The Effects of Virtual Social Support on Depression and Suicidality in College Students

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EFFECTS OF VIRTUAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

Abstract

This study will aim to find whether there is a significant difference in the depression and suicidality levels of college students based on the type of social support received—traditional or virtual. While the benefits of traditional support on mental well-being have long been known, in today’s world, much social interaction seems to be conducted via electronic means. This begs the question whether this type of support is capable of imparting the same benefits. This study seeks to answer this question by asking a diverse sample of 600 college students to complete the Beck Depression Inventory-II and the Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation, as well as logging their social interaction hours for one week to determine if significant differences exist.

Keywords: depression, suicidality, college students, social support
The Effects of Virtual Social Support on Depression and Suicidality in College Students

Introduction

Although depression and suicide are still all too prevalent in our society, it appears that more research has been focused on the risk factors for developing these issues than on protective factors that may help prevent them. It would perhaps make sense that in order to make significant strides toward eradicating these problems, at least equal effort should be expended on the study of those protective or preventative factors. This balanced approach would be beneficial in helping us adequately assess needs and where resources should be allocated—such as programs aimed at increasing and encouraging the development of protective factors, rather than simply ones that aim to reduce or eliminate risk factors.

When studies have explored potential protective factors against depression and suicidality, the results have shown that the perception of social support is paramount (Chioqueta & Stiles, 2007). This would appear to make intuitive sense, as we have long been aware of the multitude of benefits that are gained from having a sufficient support system. Having the ability to lean or rely on friends and family members, as well as simply having the human contact that is inherently included in this process, has long been shown to benefit us both physically and mentally.

However, what does social support mean in today’s society? With the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and numerous others becoming ubiquitous, and the replacement of the telephone call with E-mail or text messages, at least to a large extent, are we losing an essential component of social contact—its very humanity? With the depersonalization of communication and social interaction, the inability to read nonverbal signals, and the lack of actual human contact/touch, can we still expect to receive the same benefits from this new type
of social support? Can virtual relationships do for us what their traditional counterparts can? These are all questions begging answers.

**Review of the Literature**

The available literature supports the notion that the perception of social support is associated with lower levels of both depression and suicidality. Furthermore, there also appears to be evidence for the assertion that virtual social networking, including Facebook use, can increase the user’s perception of available social support. This review will discuss several of the studies currently completed on both topics.

Chioqueta and Stiles (2007), for instance, found that the perception of social support was significantly and negatively correlated with both suicidal ideation and depression. They further found that this perception of available support is a strong buffer against suicidality. In fact, they found that the best predictor of suicidal ideation, at least among their sample of college students, is the perceived amount of social support that is available. The explanation they suggested for this trend is that feelings of belonging and connectedness mitigate feelings of suicidality.

Pettit, Roberts, Lewinsohn, Seeley, and Yaroslavsky (2011) concurred with the above findings on depression, discovering that poor social support is a vulnerability for developing feelings of depression, especially among emerging adults. Their study found that high levels of depression were correlated with low levels of perceived support. Moreover, an increase in perceived support led to a subsequent decrease in depressive symptoms. This finding was nearly identical to the one made previously by Stice, Ragan, and Randall (2004).

Kleiman, Riskind, Schaefer, and Weingarden’s (2012) study on risk factors for suicidality concluded that while both low levels of social support (as previously stated) and impulsivity are considered such risk factors, *high* levels of social support act as a protective
factor (again, as previously stated) and a buffer against other risk factors. To this end, they found that impulsivity ceased to be a predictor for suicidality when high levels of social support were present.

Given the obvious need for social support in order to mitigate levels of depression and suicidality, along with the fact that from 90%-95% of all college students use Facebook and other social media (Manago & Taylor, 2012; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011; Sheldon, 2008), the obvious question becomes whether social media can provide its users with the perception of social support. Perhaps the issue is why, how, and for what social media is used. Reich, Subrahmanyam, and Espinoza (2012), in their study, found that most of their sample use sites such as Facebook to stay in touch with current friends and family members and to even strengthen these pre-existing relationships. The study demonstrated that social networking sites do serve to make existing relationships closer, decrease feelings of loneliness and depression, and increase perceptions of social support.

Another finding, by Manago and Taylor (2012) is that social networking sites can be useful tools in helping emerging adults adjust to college life. They found that those college students who were able to maintain contact with old friends were less lonely and adjusted more easily to college life. These authors further posited that the benefits of social networking sites are even greater than some traditional means in maintaining existing friendships. This same study also discovered that the larger the size of the social network, the higher the perception of available social support is for the user.

Another study by Sheldon, Abad, and Hinsch (2011) discovered that Facebook use was positively correlated with both connectedness and disconnectedness. A follow-up study was also conducted to attempt to explain this seemingly contradictory finding. It was discovered that
feelings of being disconnected/lonely led to increased Facebook use, whereas more Facebook use, in turn, resulted in increased feelings of connectedness. The authors concluded that social network use does satisfy relatedness needs, but they still concluded that while Facebook use may be a positive experience, it is not as positive or satisfactory as face-to-face contact.

Other studies have explored whether the quality of one's virtual relationships correlate with depression levels. Ranney and Troop-Gordon (2012) found that, among first semester college students, having positive quality distant/virtual friendships (such as those maintained via Facebook) can help compensate for a lack of face-to-face relationships during this adjustment period. They further found that spending more time online with these distant friends led to lower levels of depression within this population. This is an important finding, as college freshmen were reported to be at a heightened risk for experiencing feelings of depression.

Davila et al. (2012) also concur with the findings on the effects of the quality of relationships, having themselves discovered that only the quality of social networking interactions is associated with depression levels. For instance, they found that positive quality relationships were correlated with lower depression levels, whereas no relationship was found between unqualified social network use and depression. On the other hand, Sheldon's (2008) study agreed with the contention that virtual friendships can be used as an effective alternative to more traditional relationships, especially among those who are more socially anxious.

As evidenced by the preceding findings, social support is crucial for mitigating feelings of depression and suicidality, and social network use appears to be an effective method for obtaining this social support. However, most of the current studies have only explored the effects of Facebook and not other virtual forms of contact such as texting, chat rooms, or massive multiplayer online role-playing games. Furthermore, no studies have made direct comparisons
between traditional and virtual forms of interaction to determine whether there is a significant difference in their ability to provide the necessary perception of social support. This current study proposes to address these gaps in the existing research literature. More specifically, the study will ask whether there is a significant difference in the levels of depression and suicidal ideation among those whose social support is largely virtual and those whose social support largely consists of traditional, face-to-face interaction.

Method

Participants

The population of interest for the proposed study is college students - both undergraduate and graduate. Depression rates among this population have been rising, and are currently reported as 15-20% according to one source (Armento, McNulty, & Hopko, 2012). Other studies find the prevalence to be even higher, up to 53% (Furr, Westefeld, McConnell, & Jenkins, 2001). This same study also reported that 9% of their sample had experienced suicidal ideation since beginning college, and 1% had made a suicide attempt in the same time period (Furr et al., 2001). Moreover, this population in particular can benefit from good social support systems, as they are attempting to adjust to life as independent adults, and perhaps even living far away from home for the first time. Furthermore, as this population tends to be younger, they may be more likely than others to depend on virtual social supports and interactions through electronic means.

In order to obtain a representative sample of this population that would allow for an adequate degree of generalizability (external validity), this study proposes to use multistage sampling. First, clusters (colleges and universities) would be randomly selected from all the post-secondary institutions in the United States. This method will provide study participants from geographically diverse areas as well as urban and rural locations. Following cluster sampling,
this study would obtain a stratified random sample from each selected cluster. The strata would include freshmen, sophomores, (juniors, seniors, and graduate students from four-year institutions and those that provide graduate programs). This sampling technique would help ensure that all grade levels are adequately represented. This study would sample 75 students (proportionally by grade level) from eight separate institutions, for a total of 600 study participants.

Procedure

Measures. This study seeks to determine whether there is a difference in the levels of depression and suicidal ideation (dependent variables- ratio level when totaled) based on the type of social support- traditional or virtual- received (independent variable- ordinal level after grouping). Grade level (ordinal) will also be analyzed as a moderating variable, as it may be possible that the level of adjustment to college life (calculated by the number of years attended) will lead to different outcomes. Levels of depression and suicidality will be measured by the scores obtained on the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) and the Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS), respectively. Both are self-report instruments, asking respondents to provide their choices on a Likert-type scale, the BDI-II item responses on a 0-3 ("not present" to "severe") scale (Arbisi & Farmer, 2001), and the BSS item responses on a 0-2 (least to most severe) scale (Hanes & Stewart, 1998).

The type of social support will be operationalized as the proportion of virtual interaction to all (traditional and virtual) social interaction within one week, with less than 25% being considered a low proportion of virtual social support (mostly traditional), 25% - 75% being considered a moderate proportion, and more than 75% being considered a high proportion (mostly virtual). To measure this proportion, a weekly social interaction log will be used. This
log will ask participants to enter the number of hours and minutes spent on traditional interaction (i.e. in-person interaction and telephone/Skype conversations) and virtual interaction (i.e. interactions through social media and text/e-mail conversations) each day for the duration of one week (see Appendix A for complete instrument). The moderating variable—grade level—will be assessed by participant self report: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate.

According to the *Mental Measurements Yearbook* (MMY), both the BDI-II and the BSS have been demonstrated to have high reliability and validity. Reviewers Arbisi and Farmer (2001) found the BDI-II to have a reliability coefficient (alpha) of .92-.93, demonstrating a very high level of reliability. The test-retest reliability is equally high at .93. Convergent validity for this instrument has been demonstrated by its .71 (strong) correlation with the *Hamilton Psychiatric Rating Scale for Depression- Revised*. For discriminant validity, the BDI-II correlates moderately with the *Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety- Revised* at r = .47. Furthermore, those with mood disorders score higher on this measure than those with anxiety and adjustment disorders, a demonstration of concurrent validity for this instrument.

For the BSS, Hanes and Stewart (1998) reported the reliability coefficient alpha as ranging between .87-.95. This demonstrates a high level of reliability for this instrument as well. For convergent validity, the BSS was found to be strongly correlated with the *Scale for Suicide Ideation*, with coefficients above .90.

**Design.** This study will utilize an ex post facto (causal-comparative) design. Random assignment is not possible, as the groups will be determined by their self-reported proportion of time spent on virtual interactions. Furthermore, there is no manipulation of the independent variable by the researchers, as the variable—time spent on virtual interaction—has already occurred.
Procedures. Once the sample has been identified, each participant will receive a postcard informing them of the upcoming study and asking for their participation. Following this, they will receive, by mail, a packet containing all instructional/informed consent materials (see Appendix B for informed consent form), the BDI-II, the BSS, the weekly social interaction log, and a postage-paid return envelope. Also, given the sensitive nature of the topic—depression and suicidality—the packets will also include a statement encouraging those who feel that they are depressed and/or suicidal to contact their campus or other local mental health services. Also included will be the national suicide hotline number, with the encouragement to call immediately in the event of suicidal thoughts.

The participants will be asked to complete the first two instruments (the BDI-II and the BSS) and to use the provided log to track their social interaction hours for a one-week period. After the week has elapsed, the participants will be asked to return all materials in the provided envelope. In order to encourage participation, especially given the week-long commitment required, and if the budget allows, the participants would be promised a gift card or other similar item once the returned materials have been received. To protect the participants' confidentiality, the measures will be completed anonymously, with no names on any of the assessment instruments—the participants will only be asked to provide certain demographic information, such as their gender, age, and grade level: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate. For identification purposes, each participant will be identified by a number that will be recorded on the materials sent out to allow for tracking returns and matching the various instruments to one another.

Data Analysis. Once the materials have been returned, the time spent on traditional and virtual interaction will be totaled. To obtain the proportion of time spent on virtual interaction
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(VI), the VI total will be divided by the grand total. Once the proportion of virtual interaction for each participant has been determined, they will be grouped according to the above-mentioned criteria- less than 25%, 25%- 75%, and more than 75%. Each of the three groups will be further broken down by grade level. Once the data have been grouped, the mean scores and standard deviations on the BDI-II and the BSS will then be calculated for each of the groups for analysis, using the IBM SPSS 20 software. Histograms will also be created and analyzed to ensure normal distributions of the data.

After having ensured that the data are distributed normally, the derived means for each group will be compared by conducting two separate multifactorial analyses of variance (FANOVA), one for the BDI-II and one for the BSS. The means will be compared both by grade level and by proportion of virtual interaction (VI), to determine whether there are significant differences based on one or both factors. The FANOVA is necessary, as there are two independent variables- the proportion of VI and grade level, and one dependent variable- either the BDI-II or the BSS. Both are 3X5 factorial designs, with the VI having three levels, and grade level having five. Due to the two separate analyses, a Bonferroni corrected alpha level will be set at .025 (.05/2). Both interactions and main effects will be compared to this alpha level.

If it is determined that at least one mean varied significantly from the others in either factor and/or either analysis (if the obtained F-values were under the set alpha level of .025), Tukey’s post-hoc test will then be conducted to determine which group was different. If there was a significant interaction present, this will be analyzed through graphing the data and conducting a test of simple main effects. Furthermore, if a statistically significant difference was found, the effect size will then be determined by calculating Eta-squared values, which
determine the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable.

**Discussion**

Given the known benefits of adequate social support on psychological well-being, including depression and suicidality, it is important to ascertain whether the ever more popular virtual forms of interaction are capable of imparting this same benefit. Although some research has been done into this very important issue, no studies have directly compared the depression and suicidality levels of those whose social support is largely virtual to those whose support comes mostly by traditional means. This study seeks to fill in that gap, as well as including all forms of virtual interaction, not merely Facebook use.

Although this study will attempt to answer questions left unanswered by previous research, there are also some limitations present in the current study that must be taken into account. First, as this study will rely solely on self-reports by its participants, the acquired data will be vulnerable to the risks inherent in this type of data collection. It is possible, for instance, that participants will not provide values that are entirely accurate. If the results of this study prove statistically significant, perhaps a follow-up could be conducted using outside observers or other, less biased, methods of data collection.

Another limitation to this study is the causal-comparative design it uses. Although random assignment and manipulation of the IV (time spent on virtual interaction) would be challenging at best, and impossible at worst, this design does make it more difficult to determine causality with a high degree of certainty. With these limitations, and without control over possible extraneous variables, the study’s internal validity may be somewhat weaker than an experimental design could provide.
If the current study’s results prove significant, a possible future direction of research might be to expand the sample to test populations other than college students, such as adults or adolescents (middle/high school students). With the current proposed sample, the generalizability of the obtained results to other groups will be limited. Another direction that may prove useful in the future is to narrow the sample, i.e. obtain a sample that excludes nontraditional students to determine if their exclusion might lead to different results.

Furthermore, this study will test whether grade level may be a moderating variable. Another possible future avenue would be determining whether other moderating variables exist, such as age or gender. While this study does seek to fill in an important gap in the existing research, future studies on the subject, using different designs, samples, and data collection methods, are encouraged.
References


Appendices

Appendix A

Weekly Social Interaction Log

Instructions:

For the next seven days, beginning tomorrow morning, please indicate in the spaces provided the number of hours and minutes spent on each type of social interaction.

Day 1

Traditional Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (include time spent together at their homes/dorms, time spent together at your home/dorm, and time spent together in any other location) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (include time spent speaking on the telephone and using Skype) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Virtual Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/ social media (include time spent on Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, chat rooms, massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG)- such as World of Warcraft, video game console multiplayer games, and other social networking sites) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (include time spent sending (composing) and receiving (reading) text messages and e-mail messages from friends and family members) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Day 2

Traditional Interaction:

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Virtual Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/ social media (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes
Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Day 3

Traditional Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Virtual Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/social media (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Day 4

Traditional Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Virtual Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/social media (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Day 5

Traditional Interaction

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (see “Day 1” for items to include) _____ hours, _____ minutes

Virtual Interaction
Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/ social media (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

**Day 6**

*Traditional Interaction*

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

*Virtual Interaction*

Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/ social media (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

**Day 7**

*Traditional Interaction*

Time spent interacting with friends or family members in person (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent speaking with friends or family members when not in their physical presence (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

*Virtual Interaction*

Time spent interacting with friends or family members through the internet/ social media (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

Time spent communicating with friends or family members through electronic means (see “Day 1” for items to include) _______ hours, _______ minutes

**For administrator use only**

Total weekly hours and minutes spent on traditional interaction (TI)__________

Total weekly hours and minutes spent on virtual interaction (VI)__________

Total hours and minutes spent on social interaction (TI + VI)__________

Percentage of time spent on virtual interaction (VI/Total time) _____%
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

The experiment in which you are about to participate investigates the effect that virtual social support has on the receiver's levels of depression and suicidal ideation. The experiment is being conducted by Joanna Bruckner, a SUNY Oswego graduate student under the supervision of Dr. Kristen Munger, Assistant Professor in the Counseling and Psychological Services Department, and has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee at SUNY Oswego.

The experiment consists of the completion of two brief written instruments - a measure of depression and another of suicidal ideation - as well as the logging of all social interaction hours for the period of one week. You will be asked to complete both instruments and then track and record the time you spend on both virtual social interaction and traditional, face-to-face interaction. Once complete, you will be asked to return all materials in the provided, postage-paid envelope.

A possible risk of participating in this study is obtaining a score on either the depression or the suicidal ideation measure that you may consider distressing.

The experiment will last about one week.

Each person’s data in this study will be anonymous. You will not be asked to include your name on any of the documents provided to you. At the end of the study, a full explanation of the experiment will be given to you.

By participating in this study, you will help increase understanding of the effects of virtual social support on psychological well-being.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about the experiment, please contact Joanna Bruckner at 555-5555.

I have read the above statement about the purpose and nature of the study, and I freely consent to participate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Experimenter’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print Participant’s Name</td>
<td></td>
<td>Print Experimenter’s Name</td>
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Appendix C
IBR Documentation

PRACTICE
Human Subjects Transmittal Form

This form is being emailed to the PI and their faculty supervisor.

Principle Investigator's full name: Kristen Munger

Title of Investigation: Effects of virtual social support on depression and suicidality.

If appropriate, Faculty Supervisor's name: enter name here

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. The attached application involves scientific investigation using human subjects.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>2. The attached application uses human subjects below the age of 18. If yes, parental informed consent or consent of the subject's legally authorized representative must be obtained in addition the informed consent of the minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>3. The attached application involves experimental biomedical procedures, or use of drugs or toxic substances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>4. The attached application involves the administration of personality tests, Inventories or questionnaires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>5. It is affirmed that the investigation will adhere to the policies and Procedures of the State University of New York for the study of human subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>6. Additions to or changes in procedures involving human subjects that occur after review of the application will be brought to the attention of the review committee as will anticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Human Subjects Transmittal Form Research Protocol

A. Brief description of the research (e.g., purpose, hypotheses):

This study will aim to find whether there is a significant difference in the levels of depression and suicidality among college students based on the type of social support received- traditional or virtual. The design used for this research will be causal-comparative, as the subjects will be grouped according to their self-reported proportion of social support, as well as their grade level. The means for each group's scores on the BDI-II and the BSS will then be calculated, and compared to one another according to the following rule: less than 25% virtual support, 25%-75% virtual support, and more than 75% virtual support to determine whether significant
differences exist.

B. A description of the benefits of the research to the human subjects, if any, and of the benefits to human or scientific knowledge:

Given the known benefits of social support on levels of depression and suicidality, and the ever-increasing number of students whose social support is largely derived through virtual/electronic means, it is important to discover if this new type of support is as effective as more traditional interactions. If the results of this study show that virtual support is not as effective, this finding could be used to encourage students to seek out more traditional support, rather than relying solely on virtual interactions. Furthermore, this finding could also be used to encourage colleges to promote more face-to-face interactions on their campuses in order to benefit their student populations.

C. Description of subjects, indicating especially whether any are minors or otherwise members of vulnerable populations (e.g., subjects under the age of 18, pregnant females, prisoners):

The subjects of this study will be 600 college students. The sample will include 75 students from eight separate post-secondary institutions in the United States, selected from geographically diverse areas and including both urban and rural locations. Included will be freshmen and sophomores from all locations, juniors and seniors from all four-year institutions, and graduate students from all locations that provide post-graduate studies. The 75 students from each campus would include participants from each possible grade level proportionally.

D. Description of how the subjects will be used (e.g., how they are selected, what they will do - such as complete questionnaires or participate in a simulated task):

The subjects will be randomly selected through a multistage sampling procedure. From eight randomly selected colleges, 75 students will be selected from each, proportionally by grade level. Once selected, the participants will receive a packet containing the BDI-II, the BSS, and a weekly social interaction log. They will be asked to complete the first two assessments and then track and record their social interactions for seven days. Once completed, these materials will be returned by mail.

E. Description of the risks and discomforts, if any, to subjects:

This study is asking for one week of the participants time, involving the calculation and logging of their social interaction hours- a fairly significant commitment. Furthermore, a potential risk might be obtaining what could be perceived as a high score on either the BDI-II or the BSS. This perception could be psychologically or emotionally distressing for the participant.

F. Does the proposed research involve deception? Explain why it is necessary and how will the subject be debriefed so as to minimize risk to the subject due to the deception:

There is no deception involved in this research.

G. Upload the Informed Consent Form as well as any surveys or questionnaires, or other material that involves the subject. Please upload only Word, .rtf, or .pdf files.