

**Deception in close relationships: If I lie, why should I trust my partner?**

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DECEPTION IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS: IF I LIE, WHY SHOULD I TRUST  
MY PARTNER?

Deception plays a role in everyday communication, with information selectively withheld or disclosed in order to form and maintain social relationships. In intimate relationships however, where individuals tend to match each other's inputs, both positive and negative, deception may prove costly. The present research uses Social Exchange Theory to investigate the impact of deception, and perceptions of deception, on trust, commitment, and satisfaction in intimate relationships. Analysis of data from both couple members of 71 heterosexual couples indicated that the use of deception, and perceptions of a partner's deception, were significantly negatively related to levels of trust, satisfaction and commitment. Perceived partner deception significantly predicted trust for both female and male partners. One's own use of deception was related to one's perceptions that their partner engaged in deception, indicating that people's perceptions of their partner's behaviour are consistent with their own behaviour. Furthermore, one's perceived partner deception was related to that partner's actual deception, indicating that if an individual is actually engaged in deception, then they are perceived to be deceitful by their partner. These findings suggest that in intimate and interdependent relationships, where behaviours and motives are cyclical and reciprocal, not only are one's own thoughts and behaviours important, but so, too, are the perceptions of a partner's behaviours. Finally, deception can be seen as a relational cost, which has negative outcomes for both partners.