ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT MESSAGES:

A FACEWORK PERSPECTIVE

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of different message features on elderly individuals' perceptions of instrumental and emotional support messages. The message features consisted of different combinations of facework strategies (honor positive face-honor negative face, honor positive face-threaten negative face, threaten positive face-honor negative face, and threaten positive face-threaten negative face) and support act types (advice, offers, and expressions of concern). It was expected that messages which honored participants' positive and negative faces would be rated as the most helpful, while those which threatened both faces would be rated as least helpful. In addition, it was predicted that instrumental support messages would be perceived as less helpful than emotional support messages. Finally, it was expected that family members would be more likely to provide instrumental support to the elderly, whereas friends would be more likely to provide emotional support. A number of research questions were also posed. Two of the hypotheses were supported, and one was not. Overall, many of the results were inconsistent with much of the literature on social support, facework, and politeness theory. One possibility may be that as a subculture, the elderly value and use a distinct set of criteria when evaluating support messages.
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Social support is generally defined as “social transactions that are perceived by the recipient or intended by the provider to facilitate coping in everyday life, and especially in response to stressful situations” (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1990, p. 173). Two main categories of social support have been identified: instrumental and emotional support. Instrumental support refers to provisions of tangible aid, information, or assistance, while emotional support refers to fostering feelings of esteem and acceptance (House, 1981).

The purpose of the present study is to examine whether elderly individuals’ perceptions of message helpfulness vary as a function of context (e.g., situations requiring instrumental or emotional support) and message attributes. Social support, and social activity in general, has been found to be positively correlated with high morale and well-being among the elderly (see Larson, 1978; Lemon, Bengston, & Pierce, 1972). However, relatively little is known about the particular features of supportive acts that lead to these positive outcomes. This study will examine the attributes of instrumental and emotional support messages.
in an effort to understand whether particular message features make different forms of support more or less helpful.

This chapter will establish the significance of social support research, explore how scholars have conceptualized and studied social support in the past, and explain how facework theory is a promising avenue for examining the helpfulness of supportive messages. The chapter will also advance several hypotheses and research questions based on the literature reviewed. Next, Chapter Two will discuss the methodology employed in the current study. Chapter Three will present a detailed report of the results. Finally, Chapter Four will discuss the implications of the findings, the study's limitations, and will provide suggestions for future research.

**The Significance of Social Support**

Although researchers disagree about how best to define and examine the construct of social support, they do agree that its study is warranted on both theoretical and pragmatic grounds. One of the most important features of social support is the vital role it plays in all phases of interpersonal relationships. Burleson, Albrecht, Goldsmith, and Sarason (1994) explain that social support is basic to human interaction because it has the potential to play a decisive role in relationship formation, relationship maintenance, and even relationship dissolution.
For example, expressions of caring, trust, and affection are conveyed through supportive communication. Further, a lack of support may be influential in the disintegration of a relationship. Goldsmith and Parks (1990) explain that social support is closely associated with the deterioration of friendships and romantic relationships, as well as with their development. Thus, a thorough knowledge of the supportive process will help scholars gain a better understanding of interpersonal relationships.

In addition to its centrality in understanding human interaction, social support has also been linked to a variety of positive and negative life consequences—especially for recipients of support-giving efforts. Several studies have found a positive correlation between social support and improved physical health for surgical patients, pregnant women, and asthmatics (for a review, see Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983). In addition, House, Landis, and Umberson (1988) found that individuals with strong social ties and relatively large networks have lower mortality rates than individuals who are more isolated. Other work suggests that the availability of social support is inversely associated with dysfunctional psychological behavior. For example, Crohan and Antonucci (1989) observed that the presence of social support was related to low depression and high morale. Gottlieb (1994, p. 318) reports that social support serves a "protecting function" in that people who actually receive support, or just believe it
is available, are at a lower risk of physical or mental illness. In addition, social support is also known to buffer the effects of stress (Barrera et al., 1981; House, 1981). For example, Cohen and Wills (1985) found that social support buffers recipients from the impact of crises or trauma. Finally, as House (1981, p. 7) notes, “the quantity and quality of people’s social relationships . . . appear to have an important bearing on the amount of stress they experience, their overall well-being, and on the likelihood that stress will adversely affect their overall well-being.”

In addition to benefiting support receivers, social support also affords certain benefits to support providers. In the case of the elderly, Crohan and Antonucci (1989) discuss several benefits that they may incur by providing support to others. For example, supporting someone else may help elderly individuals feel needed and important to the welfare of others. In addition, being solicited for help may make an elderly support provider feel valued by others. Finally, Crohan and Antonucci (1989) suggest that when the elderly provide social support, it is beneficial because they increase the chance that others will reciprocate the support, if necessary, in the future.

Goldsmith and Parks (1990) suggest some other benefits that anyone (including the elderly) may receive by providing support. For example, they claim that the provision of social support may promote a closer relationship between the
provider and receiver. In addition, Goldsmith and Parks (1990) point out that providing support to another person may benefit the provider simply with the satisfaction of being able to help somebody with their problems. Thus, the literature suggests that, in many cases, social support affords benefits to both the support provider and receiver.

However, the presence of social support is not always positive. La Gaipa (1990) reports that supportive behaviors may also have negative effects on the health of both support givers and support receivers. Providing social support may be ineffectual or even damaging to the relationship if the receiver misinterprets it as a threat to his/her autonomy. Since providing support can be physically and emotionally draining to the provider, La Gaipa (1990) suggests that those support providers who are highly caring, empathic, and sensitive to others' needs (usually women) experience heightened levels of depression and burden. Finally, if giving support becomes too costly, the provider may begin to resent the receiver, as Giles et al. (1992) suggest occurs when adult children begin to resent their elderly parents.

Receiving social support has its own set of costs. Among the dangers involved in receiving support are feeling smothered, controlled by the provider, or obligated to conform to his/her wishes (La Gaipa, 1990). These feelings may, in turn, lead the receiver to feel inadequate, depressed, or even resentful of the
support provider. In addition, Goldsmith and Parks (1990) suggest that receiving support may be damaging if the support provider betrays one's confidence, forms a negative impression of the receiver, or leaves the receiver feeling indebted.

Taken together, these lines of research indicate that for better or worse, social support clearly has a profound impact on both physical and psychological well-being as well as relationship development, maintenance, and dissolution. One group in particular, the elderly, may be especially susceptible to these effects.

Social Support and the Elderly: The Need for More Research

By the year 2000, it is estimated there will be over 31 million elderly persons (ages 65+) in the U.S. (Glick, 1979). In the past several decades, life expectancy has increased 31 years for women, and 23 years for men (Downs, 1989). Surprisingly, social support researchers have not recognized the elderly experience as warranting special attention. Assuming that elderly people will be living longer, more active lives (Hesse-Biber & Williamson, 1984), it is likely that they will experience relationships that involve social support and companionship. For instance, 80% of all elderly people have living children, and 75% of the elderly either live with their children or within 30 miles of them (Johnson & Bursk, 1977). Further, since people will be living longer, they will have more opportunities for establishing friendships with others their own age. Thus, it is crucial that
researchers begin to focus on the unique supportive interaction between the elderly and their adult children, and between the elderly and their friends.

The limited knowledge we have concerning the elderly and support indicates that the quality of supportive interaction may be more closely associated with life satisfaction than the quantity of interaction. For example, research conducted by Lowenthal and Haven (1968) suggests that the maintenance of one stable (high quality) relationship was more closely associated with elderly individuals' well-being than were high levels of social interaction. Along a similar line, Nussbaum (1983) reports that feeling close to friends is an important predictor of life satisfaction for the elderly. In addition, Giles et al. (1992) suggest that the quality of social support received across the lifespan may be critical to individuals' development in their later years. For example, they note that, when supporting the elderly, it is important for support providers to "avoid encouraging dependence, so that certain negatively tainted interactions [such as threatening their esteem] can be relatively effective in promoting good health outcomes and successful development" (Giles et al., 1992, p. 274). Finally, Lemon et al.'s (1972) research suggests that, for the elderly, stable intimate relationships were more important to life satisfaction than sheer quantity of social interaction.

However, as previously mentioned, social support may also have negative effects on the elderly. For example, social support provided to the elderly by their
family may lead to negative outcomes since it challenges the elderly person's independence (Nussbaum, 1985; Wood & Robertson, 1978). Supportive messages are often threatening to the elderly because the relationships are unbalanced in that the elderly person is dependent in some way on the support provider.

Although many relationships may be unbalanced in terms of support provision, the literature suggests that kin relationships are far more unbalanced for the elderly than are relationships with friends. For example, Giles et al. (1992) suggest that if elderly support recipients can not reciprocate the support they receive from their adult children, then feelings of inequality may diminish the helpfulness of the support and possibly the quality of the relationship itself. In addition, Hesse-Biber and Williamson (1984) point out that the elderly often have no other option but to place themselves in a dependent position in relation to their adult children.

Research seems to support these claims regarding kin relationships. For example, Johnson and Bursk (1977) suggest that as elderly individuals' dependence on their children increases, the resentment by the adult child increases, which may lead to frustration for the elderly individual and a poorer relationship for both parties. In addition, Nussbaum (1983) found that for elderly individuals living in their own house or in a nursing home, higher levels of interaction with
family members (as compared to friends) was related to a lower “zest for life” than for those who interacted more with their friends.

Although limited, studies of social support among the elderly highlight two significant points. First, the importance of social support for the rapidly growing population of elderly people warrants further research. Second, this research must focus on the quality of the messages exchanged. Unfortunately, without message-based research, we have little sense of what constitutes “high quality” interaction or support. The present study seeks to alleviate this problem by focusing on both supportive interaction and message features.

**Conceptualizations of Social Support**

**Definitions of Social Support**

Research indicates that the effects of social support on the elderly may, in part, depend on the type of support given as well as who is providing the support. Although several definitions have been offered, social support is generally conceptualized as “social transactions that are perceived by the recipient or intended by the provider to facilitate coping in everyday life, and especially in response to stressful situations” (Pierce et al., 1990, p. 173). From this definition, social support can imply a number of different relationships with support providers.
(ranging from a spouse or lover to a neighbor or co-worker) and a variety of types of support (e.g., emotional or instrumental).

Support Providers

In terms of the people who can be classified as members of the support process, scholars have made several proposals. Some researchers argue that social support can exist in almost any interpersonal relationship, as long as the parties involved give or receive support. Along these lines, Kahn and Antonucci (1980) present the "convoy model" which posits that individuals move through life surrounded by a convoy of support givers and receivers. Although the network itself remains constant, the specific people involved in the convoy may change over the years.

In a similar fashion, Sarason et al. (1983, p. 127) define social support as "the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us." Concurrently, Cutrona, Suhr, and MacFarlane (1990) explain that social support may take place among family members, friends, and/or associates. Barrera et al. (1981, p. 435) denote social support as "the various forms of aid and assistance supplied by family members, friends, neighbors, and others."
Some evidence has been found for "convoy models" of social support. For instance, Graney (1975) reported that happiness among the elderly was positively associated with face-to-face social interaction with both family and friends. In addition, Larson (1978) found that informal activities such as visiting with friends and neighbors were positively related to well-being among the elderly. The "convoy model" and its attendant research implies, to some degree, that the availability of supportive relationships should be the focus of social support research, regardless of the quality of the relationship, the nature of the messages exchanged, or the people involved.

In contrast, other researchers maintain that while many personal relationships have the potential to provide support, not all do so, at least to the desired levels (Burleson et al., 1994). This may be especially true for the elderly. Gerontological research has shown that older adults prefer certain support providers over others (Rook, 1990). Studies indicate that support provided by friends is more likely to be related to an elderly person's satisfaction than support provided by family members (Hesse-Biber & Williamson, 1984, Lemon et al., 1972; Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Mutran & Reitzes 1984; Rook 1990; Treas, 1975). In fact, Mutran and Reitzes (1984, p. 117) report that "familial support does not increase morale among the elderly and may actually be negatively associated with well-being."
There are several explanations for why friends, rather than kin, may provide more satisfying support to elderly people. Treas (1975) notes that family relationships are fraught with conflict, and financial support from adult children is often provided without any intimacy or emotional support. Family relationships (sometimes including marriage) may also challenge the elderly person’s independence and are, therefore, often unfulfilling and even upsetting for the aging person (Nussbaum, 1985, p. 268; Wood & Robertson, 1978). Giles et al. (1992) explain that family relationships involve an obligation to help, whereas friendship involves a voluntary desire to help. Further, many “elderly people are often left with the sole option of placing themselves in a dependent, powerless role in relation to their adult children” (Hesse-Biber & Williamson, 1984, p. 264).

On the adult child’s part, “feelings of love and respect for the elderly parent may easily turn into guilt, hatred, and disappointment as children attempt to function in their new role as caregiver” (La Gaipa, 1990, p. 132). Overall, research suggests that support provided by friends is often more satisfying to the elderly because it does not challenge their independence to the extent that kin relationships do, friendships are voluntary whereas kin support may be obligatory, and friendships often involve less conflict than relationships with family members.

Regardless of their comparison to friendships, kin relationships are still a fundamental part of elderly individuals’ social networks (Treas, 1975). Thus, it is
important to explore what factors influence satisfaction with support provided in kin relationships. Johnson and Bursk (1977) claim that satisfying relationships between elderly persons and their adult children depend on the *quality* of communication between them. That is, aside from the specific situations requiring support, the manner in which that support is communicated may also have some bearing on its helpfulness. In fact, research suggests that satisfying relationships between the elderly and their adult children depend more on the nature of communication rather than geographical proximity (Lemon et al., 1972; Johnson & Bursk, 1977). In other words, it is not as important for elderly persons to be physically close to their relatives as it is to have high quality communicative interactions with them.

Thus, it is not enough to recognize that family and friends are supportive since “it is usually not the simple existence of a relationship per se that provides support” (Burleson, 1990, p. 66). Since research has consistently shown that support conveyed to the elderly from family members is less satisfying than support from friends, it may be that the quality of supportive communication, not the quantity, is more important in determining satisfaction. Therefore, research must begin to examine why the helpfulness of social support varies as a function of who is providing it as well as *the quality of support they are providing*. 
Examining the nature of the messages exchanged may be one way to assess and understand the quality of interaction.

**Categories of Social Support**

Aside from attempting to determine who is actually involved in the support process, researchers have suggested many types and functions of social support. For example, Albrecht, Adleman, and Associates (1987) propose that social support may function to extend access to information, goods, and services; to enhance control through tangible assistance; or to provide emotional acceptance and assurance. Alternatively, House (1981) has described four types of social support including emotional support, appraisal support, informational support, and instrumental support. When attempting to classify these typologies into a meaningful collection, two broad categories emerge. As noted earlier, researchers tend to see most types of support as either emotionally- or instrumentally-oriented (Barrera et al., 1981; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Leatham & Duck, 1990; House, 1981; Tardy, 1994;Thoits, 1982).

Instrumentally-oriented forms of support are defined by Cutrona et al. (1990, p. 31) as those which “directly promote problem solving.” Cutrona et al. (1990, p. 31) provide specific examples of instrumental support such as “tangible aid... wherein goods or services are provided” and “informational support” which
may include advice or guidance directed at solving a particular problem. Crohan and Antonucci (1989, p. 131) describe "aid" as "transactions that provide information and practical assistance." In a similar manner, Kahn (1979, p. 85) describes this type of social support as "the giving of symbolic or material aid to another." Interestingly, Rook (1990) claims that family members provide a majority of the instrumental support that elderly people receive.

Whereas instrumental support is defined as tangible or material assistance, emotional support is characterized by Barrera et al. (1981, p. 438) as "intangible forms such as guidance and expressions of esteem." According to Cutrona et al. (1990, p. 31), emotional support which "promotes emotional adjustment" can be divided into three types: attachment, network, and esteem support.

Attachment support consists of verbal and nonverbal expressions of sympathy, caring, and concern for the other. Similarly, Crohan and Antonucci (1989, p. 131) define "affective transactions" as including expressions of "liking, admiration, respect, or love." Network support entails providing the other with the feeling that she or he is part of a group that shares common interests or values. The third dimension of emotional support detailed by Cutrona et al. (1990, p. 31) is "esteem support" which involves "bolstering a person's sense of competence or self esteem." In addition to attachment, network, and esteem support, Crohan and Antonucci (1989, p. 131) discuss "transactions of affirmation" which involve
“expressions of agreement or acknowledgment of the appropriateness of some act or statement of another.” Rook (1990) also notes that whereas family members are a major source of instrumental support for the elderly, friends and companions provide significant emotional support.

Overall, there are some key differences between emotional and instrumental forms of social support. Emotional support involves messages which serve to provide comfort or bolster the receiver’s self-esteem, whereas instrumental support is designed to assist with physical problems or provide tangible assistance. Research suggests that the elderly are more likely to rely on their friends for emotional support and their kin for instrumental aid (Rook, 1990).

This difference in support providers may help explain why elderly people report that their relations with friends are more satisfying than their relationships with adult children. Instrumental support, which is likely to come from family members, may be inherently less satisfying to receive since it implies that the recipient is unable to complete a task on his/her own. Emotional support, which is likely to come from friends, may be more satisfying since it serves to promote emotional well-being and bolster self-esteem.

However, both instrumental and emotional support are necessary in an elderly person’s world. Although they may prefer emotional support, instrumental support becomes more and more necessary as people grow older. That is, for
most individuals, the aging process brings with it an increasing need for tangible aid and assistance.

Overall, this discussion of support types, and the earlier discussion of support providers, share a common theme. The literature suggests that the quality of support, not the quantity, is a key factor which influences the well-being of support receivers and the helpfulness of support messages. An overall measure of quality must consider (1) who is sending the message and (2) what type of message he/she is sending. As mentioned earlier, Johnson and Bursk (1977) argue that relationship satisfaction between elderly persons and their adult children depends on the quality of communication between them. In addition, this section has demonstrated that another dimension of quality, the type of support, has some bearing on the well-being of the receiver and on the overall effectiveness of the communication. Thus, as our elderly population continues to grow, we must begin to examine better and worse ways for family and friends to convey instrumental (and emotional) support. Several perspectives have guided social support researchers in their attempt to examine these different forms of support and their effects. These perspectives are described below.
**Perspectives for Studying Social Support**

Three primary approaches underlie most social support research: the psychological, the social network, and the interactional approach. Of these perspectives, only the interactional approach emphasizes the importance of communication in the social support process.

**The Psychological Approach.** The psychological approach to studying social support “emphasizes the individual’s subjective sense of being supported or perceptions of support availability” (Burleson et al., 1994, xvi; see also, Pierce et al., 1990). A majority of gerontology literature examining social activity employs this approach. Many measures of support and satisfaction among the elderly are derived from subjective scales which ask people to rate how supported or satisfied they feel (see Larson, 1978; Lemon et al., 1972; Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961; Nussbaum, 1985). For example, Sarason et al.'s (1983) Social Support Questionnaire measures perceived available support and respondents’ satisfaction with perceived support. From this perspective, social support exists only when the receiver feels that support is being provided or at least that support is available.

One advantage of this approach is that it focuses on the personality characteristics that influence people’s perceptions of their relationships and their social world (Pierce et al., 1990). Work conducted within this perspective
generally indicates that personality characteristics such as depression and morale are associated with the perceived availability of social support (e.g., Crohan and Antonucci, 1989). In addition, Gottlieb (1994) maintains that simply believing that there is available support is related to one's well-being. This approach is valuable because it emphasizes the importance of focusing on the unique needs of each individual. Although researchers may try to establish definitions and typologies of supportive behaviors, they must bear in mind that each person's personality will influence perceptions of the availability and helpfulness of social support.

The psychological approach has, however, been criticized on several grounds. First, Pierce et al. (1990) argue that this approach does not consider the interpersonal context in which support occurs. In other words, by simply focusing on one's "sense" of available support, researchers fail to consider vital situational and relational factors such as who is providing the support, how the support is communicated, and under what circumstances support is given.

**The Social Network Approach.** In contrast to the psychological approach, the social network approach focuses on the relationship between social support and the size (number of ties), density (connection or integration of ties), and multiplexity (different people in different roles) of an individual's network (Burleson et al., 1994). Thus, unlike the psychological approach, the social network approach is highly objective. Researchers operating within this
perspective assume that quantitative features influence the impact that interactions have on network members (Pierce et al., 1990). For example, by measuring the number of neighbors, friends, and family members a person has, Edwards and Klemmack (1973) found that life satisfaction for the elderly was positively correlated with the size of their social network. In a similar vein, Adams (1971) found that elderly persons were more satisfied when they reported having membership in some informal social group. Similar to the psychological approach, the main problem with the social network approach is that it fails to examine what the elderly talk about with their family or social group, and how that communication may be related to well-being. In addition, the social network approach cannot account for results which suggest that qualitative, not quantitative, features of social relationships are associated with one's well-being (Pierce et al., 1990).

The Interactional Approach Both the psychological and social network approaches have made useful contributions to the study of social support. Research from these perspectives has helped us understand how personality characteristics, cognitive states, and connections with our support providers influence our well-being and ability to cope. Yet, both fail to acknowledge the fundamental role of communication in the support process.
In contrast, the interactional perspective views social support as a *form of communication*. As Zimmermann and Applegate (1994, p. 50) argue, “the need for social support is a problem that people develop communicative practices to solve.” Thus, the interaction approach assumes that the provision and receipt of support occurs through communicative exchanges (Burleson et al., 1994). Proponents of this approach suggest that research should examine the actual messages and interactions in which support participants engage, rather than evaluating people’s perceptions of support or quantifying elements of their social networks.

There are at least three reasons to approach the study of social support from an interactional perspective. First, as previously mentioned, communication is a fundamental component in the support process. Talk is a primary channel through which both instrumental and emotional support are conveyed. Zimmermann and Applegate (1994, p. 52) note that, “support and its cognitive and affective correlates are accomplished in talk.” In addition to examining the perceptions of support availability and mapping out networks of relationships, research must also examine the nature of supportive messages. In short, researchers must begin to understand “which behaviors are most effective in making a recipient feel better and in helping a recipient to solve his or her problem” (Barbee, 1990, p. 47).
Second, regardless of the stability or accuracy of an individual’s perceptions of support, communication contributes to creating these perceptions. In other words, it is not enough to examine perceptions of social support since communication is, in part, responsible for the nature of our perceptions. Finally, research on how support is conveyed through communication may ultimately enable scholars to “advise people about how to be more supportive” (Burleson et al., 1994, p. xviii). Gottlieb (1994) suggests that epidemiological and life event studies focusing on social support have many important applications for medical, mental health, and human services professionals. Studying social support from a communication perspective may ultimately allow researchers to provide practical guidelines to people in order to help them provide and receive more helpful support.

Interestingly, most social support research conducted to date has focused on the particular functions or effects of social support (see Tardy 1992, 1994). Researchers have often examined the end-product of supportive interactions, or who provides support, rather than the quality of the messages used to achieve these goals. This is due to the fact that most research conducted on social support stems from either a psychological or sociological perspective. Comparatively little research has employed a common perspective to examine the quality of messages involved in supportive interactions using a communication
perspective. In fact, few studies have focused on the specific features of messages that people use to express different forms of support or the specific message features that lead to perceptions of sensitivity, effectiveness, and helpfulness of supportive messages (Burleson et al., 1994). Therefore, as Burleson et al. (1994, p. xix) note, there exists a “need for theories of message design and message effects that explain characteristics and impacts of different messages.” Both facework theory (Cupach & Metts, 1994; Goffman, 1965; Goldsmith 1992, 1994) and politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987) may be useful for understanding how particular message features influence our perceptions of helpful instrumental and emotional support messages.

**Facework and Politeness Theory**

Facework theory as described by Goldsmith (1992, 1994) and Cupach and Metts (1994) attempts to explain communicative interactions by examining message features, interactional contexts, and relationships between the people involved. The Western notions of “face” and “facework” were introduced by Goffman (1965) and extended with Brown and Levinson’s (1978) “politeness theory.” Each of these theories, as well as their historical roots will be reviewed in the following sections. A discussion of the ways in which these theories can be applied to study the helpfulness of social support messages will also be presented.
Historical Development

Both politeness theory and facework theory assume that during social interaction, individuals (a) have certain personal needs they seek to fulfill, and (b) recognize and seek to address the personal needs of others by engaging in ritualized interaction (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Goffman, 1965).

According to Goffman (1965, p. 5), face may be defined as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself...” Goffman (1965) suggests that we each have face-wants, such as desiring that others respect and uphold our face. However, in almost all social interactions, our faces may be upheld, through communicative strategies known as facework, or they may be threatened.

With their introduction of “politeness theory” Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) advanced this conceptualization of “face” by introducing two important aspects, positive and negative face. Thus, they distinguish between positive and negative face-wants. Positive face refers to the desire to be approved of, valued, and appreciated by others. Negative face refers to one’s desire for “freedom of action” or “freedom from imposition” (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). In addition, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) proposed a system for explaining a wide range of different facework or politeness strategies. Politeness theory, face-threats, and face-wants will be explained in greater detail later in this chapter.
Of course, the assumption that individuals engage in social interaction to fulfill needs, or that social interaction is ritualized, is certainly not limited to the theories of Goffman or Brown and Levinson. In fact, many communication scholars, psychologists, and sociologists have examined human needs, motivation, and social interaction. A discussion of some of these works will help illustrate the development of both politeness theory and facework theory. Below is a brief historical account of theories involving “needs” and the theoretical development of “facework.”

**Universal Needs.** The notion that social interaction involves “universal” needs or motivators is not limited to the work of Brown and Levinson. Rather, the assumption that there are certain universal needs which individuals bring to social interaction is a culmination of decades of theoretical development in a variety of fields.

For example, Schutz (1971) claims that people have three basic needs in any interpersonal relationship: the need for affection, the need for control, and the need for inclusion. Schutz argues that these interpersonal needs are manifested in people’s feelings and behaviors toward others. The need for inclusion refers to one’s desire to feel important or significant in the eyes of others and to feel that one belongs in a group or relationship. Schutz points out that unlike the need for
affection, the need for inclusion does not involve strong emotional ties to an individual person. Further, unlike the need for control, inclusion implies a desire for “prominence, not dominance” (Schutz, 1971, p. 18). On the other hand, one’s need for control in interpersonal relationships refers to a desire to have decision-making power, authority, autonomy, and influence over others. Finally, the need for affection refers to an individual’s close personal emotional feelings (including love or hate) between him/herself and others. Consistent with Goffman (1965) and Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) position that face-wants are “universal,” Schutz implies that affection, control, and inclusion needs are universal, since he argues that “each person” has these needs (Schutz, 1971, p. 17).

In addition to Schutz, other scholars have also examined human needs and motivation. For example, similar to Schutz’ needs of affection and inclusion, McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1976), propose that all individuals have a basic need for affiliation. Essentially, “affiliation” refers to the desire to make contact and have relationships with others. In addition, McClelland et al. point out that needs or motivators “should be distinguishable primarily in terms of the types of expectations involved, and secondarily in terms of the types of action... which confirm those expectations in varying degrees and thus yield positive or negative affect” (McClelland et al., 1976, p. 76-77). McClelland et al.’s discussion of expectations is important because of its relation to Brown and Levinson’s (1978,
1987) and Goffman's (1965) assertion that people assume their face-wants will be upheld in an interaction. In other words, people have an expectation that their face will be honored, and they also expect to try to honor the other person's face as well.

Assuming individuals have an expectation that their face-wants and other interpersonal needs should be satisfied, it stands to reason that people must evaluate the types of messages they receive or send during interpersonal interactions. The work of Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) provides an historical background for understanding how people may evaluate interpersonal interactions. In their research on the measurement of meaning and semantic space, Osgood et al. (1957) found three ubiquitous dimensions that characterize how people judge the social world. These include evaluation (good-bad, fair-unfair, kind-cruel, etc.), potency (large-small, strong-weak, etc.), and activity (fast-slow, active-passive, etc.). According to the authors, the usefulness of these dimensions is that they are cross cultural, similar to the theories discussed earlier which claimed that needs are universal.

Osgood et al.'s (1957) dimensions also are useful in understanding the complex relationships between face-wants, face-threats, and facework strategies. For example, the "evaluation" dimension is helpful in terms of illustrating how people perceive situations or messages in terms of whether they are threatening or
not. As McClelland et al. (1976) point out, expectations are a key factor in determining whether or not needs are satisfied. One way that people may judge the degree to which their face-wants are satisfied may occur in the “evaluative” dimension of semantic space. Thus, if all cultures have a need to evaluate, the degree to which face needs are met may be one way that people judge relationships, interaction, or the helpfulness of support messages. In addition, the “potency” dimension may be used when people attempt to assess the degree or severity of a face-threat in order to react to it. Thus, understanding the “potency” dimension may help explain how people decide on the strength of reaction to a face-threat or a threatening situation.

Overall, the works discussed in this section provide a brief (and selective) historical account of how scholars have conceptualized and researched interpersonal needs. All of the theories discussed pertain—and have contributed—to the development of both facework and politeness theory. Schutz’ (1971) affection and inclusion needs and McClelland et al.’s (1976) affiliation need are closely aligned to Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) notion of positive face. Further, Schutz’ (1971) discussion of a need for control is similar to Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) concept of negative face. Finally, Osgood et al.’s (1957) work on the measurement of meaning establishes a basis for understanding how people evaluate and determine the intensity or strength of face-threats or
facework strategies. Each of the theories provided a strong foundation for Goffman's (1965) introduction of facework, which is one of many progressions in a long line of theoretical works examining the universality of interpersonal needs.

**Goffman's Development of "Facework".** As mentioned earlier, aside from research on the universality of certain interpersonal needs, an historical account of the foundations of facework and politeness theory must also examine research on the symbolic and ritualized nature of human interaction. Facework and politeness theory both assume, to some extent, that human interaction is symbolic and ritualized. In order to accept the abstract notion of face, individuals must engage in symbolic interaction that recognizes and upholds our unseen "face." Goffman (1965) proposed that in every social interaction, a person acts out a *line* or "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (Goffman, 1965, p. 5). Further, in any social encounter, others perceive a person as willfully taking a line, whether that person intended to or not. From this assumption, Goffman (1965) first developed the Western notion of face that was eventually extended by others, including Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). As noted previously, Goffman defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1965, p. 5). In addition, Goffman (1965) proposes
that people "have" or "maintain" their face when the line they take presents an image of themselves that is internally consistent, supported by others, and also supported by other evidence in the situation.

In terms of social encounters, Goffman (1965) claims that people conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain their own face as well as the faces of other participants. For example, according to Goffman (1965), people seek to avoid having themselves or others lose face. In other words, individuals are constantly striving to stay in face and keep everyone else in face as well. Goffman (1965) notes that "one's face, then, is a sacred thing, and the expressive order required to sustain it is therefore a ritual one" (Goffman, 1965, p. 19). Thus, interpersonal interactions are situations where everyone tries temporarily to accept everyone else's "line."

Interaction, in this sense, is symbolic and often ritualistic in that people are monitoring an abstract and symbolic measure of their own and another's worth, that is, their face. Goffman points out that this mutual recognition of each other's face is, in reality, a "working acceptance, not a real one, since it tends to be based not on agreement of candidly expressed heart-felt evaluations, but upon willingness to give temporary lip service to judgments with which participants do not really agree" (Goffman, 1965, p. 11). This notion of a symbolic working acceptance was further developed by McCall and Simmons (1978) with their discussion of a
“working agreement” during interaction in which people accept each other’s “role identities” (similar to Goffman’s “line”).

According to Goffman’s (1965) theory, face is often sustained through a ritualized pattern of interaction. That is, individuals respond to face-threats or avoid face-threats by engaging in one of many highly structured, culturally specific, and socially acceptable behaviors. For example, Goffman (1965) observes that individuals use poise to suppress or conceal any tendency to lose face during an interaction with others. Other face sustaining or restoring behaviors, called facework, include avoidance, hedging, modesty, respect, politeness, discretion, circumlocution, joking, etc. (Goffman, 1965). Thus, “facework” refers to any action which attempts to uphold one’s face-wants or to minimize an existing face-threat. Many of these ritualized facework strategies have been incorporated into Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) subsequent politeness theory.

Overall, an historical account of theory and research development in the areas of interpersonal needs and facework is useful for understanding present day theories such as politeness theory. It is evident that scholars have, for many decades, recognized the importance of interpersonal needs in determining individuals’ behavior in and satisfaction with social interactions. In addition to the idea that interpersonal needs and face-wants are cross-cultural, the notion that
human interaction is often symbolic and ritualistic in nature is another major theoretical underpinning of politeness theory and much social support research.

**Politeness Theory**

As mentioned earlier, face theory is rooted in the assumption that “when people interact, they tacitly present a conception of who they are in that encounter, and they seek confirmation for that conception” (Cupach & Metts, 1994, p. 3). However, the value of using facework in examining message features stems from Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) politeness theory.

Politeness theory seeks to explain the nature of “face” as well as how face influences the ways in which people communicate. First, like Goffman, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) assume that all people have, and know each other to have, “face” which is defined as “the public self image that every member wants to claim for himself...” They go on to explain that face is something that is “emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). As competent social actors, people normally wish to protect their own face, as well as the faces of others since everyone’s face is vulnerable. Politeness theory treats face as “basic wants... which every member [of society] knows every other member desires, and which in general it is in the interests of every member to partially satisfy”
(Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62). Although people are interested in attending to others' face-wants, politeness theory also recognizes that face can be threatened or ignored in situations such as a need for urgent cooperation or in the interests of efficiency.

**Positive and Negative Face.** Brown and Levinson (1978) have extended Goffman's conceptualization of "face" by introducing two related dimensions, positive and negative face. Positive face represents a person's need to have his or her wants desirable to other people. Specifically, people want their goals to be thought of as desirable "not just by anyone, but by some particular others especially relevant to the particular goals, etc." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 63). For example, it is important that one's cooking ability be admired by other cooks, one's drawing by an artist, and one's productivity by a supervisor. On the other hand, negative face consists of a person's desire for autonomy or freedom of action.

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) argue that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, specifically an act that opposes the face-wants of either the hearer or sender. In this case, an "act" is defined as "what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, just as one or more 'speech acts' can be assigned to an utterance" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). Several
important distinctions are made among the different types of face-threatening acts (FTAs). The theory classifies FTAs according to which face they are threatening (positive/negative) and who's face they are threatening (hearer/sender).

**Threats to Negative Face.** First, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) distinguish between acts that threaten positive face and those which threaten negative face. Acts that threaten negative face involve an indication that the speaker may potentially impede the hearer’s freedom of action. One category of negative FTAs involves pressuring the hearer to do (or refrain from doing) something, such as giving orders and requests, relaying advice or suggestions, reminding the hearer to do something, and conveying threats, warnings, or dares to the hearer. A second class of FTAs which threatens negative face are those which “predicate some positive future act of the sender toward the hearer and in doing so put pressure on the hearer to accept or reject them, and possibly to incur a debt” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). Some examples of this type of FTA include conveying offers and promises to the hearer. One last type of FTA which threatens negative face consists of those acts which assert the sender’s desire toward the hearer or the hearer’s goods which may cause the hearer to feel that he/she needs to either protect the object of the sender's desire or give it to the sender. Examples of this type of FTA include expressing compliments, envy, admiration (indicating that the sender would like something the hearer has), or
expressions of strong negative emotion (indicating that the sender possibly intends to harm the hearer or the hearer's goods). The three categories of FTAs discussed so far threaten negative face by impeding, or threatening to impede, the hearer's freedom of action in a variety of ways.

**Threats to Positive Face.** Politeness theory also distinguishes among threats to one's positive face. In general, FTAs which threaten positive face indicate that the speaker "does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants, etc. [and] that in some important respect he doesn't want [the hearer's] wants. . ." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). One type of FTA which threatens positive face demonstrates that the sender has a **negative evaluation** for some aspect of the hearer's positive face. For example, expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, ridicule, disagreements, contractions, or challenges all demonstrate that the sender does not like or want some aspect of the hearer's wants, personal characteristics, values, or beliefs. A second category of positive FTAs includes those which show that the sender *does not care about the hearer's positive face*. To illustrate this type of act, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) provide the following examples: expressions of violent emotions by the sender, irreverence, mentions of taboo topics (indicating that the sender does not value the hearer's values or fear the hearer's fears), bringing bad news about the hearer or boasting good news about the sender, raising dangerously emotional topics, blatant non-
cooperation in an activity, and the use of status-marked identifications in initial encounters (in which the sender may misidentify the hearer in an offensive way). It is important to note that Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 67) believe there is an overlap in this classification of FTAs because "some FTAs intrinsically threaten both negative and positive face (e.g., complaints, interruptions, threats, strong expressions of emotion, requests for personal information)."

Aside from distinguishing positive versus negative face-threats, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) also make a distinction between acts that primarily threaten the hearer's face versus those that threaten the sender's. For example, acts which are threatening to the sender's negative face may include expressing thanks, acceptance of the hearer's thanks or apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, and responses to a hearer's faux pas (he/she is forced to respond in some way). FTAs which threaten the sender's positive face may include apologies, acceptance of a compliment, a breakdown of physical control over the body, self-humiliation, admissions of guilt, and loss of emotional control. Together, these distinctions among different FTAs create a typology in which acts may be classified according to whom they threaten and which face they threaten.

In addition to classifying different types of FTAs, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) also explore different strategies that people use to carry out FTAs. Their discussion of strategy is based on the assumption that "in the context of the
mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid these face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 68). More specifically, they argue that people will take into consideration the relative weighting of at least three wants: (a) the want to communicate the content of the FTA, (b) the want to be efficient or urgent, and (c) the want to maintain the hearer’s face. In turn, unless the sender’s want to be efficient or urgent is greater than the want to maintain the hearer’s face, the sender will want to minimize the threat of his/her FTA. Politeness theory details a variety of methods for minimizing face-threats.

**Strategies Used in Face-Threatening Acts.** Assuming that a person chooses to perform the FTA, there are four basic strategies that she/he may implement. The first set of strategies involves whether or not the FTA will be on record or off record. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 68), a person goes on record in doing an act if it is “clear to participants what communicative intention led the actor to do [the act].” On the other hand, if a person goes off record in doing the FTA, his/her intentions are more ambiguous. In other words, the person doing the FTA can not be held to have committed him/herself to one particular intent if it is done off record. If a person chooses do the FTA off record, then there are no other strategic steps available to minimize the threat since only on record messages can be redressed. In other words, since redressive
actions intentionally attempt to reduce a specific face-threat, they can not follow
off record FTAs in which meanings are ambiguous and somewhat “negotiable”
(Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69).

However, if someone goes on record with an FTA, then he/she must
choose whether to go on record with or without redressive action. Doing an act
without redress, or baldly, consists of doing it in the clearest, most unambiguous
way possible. For example, saying “I really hate your shirt” conveys the face-
threatening message (1) on record and (2) without any redressive action (baldly).
Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) note that an FTA will only be done without
redressive action if the sender does not fear retribution from the hearer since there
is no attempt to minimize any face-threat. In contrast, a person may also do the
FTA on record with redressive action. That is, an FTA can be committed while
attempting to remedy potential damage to the hearer’s face. This may be
accomplished by modifying the message in such a way that indicates “clearly that
no such face-threat is intended or desired, and that [the sender] in general
recognizes [the hearer’s] face-wants and himself wants them to be achieved”
(Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 70). This redressive action can take the form of
either positive or negative politeness, depending on which dimension of face is
being emphasized.
Positive politeness addresses the self image that the hearer claims for him/herself (positive face). For example, by treating someone as a friend, member of an in-group, or a person who is valued and well liked, one may lessen the potential threat that an FTA creates for that person’s positive face. Further, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) explain that positive politeness is approach-based in that it “anoints the face of the addressee” by indicating that the sender wants the hearer’s wants. In other words, it actively seeks to make the hearer feel valued and appreciated.

On the other hand, negative politeness is geared toward addressing a person’s negative face-wants of autonomy and freedom of action. For example, negative politeness strategies may include self-effacement (by the speaker), restraint, formality, and concentrating on the hearer’s desire to be unimpeded. Whereas Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) characterize positive politeness as approach-based, they describe negative politeness as avoidance-based. In other words, negative politeness consists of reassuring the hearer that the speaker is restrained or will not do something to threaten or interfere with the hearer’s independence. This distinction regarding the nature of positive and negative politeness has been one important source criticism (e.g., Lim & Bowers 1991), which will be discussed later.
**Factors Influencing Choice of Strategies.** In addition to describing and categorizing different types of face-wants and threats, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) also discuss the factors which influence people's choice of strategies. Basically, they argue that given similar circumstances, people will tend to choose the same type of strategy for doing an FTA. This argument is based on the assumption that each strategy has certain advantages or "payoffs" which are available under certain circumstances. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) provide a detailed discussion of both the payoffs and the circumstances which influence people's choice of strategies.

The payoffs associated with each strategy are "derived on a priori grounds" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 71). For example, by doing an FTA off record, a speaker might satisfy the hearer's negative face-wants to a greater extent than if he/she used a politeness strategy. Also, by going off record, a speaker may avoid any accountability or responsibility for the FTA. On the other hand, going on record with an FTA may allow the speaker to be viewed as honest or non-manipulative, and it promotes clarity and reduces misunderstandings. The payoffs associated with doing an FTA on record without redress (baldly) may include efficiency or that the speaker can claim that the act is not an FTA at all. Finally, if the speaker does use redress, such as positive politeness or negative politeness, he/she may be able to satisfy (to some degree) the hearer's positive or negative
face-wants. Thus, each strategy for doing an FTA affords certain payoffs to the speaker, which are considered before choosing a strategy.

**A Hierarchy of Strategies.** Politeness theory also organizes the five superstrategies into the following hierarchy of politeness (from most polite to least polite): (1) do not do the FTA, (2) do the FTA off record, (3) use negative politeness, (4) use positive politeness, (5) do the FTA baldly on record (Lim & Bowers, 1991). Interestingly, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 73) claim that positive politeness precedes negative politeness “on the continuum of FTA danger” for the following reason. Positive politeness carries the assumption that the speaker is a member of the group of “others” from whom the hearer desires approval and acceptance; yet, by making this assumption, the speaker leaves his/her own face vulnerable because the hearer may not actually include him/herself in that set of “others.” On the other hand, negative politeness holds less of a threat to the sender because it is focused on a common desire for freedom from imposition. The sender does not need to worry about whether or not an expression of negative politeness is appropriate or desired to the same extent he/she would about an expression of positive politeness. Simply put, “it is safer to assume that [the hearer] prefers his peace and self-determination than that he prefers [the sender’s] expressions of regard, unless [the sender] is certain of the contrary” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 74). The ranking of negative politeness as
more polite than positive politeness has been a major source of criticism for politeness theory (e.g., Coupland, Granger, & Coupland, 1988; Craig Tracy, & Spisak, 1986; Lim & Bowers, 1991). These criticisms, along with others, will be detailed later in the discussion.

In addition to considerations of strategy payoffs, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) claim that the *circumstances* surrounding the FTA will also influence the speaker’s choice of strategies. The “circumstances” that Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) refer to include three dimensions: (1) the social distance between the actors (the similarity or difference in social rank between the interactants), (2) the relative power of the actors (the degree to which one interactant can impose his/her wants on the other), and (3) the absolute ranking of imposition that an FTA may cause in a given culture (the degree to which one’s autonomy or esteem may be threatened).

Overall, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) have advanced the theoretical development of facework in several important ways. Most importantly, politeness theory extends Goffman’s work by making the distinction between positive and negative face. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) also describe how different acts are more or less threatening to each type of face (positive/negative) and each person involved in the exchange (sender/receiver). In addition, politeness theory establishes a hierarchy of strategies available to individuals who commit face-
threatening acts. Politeness theory thus provides a valuable framework for studying message quality and effects. In terms of the current study, it may be useful for analyzing how people's perceptions of support messages differ in helpfulness.

**Criticisms of Politeness Theory**

Despite being the impetus of a great deal of research, politeness theory has also drawn criticism regarding several fundamental problems (for example, Coupland et al., 1988; Craig et al., 1986; Lim & Bowers, 1991). Criticisms of politeness theory seem to emphasize two fundamental problems: (1) the unidimensionality of politeness strategies and (2) the approach/avoidance distinction made regarding the nature of positive and negative politeness.

In terms of the current study, it is important to understand the criticisms leveled against politeness theory. By discussing these criticisms, they can be addressed (and accounted for) when interpreting this study's findings.

**The Unidimensionality Argument.** The first disputed proposition deals with the unidimensionality of politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) assert that positive and negative politeness strategies are mutually exclusive and, further, that they form a typology ordered in terms of degrees of politeness (Craig et al., 1986). In other words, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987)
characterize politeness strategies as existing on a continuum or hierarchy ranging from most polite (negative politeness) to least polite (positive politeness), from which only one strategy may be used to redress a given face-threat. More specifically, Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that:

Positive politeness precedes negative politeness in the continuum of FTA ‘danger’. . . [because] positive politeness redresses by means of fulfilling [the hearer’s] want that some others should want some particular desires of his. . . negative politeness, on the other hand, is addressed to a generalized desire for freedom of action. . . ; [and]. . . it is safe to assume that [a hearer] prefers his peace and self-determination than that he prefers [the sender’s] expressions of regard. (p. 73)

Thus, as Lim and Bowers (1991) argue, politeness theory erroneously suggests that people should prefer negative politeness over positive politeness regardless of the situation. These researchers point out that, according to politeness theory, we must then assume that strong threats to a person’s *positive face* could be alleviated by attending to their negative face with *negative politeness* (which is arguably more polite).

For these reasons, Lim and Bowers (1991) argue that we must recognize positive and negative face-wants as *distinct* and *different* phenomena. They believe that when a speaker performs an FTA which threatens both the hearer’s positive and negative face, the sender must use *both* types of politeness.
Consistent with this argument, Coupland et al. (1988) argue that there is no reason to believe that strategies can not be mixed.

A number of studies have found evidence suggesting that speakers use complex combinations of both positive and negative politeness strategies. For example, Craig et al. (1986) observed that people use messages containing elements of both types of politeness and that the meaning of the strategies must be examined from within the context of the interaction. Shimanoff (1977) also observed that speakers used combinations of both positive and negative politeness strategies. Goldsmith (1992, p. 268) suggests that “the strategies are not mutually exclusive and exhaustive: Some specific message features could function as positive or negative politeness, and speaker’s messages frequently utilize strategies from more than one category.”

Along similar lines, when Lim and Bowers (1991) asked respondents how they would perform a given FTA, they found that people used multiple types of facework strategies when multiple face-threats arose. More specifically, they observed that when people performed an FTA which threatened both positive and negative face, “approbation [positive politeness] and tact [negative politeness] co-occurred overwhelmingly, suggesting that multiple types of facework are required to address threats to multiple types of face” (Lim & Bowers, 1991, p. 448).
Further, they found that the use of one type of facework did not affect the use of other types (thus supporting the claim that they are not unidimensional).

Taken together, this research supports the argument that politeness strategies are neither unidimensional nor mutually exclusive. Research by Lim and Bowers (1991) and Shimanoff (1977) demonstrates that message exchanges are not made of a single utterance or statement which can be addressed by a unidimensional politeness strategy. Rather, their work suggests that such communicative exchanges involve combinations of both face-threats and politeness strategies, in which multiple meanings can often be inferred (i.e., threats or redress to both positive and negative face). In all, these findings support Coupland et al.'s (1988, p. 255) assertion that positive and negative politeness “emanate from different intentions and lack the functional ‘sameness’ which would allow them to be treated strictly as discourse variables.”

In their recent revision, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 18) concede that they “may have been in error to set up the three super strategies, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record, as ranked unidimensionally to achieve mutual exclusivity.” In response to these developments, the current study will attempt to implement the new conceptualization of politeness strategies by combining and overlapping strategies within support messages.
The Approach/Avoidance Argument. In addition to the issue of unidimensionality, critics of politeness theory have also objected to the “approach/avoidance-based” distinction made regarding the nature of positive and negative politeness. As discussed earlier, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) maintain that negative politeness is avoidance-based in that it refrains from attacking the hearer’s negative face, whereas positive politeness is approach-based in that the speaker actively gives positive face to the hearer. Coupland et al. (1988) explain that, according to this conceptualization, while positive politeness addresses all aspects of a person’s positive face-needs, negative politeness seeks solely to mediate some specific FTA. In other words, negative politeness is conceptualized as being redressive of a specific act, whereas positive politeness involves a more global redress of one’s self-image as a whole (Coupland et al., 1988). Thus, one major criticism of this formulation is that it places unwarranted emphasis on those acts which threaten negative face, and fails to adequately explain situations in which positive face is threatened (Lim & Bowers, 1991).

In fact, Lim and Bowers (1991) have shown that facework is not limited to just negative face-threats. People regularly threaten each other’s positive faces and, in turn, employ a variety of strategies to alleviate those positive face-threats. Along this line, they have also shown that positive politeness can involve acts which actively seek to mediate a specific positive face-threat, rather than just
attending to one's general positive face-wants. To illustrate this point, Lim and Bowers (1991, p. 419) explain that, "when criticizing another's work, for example, a speaker might trivialize the significance of the problems or attribute the problems to situational causes." Finally, Lim and Bowers (1991) argue that it is important to examine the ways by which people actively avoid threatening another's positive face (as well as how they approach promoting it) in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of facework.

The model's "approach/avoidance distinction" emphasizes speech acts which mainly threaten negative face and fails to explain situations in which one's positive face is threatened (Lim & Bowers, 1991). Thus, the model is not very useful in explaining approach-based positive politeness strategies, nor does it acknowledge the fact that positive politeness can be avoidance-based. The current study will overcome this limitation by providing the hearer with messages which actively seek to mitigate a specific positive face-threat, rather than addressing the hearer's more global desire to be liked and accepted.

In sum, several criticisms have been leveled against politeness theory. First, critics argue that the unidimensional typology of strategies lacks validity because speakers often use complex combinations of multiple strategies to address multiple face-threats. Second, the approach/avoidance distinction emphasizes
acts which mainly threaten negative face, while giving less attention to positive face.

In spite of its shortcomings, Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) work identifies some of the major factors that influence the messages people chose to use, such as the advantages associated with different strategies, the influence of contextual variables, and the relationship of interactional partners. The current study will attempt to correct some of the problems highlighted by critics by combining different politeness strategies and face-threats in single messages and by implementing positive politeness strategies which are more approach-based.

Politeness theory also emphasizes the importance of recognizing people’s face-wants in all forms of interaction. In terms of providing support to the elderly, this model provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding why some messages and/or support situations may be more or less threatening to elderly people’s face-wants. Through understanding the dynamics of face-wants, face-threats, and redressive strategies, scholars are better equipped to study supportive interaction. The following sections will demonstrate ways in which facework and politeness theory are useful for understanding how supportive messages affect the elderly.
Politeness theory posits that all communicative interaction carries a potential threat to either one’s positive face, negative face, or both. Interestingly, researchers (Goldsmith, 1992) have also argued that social support processes involve face-threat for both the sender and receiver. This may be especially true in the case of support involving the elderly.

For instance, the notion of “face-threat” may explain why support messages conveyed to the elderly by family members often lead to lower satisfaction, while friends often provide more satisfying support. Two different explanations are suggested. First, it may be that supportive messages from family members contain threats to the elderly’s positive and negative face, or that they are not concerned with “redressing” face-threats if they are unavoidable. On the other hand, friends may be more concerned about being polite and redressing face-threats in their supportive messages. A second explanation may be that the principal forms of support provided by family and friends differ in their inherent degree of face-threat.

In terms of the first explanation, since family relations are more obligatory and friendships more voluntary, there may be less relational cost involved for family members who fail to redress face-threats than for friends. For example, since elderly friendships are voluntary and more balanced than kin relationships in
terms of reciprocity, friends may be more motivated to be polite and redressive of face-threats when providing support. In addition, since the elderly must often rely heavily on kin for important forms of support, it may be easier for them to dismiss a friend who offends them than it would be to distance themselves from their adult children or kin network. Thus, since it is harder to sever family ties than it is to break off a friendship, it seems logical that family members would have “less to lose” by failing to redress an elderly individual’s face than would friends.

An alternative explanation may be that family members are more likely to provide instrumental support, whereas friends of the elderly are more likely to provide emotional support. Thus, the difference in elderly people’s satisfaction with the support received by these different providers may, in part, be due to the amount of face-threat inherent in each type of support.

Instrumental support (which is likely to come from kin) involves an inherent threat to both positive and negative face. That is, receiving tangible aid or physical assistance may reduce, or at least threaten, an individual’s self-esteem and autonomy. On the other hand, receiving emotional support is likely to honor receivers’ positive and negative faces in that it will make them feel cared for and valued, and probably will not threaten their freedom of action. Thus, findings regarding differences between support provided by families compared to support from friends may actually be due to the inherent face-threat in the primary type of
social support that each is providing. Family members are likely to provide instrumental support which holds an inherent threat to both positive and negative face, whereas friends are likely to honor face by providing emotional support.

In sum, then, there may be two explanations for why the elderly seem to be more satisfied with their friendships than with their family relations. One explanation may be that family members are less concerned, than are friends, with upholding an elderly individuals' face-wants. A second explanation may be that support from family is more instrumental, and thus more threatening to autonomy, than is support from friends. The current study will seek to investigate these explanations by examining the elderly's perception of who is most likely to provide each type of support and by exploring differences in the perceived helpfulness and degree of face-threat associated with instrumental and emotional support.

However, regardless of who is providing support, there are still better and worse methods of providing even the most face-threatening support acts. As discussed earlier, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) describe several strategies that speakers may use when doing an FTA. The importance of these facework strategies in the social support process has been established in recent research by Goldsmith (1992, 1994).
Preliminary Research Integrating Social Support, Facework and Politeness

Theory

Goldsmith (1994) argues that facework is a useful theoretical approach for studying social support because it allows researchers to identify the different features of effective and ineffective support messages. She notes that it is not enough simply to match the type of support to the type of problem and type of supporter; rather, she argues it is important to consider how skillful various support messages are. Facework theory provides at least one foundation on which the skillfulness of support-giving strategies can be arrayed.

In a recent study, Goldsmith (1994) examined the relationship between different supportive acts and different facework strategies. Three support acts were developed for different situations requiring emotional support. These included advice (which consisted of telling the hearer what to do), offers (which conveyed the sender’s willingness to do something for the hearer), and expressions of concern (which involved messages in which the sender emphasized caring for the hearer). Goldsmith argued that each of these act types include different degrees of face-threat. Advice poses a threat to negative face, because it limits the hearer’s freedom of action, and a threat to positive face since it may imply criticism. The face-threat for offers of support is less clear since offering support does threaten negative face, yet as Goldsmith (1994) points out, the hearer does
have the option to accept or reject the offer. Finally, Goldsmith (1994) claimed that expressions of concern pose little threat to either positive or negative face, unless they tell the hearer how he or she should feel.

For each supportive act, different messages were constructed using each type of facework strategy (positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, and off-the-record). Goldsmith (1994) then measured young adults’ perceptions regarding the amount of face-threat and perceived helpfulness of each combination of support act and facework strategy. Her findings indicate that the degree of face-threat depends on both the type of act and the type of facework implemented. In each situation, facework strategies influenced the perceived helpfulness of support act types (e.g., offers, advice, and expressions of concern) and messages without facework had the lowest mean effectiveness ratings. These results suggest that different facework strategies influence the perceived helpfulness of support messages, to varying degrees, regardless of whether the action performed is one of making an offer, giving advice, or expressing concern. Further, different combinations of facework strategies and supportive act types also had an effect on perceived helpfulness. For example, messages consisting of advice with positive facework were significantly more supportive than other types of advice (Goldsmith, 1994). Overall, perceived helpfulness depended on the situation, the act type, and the facework strategy used.
Goldsmith (1994, p. 41) has clearly illustrated that “selecting the appropriate supportive act, executing it skillfully, and showing regard for face do make a difference” in people's perceptions of supportive messages. Her research is promising because it suggests not only that facework can be successfully applied to study features of supportive messages, but also that the particular message features suggested by this theory influence perceived helpfulness. This may be especially true in the case of social support involving the elderly.

**Focus of Current Study**

Goldsmith’s (1994) preliminary exploration will be a model for the current study; however, it will be refined and extended in several important ways. First, the current study will extend Goldsmith’s work by focusing on a different sample, the elderly. Second, the current study will examine the role of facework in instrumental as well as emotional support situations. As mentioned earlier, since both types of support are essential to the growing population of elderly people, we must begin to examine better and worse ways through which providers can convey instrumental and emotional support. Third, the current study will examine three act types (e.g., advice, offers, and expressions of concern), but will combine positive and negative politeness strategies in single messages. Goldsmith (1994) kept positive and negative politeness separate, and did not examine the
effectiveness of any combinations of strategies. As mentioned earlier, many scholars have argued that facework strategies are not unidimensional and often occur in combinations naturally (Craig et al., 1986; Coupland et al., 1988; Lim & Bowers 1991; Shimanoff, 1977). In spite of such claims, most studies continue to examine positive and negative politeness strategies as separate entities. In an effort to address this problem, the current study will investigate perceptions of combinations of facework strategies.

Finally, several researchers (e.g., Cupach & Metts, 1994) suggest that it is important to test the real world validity of some of these theoretical claims regarding facework and politeness strategies. For example, Cupach and Metts (1994) note that research should begin to examine whether or not individuals perceive the facework strategies that scholars have argued protect positive and negative face as actually protecting positive and negative face. Thus, the current study will extend Goldsmith's (1994) preliminary work by examining people's perceptions of whether features which politeness theory suggests should honor (and threaten) positive and negative face are perceived as actually doing so.

In sum, then, several hypotheses and research questions regarding perceptions of supportive messages will be examined in the current study. In general, it is believed that the perceived helpfulness of messages will be influenced by the kind of support (e.g., instrumental vs. emotional), the type of act used to
convey such support (e.g., advice, offers, and expressions of concern), and the particular combinations of facework strategies contained in each message (e.g., honor positive face-honor negative face, honor positive face-threaten negative face, threaten positive face-honor negative face, and threaten positive face-threaten negative face). In order to understand the current study’s research questions and hypotheses, it is important to understand the messages used to test these hypotheses and research questions. A brief description of the logic underlying the construction of messages used in this project is presented below.

**Logic Underlying Message Construction**

Two instrumental and two emotional support situations were used as stimuli. The instrumental support consisted of (1) the participant’s needing a ride to the grocery store and help carrying the groceries home, and (2) the participant’s needing help shoveling his/her walkway after a severe snowstorm. In both scenarios, instrumental support is needed because of some physical limitation such as a cold or back problems, etc. The emotional support situations consisted of (1) the participant’s being depressed because a close family member has moved away and will not be able to visit for Thanksgiving, and (2) the participant’s being depressed and lonely because his/her friends must give up their regular weekly lunch meeting which they have held for the past 15 years. For a more complete
description of these situations, please see Appendix A; Chapter Two details the rationale for selecting these particular scenarios.

For each situation, messages containing various combinations of facework strategies were constructed. Since one can either honor or threaten positive or negative face, there are four possible combinations of messages, two of which are illustrated below. The following examples are provided in reference to the grocery store (instrumental support) problem.

I think you are a really great person, and I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. I care about you, and I don't want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the grocery store. I think it's time you get someone to help you out when you go grocery shopping.

This message is intended to honor the hearer's positive face and threaten his/her negative face. As described earlier in this chapter, politeness theory holds that positive face-wants include the desire to be liked, admired, and approved of (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). In addition, positive politeness refers to those strategies which uphold the hearer's positive self-image (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Based on these conceptualizations, the above message honors positive face by stating that the hearer is a "good person" and is "admired" and "cared for" by the speaker. In other words, these message features serve to make the hearer feel valued, admired, and cared for. Further, politeness theory maintains that one's
negative face-wants include the desire that his/her actions be unimpeded (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). In addition, a hearer’s negative face may be threatened by acts which put pressure on the hearer to do something such as obeying an order to taking a suggestion (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Thus, the above message threatens the hearer’s negative face by stating “I think it’s time you get someone to help you out when you go grocery shopping” and because he/she is not given a choice about what to do. These message features limit the hearer’s freedom of action. In contrast, the next message honors both positive and negative face:

You know, maybe there are some people who could use your advice when they go shopping. If you’re up to it, you might enjoy car-pooling and sharing some of the work with someone else. I know I’ve always enjoyed the times we’ve gone out shopping together. You are the best bargain hunter I know, and I always appreciate the way you help me when I shop. I care about you, and I don’t want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the grocery store.

Based on the theoretical descriptions offered earlier, the above message clearly honors the hearer’s positive face by stating that the speaker values the hearer’s advice, enjoys spending time with the hearer, believes the hearer is the best bargain hunter, appreciates the hearer’s help with shopping, and that the speaker does not want the hearer to hurt him/herself. All of these statements serve to make the hearer feel useful, admired, and cared for. However, unlike the previous message, the above message also honors the hearer’s negative face.
because the hearer is given an option of whether or not to take the advice. For example, qualifying statements such as “maybe there are . . .” and “if you’re up to it, you might enjoy. . . .” imply that this message is a suggestion rather than an order. With these statements, the hearer can choose to maintain control over the situation, to some extent; thus, his/her autonomy is not threatened as much as in the previous message.

Messages containing combinations of positive and negative politeness strategies (such as those presented above) were developed across act types (e.g., offers, advice, and expressions of concern) and, as previously noted, across support contexts (e.g., instrumental vs. emotional). For a full description of these messages, please see Appendix A. With relevant message feature manipulations in mind, specific hypotheses and research questions can now be presented.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

First, in terms of facework strategies, messages that honor rather than threaten the hearer’s face-wants should be perceived as more helpful. In general, face-honoring messages are expected to be more helpful than face-threatening messages, regardless of whether they are emotionally or instrumentally supportive.

H1: Regardless of the type of support, messages that honor the hearer’s positive and negative face-wants will be perceived as more helpful than messages that do not.
Second, as mentioned earlier, instrumental support messages are inherently more face-threatening than emotional support messages. For example, the need for instrumental support implies that the receiver is unable to complete a task on his/her own and may even lead to a decrease in the receiver's self esteem. Thus, it is expected that instrumental support messages which honor both positive and negative face will be perceived as less helpful than emotional support messages which honor both faces.

H2: Instrumental support messages which honor both positive and negative face will be perceived as less helpful than emotional support messages that honor both positive and negative face.

Third, particular act types may be inherently more or less face-threatening. Since messages conveying advice tell the hearer what he or she should do, they contain an inherent degree of threat to the hearer's negative face. For instance, advice may threaten negative face because it limits the hearer's freedom of action; it also threatens positive face because it may imply criticism. Offers, while less threatening, may still serve to impede the hearer's freedom of action. However, offers might serve to honor the hearer's positive face. That is, because the sender is making an offer to give some sort of assistance, the hearer may feel cared about and valued. Finally, expressions of concern seem to contain little threat to either positive or negative face. In fact, by expressing concern for the hearer, the sender
is honoring his/her positive face by attempting to make him/her feel valued and cared for. However, expressions of concern may contain some degree of face-threat depending on whether the sender’s concern is acknowledged and legitimized. To examine these possibilities, the following research question is advanced:

RQ1: Do the different types of support acts (advice, offers, expressions of concern) vary in terms of their perceived helpfulness?

Fourth, the overall perceived helpfulness of a support message may be related to which face (positive or negative) the receiver perceives as being threatened. In other words, if a sender must threaten either positive or negative face, it is important to know which one is more strongly related to helpfulness.

RQ2: Is the threat to one particular type of face (i.e., positive face vs. negative face) more strongly related to the perceived helpfulness of messages?

In a similar vein, it is also important to understand how various act types (e.g., advice, offers, or expression of concern) and support situations (e.g., instrumental or emotional) may affect which face is more critical to perceptions of helpfulness. In other words, certain acts types (i.e., offers, advice, or expressions of concern) may be more helpful in certain situations, but less helpful in other situations. As mentioned earlier, each act type may be more or less threatening to
the hearer’s positive and negative face, thus suggesting that some act types may be
more helpful than others. Further, in addition to the type of act employed, the
overall helpfulness of messages may vary according to the type of support
situation.

**RQ3:** Does the type of support situation and/or act type affect whether it is perceived as more or less helpful to threaten the hearer’s positive or negative face?

In terms of establishing real world validity for the various features of
facework and politeness theory, researchers must examine whether people perceive
politeness strategies to actually do what scholars theorize they should be doing. In
other words, it is important to measure the extent to which people’s perceptions of
facework messages correspond with theoretical assumptions.

**RQ4:** Do people perceive the features of messages designed to honor and threaten positive and negative face as actually doing so?

Finally, studies indicate that support provided by friends is more likely to
be related to an elderly person’s satisfaction than support provided by family
members (Hesse-Biber & Williamson, 1984; Lemon et al., 1972; Lowenthal &
Haven, 1968; Mutran & Reitzes; Rook 1990; Treas, 1975). However, these
studies have not examined the role of facework in the strategies provided by
different relational partners. Facework may help explain why elderly people report
that their relations with friends are more satisfying than their relationships with
adult children. Instrumental support, which is likely to come from family members,
may be inherently less satisfying to receive since it implies that the receiver is
unable to complete a task on her/his own. Emotional support, which is likely to
come from friends, may be more satisfying since it serves to promote emotional
well-being and bolster self-esteem. Thus, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H3: Elderly people are more likely to receive instrumental
support from family members and emotional support from friends
and companions.

In sum, then, the current study will explore how different supportive
situations, support from different providers, and different message features (such
as facework strategies and act types) are related to elderly individuals’ perceptions
of helpfulness. The next chapter describes the methods used to investigate these
hypotheses and research questions.
Chapter 2

METHODS

General Procedures

A survey consisting of approximately 60 closed-ended questions was given to a sample of elderly people in order to determine their perceptions of different support messages. The instrument presented the participants with hypothetical situations requiring either instrumental or emotional support. The participants then rated different responses to these situations in terms of their helpfulness and degree of threat to both positive and negative face; in addition, participants also reported who in their social network would be likely to convey such a message to them. Demographic information concerning age, religion, marital status, and education level was also obtained.

Data Collection

The data used in the current study were collected over several months between January and June of 1995. The principal researcher administered as many questionnaires as possible in person (n=95, 75% of sample), explained directions, and was available to answer questions. Every effort was made to collect all of the data in person, however, in order to acquire an adequate sample size, it was
necessary to have some of the questionnaires distributed by the principal researcher's family members and teachers to elderly people they knew (n=31, 25% of sample). These data collectors were given strict instructions on how to explain the directions and were asked to make themselves available to participants in order to answer questions. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a detailed instruction sheet which participants signed. Thus, all of the participants, regardless of how their data were collected, received the same instructions. Informed consent was also obtained prior to the administration of each questionnaire. All responses were anonymous (no information through which the participant could be identified was requested) and confidential.

In all, 75% of the questionnaires were administered in person and 25% were collected and returned by mail. Some control over the data and sample was sacrificed in order to achieve an adequate sample size. For statistical purposes, each questionnaire was labeled to indicate whether it had been collected in person or through the mail. The next chapter discusses analyses designed to determine if the manner in which the data were collected had any significant effect.

**Participants**

Data were collected by the primary researcher in five different senior centers (approximately 10-20 participants at each) and in several people's homes (approximately five) in Newark, Delaware and Wilmington, Delaware. In addition,
family members and teachers administered questionnaires to elderly people they knew, who lived independently at home on their own. Of these, approximately 20 were collected in Boynton Beach, Florida, approximately 20 were collected in Baltimore, Maryland, approximately 10 were collected from a YWCA in Boston, Massachusetts, and approximately three were collected in Newark, Delaware. Thus, the sample included participants from a variety of geographical regions including four different states along the East Coast of the United States. In all, a total of 126 participants completed the survey.

Participants’ ages ranged from 60 to 90 years old (M=73.19, SD=6.40). In terms of gender, 69% of the sample were women (n=87) and 31% were men (n=39). The sample was not representative in terms of ethnic diversity, 97.6% of the participants (n=123) described themselves as White or Caucasian, 1.6% of them (n=2) described themselves as Black or African Americans, and one person described himself as “other.” In addition, no other ethnic groups were represented in the sample. In terms of religion, 63.5% (60 women, 20 men) of the participants described themselves as Christian, 31.6% (23 women, 16 men) were Jewish, and 4% (2 women, 3 men) described their religion as “other.”

The participants varied greatly in terms of their education level. Most of the participants reported that they had attained high school or college degrees. In terms of the highest level of school which they completed, 52.4% (50 women, 16
men) listed high school, 27% (20 women, 14 men) listed college, 8.7% (5 women, 
6 men), listed graduate school, 7.1% (6 women, 3 men) listed junior high school, 
and 4.8% (6 women, 0 men) listed elementary school.

Finally, almost all of the participants in this study were married at some 
point during their lifetime. Most of the participants (55.6%; 40 women, 20 men) 
reported that they were currently married, 34.9% (37 women, 7 men) were 
widowed, 7.9% were divorced, and only 1.6% (1 woman, 1 man) had never been 
made.

Survey Instrument

Overview of Survey Content

Four different versions of the questionnaire were created and administered 
to participants. The rationale and procedure for constructing these versions is 
described at the end of this section. In general, all versions of the survey contained 
questions designed to elicit demographic information and estimates of satisfaction 
with family, friends, and overall life quality. They also contained two hypothetical 
scenarios depicting situations in which instrumental support was required and two 
situations in which emotional support was required. Following each situation, 
participants were presented with responses that reflected various act types and 
various combinations of facework strategies. A total of twelve different messages 
appeared on each version of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to rate
these messages for their helpfulness, the extent to which they made them “feel
good about themselves” (a measure of positive face), and the extent to which they
made them “feel as though they had a choice” (a measure of negative face). These
measures of positive and negative politeness were largely based on dependent
measures used by Goldsmith (1994). In addition, they are consistent with Brown
and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) conceptualizations of positive and negative face.
Participants were also asked from whom they would be most likely to receive the
messages (i.e., spouse, son, daughter, friend, granddaughter, grandson, or other).

The hypothetical support situations were created to reflect common
problems that elderly people are likely to encounter. For example, the literature
suggests that as people age, they are likely to experience situations requiring
support such as illness, physical injury, having a family member move far away, or
having to stop participating in a recreational activity (Murrell, Norris, & Hutchins,
1984). In addition, as mentioned earlier, opinions and ideas regarding situation
development were obtained from elderly people and friends and family of the
elderly. The situations used in the survey are based on some of these experiences.
For example, the instrumental support situations consisted of needing help: (1)
grocery shopping because of physical injury, and (2) shoveling snow after a storm
because of a recent illness. The emotional support situations consisted of feeling
lonely and depressed because: (1) a family member has moved far away, and (2) a
group of friends is no longer getting together for their regular lunch gathering.

For each situation, three different act types were presented. As noted
earlier, these included: (1) advice, (2) offers of support, and (3) expressions of
concern. While these three act types do not represent an exhaustive taxonomy,
they were utilized because (1) they represent a wide range of supportive acts and
(2) they were among the acts used in Goldsmith’s (1994) preliminary study. For
each act type, participants were asked to rate one message containing a particular
combination of facework strategies. There are four possible combinations of
facework strategies for each support act: (1) honor positive face/honor negative
face, (2) honor positive face/threaten negative face, (3) threaten positive
face/honor negative face, and (4) threaten positive face/threaten negative face. An
example of each type of facework strategy combination is presented below; in
addition all of the messages used in this study are presented in Appendix A.

So, for example, a message honoring both positive and negative face under
the act type of advice is:

You know, maybe there are some people who could use
your advice when they go shopping. If you’re up to it, you might
enjoy car-pooling and sharing some of the work with someone else.
I know I’ve always enjoyed the times we’ve gone out shopping
together. You are the best bargain hunter I know, and I always
appreciate the way you help me when I shop. I care about you,
and I don’t want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the
grocery store.
An example of a message which honors positive face and threatens negative face under the act type of offers is:

*Ever since you went to the doctor, I’ve been worried about you hurting yourself carrying all of your groceries. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you’ve always been. I really enjoy the time we spend together, and since you need some help with the groceries, I will take you shopping, and help you carry the groceries back into the house.*

An example of a message which threatens positive face and honors negative face under the act type of expressions of concern is:

*The doctor says you’re not as young as you used to be. I remember when you were in really great shape, but now your back is starting to go bad on you. I’m worried that you could really hurt yourself when you go grocery shopping. I don’t know about you, but I would be very frustrated and confused about what to do. Do you think there is anything you can do to make grocery shopping a little easier on your back.*

Finally, an example of a message which threatens both positive and negative face under the act type of advice is:

*Since you say your back is going bad on you, you should start to ride on the bus provided by the local senior center. Promise me that you will go tomorrow and sign up. I really don’t have a lot of time these days to help you. My family and my job take up all of my free time. I can’t be in two places at once, so I can’t help you with your shopping.*
**Version Construction**

A great deal of care went into constructing a questionnaire that would be easy for an elderly person to complete, and that contained situations and messages that were as realistic as possible. To this end, several researchers, many elderly people, and people with elderly friends or relatives, were asked for their advice, suggestions, and insight. One overwhelming response was that the questionnaire needed to be as short as possible and require a minimum of effort to complete.

Based on these suggestions, in order to minimize the length and labor intensity, four different versions of the questionnaire were developed. Participants were randomly assigned to complete one of these four versions; the method for determining different versions of the questionnaire appears in Appendix B. Briefly, different messages were systematically assigned to each version in order to make them all as similar as possible. Since this design is not a perfect Latin Square, each questionnaire was slightly different. More specifically on each version, for each strategy combination, only three situations (rather than four) were tested (See Appendix B). So, for example, on Version A, messages which honored positive face and threatened negative face (HPTN) were presented for the following situations: Instrumental Support Situation #1, Emotional Support Situation #1, and Instrumental Support Situation #2. However, this combination of strategies (HPTN) was not presented for Emotional Support Situation #2. Instead, the
Emotional Support Situation #2 was used for other strategy combinations on Version A (See Appendix B). Since this fluctuation was systematic across all versions, they were each affected similarly. Appendices D, E, F, and G contain all four versions of the survey instrument.

Although every effort was made to distribute the different questionnaire versions evenly, there was some variation in terms of the total number of participants who completed each. Version A (n=32) was completed by nine males and 23 females; 26 of copies of this version were collected in person and six were collected by mail. Version B had the smallest sample size (n=27) and was completed by 11 males and 16 females; 21 copies of this version were collected in person and six were collected by mail. Version C (n=28) was completed by eight males and 20 females; 25 copies of this version were collected in person and only three were mailed. Finally, Version D had the largest sample size (n=39) and was completed by 11 males and 28 females; 23 of copies of this version were collected in person and 16 were collected by mail.

**Pilot Testing**

After the initial messages and survey instrument were designed, a pilot test was conducted to determine the validity of the situations and messages and to examine whether or not elderly participants would be able to complete the questionnaire.
One version of the pilot survey was administered to approximately 20 elderly participants in late January, 1995 in Newark, Delaware and Baltimore, Maryland. All questionnaires were administered by the principal researcher. In addition to completing the surveys, participants were asked how they felt about the length of the questionnaire, the complexity of the questionnaire, and whether or not the situations and messages were representative of those they were likely to encounter in the “real world.” Subsequent review of the completed questionnaires revealed that almost all of them had been completed correctly, in about 20 minutes. In addition, most of the participants had experienced, or had friends who had experienced, situations similar to those presented in the questionnaire. Overall, the participants felt that the questionnaire presented very realistic situations, yet they also felt that it was too long, too repetitive, and too labor intensive.

Taking these comments into consideration, every effort was made to make the instrument both easier and more interesting to complete. In order to make the survey more visually appealing, some changes were made in the page design. For example, each message was put in a shaded box on its own page, and each situation description in a shaded oval. However, due to the nature of the instrument design, none of the items could be deleted. No substantive changes
were made in the actual messages since the results of the pilot study suggested that the message manipulations and dependent measures were functioning properly.

Data Entry

Due to the nature of the computer program that was used to analyze the data, each individual message had to be entered as a separate case, rather than one case per participant. The unit of analysis thus became the message, instead of the individual.

Since subsequent tests were conducted on a population of messages rather than participants, the sample size was altered. Each participant evaluated 12 messages, thus the sample size rose from 126 cases (number of actual participants) to 1,512 cases (number of actual messages evaluated by participants). As a result of this dramatically larger sample size, there was an increased potential for finding statistically significant relationships.

Many of the hypotheses and research questions posed in the current study were addressed via ANOVA. With 1,512 cases, both large and small F values in an ANOVA may be statistically significant, yet the smaller values may not be meaningful. Thus, when interpreting the results of ANOVAs (reported in the next chapter), the magnitude of the actual F values was considered as was eta², an index of the amount of variance accounted for by each significant effect. Eta² is computed by dividing the between group sum of squares over the total sum of
squares ($\eta^2 = \frac{SS_{Between\ Groups}}{SS_{Total}}$) (See Hays, 1994). Researchers such as Hays (1994) and Jackson (1992) argue that both $F$ and $\eta^2$ should be considered when making judgments about the "meaningfulness" of statistically significant results.

**Summary**

In sum, this study used three measures (helpfulness, positive face-threat, and negative face-threat) to examine elderly individuals’ perceptions of different features in supportive messages. The messages consisted of combinations of different situation types (instrumental vs. emotional support), different act types (offers, advice, and expressions of concern), and different combinations of facework strategies (HPHN, HPTN, TPHN, TPTN). In addition, the survey instrument also assessed a variety of demographic variables as well as participants’ feelings of life satisfaction, financial security, and satisfaction with family and friends. The next chapter describes the statistical procedures used to examine the hypotheses and research questions and discusses the results that were obtained.
Chapter 3

RESULTS

The current study was designed to examine elderly individuals' perceptions of different instrumental and emotional support messages. This chapter presents the results of analyses performed to test the three hypotheses and four research questions posed in the study. First, the chapter will discuss how certain variables were modified or created for statistical purposes. Second, the chapter will present demographic data describing the sample population. Next, the chapter will explain the procedures and rationale behind the three ANOVAs performed. In addition, other procedures employed to test the hypotheses and research questions are described and their results reported.

Hypothesis 1, Research Question 1, and Research Question 4 were each examined using T-tests. ANOVA tests were employed to assess the overall effects of demographic variables and message construction variables on each of the dependent variables, as well as to examine Hypothesis 2, Research Question 2, and Research Question 3. Finally, a chi-square test was used to explore Hypothesis 3. Hypotheses and research questions that are conceptually similar are presented in sections together.
Variable Construction

Due to the nature of the survey instrument and the computer program which was used to analyze the data, several modifications were made to existing variables. In addition, some new indices were constructed by combining other variables. First, it was believed that the source of the questionnaire (i.e., gathered in person or by mail) may have an effect on the dependent variables. That is, since some demographic differences could emerge between “mailed” and “in person” participants, it seemed important to determine how much of an effect these differences might have on the data, and to possibly control for them. Thus, the variable “source” was created to indicate whether the questionnaire was collected by the principal researcher (labeled “in person”) or was mailed in by another data collector (labeled “mailed”).

Second, several existing variables were modified so that they could be entered into large ANOVAs. For example, the original variable “education level” consisted of five categories (elementary, junior high, high school, college, and graduate school). Due to the memory requirements of the computer program used to perform the ANOVAs, education level was collapsed into three categories: “below high school,” “high school,” and “past high school.” For the same reason, the variable “marital status” was collapsed from four categories (married,
divorced/single, never married, and widowed) into two categories: “married” and “not married.”

In addition to these modifications, several new variables were constructed. Each questionnaire contained 12 messages constructed from two different variables (i.e., “positive face strategy” and “negative face strategy”), each with two categories (i.e., “honor” or “threaten”). In order to address several of the hypotheses and research questions, new message variables were created from combinations of these face strategies. First, messages which honored both positive and negative face were combined to form the variable “HPHN” (i.e., Honor Positive Honor Negative). Messages which honored positive face and threatened negative face were combined to form the variable “HPTN” (i.e., Honor Positive Threaten Negative). Messages which threatened positive face and honored negative face were combined to form the variable “TPHN” (i.e., Threaten Positive Honor Negative). Finally, messages which threatened both faces were combined to form the variable “TPTN” (i.e., Threaten Positive Threaten Negative). These variables consisted of the mean helpfulness ratings for each combination of facework strategies. For example, the variable “HPHN” represented the mean helpfulness rating for those messages which honored both positive and negative face.
Analysis of Demographic Information

In addition to the demographic information presented in the previous chapter, participants were asked to rate their financial security, overall happiness, and satisfaction with their friendships and kin relationships. All of these variables were rated on a scale from “1” (most satisfying, secure, or happy) to “7” (least satisfying, secure, or happy). The participants, for the most part, felt secure with their current financial situation (M=2.43, SD=1.09). In addition, they also reported being happy with things in general (M=2.19, SD=1.14). Finally, they seemed to be slightly more satisfied with their relationships with friends (M=1.63, SD=1.17) than with family (M=1.7, SD=1.34). None of these measures were significantly correlated with any of the dependent variables.

In addition to calculating the descriptive means for demographic information, a two-way ANOVA (see Table 1) was performed in order to examine the extent to which demographic variables may have explained some of the variance in the dependent variables. The results of this analysis are presented below.

Explanation of ANOVA Procedures

Before reporting the results pertaining to specific hypotheses and research questions, it is important to explain the rationale behind several ANOVA tests that were performed. In all, three different ANOVAs were conducted. All three
ANOVAs used message helpfulness as the dependent variable, yet each had a different set of independent variables and covariates.

Due to the limitations of the computer program used to analyze the data, there was not enough memory to perform an ANOVA containing all of the independent variables. Thus, the variables were divided into three conceptually distinct groups: message feature variables (e.g., situation type, act type, facework strategy), demographic variables (e.g., gender, education level, marital status, religion), and questionnaire feature variables (e.g., source, version number, situation number). Since the message feature variables were the most fundamental in terms of addressing the hypotheses and research questions, they were included in each ANOVA, while demographic and questionnaire variables were entered (along with message features) into separate ANOVAs. The first two ANOVAs were conducted to examine potentially confounding variables such as demographics and questionnaire features.

The first ANOVA (see Table 1) examined demographic variables and message feature variables together. The second ANOVA (see Table 2) examined message feature variables and questionnaire feature variables together. Finally, the third ANOVA (see Table 3) held all demographic and questionnaire feature variables constant, and explored the effects of message feature variables on helpfulness ratings. In other words, this ANOVA examined whether subjects’
perceptions varied as a function of situation type, act type, and facework strategy when all other variables were held constant. The results of all three tests are described in subsequent sections; however, as will be explained later, only the third ANOVA was used to address the hypotheses and research questions.

**ANOVA 1: Helpfulness by Demographic and Message Feature Variables**

This first ANOVA was conducted to examine the variance accounted for by different demographic and message feature variables. This ANOVA incorporated the modified "education level" and "marital status" variables mentioned earlier. In addition, due to computer memory limitations, the variable "religion" was modified in that those participants who described their religion as "other" (n=5) were excluded from the analysis. Thus, the variable "religion" refers only to the categories "Jewish" and "Christian."

As mentioned in the previous chapter, since the data were entered with the messages as the unit of analysis (n=1,512), rather than individual participants (n=126), the F values for this ANOVA must be interpreted with caution. In order to arrive at a more reliable measure of the amount of variance accounted for, $\eta^2$ was computed for each variable. Overall, four demographic variables, gender, religion, education level, and marital status had significant main effects with regard to perceived message helpfulness. Although the F values for these variables were significant, when the exaggerated sample size and small $\eta^2$ values are taken into
account, it becomes evident that the demographic indices did not have very strong main effects on perceptions of helpfulness.

Table 1. Six-way ANOVA: Helpfulness by demographics and message features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean SQ</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>eta^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>5.64*</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>97.71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>97.71</td>
<td>38.01**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>4.06**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>76.10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38.03</td>
<td>14.80**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Type</td>
<td>556.72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>278.36</td>
<td>108.30**</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Type</td>
<td>123.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>123.35</td>
<td>47.99**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Face Strategy</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Face Strategy</td>
<td>94.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94.16</td>
<td>36.63**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two-way Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital x Religion</td>
<td>18.62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.62</td>
<td>7.84*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital x Education</td>
<td>49.78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.89</td>
<td>9.69**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion x Education</td>
<td>27.34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.67</td>
<td>5.32*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion x Act Type</td>
<td>36.81</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.41</td>
<td>7.16**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x Education</td>
<td>27.47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.73</td>
<td>5.34*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education x Act Type</td>
<td>26.26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>2.55*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explained</strong></td>
<td>1384.20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.12</td>
<td>10.16**</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residual</strong></td>
<td>3469.97</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4854.17</td>
<td>1403</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.001, n=1512
Subsequent analyses of the mean helpfulness ratings for each of the significant main effects were conducted. First, participants who described themselves as Christians rated messages to be more helpful than (M=2.95, SD=1.77) participants who were Jewish (M=3.75, SD=1.92). This finding should be interpreted with caution, since religion only accounted for 2% of the variance.

The second largest significant demographic effect was due to the participants' education level [F (2, 1350)=14.80, p<.001, eta²=.02]; like religion, this effect accounted for only 2% of the total variance. Subsequent analyses of the mean helpfulness ratings (see Figure 1) indicated that as education level increased, helpfulness ratings decreased. These data suggest, then, that the higher the level of education an elderly individual completed, the more critical they were of support messages.

![Figure 1. Mean helpfulness rating by education level.](image-url)
The smallest significant demographic main effects were for gender and marital status. Subsequent analyses of the mean helpfulness rating for each category of marital status revealed that married participants (M=3.39, SD=1.86) perceived the messages to be less helpful than participants who were not currently married (M=2.93, SD=1.82). In terms of gender, men (M=3.46, SD=1.90) rated messages as less helpful than women (M=3.06, SD=1.83). However, the small F values for both gender [F (1, 1350)=4.06, p<.001, eta²=.00] and marital status [F (1, 1350)=5.64, p<.05, eta²=.00], along with the fact that they each accounted for 0% of the variance, suggest that these effects may not be meaningful or important.

Overall, the demographic variables explained only 4% of the total variance in message helpfulness ratings. Significant main effects may be due to the fact that the sample size of 126 was increased to 1,512 when entered into the computer. However, the eta² values suggest that regardless of the sample size, the demographic variables did not account for a large portion of the total variance. Most of the effects were neither meaningful nor interpretable. However, the fact that helpfulness ratings consistently decreased as one’s education level increased is interesting, and may warrant further investigation. Possible explanations for this main effect—as well as those observed for religion, marital status, and gender—are discussed in the final chapter.
In addition to demographic variables, the ANOVA (Table 1) examined the variance accounted for by different message features. Overall, act type had the largest F value \([F (2, 1350)=108.30, p<.001, \eta^2=.11]\) and accounted for the most variance (11%). Situation type was also significant, but had a smaller F value \([F (1, 1350)=123.35, p<.001, \eta^2=.03]\) and accounted for less variance. Positive face strategy had the smallest F value \([F (1, 1350)=36.63, p<.001, \eta^2=.02]\) of all the significant message features, and accounted for the least variance. Finally, negative face strategy was not significant. Overall, the message feature effects yielded much larger F values and explained more of the variance than the demographic variables did.

In addition to a variety of main effects, this ANOVA (Table 1) also yielded several significant interaction effects. It should be noted that, as with the main effects, the small F and \(\eta^2\) values suggest these interactions are not accounting for much variance. In fact, the largest interaction, marital status by education, only accounted for 1% of the variance, while the rest of the interactions accounted for 0%.

Although the \(\eta^2\) values for the interactions suggest that they are extremely small, subsequent analyses were conducted in an effort to determine if there were any problematic patterns in the data—particularly in the interactions observed between demographic and message feature variables. Graphs of two of
the interactions involving demographics and message features (see Figures 2 and 3) illustrate that, although the F values were significant, the interactions were extremely small. Further, the lines in the graphs did not cross. Thus, Figure 2 indicates that Jews and Christians were not showing opposite patterns in their ratings of perceived helpfulness (as an interaction effect would suggest); in fact, their responses seemed to move in the same general direction. Similarly, Figure 3 illustrates that, although there was a significant interaction between education level and act type, participants at different education levels did not demonstrate distinct rating patterns; rather their responses seemed to follow similar trends. All other graphs of interactions revealed the same, non-crossing pattern.

![Figure 2. Two way interaction between religion and act type.](image-url)
Figure 3. Two-way interaction between education level and act type.

**ANOVA 2: Helpfulness by Questionnaire and Message Features**

Since all of the independent variables could not be entered into one large ANOVA, message features and questionnaire features were examined in a second ANOVA (see Table 2).

Overall, F values for each message feature variable remained relatively consistent with the first ANOVA (see Table 1). However, this second ANOVA also suggested that the questionnaire variables were accounting for a significant portion of the overall variance in helpfulness ratings. More specifically, the questionnaire source yielded the largest F value \[ F (1, 1443)=45.25, p<.001, \eta^2=.02 \] of all of the questionnaire feature variables, followed by version number \[ F (3, 1443)=13.23, p<.001, \eta^2=.02 \] and situation number \[ F (1, 1443)=12.25, p<.001, \eta^2=.01 \].
Subsequent analyses were conducted to examine the mean helpfulness ratings for each category of the questionnaire feature variables. In terms of questionnaire source, those participants whose responses were mailed (M=3.61, SD=1.92) rated messages as being less helpful than participants whose responses were gathered in person by the principal researcher (M=3.04, SD=1.81). Of the two different situation numbers, messages within any situation (emotional or instrumental) numbered “1” (M=3.03, SD=1.79) were rated as more helpful than messages within any situation numbered “2” (M=3.34, SD=1.92). Finally, in terms of questionnaire version number, those messages appearing on Version B were rated as being the least helpful (M=3.54, SD=1.97) followed by Version A (M=3.23, SD=1.86), Version C (M=3.15, SD=1.78), and Version D (M=2.92, SD=1.79).

Due to the exaggerated sample size in the ANOVA, a series of post-hoc tests were performed in order to examine the relative strength of each main effect and interaction. First, $\eta^2$ values were calculated (See Table 2) in order to determine the amount of total variance for which each variable accounted. An examination of the $\eta^2$ values revealed that, of the message features, act type accounted for 11% of the total variance, situation type accounted for 3%, and positive face strategy accounted for 2%. In terms of questionnaire features,
version number accounted for 2% of the variance, situation number accounted for 1%, and the source of the questionnaire accounted for 2%.

The second ANOVA also yielded several interaction effects (see Table 2). To further examine these interactions, the $\eta^2$ values were once again computed to determine the amount of variance that each accounted for. Together, these interactions accounted for only 3% of the total variance in helpfulness ratings.

Table 2. Seven-way ANOVA: Helpfulness by message features and questionnaire features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean SQ</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
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<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
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<td>101.61</td>
<td>36.97**</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
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<td>Act Type</td>
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<td>273.70</td>
<td>99.59**</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
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<td>Situation Type</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>129.61</td>
<td>47.16**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
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<td>Positive Face Strategy</td>
<td>101.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101.54</td>
<td>36.94**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Face Strategy</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version Number</td>
<td>109.10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36.37</td>
<td>13.23**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Number</td>
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<td>33.67</td>
<td>12.25**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>124.38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>124.38</td>
<td>45.25**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way Interactions</td>
<td>168.19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.49*</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Type x Version</td>
<td>65.13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>3.95**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Type x Source</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>14.07</td>
<td>5.12*</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pos. Face Strategy x Situation Type</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>3.78*</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg. Face Strategy x Situation Number</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>10.85**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Explained                               | 1184.28| 41 | 23.22   | 8.45**  | .23      |
| Residual                                | 3938.53| 1443| 2.75    |          |          |
| Total                                   | 5122.81| 1484| 3.45    |          |          |

*p<.05, **p<.001, n=1512
As an additional precaution, the significant interaction effects were decomposed by conducting one-way ANOVA tests, which did not yield any meaningful results. In addition, the means for each of the interaction variables were graphed (see Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7) in order to visually identify the nature of the interaction. The graph in Figure 4 illustrates the interaction between act type and questionnaire version number. This effect was due to the fact that, to some extent, participants' responses were influenced by something in their particular version of the questionnaire. For example, the mean helpfulness ratings for those participants completing Version B were the most stringent, while those completing Version D were the least stringent. These differences may be due, in part, to the fact that Version B was completed by the least number of participants (n=27) while Version D was completed by the most (n=39). However, the graph demonstrates that the means all seem to move in the same general direction rather than crossing, suggesting both similar trends in rating patterns and a very small interaction effect.
Figure 4. Two-way interaction effect between act type and version number.

In contrast, the graph in Figure 5 illustrates a much clearer interaction, because the lines are moving in opposite directions. This time, the effect is due to the actual numbering of the situation (emotional #1 and instrumental #1 vs. emotional #2 and instrumental #2). Overall, participants found situations numbered "1" to be more helpful (M=3.03, SD=1.78), less threatening to positive face (M=3.15, SD=1.61), and less threatening to negative face (M=3.11, SD=1.59) than situations numbered "2," which were reported to be less helpful (M=3.34, SD=1.92) and more threatening to both positive (M=3.41, SD=1.78) and negative (M=3.38, SD=1.73) face. A number (either "1" or "2") was arbitrarily assigned to each situation, which was then applied consistently across all versions of the survey instrument. In other words, "instrumental situation #1" represented the same scenario across all four versions and appeared in the same
position in each questionnaire (for further detail, see Appendix B). Thus, the interaction between situation number and negative face strategy may be due to a fatigue factor. In other words, because situations numbered “2” consistently appeared in the latter portion of the questionnaires, participants may have been somewhat tired (or bored)—and consequently more critical—when rating these messages. This “hypothesis” is further elaborated in the final chapter.

Figure 5. Two-way interaction effect between negative face strategy and situation number.
Figure 6 illustrates a two-way interaction between act type and the questionnaire source. This effect is due to the fact that participants who completed the questionnaire in person perceived messages as being more helpful than participants who completed mailed questionnaires. However, the lines on the
graph seem to move in the same general direction, rather than crossing, which suggests that the two groups were responding in similar ways. When examined along with the F and \( \eta^2 \) values \[ F(2, 1443) = 5.12, p < .001, \eta^2 = .01 \], this graph indicates that the effect is very small and non-problematic.

The graph in Figure 7 illustrates the interaction effect between positive facework strategy and situation type. As Figure 7 suggests, messages which honored positive face, and were instrumental, were rated as being more helpful than messages which threatened negative face and were emotional. However, as with the other graphs, the lines are not crossing, thus indicating that the groups are not showing opposite patterns. Together with the small F and \( \eta^2 \) values \[ F(1, 1443) = 3.78, p < .05, \eta^2 = .00 \], this interaction appears to be small and non-problematic.

**Summary.** In both ANOVAs (see Tables 1 and 2), the effects due to message features were expected, however the effects due to demographic and questionnaire feature variables were not. In addition, further examination suggested that most of the demographic and questionnaire feature variables accounted for little, if any, of the variance in helpfulness ratings. To reiterate, with the exception of questionnaire source \[ F(1, 1443) = 45.25, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02 \], the F values of the main effects for questionnaire features such as version number \[ F(3, 1443) = 13.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02 \] and situation number \[ F(1, 1443) = 12.25, p < .001, \]
eta²=.01] were very small and did not account for much of the variance. However, while situation type [F (1, 1443)=47.16, p<.001, eta²=.03] and positive face strategy [F (1, 1443)=36.94, p<.001, eta²=.01] accounted for only 3% and 1% of the variance respectively, their F values were much larger than those for version or situation number. In addition, effects due to situation type and positive face strategy are meaningful and interpretable, whereas version and situation number effects are not.

In addition, the significant interactions for act type by version number [Figure 4, F (6, 1443)=3.95, p<.001, eta²=.01], negative face strategy by situation number [Figure 5, F (1, 1443)=10.85, p<.001, eta²=.01], act type by questionnaire source [Figure 6, F (2, 1443)=5.13, p<.05, eta²=.01], and positive face strategy by situation type [Figure 7, F (1, 1443)=3.78, p<.05, eta²=.00] were extremely small. Although statistically significant, these interactions did not account for much of the variance in the dependent variable and were non-problematic.

In all, the demographic and questionnaire feature variables exerted little influence on helpfulness ratings. Nevertheless, these variables were held constant in the final ANOVA so that the effects of message features on participants' perceptions could be examined without interference from possible confounding variables. Thus, in order to address the hypotheses and research questions, a third
ANOVA was performed in which demographic and questionnaire feature variables were entered as covariates.

Table 3. Four-way ANOVA: Helpfulness by message features with (covariates) demographics and questionnaire feature variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean SQ</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>eta²</th>
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<td>Covariates</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>52.03</td>
<td>19.41**</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.32</td>
<td>5.71*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>80.99</td>
<td>30.22**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>38.25</td>
<td>14.27**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
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<td>6.96</td>
<td>2.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Version</td>
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<td>28.41</td>
<td>10.60**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35.55</td>
<td>13.26**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>153.15</td>
<td>57.14**</td>
<td>.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act Type</td>
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<td>272.38</td>
<td>101.62**</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situation Type</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>126.79</td>
<td>47.30**</td>
<td>.03</td>
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<td>Positive Face Strategy</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>90.66</td>
<td>33.83**</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Face Strategy</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Three-Way Interactions</td>
<td>25.42</td>
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<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Act Type x Situation</td>
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<td>11.48</td>
<td>4.28*</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type x Positive Face Strategy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>39.35</td>
<td>14.69**</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>3832.92</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5013.36</td>
<td>1460</td>
<td>3.43</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*p<.05, **p<.001, n=1512
ANOVA 3: Helpfulness by Message Features with Demographics and Questionnaire Features Held Constant

When all of the demographic and questionnaire feature variables were held constant, the F values for the message feature variables remained consistent with the first two ANOVAs (see Tables 1 & 2). As in the other ANOVAs, act type had the largest F value \( [F(2, 1430)=101.62, p<.001, \eta^2=.11] \) and accounted for the most variance. This main effect was decomposed by performing a one-way post-hoc ANOVA (helpfulness by act type) which demonstrated that offers were most helpful \((M=2.41, SD=1.48)\), advice was somewhat less helpful \((M=3.25, SD=1.78)\), and expressions of concern were perceived to be the least helpful \((M=3.90, SD=1.97)\). Ratings for all categories significantly differed from one another.

Situation type had the next largest F value \( [F(1, 1430)=47.30, p<.001, \eta^2=.03] \) and accounted for less variance. This finding suggests that, in terms of helpfulness, messages in instrumental support situations were perceived as more helpful \((M=2.88, SD=1.77)\) than those in emotional support situations \((M=3.48, SD=1.89)\). Ratings for each situation type were significantly different.

Positive face strategy had the lowest significant F value \( [F(1, 1430)=33.83, p<.001, \eta^2=.02] \) of any message feature, and accounted for the least amount of variance. This finding indicates that messages which honored
positive face (M=2.92, SD=1.74) were perceived as significantly more helpful than messages which threatened positive face (M=3.45, SD=1.94). As with the first two ANOVAs (see Tables 1 & 2), negative face strategy was the only message feature variable to yield an F value that was not significant, and which did not account for any of the variance (see Table 3).

Finally, unlike the first two ANOVAs, this analysis did not produce any significant two-way interactions; however, it did yield one significant three-way interaction (See Table 3) between act type, situation type, and positive face strategy [F (2, 1430)=4.28, p<.05, eta²=.00]. Several post-hoc tests were conducted to decompose the interaction. First, an eta² value was computed for the three-way interaction which suggested that it did not account for any of the total variance. Next, the interaction was graphed into three separate figures, each with a different combination of variables on its x-axis. Figure 8 depicts positive face strategy and situation type by act type; Figure 9 portrays positive face strategy and act type by situation type; and Figure 10 shows situation type and act type by positive face strategy. These graphs illustrate that, although the F value for the interaction was significant, the lines all move in the same direction, suggesting that the variables were all behaving similarly.
Figure 8. Three-way interaction between act type, positive face strategy, and situation type (first graph).

Figure 9. Three-way interaction between act type, positive face strategy, and situation type (second graph).
In sum, when the effects of confounding variables were removed, a much clearer pictures of how message feature variables influence perceptions of helpfulness emerged. Thus, results from the third ANOVA (see Table 3) most clearly and cleanly address the hypotheses and research questions posed in the current study. What these results say about the hypotheses and research questions is described in the next section.

**Examining Hypothesis 1 and Research Question 2**

Hypothesis 1 predicted that messages which honored positive and negative face would be perceived as more helpful than messages which threatened both faces. In addition, Research Question 2 asked if the threat to one particular type of face (i.e., positive vs. negative face) was more strongly related to the perceived
helpfulness of a message. Results pertaining to this hypothesis and research question are discussed below.

Several analyses revealed that regardless of what was done to a person’s negative face, honoring his or her positive face was most important in terms of message helpfulness. Figure 11 presents the mean helpfulness ratings for each of the constructed indices. In support of Hypothesis 1, those messages which honored both faces (HPHN) were rated as the most helpful (M=2.87), while those which threatened both faces (TPTN) were rated as the least helpful (M=3.47). However, this graph also illustrates that participants perceived messages which honored positive face (HP) as more helpful than those which threatened positive face (TP), regardless of whether negative face was honored (HN) or threatened (TN). A two-way ANOVA (see Table 3) further revealed that positive face strategy, act type, and situation type were all significantly related to the perceived helpfulness of a message, whereas negative face strategy showed no such relationship.
Figure 11. Mean helpfulness ratings (1 being most helpful) for facework strategy combinations.

Similarly, subsequent T-tests suggested that, in terms of message helpfulness, there was a significant difference between those messages which honored positive face and those which threatened positive face (t=-5.53, df=1462.04, p<.001), however there was no such difference with regard to negative face strategy (t=-.33, df=1479.60, p>.74).

In sum, then, all messages which contained face-honoring strategies were perceived as significantly more helpful than those which threatened the hearer's face. Hypothesis 1 was supported by the fact that messages which honored both positive and negative face were rated as more helpful than messages which threatened both faces (see Figure 11). However, negative face strategies, regardless of whether they were face-honoring or threatening, did not seem to be related to helpfulness.
This set of findings also serves to answer Research Question 2. As Figure 11 illustrates, a threat to one's positive face was more strongly related to perceptions of helpfulness than were threats to one's negative face. Those messages which honored positive face were perceived as more helpful than those which threatened positive face, regardless of the negative face strategy used. In fact, negative face strategy seemed to have little or no effect on perceptions of helpfulness.

**Examining Hypothesis 2**

Hypothesis 2 focused on the relationship between the type of support being provided and the perceived helpfulness of the message. More specifically, it was predicted that instrumental support messages which honored both positive and negative face would be seen as less helpful than emotional support messages which honored both positive and negative face. This hypothesis was not supported.

As noted earlier, a four-way ANOVA (see Table 3) revealed that the type of support situation had a significant main effect on the perceived helpfulness of messages. In order to ascertain the direction of this relationship, the mean helpfulness ratings of positive and negative face-honoring messages (HPHN) were plotted for each type of support situation (instrumental or emotional). As Figure 12 illustrates, messages which honored both positive and negative face were rated as more helpful in instrumental support situations (M=2.72) than in emotional
support situations (M=3.03). In fact, instrumental support messages were rated as more helpful for every facework strategy presented.

![Helpfulness Graph](image)

**Figure 12.** Mean helpfulness ratings (1 being most helpful) for facework strategies in both instrumental and emotional support situations.

Subsequent T-tests did not reveal any significant difference in mean helpfulness ratings for positive/negative face-honoring messages (HPHN) in instrumental as compared to emotional support situations (t=-1.75, df=369.20, p<.08). However, the differences in helpfulness ratings between emotional and instrumental support situations were significant for all of the other facework strategy combinations: HPTN (t=-3.30, df=371.98, p<.001), TPHN (t=-3.34, df=367.61, p<.001), and TPTN (t=-4.15, df=362.18, p<.001).

Overall, then, participants viewed instrumental support messages as more helpful than emotional support messages. For every combination of facework strategies, except those which honored both positive and negative face,
instrumental support was perceived as significantly more helpful than emotional support.

**Examining Research Questions 1 and 3**

Both Research Questions 1 and 3 examined the relationships among act type, facework strategy, and perceived helpfulness. More specifically, Research Question 1 asked if act types vary in terms of perceived helpfulness. Research Question 3 asked if the type of support situation (emotional or instrumental) and/or the type of support act (advice, offers, or expressions of concern) affected whether it would be more or less helpful to threaten one's positive or negative face.

With regard to Research Question 1, act types did vary in terms of perceived helpfulness. The ANOVA in Table 3 suggests that act type had the largest main effect on perceived helpfulness out of all of the independent variables [F (2, 1430)=101.62, df=2, p<.001, eta²=.11]. As mentioned earlier, subsequent analysis of the means for each act type revealed that offers were considered the most helpful (M=2.41, SD=1.48), followed by advice (M=3.25, SD=1.78); expressions of concern were rated as the least helpful act type (M=3.90, SD=1.97). Figure 13 illustrates the relationships between act type and all three dependent measures. As this figure suggests, not only were offers the most helpful, they were also the least threatening to both positive and negative face. On
the other hand, expressions of concern were perceived to be the least helpful and most face-threatening type of supportive act.

![Figure 13. Mean dependent measures (1 being least to 7 being most) for act type.](image)

In reference to Research Question 3, all of the results presented thus far have suggested that, regardless of the situation, it is more important to attend to elderly individuals' positive face rather than to their negative face. More specifically, Figures 11 and 12 illustrate that in both instrumental and emotional situations, messages which honored positive face were perceived as more helpful than messages which threatened positive face. However, no such differences were found for negative face strategies. In addition, Figure 12 suggests that it is even more important to attend to one's positive face in emotional support situations, since messages in those situations are perceived as less helpful than in instrumental situations.
In addition to situation type, Research Question 3 also asked whether act type affected the extent to which it was perceived as more or less helpful to threaten the hearer's positive or negative face. Figure 14 illustrates the mean helpfulness ratings for each act type (offers, advice, and expressions of concern) and facework strategy combination (HPHN, HPTN, TPHN, TPTN). Similar to the findings regarding situation, the means suggest that, regardless of the act type, those messages which honored positive face were perceived to be more helpful than those which threaten positive face; yet, no such difference was found between negative face strategies. Thus, in response to Research Question 3, neither the situation nor act type changed the fact that, in terms of helpfulness, it was more important to attend to the hearer's positive face than to his/her negative face.
Finally, with respect to interaction effects, the four-way ANOVA (see Table 3) for helpfulness (which held all confounding variables constant), produced a significant three-way interaction \[ F(2, 1430) = 4.2, p < .05, \eta^2 = .00 \] between act type, situation type, and positive face strategy. However, both the F value and the \eta^2 value for this interaction suggest that it did not account for any substantial amount of variance in helpfulness ratings, and is probably due to the exaggerated sample size. In addition, graphs of the interaction (see Figures 8, 9, and 10) demonstrate that the means for all variables were moving in the same general direction. Thus, in terms of Research Question 3, these results provide further evidence that act type and situation did not affect whether it was perceived as more or less helpful to threaten positive or negative face.

Figure 14. Mean helpfulness ratings for act types in different facework strategy combinations.
Examining Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked whether or not people perceive strategies designed to honor or threaten face as actually doing so. In the current study, participants were asked to rate the degree to which each support message made them "feel good about themselves" (a measure of positive face) and whether or not they "had a choice" (a measure of negative face); these ratings thus provide some indication of whether or not messages were perceived to be doing what they were designed to do (i.e., honor or threaten positive or negative face). Thus far, all of the results seem to suggest that while participants recognized variations in positive face-threat, they did not recognize such manipulations for negative face.

However, in order to assess Research Question 4 directly, T-tests were performed on the mean ratings for messages that honored or threatened the participants' positive and negative face. Results suggest that participants recognized a significant difference ($t=-9.9$, $df=1467.44$, $p<.001$) between those messages which honored positive face ($M=2.85$, $SD=1.55$) and those which threatened positive face ($M=3.70$, $SD=1.74$). However, respondents did not perceive a significant difference ($t=0.33$, $df=1483.94$, $p>.74$) between messages which honored negative face ($M=3.23$, $SD=1.66$) and messages which threatened negative face ($M=3.26$, $SD=1.71$). Thus, in response to Research Question 4, the data indicate that participants only perceived strategies designed to honor or
threaten positive face as actually doing so, whereas they saw no significant
difference between negative face strategies.

**Examining Hypothesis 3**

Finally, Hypothesis 3 predicted that elderly individuals would report being
more likely to receive instrumental support from family members and emotional
support from friends. The data suggest partial support for this hypothesis. To test
Hypothesis 3, the variable “support provider” was collapsed from 7 groups
(spouse, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, friend, and other) into three
(family, friend, and other). The new category “family” consisted of: spouse, son,
daughter, grandson, granddaughter. A chi-square test (see Table 4) was
performed to determine if the frequency of the values in each category were
significantly different than what would be expected due to chance. Again, it must
be noted that the sample size has been exaggerated. The numbers in each cell
represent who participants felt would be most likely to communicate each
particular message; thus, there were a total of 1,512 cases.
Table 4. Chi-square: Sender by situation type.

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<th></th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>50.3%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

r=4.56, df=1, p<.05, n=1512, missing cases=320

As Table 4 suggests, participants reported that family members were more likely than friends to be support providers. However, while family members were perceived to provide more support overall, most of this was instrumental in nature. In addition, of the support that friends were reported to provide, most was emotional. Thus, family members were perceived to provide the elderly with more instrumental support than emotional support, whereas most of the support from friends was emotional rather than instrumental.

Summary of Results

Overall, the data provided some support for the hypotheses and research questions posed in this study. Hypothesis 1, which speculated that messages honoring both positive and negative face would be perceived as more helpful than messages threatening both positive and negative face, was supported. More specifically, participants rated messages which honored both positive and negative
face as being significantly more helpful than those messages which threatened both positive and negative face. Hypothesis 2 suggested that instrumental support messages honoring both positive and negative face would be perceived as less helpful than emotional support messages honoring both positive and negative face. This hypothesis was not supported. Thus, in contrast to what was expected, participants reported that messages conveying instrumental support were more helpful to them than emotional support messages, regardless of the facework strategies they contained. Finally, Hypothesis 3, which predicted that older adults would receive more instrumental support from family members and more emotional support from friends, was partially supported. That is, when compared to friends, family members were reported to provide more of both instrumental and emotional support. However, of the support that friends did provide, more of it was emotional. In addition, of the support that family members provided, more of it was instrumental.

In terms of the four research questions, the data have suggested some interesting results. First, Research Question 1 asked whether different act types would vary in terms of perceived helpfulness. The four-way ANOVA (see Table 3) revealed that the strongest main effect for message helpfulness was, in fact, act type. A graph of the means (see Figure 3) illustrated that, surprisingly, offers were considered the most helpful and least face-threatening, followed by advice and
expressions of concern. The latter were judged to be the least helpful and most face-threatening act type.

An examination of Research Question 2, which asked whether it was more or less helpful to threaten positive or negative face, revealed that positive facework is dramatically more important in terms of elderly individual’s perceptions of helpfulness. That is, regardless of situation or act type, those messages which threatened positive face were rated as less helpful than those which honored positive face. No such distinction was found between messages threatening and honoring negative face.

Research Question 3 asked whether situation and act type would affect whether it was perceived as more or less helpful to honor or threaten positive or negative face. This was addressed by a four-way ANOVA (see Table 3). The ANOVA did not reveal a very strong interaction. When version number and situation number were held constant, a small three-way interaction between situation type, act type, and positive face strategy did emerge, but accounted for none of the variance. Overall, message type and situation did not influence whether it was more or less helpful to threaten positive or negative face. As the analysis of Research Question 2 suggests, respondents found positive facework much more important than negative facework in terms of perceptions of message helpfulness and face-threat.
A T-test was performed to address Research Question 4. This Research Question asked whether participants perceived strategies intended to honor or threaten positive and negative face as actually doing so. The results provided a “yes and no” answer. That is, the participants clearly distinguished between strategies which honored positive face and those which threatened positive face. In addition, they found messages which honored positive face as less threatening to their positive face than those messages which threatened positive face. However, respondents did not make any significant distinction between messages designed to honor or threaten negative face. In fact, helpfulness ratings for messages designed to honor negative face were almost identical to helpfulness ratings for messages intended to threaten negative face.

Many of the results reported in this chapter require further discussion. The next chapter will offer explanations and interpretations of these findings. In addition, it will discuss the theoretical and pragmatic implications of the results as well as some of the limitations associated with the current study.
Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine elderly individuals’ perceptions of different features in support messages. More specifically, the project was designed to extend Goldsmith’s (1994) preliminary exploration in this area in three important ways. First, it examined a different sample, the elderly. Second, the current study explored the role of facework in instrumental as well as emotional support situations. Third, three act types (e.g., advice, offers, and expressions of concern) were investigated, but with combinations of positive and negative politeness strategies in single messages. In addition to these three extensions, the current study sought to advance the politeness and facework literature by testing the real world validity of certain theoretical claims regarding facework and politeness strategies.

This chapter begins by describing the study’s major findings, as well as their theoretical and pragmatic implications. Next, some of the methodological and theoretical limitations of the project are discussed. Finally, ideas and directions for future research are presented.
Summary of Findings

The current study proposed three hypotheses and four research questions. Each of these was examined through a variety of statistical procedures detailed in the previous chapter. Overall, each research question was addressed, one hypothesis was supported, one hypothesis was partially supported, and one hypothesis was not supported. The major findings from the current study may be broken into three main categories of message features: findings involving (1) act type, (2) situation type, and (3) facework or politeness strategies. In addition to these major findings, there were several unexpected results involving confounding variables such as demographic and questionnaire features; these will be discussed at the end of this section.

Findings Relating to Act Type

The results involving act type (e.g., offers, advice, and expressions of concern) were both unexpected and intriguing. Research Question 1 asked whether perceptions of message helpfulness varied in terms of act type. The results suggested that, regardless of situation type or facework strategies used, offers were considered the most helpful and least threatening to both positive and negative face, advice was less helpful and more threatening, and expressions of concern were considered to be the least helpful and most face-threatening type of support message.
These findings were somewhat unexpected, especially when compared with Goldsmith's (1994) results. Goldsmith (1994) found that helpfulness and face-threat ratings for each act type varied depending on the type of facework used (positive or negative) and the type of situation (relational breakup or failed exam). Her results did not suggest any consistent pattern in which act types were believed to be more or less helpful (there were mainly different ratings for each situation and strategy). Thus, unlike Goldsmith's (1994) results, the findings of the current study suggest that elderly individuals clearly perceived offers to be the most helpful and least threatening type of support act—and, this did not vary with situation or facework strategy.

**Explanations.** There are several possible explanations for why the current study's findings diverged so greatly from Goldsmith's (1994). First, it should be noted that Goldsmith's (1994) study only investigated emotional support situations, thus there is no comparison for the present study's findings regarding instrumental support. Second, differences between the findings may be due to the current project's unique sample population. For elderly individuals, offers may serve a different supportive function than they do for younger adults. In particular, the data indicate that elderly individuals want support providers to offer direct and tangible assistance. This explanation is further supported by the fact that, in the current study, participants rated advice as being more helpful than expressions of
concern. In other words, if a support provider did not offer to do something to solve the problem (offer), it was more helpful to tell the hearer what he/she needed to do (advice), rather than simply expressing concern about the problem.

Although further study is required to fully understand this finding, there are several possible explanations for why direct and tangible assistance was perceived to be so helpful. One possibility is that, as people age, physical or mental deficits may cause them to have greater difficulty managing their lives. Thus, it may become increasingly important to seek tangible assistance rather than emotional support (such as expressing concern). Another possibility is that, as we grow older, we may become accustomed to being offered instrumentally-oriented support. That is, whether or not an elderly individual actually needs it, support providers may offer tangible aid more readily to an elderly person than to a younger person. In turn, elderly individuals may have rated the tangible forms of support as being more helpful because those are the types of support they have come to expect.

**Theoretical Implications.** Findings regarding the helpfulness and face-threat of different support act types have important theoretical implications. First, according to Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) politeness theory, offers should have been the most threatening to one’s negative face, followed by advice, and then expressions of concern. Expressions of concern should provide the least
threat to one’s positive face. However, the results suggest that not only were offers perceived to be the most helpful, they were also rated the least threatening to both positive and negative face. Thus, it may be that politeness theory, in its present form, is not accounting for other variables or phenomena which may be influencing perceptions of face-threat. For example, politeness theory may not apply consistently across the life course. In other words, what is more or less threatening to an individual may change as they age. This implication will be discussed in more detail in a later section on politeness and facework strategy results.

**Pragmatic Implications.** In addition to theoretical implications, these results suggest some important pragmatic implications. First, in terms of providing care to elderly parents or patients, it may be most helpful for family members and health care professionals to offer more direct, tangible forms of support. And, telling someone what to do may be more helpful than simply expressing concern for his/her well being.

This finding contradicts prior research. For example, with regard to psychotherapy, Rogers (1975) proposed that counselors who actively listen to clients, acknowledge their feelings, and employ empathic forms of communication are likely to be perceived as concerned, warm, and involved. Similarly, Burleson and Samter (1985) found that college students rated higher level comforting
strategies (i.e., those that explicitly acknowledged, elaborated, and legitimized another's feelings) as the most sensitive and lower level comforting strategies (i.e., those that told someone what to do or how to feel) as the least sensitive. The current data suggest this pattern of results may not apply to the elderly. It should be noted that Burleson and Samter's (1985) dependent measure was sender sensitivity, rather than helpfulness. However, the current findings indicate that "sensitive" messages may not necessarily be perceived by elderly to be the most helpful. In sum, then, support providers need to be aware of the fact that traditional conceptualizations of sensitive counseling and support may not be regarded as particularly helpful by older adults.

These findings can also help alleviate some of the tension—and promote greater understanding—between younger family members and their elderly relatives. For example, adult children and grandchildren may resent elderly parents or grandparents for offering advice or help as social support. However, they may not realize that the elderly individual might perceive offers and advice as being more helpful than simply expressing concern. Thus, if younger family members are aware of the different meanings elderly individuals assign to advice and offers of support, they may better appreciate support efforts by older family members.
Findings Relating to Situation Type

As with the results for act type, findings involving situation type were surprising as well. Hypothesis 2 predicted that instrumental support messages which honored both positive and negative face would be perceived as less helpful than emotional support messages which honored both faces. The results reported in the last chapter do not support this hypothesis. In fact, regardless of the face strategy used, instrumental support messages were consistently rated as being more helpful than emotional support messages. However, although the F values were large and significant for situation type's main effect, the $\eta^2$ value was rather small, accounting for only 3% of the total variance. Thus, while these findings are interesting, they require further research to determine the extent to which situation type is related to perceptions of helpfulness.

In addition to these findings, the results also suggested partial support for Hypothesis 3, which predicted that elderly individuals would be more likely to receive instrumental support from family members, and emotional support from friends. As reported in the previous chapter, family members were perceived to provide more of both types of support. However, of the support that family were reported to provide, most of it was instrumental. In contrast, of the support that friends were likely to provide, most was emotional. These findings suggest that the elderly spend a great deal of time communicating with family members, and
that most of the support they receive is instrumental in nature. Although the elderly receive less overall support from friends, it typically involves emotional support situations. When examined together, all of the findings regarding situation type suggest that because instrumental support was perceived to be the most helpful, and was most likely to be provided by family, the elderly may consider support from family members to be more helpful than support from friends.

These findings contradict previous research on relationships between elderly individuals and their family and friends. For example, as mentioned in the Chapter One, research has shown that older adults prefer certain support providers over others (Rook, 1990). Studies suggest that support provided by friends is more likely to be related to an elderly person's satisfaction than support provided by family members (Hesse-Biber & Williamson, 1984, Lemon et al., 1972; Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Treas, 1975) and that familial support may be negatively associated with elderly individuals' well-being (Mutran and Reitzes, 1984). Given the trends observed in the current project, the question of whose support efforts are most beneficial to the elderly clearly requires further investigation.

As with act type, many of these findings were unexpected. Hypothesis 2 predicted that instrumental support messages would be perceived as less helpful than emotional support messages containing the same combination of facework.
strategies. This hypothesis was based on the expectation that since instrumental support theoretically involves an inherent threat to negative face, it would be regarded less favorably than emotional support which involves no such inherent threat. There are several possible explanations for this finding, as well as some important theoretical and pragmatic implications.

**Explanations.** One possible explanation for this finding involves the nature of the messages designed for the current project. More specifically, the support messages in this study consisted of only three act types (offers, advice, and expressions of concern). Although the nature of the situations changed (e.g., instrumental or emotional), the act types did not. Perhaps it was not so much that emotional support was less helpful than instrumental support, but rather that specific act types were believed to be more helpful in situations requiring instrumental support. In other words, when presented with a situation requiring instrumental support (e.g., the grocery or snow storm situations) offers and advice would logically seem to be most helpful. However, in emotional support situations, (e.g., being lonely or depressed) offers of tangible aid and advice would not be as helpful as comforting—and neither would a simple expression of concern as conceptualized in the present study.

When constructing messages for the current project, expressions of concern were equated with acts of comforting. In retrospect, however, acts of
comforting involve much more elaboration and detail than what was presented in
the present study. As Burleson and Samter (1985) suggest, comforting messages
often involve extended sequences of counseling, explicit and extensive feeling
elaboration, the asking and answering of questions, the relating of similar
experiences, and even a reframing of events. In contrast, expressions of concern,
as operationalized here, typically included conveying some degree of care or worry
for the hearer (e.g., “I really care about you, and I hate to see you down” or “I am
worried that you might hurt yourself”). They did not really provide extended and
elaborated efforts to reduce another’s emotional distress. The data suggest, then,
that such acts may not be particularly helpful in any situation, regardless of
whether it is one calling for instrumental or emotional support.

However, if other act types such as comforting or reassurance had been
conveyed, the messages in the emotional support situations may have been
perceived as more helpful than what the data presently suggest. That is,
instrumental support may have been regarded as more helpful because the act
types used in all situations were geared more towards providing tangible assistance
(offers, advice, etc.) rather than focusing on supporting the hearer emotionally.
Thus, the present findings may be attributed to the fact that this study did not
really implement a wide enough variety of acts.
**Theoretical Implications.** In addition to exploring possible explanations, it is important to point out this finding’s theoretical implications. One implication suggested by the result is that the theoretical distinctions between emotional and instrumental support must be examined more closely.

Scholars tend to classify most types of support as either emotional or instrumental (Barrera et al., 1981; Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Leatham & Duck, 1990; House, 1981; Tardy, 1994). Although the literature presents a very sound conceptual distinction between instrumental and emotional support, the empirical differences are not as clear. In other words, it may not be empirically feasible to look at either emotional or instrumental support as mutually exclusive, independent constructs. For example, Tardy (1994) argues that the distinction between instrumental and emotional support types is not empirically justified. In a recent meta-analysis of the literature (1994), he reported that overall, instrumental support, emotional support, and combined support messages were perceived to be almost equally beneficial. In line with Tardy’s (1994) claims, Sarason, et al. (1994, p. 97) argue that "scales measuring different supportive functions [i.e., instrumental or emotional] often have intercorrelations as high as the subscale reliabilities, thus indicating that the subscales are not measuring distinct constructs."
In addition to Tardy's work, other scholars have suggested a variety of support types. For example, aside from instrumental and emotional support, House (1981) has described appraisal support and informational support. In addition, Cutrona et al. (1990) have divided emotional support into three distinct subsets: attachment support, network support, and esteem support (each of these is described in Chapter One).

Clearly then, some of the existing literature suggests that the current typology of support types needs more examination and empirical testing. The current study provides further evidence for this claim. In other words, one way to frame the findings is to say that, at least for the elderly, instrumental and emotional support do not behave consistently with the current conceptual typology.

For one thing, there appear to be qualitative differences between support act types within the same category. For example, in all situations, one type of instrumental support (offers) was found to be more helpful than another (advice), and both were perceived to be more helpful than the emotional support act (expressions of concern). However, we can not yet conclude that, for the elderly, instrumental support is always more helpful than emotional support. First, we should not assume that simple expressions of concern and sophisticated comforting strategies are conceptually similar enough to be classified together as "emotional support." Likewise, the qualitative differences between offers of tangible
assistance and the conveyance of advice, along with the quantitative differences in perceptions of their helpfulness, suggest that they are not conceptually similar enough to be classified together as "instrumental support."

If researchers focus only on differences between support types (e.g., instrumental vs. emotional), they risk overlooking the subtle qualitative differences within support categories. Instead, it may be more useful to view support messages on a continuum ranging from instrumental to emotional. In doing so, we can begin to study communicative acts which are mixtures, to varying degrees, of both instrumental and emotional support.

Aside from the implications for the theoretical distinctions that scholars make among different support types, the findings may also suggest another implication regarding support across the life course. Social support researchers must also begin to take into account the fact that, as we age, our perceptions of what types of support are helpful, as well as who is likely to provide them, may change. For example, the current study's findings suggest that instrumental support, in its current conceptualization, is perceived to be most helpful to elderly individuals and family members are most likely to provide instrumental support. Thus, while not directly contradicting the social support literature, this finding adds an interesting subtlety.
Pragmatic Implications. Findings regarding the helpfulness of support messages in different situations also hold some interesting practical applications as well. As mentioned earlier in this section, one possible explanation for why instrumental support was perceived as more helpful than emotional support may have been that the act types used were more instrumental in nature. While this warrants further investigation, it also suggests an important pragmatic application. The findings may imply that elderly individuals are concerned with whether or not the support they receive is appropriate for the type of problem they have. For example, offering to drive somebody to the grocery store may help them get their shopping done, but it may not be very helpful in terms of overcoming depression or loneliness. Thus, support providers may need to give the correct type of support to elderly individuals based on the situation.

Findings Relating to Facework and Politeness Theory

The results relating to facework and politeness strategies were both surprising and puzzling. Overall, analyses presented in the previous chapter suggest that, for the elderly, positive face was more salient than negative face. For example, Research Question 4 asked whether or not elderly individuals perceive strategies designed to honor or threaten face as actually doing so. The results suggest that they easily recognized differences in helpfulness and face-threat
between positive face-honoring and threatening messages, but they perceived no such difference between negative face-honoring and threatening messages.

In addition, Hypothesis 1 predicted that messages which honored both positive and negative face would be perceived as more helpful than messages which threatened both positive and negative face. This hypothesis was supported. However, the results suggest that the amount of positive face-threat played the greatest role in determining a message's helpfulness rating. In other words, elderly participants seemed to regard their positive face as more important than their negative face, and they only seemed to recognize positive politeness strategies. In all, the results suggest that attending to elderly individuals' positive face is an important feature of support messages in terms of perceived helpfulness and perceived face-threat.

**Explanations.** For the most part, it was surprising to find how important positive face seemed to be, and how unimportant negative face was, for elderly individuals. Although these findings are very interesting, it is important to explore some possible explanations for the results.

One reason that negative face had such a small effect may be due to the design of the sample messages. In other words, the negative face strategies contained in the messages may not have been clear enough to enable respondents
to make distinctions between face-threatening and honoring strategies. Perhaps stronger distinctions would have produced different results.

Another explanation involves the nature of the situations used in the current study. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) argue that the seriousness of a face-threat involves three factors: (1) the social distance between the hearer and sender, (2) the relative power of the hearer to the sender, and (3) the absolute ranking of imposition in the particular culture. The third factor may explain why negative face-wants and strategies were not related to perceptions of helpfulness. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 77) define this ranking of imposition as "the degree to which [the message] is considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval (his negative and positive face-wants)."

Thus, in terms of the current findings, it may have been that the relative imposition implied by each support situation may have not been strong enough to adequately threaten the participants' negative face. For example, although needing a ride to the store or needing help shoveling snow is threatening to one's autonomy, neither is as threatening as needing to borrow large sums of money from a friend or needing to permanently move in with an adult child. Thus, although the situations, and some of the messages, may have threatened the hearer's autonomy, it may still have been more important to get to the store or have the walkway shoveled than it was to have their negative face-honored.
For positive face, Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 78) ranking involves “an assessment of the amount of ‘pain’ given to [the hearer’s] face, based on the discrepancy between [the hearer’s] own desired self-image and that presented (blatantly or tacitly) in the FTA.” Thus, unlike negative face, threats to positive face are ranked by the amount of “esteem” damage they may incur. Consistent with this, most of the positive face-threatening messages used in this study would cause a considerable amount of “pain” to the hearer’s face. Thus, the findings may be explained by the fact that both the situations and the messages presented to participants were not imposing or threatening enough to their autonomy to elicit any noticeable response. However, variations in positive face strategy may have been recognized more easily because the positive face-threat was relatively greater than the negative face-threat.

Another explanation for the findings may have to do with the nature of the sample population. The elderly, as a cohort, may be more or less concerned with positive or negative face than younger adults. Thus, the nature of their cohort or “subculture” may explain why they place so little emphasis on negative face. Although Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) maintain that face-wants and strategies are universal and cross-cultural, Fitch and Sanders (1994) present arguments to the contrary.
In a recent study (1994), these researchers examined preferences for expressions of directives across three cultures. They argue that while Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) hold face-threat constant as a basis for preferences for expressions of directives, “this overlooks (and rules out) that some cultures may base preferences for the expression of directives on factors other than threats to an individual’s face” (Fitch & Sanders, 1994, p. 221). Additionally, Fitch and Sanders (1994) point out that, in some cultures, honoring one’s negative face (by being indirect) may actually result in a threat to their positive face. That is, if a hearer can not interpret the meaning of an indirect message correctly, he/she may feel less intelligent, socially incompetent, or may even embarrass him/herself by reacting inappropriately to a misunderstood message. Thus, Fitch and Sander’s (1994) work may help explain part of why the elderly, who may be considered a “subculture,” would have different preferences for directness or indirectness in support messages. In other words, their findings suggest that one possible reason why the facework strategies in the current study were not perceived as behaving according to politeness theory may be that the participants were members of a subculture (the aged) not accounted for by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987).

In summary, there are several possible explanations for why the elderly respondents did not recognize negative face strategies as readily as they did positive face strategies and why they rated positive facework as being more
important to message helpfulness than negative facework. First, the design of the messages or situations may not have presented the participants with relatively equal degrees of positive or negative face-threat. Second, as a subculture, the elderly may have different preferences for direct and indirect expressions of support. Regardless of why the participants found negative face to be less important and salient than positive face, this finding suggests several important theoretical and practical implications.

**Theoretical Implications.** The findings involving facework strategies hold several implications for politeness theory and facework research. First, as mentioned in Chapter One, a major criticism of politeness theory is that it does not examine strategy combinations (the unidimensionality argument). Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) conceptualize positive and negative face strategies as existing on either end of a unidimensional continuum. Their critics have argued that there may not be one continuum, but rather that positive and negative politeness may be orthogonal, independent dimensions. The current study operated under this assumption, that is, participants were asked to rate the helpfulness of support messages which consisted of *combinations of politeness strategies*. Results indicated that when politeness strategies are combined, negative politeness becomes relatively unimportant. This finding provides partial support for the “unidimensionality argument” in that only one type of face was
evaluated as important (i.e., positive face). In other words, since participants only recognized changes in positive face strategies, it is possible that Goffman's (1965) original conceptualization of "face" as a single dimension, with strategies ranging from face-honoring to face-threatening, may be the most empirically sound. Of course, this requires further investigation before any conclusion can be reached regarding the unidimensionality of positive and negative face. More than anything else, the current study illustrates that future researchers must begin to focus on how complex combinations of politeness strategies are related to hearers' face-wants.

In addition to the unidimensionality argument, critics of politeness theory have also offered an "approach-avoidance argument." Simply put, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) conceptualize negative politeness strategies as "avoidance-based" in that they refrain from attacking a hearer's negative face and positive politeness strategies as "approach-based" in that they actively give positive face to the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) further argue that negative politeness seeks to mediate some specific act, whereas positive politeness addresses all aspects of a person's positive face needs (and is more global). Critics have argued that strategies used to alleviate threats to positive face can be both approach- and avoidance-based. They also suggest that positive politeness can involve strategies which actively seed to mediate a specific positive face-threat.
The current results do not completely speak to the approach-avoidance argument, in part, because the survey instrument was written to be consistent with the critics' conceptualization of positive and negative face. In other words, messages addressed specific positive and negative face-threats. Positive face strategies were found to mediate specific positive face-threats in that messages which honored and threatened positive face were perceived to be significantly different. However whether or not people actually use positive face strategies to mediate specific positive face-threats in real-world interactions requires further investigation. Clearly, the approach-avoidance argument could be explored more effectively through discourse analyses of real messages that would enable us to examine how people really use politeness strategies.

A second implication for politeness theory deals with the real world validity of its claims. One of the purposes of the current study was to empirically test whether elderly individuals perceived face strategies designed to threaten or honor face as actually doing so. The results suggest that older adults only recognized positive politeness strategies as functioning in a manner consistent with politeness theory. Thus, the current study did not find empirical support for the claims politeness theory makes regarding negative face-wants and negative politeness strategies. This suggests that politeness theorists, who have spent considerable
effort developing the theory conceptually, must also spend more time testing their claims empirically.

Finally, these findings hold implications in terms of studying the elderly. Few, if any, studies have examined politeness theory with an elderly population. Although Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) maintain that politeness theory is universal, the current study’s results suggest that it may not account for changes across the life-course. More specifically, these findings indicate that as we age, our face-wants, our perceptions of face-threats, and our use of politeness strategies may change as well.

**Pragmatic Implications.** Aside from warranting further theoretical development and empirical investigation, these findings suggest some important pragmatic implications. First, caution must be exercised in prescribing any practical applications based on the results regarding facework strategies. Although elderly participants reported that negative face-threat was not related to their perceptions of helpfulness, we should not assume that autonomy or independence is *unimportant* to them. While honoring negative face-wants in support messages may influence how helpful a message is, participants may not be aware of it. For example, it may be that as we grow older, feeling independent becomes less important.
However, we must also consider that the elderly may become accustomed to having their negative face threatened so often that they eventually come to accept it as part of growing older. Older people may no longer recognize the helpful aspects of messages which honor negative face. For example, an alcoholic might report that a drink is the most helpful way to solve a problem, yet he/she may not be able to see that there are more effective ways to feel better (e.g., counseling). Along similar lines, the elderly may be so used to having their autonomy threatened, that they are willing to accept that threat as long as they receive the support they need. Thus, although they do not perceive negative face-honoring messages as more helpful than those which threaten negative face, that does not mean we should fail to honor their negative face or feel free to threaten their negative face.

With this cautionary note in mind, the findings may also help promote greater understanding in intergenerational relationships. If the differences between politeness theory's presumptions and the responses from this study's elderly population are due to the participants' position in the life-course, then we might assume that intergenerational communication may be hindered by different conceptions of face-wants. For example, adult children may have trouble understanding why their elderly parents are always telling them how to do things, or are always trying to do things for them. In addition, the notion of the
“nagging” grandparents may be explained, in part, by the fact that elderly parents or grandparents do not place much value on negative face-wants.

**Unexpected Findings and Confounding Variables**

In the process of testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions related to message features, the ANOVAs produced some unexpected results involving demographic and questionnaire feature variables. In terms of demographics, it was found that education level, gender, marital status, and religion all had significant main effects on helpfulness ratings. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the F values for these effects were much lower than those for message features and the \( \eta^2 \) values suggested that they accounted for almost none of the variance. Thus, their statistical significance may be due to the fact that the sample size was exaggerated from 126 to 1,512.

Nevertheless, some of the demographic variables maintained interesting associations with helpfulness ratings. For example, as individuals attain higher levels of education, they become more critical of support messages. This finding may indicate that intelligence, or knowledge, plays an important role in determining one’s perceptions of support skills. That is, people who are more educated may be able to make finer distinctions between more or less helpful messages, whereas less educated people may not. Of course, due to the small F
and $\eta^2$ values, this finding warrants further investigation before any conclusions can be drawn.

While interesting, it is difficult to interpret why demographic variables such as religion or marital status would affect perceptions of helpfulness. In terms of religion, there may be some cultural differences which would influence people's perceptions of support messages. For example, perhaps one religious group places a higher value on talk or expects more from support messages. However, further investigations would need to be conducted before we can even speculate about this relationship. In terms of marital status, again, there may be some difference in perceptions of support skills between people who are married and those who are not. One possibility may be that people who are not married have less contact with others and are therefore more satisfied with the contact they do receive. Conversely, since married people have frequent interaction with a spouse, they can afford to be more critical of messages they receive from others. Another possible explanation may be that married people are more skilled communicators than those who are divorced or single (widows excluded). With a higher skill level, married people may be better equipped to recognize subtle differences in messages that make them more or less helpful. However, since the marital status variable was recoded for statistical analyses, these speculations are offered with caution. That is, since the five marital status categories were collapsed into two, those
categorized as not married included widows, divorcees, and those never married; thus it is difficult to interpret this finding without further investigation.

A second group of unexpected findings deals with questionnaire feature variables such as the version number, situation number, and questionnaire source. The results involving these questionnaire features were even more puzzling because they were designed to be arbitrary and random. For example, messages were systematically assigned to a version number (see Appendix B) so that all versions would have the same number of each type of message. However, the ANOVAs (see Table 2) indicate that messages in some versions were perceived as more or less helpful than messages in other versions.

This effect may have been due to some difference in the population that filled out each version. While every effort was made to randomly distribute each version of the questionnaire, some senior centers received more of one version number and less of others. Thus, some qualitative difference in the population of each senior center may have been reflected in the ANOVA (see Table 2) findings involving version number.

In addition to version number, the ANOVA (see Table 2) also suggested that the situation number for each message had a significant main effect. One explanation for this finding may be that both situations numbered “1” consistently appeared before situations numbered “2.” As a result, participants may have
become tired as they reached the latter portions of the questionnaire and thus rated these situations more critically. However, the F and eta^2 values for this effect (see Table 2) suggest that it accounted for minimal variance and was most likely due to the increased sample size.

The final unexpected finding involving questionnaire features was that of questionnaire source. Of all of the questionnaire features, the main effect for questionnaire source yielded the highest F value (see Table 2). Although every effort was made to collect all of the data in person, it became necessary to collect some by mail. Subsequent analyses revealed that messages on questionnaires collected by people other than the principal researcher (labeled “mailed”) were rated as being less helpful than messages on questionnaires collected in person by the principal researcher. This finding may be explained by the fact that the demographic makeup of the surveys collected in person was different from the surveys mailed in. Overall, the population of participants that completed “mailed” questionnaires was more educated, more likely to be married, and more likely to be Jewish than those who completed the “in person” questionnaires. In addition, a second possible explanation may be that, since the principal researcher was not present to administer the questionnaire, those people who completed the “mailed” questionnaires may not have understood the directions or may have had questions
that were not answered. Most likely, this finding was due to a variety of methodological flaws and differences in demographics between the two categories.

In addition to these unexpected main effects, there were several significant interactions involving message features and demographic or questionnaire feature variables. As with most of the main effects, the $F$ and $\eta^2$ values (see Table 1 and Table 2), and the graphs of these relationships, suggest that the interactions were extremely small and that their statistical significance was probably due to the increase in sample size. In addition, graphs of the interactions indicated that the lines rarely crossed, suggesting that there were no "opposite" patterns of ratings.

One exception was the interaction between negative face strategy and situation number. The graph of this relationship suggested that the two variables were behaving in slightly dissimilar ways. As noted earlier, participants may have become somewhat tired or impatient as they neared the end of each questionnaire. Thus, situations numbered "2" were rated more critically than situations numbered "1," which were presented earlier. However, a similar interaction was not found between positive face strategy and situation number. One possible explanation may be that since it had a significant main effect, positive face strategy canceled out, or diminished, any effects due to situation number.

In all, subsequent analyses of these significant effects suggested that the demographic and questionnaire feature variables explained little or none of the
total variance. The effects may be accounted for by the increased sample size and slight flaws in the methodology. For the most part, they were neither meaningful nor important to testing the hypotheses or answering the research questions. For these reasons, these variables were held constant during the final ANOVA so that the hypotheses and research questions could be addressed without interference from confounding variables.

**Summary of Explanations and Implications**

Overall, all of findings were surprising and enlightening. While there may be several plausible explanations for each of the results, they all imply that there needs to be more research involving combinations of support types, combinations of politeness strategies, and more communication research involving the elderly. Aside from instigating further research and theoretical development, the findings of the current study also suggest some important practical applications. In addition to promoting greater understanding in intergenerational relationships, the results suggest that we must make a greater effort to understand the elderly as a unique population that may have different communicative needs and may use different communicative strategies. Thus, everyone from health care providers to friends and family members should recognize the importance of understanding the unique needs and perceptions of elderly individuals.
Limitations of the Current Study

At this point, it is important to qualify the above discussion by detailing some of the limitations of the current study. Although the results and their implications are interesting, there are some methodological and theoretical limitations that should be noted.

Methodological Limitations

Although studying an elderly population is a major strength of the current study, which sets it apart from so much of the other support and facework literature, the sample also created some unique methodological problems. For the most part, the methodological limitations of this study dealt with the nature of the sample and the nature of the measurement instruments.

Working with an Elderly Sample. Finding elderly participants willing to sit down and fill out an 18 page survey was extremely difficult. It did not seem reasonable to knock on strangers’ doors asking them to participate, so most of the data collection took place in senior citizen centers. Many of the individuals in the senior centers were very skeptical about filling out any type of survey or were simply unwilling to take the time necessary to complete such a lengthy questionnaire. For example, each senior center that was visited had approximately 50-100 people present at any time, yet most visits yielded only 10-20 completed
surveys per center. In addition, of the questionnaires that were returned, many were left mostly blank and had to be excluded from the sample. It was apparent that this survey instrument was too long and too complicated for many elderly individuals. Thus, while adequate, the sample size (n=126) is relatively small compared to other studies.

Despite all of these difficulties, spending time talking with elderly people was very fulfilling. They provided a lot of insight and qualitative information regarding their experiences with aging. Many of them felt that they were often ignored by society, and were happy to see research focusing specifically on their experiences. In addition, they provided a lot of useful information regarding their relationships with each other and with their families. Almost all agreed that we need to make a greater effort to teach support providers how to effectively communicate with elderly individuals.

**Data Collection.** In order to maximize the sample size, approximately 20% of the questionnaires were collected through the mail by friends, relatives, and teachers in a variety of states along the East Coast. Although each was given strict instructions and guidelines for administering the questionnaires to participants, some control over the sample and data collection was sacrificed.

In addition to limitations due to its size, the sample was also not very representative. As reported in the results section, the demographic make-up of the
sample does not reflect the larger population. First, data were only collected from people who were coherent and cogent enough to complete the questionnaire, thus many people were not asked to participate. In addition, due to the geographic areas in which the data were collected, the sample was almost entirely Caucasian. Thus, many minority members, individuals living at home, in retirement communities, and individuals in nursing homes or hospitals were excluded from the sample.

Gathering an elderly sample as small as 126 took nearly six months and was extremely difficult. In all, a larger more representative sample may have yielded stronger and clearer results. Finally, stricter control over the data collection may have eliminated or accounted for some of the spurious effects.

The Questionnaire. Aside from the sample, other methodological limitations stemmed from the design of the questionnaire. First, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the message design matrix was not a perfect Latin Square (see Appendix A), thus one version of the questionnaire was slightly different from the others. In addition, the 48-message design required each questionnaire to be 18 pages long, with 12 different messages. This questionnaire was definitely too long and too involved for elderly respondents.

Finally, there may have been some limitations due to the construction of the messages. While every effort was made to create messages and situations that
were realistic, the supportive messages may have been contrived to some degree. That is, they may not have accurately represented how people really talk when providing support. For example, every message had an equal amount of both positive and negative politeness strategies. However, in reality, people may use messages with different proportions of each, or they may use messages which both honor and threaten the same face. Overall, while every effort was made to construct messages that were realistic and systematic, this resulted in a questionnaire which was too confusing and labor intensive for many elderly participants.

**Theoretical Limitations**

Aside from methodological problems, the findings must also be qualified by discussing some theoretical limitations. The current study’s primary theoretical limitation deals with the conceptualization of the dependent variable. More specifically, the primary criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of a supportive message was to rate its “helpfulness.” However, someone’s perception of the most helpful message is not necessarily an indication of the best or most effective support message. As mentioned earlier, although an alcoholic may perceive a drink to be the most helpful way to deal with a problem, it is probably not the best or most effective way for that person to address the problem. Finally, evaluating messages solely on the basis of how helpful they are may have, to some degree,
contributed to the low evaluations of emotional support messages. Participants may have taken the term “helpful” to refer to more tangible types of aid or assistance. Thus, while emotional support may have been effective in alleviating someone’s depression or loneliness, it may not have been very “helpful” in the literal sense of providing tangible assistance.

In addition, the current project was also limited in its narrow focus on only two types of social support, instrumental and emotional. As noted earlier in this chapter, scholars have described numerous other types of social support. It may have been useful to look at a range of support situations rather than only emotional and instrumental.

Taken together, all of these limitations, to some degree, qualify the findings summarized earlier in this chapter. The methodological and theoretical problems described above may help explain why only approximately 20% of the total variance was accounted for.

**Directions for Future Research**

The results of the current study, as well as the limitations, suggest some important new directions for communication research. While this study attempted to extend previous methodologies (i.e., Goldsmith, 1994), there are many other methodological avenues that have yet to be explored. Likewise, while this study
sought to empirically test some important theoretical assumptions, there are several ways in which social support and politeness theory may be advanced.

**Improving Validity**

One important way that future research may advance our current knowledge of all types of communication is to attempt to be as realistic as possible. That is, in order to understand the nature of communication, we need to move away from artificial message construction, towards a greater use of discourse and transactional analysis. This study would have benefited greatly from examining actual messages exchanged between real people trying to provide support for real problems. For example, as mentioned earlier, messages in the current project were written under the assumption that criticisms regarding "unidimensionality" and "approach-avoidance" were correct. Thus, these criticisms could not be evaluated fairly. However, by examining messages from actual conversations, we would be able to determine whether or not people really use combinations of politeness strategies and whether or not positive and negative politeness are really approach- or avoidance-based. Although this would be much more complicated in terms of design and experimental control, the quality of the results would be improved dramatically. Certainly, this would solve the problem of trying to systematically create realistic messages which involve complex combinations of politeness strategies. In addition, rather than giving people
hypothetical problems to imagine, it would be more useful to see how they react to support regarding their own problems, which they would probably care more about. Thus, as Burleson et al. (1994) suggest, examining social support—and politeness theory for that matter—from a communication perspective will provide insight into the true nature of how people support each other.

**Non-Verbal Support Messages**

Another new avenue to explore involves non-verbal supportive exchanges. Again, in order to understand all human communication, we can not simply focus on verbal exchanges. Non-verbal cues hold a wealth of communicative information that participants are unable to access when they fill out a questionnaire. One way that this methodology could be implemented for a study such as the current one would be to have participants actually see the support provider (either a researcher or an actor) communicate the support message. Hugging someone, smiling or frowning, and rolling one’s eyes are common non-verbal cues whose effect have not been explored in the social support literature. However, they may have a profound influence on how messages—and their features—are perceived. For instance, messages in which both non-verbal and verbal channels are consistent with each other (e.g., smiling and saying you are glad to see someone) may be perceived to be more sincere or helpful than those in
which non-verbal and verbal messages contradict each other (e.g., rolling your eyes and saying you are interested in the other person’s problems).

**Support Types**

In addition, future research should attempt to look at support types together. Rather than studying either emotional or instrumental support, researchers should examine how they compare with or differ from each other. Further, theorists should begin to examine the areas between instrumental and emotional support. By conceptualizing support as a continuum ranging from instrumental to emotional, rather than a list of broad categories, scholars may gain a better understanding of the nature of different types of social support. By breaking support types into mutually exclusive categories we may be limiting our understanding of how they are related. With this broader conceptualization, we could also begin to examine the importance of matching the type of support provided with the type of support needed.

Along similar lines, the current study’s findings and limitations suggest that we should extend our conceptualization of supportive act types. While advice, offers, and expressions of concern are important acts, there may be many others which are being overlooked; some of these might include reassurance, story-telling (relating of similar experiences), and non-verbal acts. As mentioned earlier, physical touching, hugging, smiling, nodding, etc. are behaviors that may convey
support in and of themselves or may complement verbal support acts; yet, these have not received much attention in the social support literature.

**Politeness and Facework**

Although it has been noted that, methodologically, we must increase our understanding of combinations of politeness strategies, this direction must also be followed theoretically. Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) conceptualization of facework and politeness simply does not recognize that people may use any variety of strategy combinations in their communication. The current study’s findings suggest that, when strategies are combined, negative politeness seems to become less important to the hearer. While this finding may be due to some limitation or flaw in the project, it may also support the claims of politeness theory’s critics (e.g., Coupland et al., 1988; Craig et al., 1986; Lim & Bowers, 1991; Fitch & Sanders, 1994) who argue that we need to begin to reconceptualize politeness theory to account for strategy combinations and cultural differences.

**Research Involving the Elderly**

Finally, the problems described in working with an elderly sample explain why there is so little communication research on this population. However, as the elderly population continues to grow, and as our life expectancies continue to increase, we must recognize intergenerational communication and communication
across the life-course as areas which warrant considerable attention. In coming years, we will all be involved in more and more relationships with elderly individuals. As the current study's findings suggest, we should not erroneously assume that current communication theories apply to the elderly in the same way they apply to the average sample of middle-class college students.

**Conclusion**

This study suggests that certain features of supportive messages are related to how helpful they are to elderly individuals. In terms of particular support acts, offering to do something for an elderly person was rated as the most helpful way to provide social support. Giving advice was somewhat less helpful, and expressing concern for him/her was considered to be the least helpful. Another important message feature was the type of support. For the elderly, instrumental support was perceived to be much more helpful than emotional support. Finally, politeness strategies were another important dimension of support messages. Overall, the elderly seem to recognize positive politeness, and held their positive face-wants to be more important than their negative face-wants. Thus, elderly individuals felt that the most helpful support messages were those which directly offered tangible instrumental support and honored their positive face.

Overall, the results of this study were somewhat surprising and puzzling. Due to some of the methodological limitations, interpretations and generalizations
of the reported data should be made with a certain degree of caution. However, this study has many important implications for the literature on social support, facework and politeness theory, gerontology, and for family and friends of the elderly. First, the findings suggest that the elderly, as a unique subculture, have their own criteria for what message features are important. They seem to be more concerned with getting the support they need, and feeling good about themselves, than with autonomy or emotional support. Part of this may be due to the fact that, for better or worse, they have adjusted to having less autonomy than when they were younger.

In terms of politeness theory, these findings suggest that current conceptualizations of positive and negative face-wants and politeness strategies need to be revised to account for messages which combine strategies. While positive and negative politeness strategies may act consistently with politeness theory when examined separately, the current study suggests that, when combined, negative face strategies are less salient than positive face strategies. Whether or not these findings will hold in subsequent studies is, of course, an empirical question. However, in its current form, politeness theory does not account for them at all.

Finally, these results hold some important pragmatic implications for everyone who communicates with elderly individuals. One reason that adult
children may have difficulty interacting with elderly parents is that each may have
different priorities and criteria for evaluating supportive messages. In other words,
what an elderly parent feels is supportive to him/herself, may be upsetting to their
adult child. One way to try and improve intergenerational relationships may be to
better our understanding of how elderly individuals’ communicative preferences
differ from younger adults’.

By understanding the unique nature of communication among elderly
people, as well as intergenerational relationships, communication scholars have the
opportunity to promote greater intergenerational understanding, improve adult
child-elderly parent relationships, and assist in providing highly satisfying support
to the elderly.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

SITUATIONS AND MESSAGES CONSTRUCTED FOR SURVEY INSTRUMENT

HP= Honor positive face
HN= Honor Negative Face
TP= Threaten positive face
TN= Threaten Negative Face

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT SITUATION #1: You have always walked to the grocery store and carried your groceries back home, on your own. Lately, you have been having some trouble with your back and your joints. The doctor has advised you to avoid carrying heavy objects. Since you don’t have a car, you will need a ride to the grocery store, and you will need help carrying groceries back into your home afterwards.

ADVICE:

(HP.TN) “I think you are a really great person, and I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. I care about you, and I don’t want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the grocery store. I think it’s time you get someone to help you out when you go grocery shopping.”

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued, admired, and cared for. Threatens Negative face because the hearer is directly told what to do, thus threatening autonomy.

(HP.HN) “You know, maybe there are some people who could use your advice when they go shopping. If you’re up to it, you might enjoy car-pooling and sharing some of the work with someone else. I know I’ve always enjoyed the times we’ve gone out shopping together. You are the best bargain hunter I know, and I always appreciate the way you help me when I shop. I care about you, and I don’t want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the grocery store.”

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel useful, admired, and cared for. Honors negative face because the hearer is given
an option of whether or not to take the advice. It is a suggestion rather than an
order. The hearer still has control over the situation, to some extent.

(TP, HN) “I really don’t have a lot of time these days. My family and my
job take up all of my free time. I can’t be in two places at once, so I can’t help
you with your shopping. You know, maybe there are some people who could use
your advice when they go shopping. If you’re up to it, you might enjoy car-
pooling and sharing some of the work with someone else.”

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it implies that the hearer is
less important to the sender than the sender’s family, and job. The hearer does not
feel valued or important. Embarrasses the hearer by implying that their back is
going “bad.” Honors negative face because the hearer is given a suggestion, rather
than an order.

(TP, TN) “Since you say your back is going bad on you, you should start
to ride on the bus provided by the local senior center. Promise me that you will
go tomorrow and sign up. I really don’t have a lot of time these days to help you.
My family and my job take up all of my free time. I can’t be in two places at
once, so I can’t help you with your shopping.”

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it implies that the sender
does not have time for the hearer, thus making the hearer feel devalued. Further,
the statement “since you say . . .” implies that hearer’s back pains may exaggerated,
thus delegitimizing the hearer’s feelings. Also, saying “your back is going bad”
implies that the there is something wrong with the hearer. All of these components
attack the hearer’s sense of esteem and self-worth. Threatens negative face
because the hearer has no freedom of action, the sender is telling the hearer exactly
what to do.

OFFERS:

(HP, TN) “Ever since you went to the doctor, I’ve been worried about you
hurting yourself carrying all of your groceries. I care about you and I want you
to stay as healthy as you’ve always been. I really enjoy the time we spend
together, and since you need some help with the groceries, I will take you
shopping, and help you carry the groceries back into the house.”

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel cared
for, valued, and it implies that hearer is otherwise in good health. Threatens
negative face because the sender is telling the hearer exactly what will be done,
without asking the hearer what he/she wants.
(HP, HN) "Maybe we could start going grocery shopping together, if that's all right with you. I would really like to have more time to be together and talk. I really like talking to you and I value your advice. Ever since you went to the doctor, I've been worried about you hurting yourself carrying all of your groceries. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you've always been. I really enjoy the time we spend together."

(RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the hearer's physical problems/limitations which may embarrass or humiliate the hearer. Also, the sender's reasons for shopping together emphasize saving gas and time rather than a desire to spend time with the hearer. Honors negative face because the hearer has the option of accepting or rejecting the sender's offer. Also, the message emphasizes shopping together, rather than the sender helping the hearer with the shopping.)

(TP, TN) "The doctor says your back is not what it used to be. It happens to everybody sooner or later. You know, maybe we could save some time and some gas money just by shopping together. What do you think?"

(RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the hearer's physical problems/limitations which may embarrass or humiliate the hearer. Also, the sender's reasons for shopping together emphasize saving gas and time rather than a desire to spend time with the hearer. Honors negative face because the hearer has the option of accepting or rejecting the sender's offer. Also, the message emphasizes shopping together, rather than the sender helping the hearer with the shopping.)

(TP, TN) "Since you are not allowed to carry heavy groceries anymore, I've signed you up to ride on the bus provided by the senior center. They will pick you up at 10:00 to take you to the store, and they will carry your groceries in for you afterwards. But hey, what can you do? The doctor says your back is going bad. It happens to everybody sooner or later."

(RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the hearer's physical problems/limitations which may embarrass or humiliate the hearer. Threatens negative face because the sender has already decided what will be done, leaving the hearer with no autonomy of freedom of action. Further, the hearer will now have to depend on the bus to get to the store and to carry the groceries in afterwards.)

(CONCERN:

(HP, TN) "I really care about you, and I don't want to see you in any pain or discomfort. I really admire the way you can take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might hurt yourself if you're not careful with heavy things like carrying the groceries. Don't worry about it; there is no use getting all worked up over it. We all reach a point where we need to really depend on other people to help us get things done. It happens to everyone sooner or later."
RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it expresses concern for the hearer's well being, and makes the hearer feel valued and worthwhile. Threatens negative face because the hearer is directly told how he/she is feeling. Further, the hearer must accept that his/her abilities are limited and he/she has no choice but to depend on others to a greater extent.

(HP, HN) "Do you think there is anything you can do to make grocery shopping a little easier on your back? I don't know about you, but I would be very frustrated and confused about what to do. I really care about you, and I don't want to see you in any pain or discomfort. I admire the way you can take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might hurt yourself if you're not careful carrying heavy groceries."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it expresses concern for the hearer's well being, and makes the hearer feel valued and worthwhile. Honors negative face because the hearer is not told how he/she should feel. Further, the hearer is not forced into depending on others or accepting others help. The sender simply expresses concern, and asks the hearer what she/he can do to remedy the situation.

(TP, HN) "The doctor says you're not as young as you used to be. I remember when you were in really great shape, but now your back is starting to go bad on you. I'm worried that you could really hurt yourself when you go grocery shopping. I don't know about you, but I would be very frustrated and confused about what to do. Do you think there is anything you can do to make grocery shopping a little easier on your back?"

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the message will embarrass the hearer by pointing out how his/her body is deteriorating. This will diminish the hearer's self-esteem as well as embarrass him/her. Honors negative face because the hearer is not told how he/she should feel. Further, the hearer is not forced into depending on others or accepting others help. The sender simply expresses concern, and asks the hearer what she/he can do to remedy the situation.

(TP, TN) "Don't worry about it; there is nothing you can do about it so it's no use getting all worked up over it. We all reach a point where we need to really depend on other people to help us get things done. It happens to everyone sooner or later. The doctor says you're not as young as you used to be. I remember when you were in really great shape, but now your back is starting to go bad on you, and I'm worried that you could really hurt yourself when you go grocery shopping."
RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the message will embarrass the hearer by pointing out how his/her body is deteriorating. This will diminish the hearer's self-esteem as well as embarrass him/her. Threatens negative face because the hearer is directly how he/she is feeling. Further, the hearer must accept that his/her abilities are limited and that he/she has no choice but to depend on others to a greater extent.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SITUATION #1: A close family member received a new job and just moved his/her family to another state several hundred miles away. You are used to seeing them for Thanksgiving, but this year they will not be able to come in. You really miss this person, and you are starting to feel a little bit lonely.

ADVICE:

(HP, TN) "I'm sure it was very hard for him/her to move so far away. It's never easy to move away from people that you care about. I know they really enjoyed living so close to you, and they will really miss you. You should try to visit them soon, and make sure to call them on the holiday. But first, you need to cheer up and get out and meet some new people."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel wanted and valued by both the sender and the absent family member. Threatens negative face because the hearer is directly told what to do, and the message does not legitimate the hearer's feelings ("you need to cheer up").

(HP, HN) "I'm sure it's very hard to be away from them, especially on Thanksgiving. Maybe there is a way you can get out to visit them if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably lots of people you might enjoy meeting around here. I'm sure it was very hard for him/her to move so far away. It's never easy to move away from people that you care about. I know they really enjoyed living so close to you, and they will really miss you."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel wanted and valued by both the sender and the absent family member. Also, this message acknowledges the hearer’s feelings. Honors negative face because it validates the other person’s feelings, and provides open-ended options for the hearer to accept or reject.

(TP, HN) "It's a shame they had to move away, but business is business. I'm sure it's hard to move so far away, but they'll get adjusted in no time and so
will you. I guess they won’t be able to visit you for Thanksgiving this year. Maybe there is a way you can get out to visit them if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably lots of people you might enjoy meeting around here. \(13B\)

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it implies that the hearer’s family member’s career is more important than the relationship with the hearer. Also, the message implies that since the family member will be able to easily adjust, it will not be that hard for them to be so far away from the hearer. Both of these characteristics may serve to lower the hearer’s self-esteem or sense of importance in the relationship with the family member. Last, the sender makes no mention of the hearer’s feelings or emotional state. Honors negative face because it validates the other person’s feelings, and provides open-ended options for the hearer to accept.

\(TP, TN\) “You should try visit them soon, and make sure to call them on the holiday. But first, you need to cheer up and get out and meet some new people. It's a shame they had to move away, but business is business. I guess they won't be able to visit you for Thanksgiving this year. I'm sure it's hard to move so far away, but they'll get adjusted in no time and so will you.” \(16A\)

OFFERS:

\(HP, TN\) “I am sure he/she will really miss you, especially around Thanksgiving. I know how much he/she enjoyed living so close to you, especially around holiday time. I know it will really tough to be so far away from them this holiday. I decided you should come to our house for Thanksgiving. We enjoy your company, and you need to get out of the house.” \(17A\)

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued by both the family member and sender. The sender also validates the hearer’s feelings. Threatens Negative face because the hearer is given no choice about whether or not to go to the sender’s house on Thanksgiving. Further, the hearer is told that he/she must “get out of the house.”

\(HP, HN\) “I know how much he/she enjoyed living so close to you, especially around holiday time. I know it will be really tough to be so far away from them this holiday. So what were you thinking about doing for Thanksgiving? If you’d like, I would love to have Thanksgiving dinner with you. I think it would be a lot of fun, let me know if you feel up to it or if there is
anything else I can do to help. I am sure he/she will really miss you, especially around Thanksgiving.” (18D)

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued by both the family member and sender. The sender also validates the hearer’s feelings. Also, since the sender says it would be fun to have the hearer over for dinner, there is no sense of imposition, the hearer is made to feel wanted. Honors negative face because the hearer is given the option of accepting or rejecting the sender’s offer of support. Also, the sender asks the hearer what he/she is planning to do, thus implying a certain degree of autonomy.

(19C)

"Boy, what are you going to do about Thanksgiving this year? I guess they will be too busy to come in just for dinner. Since you don’t have plans, I’ve decided you should come to our house for Thanksgiving. We enjoy your company, and you need to get out of the house anyway. Don’t be surprised if you don’t hear from them for a while, it’s probably really hard for them to get adjusted to their new life out there. So what were you thinking about doing for Thanksgiving? If you’d like, you can have Thanksgiving dinner with me. Let me know if you feel up to it or if there is anything else I can do to help.

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the message first emphasizes that the hearer will be alone for the holiday. Second, the message focuses on how busy and involved the family member that moved away is. This implies that he/she does not value the hearer enough to call or to come back for the holiday. Honors negative face because the hearer is given the option of whether or not to accept the offer.

(20C)

"Boy, what are you going to do about Thanksgiving this year? I guess they will be too busy to come in just for dinner. Since you don’t have plans, I’ve decided you should come to our house for Thanksgiving. We enjoy your company, and you need to get out of the house anyway. Don’t be surprised if you don’t hear from them for a while, it’s probably really hard for them to get adjusted to their new life out there."

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the message first emphasizes that the hearer will be alone for the holiday. Second, the message focuses on how busy and involved the family member that moved away is. This implies that he/she does not value the hearer enough to call or to come back for the holiday. Also, the statement “since you don’t have plans” emphasizes the fact that hearer will be alone, and also may embarrass the hearer.
CONCERN:

(HP, TN) “I really care about you, and I hate to see you down. I know you are used to spending your Thanksgiving holiday with them. I am sure it’s really hard to be away from your family on such an important holiday. I know it must be hard to be in a situation that’s completely of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later.”

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because the hearer feels cared for and valued. Also, it legitimizes the hearer’s feelings. Threatens negative face because the hearer is made to feel helpless, not in control of his/her situation.

(HP, HN) “I am sure it’s really hard to be away from your family on such an important holiday. I know it must be very tough to be in a situation like this. I don’t know about you, but I would be feeling a little down, or maybe even lonely. How are you doing with it? I really care about you, and I hate to see you down. I know you are used to spending your Thanksgiving holiday with them.”

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because the hearer feels cared for and valued. Honors negative face because the hearer is not made to feel trapped by the situation. Rather, the sender expresses how he/she would feel if he/she were in the same situation. Thus, the hearer is not told how he/she should be feeling. Finally, the inquiry “how are you doing” allows the hearer the freedom to express his/her own feelings rather than being told how he/she feels or should feel.

(TP, HN) “Of course they had to move away, how could anyone pass up an opportunity like that? Besides, they didn’t have that much keeping them here anyway. I know it must be very hard for you right now. I don’t know about you, but I would be feeling a little down, or even lonely. How are you doing with it?”

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the hearer is made to feel that he/she was not that important in the family members life.

(TP, TN) “I know it must be hard to be in a situation that’s completely of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later. Of course they had to move away, how could anyone pass up an opportunity like that? Besides, they didn’t have that much keeping them here anyway. I am sure it’s really hard to be away from your family on such an important holiday.”
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT SITUATION #2: It has been one of the worst winters in many years. There has been a snow storm almost every week for the past month. You have been struggling with the flu for a few days, and you doctor has advised you to limit you time out in the cold weather. This year you will need to find someone to help you shovel the snow from your walkway.

ADVICE:

(HP, TN) "I think you should hire some kids in the neighborhood to shovel the walkway for you. I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. You've always done such a good job of taking care of things around the house. But, I care about you and I don't want to see you hurt yourself or getting sick by going outside and trying to shovel the snow all by yourself." 

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued and cared for. Also, it emphasizes the hearer's ability to care for him/herself and the house. Threatens positive face because the hearer is directly told what to do. Further, the sender advises that the hearer not participate at all in the shoveling, rather than just getting help.

(HP, HN) "I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. You've always done such a good job of taking care of things around the house. I care about you and I don't want you to see you hurt yourself or getting sick by going outside and trying to shovel the snow all by yourself. You might think about keeping an eye out for the kids walking around the neighborhood after it snows. Maybe there are some kids in the neighborhood who are looking to make a little bit of money by helping shovel driveways."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued and cared for. Also, it emphasizes the hearer's ability to care for him/herself and the house. Honors negative face because the sender is merely giving a suggestion rather than a direction, so the hearer is free to make the final decision. Also, implies that the hearer needs help rather than having someone do the job for them.

(TP, HN) "You might think about keeping an eye out for the kids walking around the neighborhood after it snows. Maybe there are some kids in the neighborhood who are looking to make a little bit of money by shoveling driveways. The doctor says your not as young as you used to be. You've got to realize that you will only get sicker if you go out in cold weather like this to shovel the walkway."
RATIONALE: Threatens negative face because it emphasizes the hearer’s physical limitations which may embarrass them or lower their self-esteem. Honors negative face because the sender is merely giving a suggestion rather than a direction, so the hearer is free to make the final decision. Also, implies that the hearer needs help rather than having someone do the job for them.

(HP, TN) "The doctor says your not as young as you used to be. You’ve got to realize that you will only get sicker if you go out in cold weather like this to shovel the walkway. I think you should hire some kids in the neighborhood to shovel the walkway for you." (28D)

RATIONALE: Threatens negative face because it emphasizes the hearer’s physical limitations which may embarrass them or lower their self-esteem. Threatens positive face because the hearer is directly told what to do. Further, the sender advises that the hearer not participate at all in the shoveling, rather than just getting help.

OFFERS:

(HP, TN) "Since I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, I’ll come over and shovel yours too. After I shovel for you, you’ll be able to get out of the house. Since you’re just getting over the flu, I am worried about you getting sick again from all of this cold weather. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you have always been. I’d hate to see you get sick again just because your walkway needs shoveling." (29D)

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel cared for, and implies that the hearer is in otherwise good health. Threatens negative face because the sender is telling the hearer what will be done without asking the hearer what he/she wants, and also implies that the hearer will be stranded in the house if the sender does not come over to shovel.

(HP, HN) "Since you’re just getting over the flu, I am worried about you getting sick again from all of this cold weather. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you have always been. I’d hate to see you get sick again just because your walkway needs shoveling. I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, so maybe I could stop by and help you with yours. You know I’d always like to have a little more time to talk with you anyway. Let me know if you want me to stop by." (30C)

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel cared for, valued, and implies that the hearer is in otherwise good health. Honors
negative face because it leaves the hearer a choice about whether or not to accept the offer. The sender is offering to “help out” rather than do the task for the hearer. Also, the sender says that he/she would like to spend more time with the hearer, thus implying that the task would not be a burden on the sender (This also serves to honor positive face).

(TP. HN) “Since it’s so cold out, you’ll probably need some help shoveling the snow off of the walkway. I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, so maybe I could stop by and help you with yours. Let me know if you want me to stop by. You just got over another one of your bad cases of the flu. The doctor said that you had better start taking care of yourself before you get any worse.”

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the hearer’s physical limitations which may embarrass or humiliate the hearer. Honors negative face because the hearer is given the choice of whether or not to accept the offer. Also the sender is only offering to “help out” rather than doing the entire task for the hearer.

(TP. TN) “You just got over another one of your bad cases of the flu. The doctor said that you had better start taking care of yourself before you get any worse by staying out of the cold. Since I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, I’ll come over and shovel yours too. After I shovel for you, you’ll be able to get out of the house.”

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the hearer’s physical limitations which may embarrass or humiliate the hearer. Threatens negative face because the sender is telling the hearer what will be done without asking the hearer what he/she wants, and also implies that the hearer will be stranded in the house if the sender does not come over to shovel.

CONCERN:

(HP. TN) “Don’t worry; there’s no use getting upset about it. We all reach a point where we need to start relying on other people to do things that we just can’t do anymore. There’s not much you can do about it, it happens to everyone sooner or later. I really care about you and I would hate to see you get sick again, especially since you are recovering so well. I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might get sick again if you go out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning.”
RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued and worthwhile. Also, it emphasizes the fact that the hearer is successfully recovering from the flu. Threatens negative face because the hear is directly told how he/she should feel. Further, the hearer is told to accept that his/her abilities are limited and that he/she has no choice but to depend on others to a greater extent.

(HP, HN) "I really care about you and I would hate to see you get sick again, especially since you are recovering so well. I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might get sick again if you go out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning. I don't know about you but I would feel very confused and frightened about what to do. Do you think there is anything you can to do make shoveling the walkway a little less threatening to your health?"

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel valued and worthwhile. Also, it emphasizes the fact that the hearer is successfully recovering from the flu. Honors negative face because the hearer is not told how he/she should feel. Further, the hearer is not forced into depending on others or accepting other's help. The sender simply expresses concern, and asks the hearer what he/she can do to remedy the situation.

(TP, HN) "Do you think there is anything you can to do make shoveling the walkway a little less threatening to your health? I don't know about you but I would feel very confused about what to do. I remember when you used to be in top-notch shape, but the doctor says your not getting any younger. Now you get sick every time it gets a little chilly out. I don't need you getting sick again by going out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning."

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the message is embarrassing to the hearer since it emphasizes he/she is getting older and his/her body is deteriorating. This will also serve to diminish the hearer’s self-esteem. Further, the sender does not say he/she is worried, but rather that he/she doesn’t want to see the hearer get sick again. Honors negative face because the hearer is not told how he/she should feel. Further, the hearer is not forced into depending on others or accepting other's help. The sender simply expresses concern, and asks the hearer what he/she can do to remedy the situation.

(TP, TN) "I remember when you used to be in top-notch shape, but the doctor says your not getting any younger. Now you get sick every time it gets a little chilly out. I don't need you getting sick again by going out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning. Don't worry; there's no use getting upset
about it. We all reach a point where we need to start relying on other people to
do things that we just can't do anymore. There's not much you can do about it, it
happens to everyone sooner or later. *(35B)*

**RATIONALITY:** Threatens positive face because the message is
embarrassing to the hearer since it emphasizes the he/she is getting older and
his/her body is deteriorating. This will also serve to diminish the hearer’s self-
estee. Further, the sender does not say he/she is worried, but rather that he/she
doesn’t want to see the hearer get sick again. Threatens negative face because the
hear is directly told how he/she should feel. Further, the hearer is told to accept
that his/her abilities are limited and that he/she has no choice but to depend on
others to a greater extent.

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SITUATION #2:** For the past 15 years, you have
met the same group of friends for lunch. Each week you went to the same
restaurant which you all really liked. These lunch meetings were a great way to
catch up with your friends and to socialize. Recently, more and more members of
your group have not been able to attend the lunches. Some people are too sick,
others can’t get around as easily, and some have moved away. You have been
feeling down and a little lonely about not being able to meet with your friends the
way you used to.

**ADVICE:**

*(HP, TN)* “You should call all of them up and invite them to your house
for dinner one night. But first, you need to cheer up, there is no use getting upset.
You need to just get up and get on with your life. I am sure it's hard on everyone
that you guys aren't having lunch anymore. I know all of your friends really
enjoyed spending that time with you, and they must really be missing you
too.” *(37B)*

**RATIONALITY:** Honors Positive face because it makes the hearer feel
wanted and valued by the friends. Threatens negative face because the hearer is
directly told what to do and how to feel. Further, the message does not legitimate
the hearer’s feelings (e.g., “cheer up”).

*(HP, HN)* “I am sure it’s hard on everyone that you guys aren’t having
lunch anymore. I know all of your friends really enjoyed spending that time with
you, and they must really be missing you too. If it were me, I would be feeling a
little lonely right now. Maybe there is a way you guys can still get together, if
you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably a lot of new people you could meet in the neighborhood as well."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it makes the hearer feel wanted and valued by the friends. Honors negative face because it legitimizes the hearer's feelings of loneliness and provides open-ended options for the hearer to accept or reject.

(TP, HN) "If it were me, I would be feeling a little lonely right now. Maybe there is a way you guys can still get together, if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably a lot of new people you could meet in the neighborhood as well. It's a shame you are all getting so old that you can't even get out for lunch anymore. I'm sure everyone will have no problem finding something else to do since they can't meet you anymore."

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the fact that the hearer and his/her friends are getting old. Further it implies that the hearer was not really that valued because the friends will find "something else to do." Honors negative face because it legitimizes the hearer's feelings of loneliness and provides open-ended options for the hearer to accept or reject.

(TP, TN) "It's a shame you are all getting so old that you can't even get out for lunch anymore. I'm sure everyone will have no problem finding something else to do since they can't meet you anymore. You should call all of them up and invite them to your house for dinner one night. But first, you need to cheer up, there is no use getting upset. You need to just get up and get on with your life."

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes the fact that the hearer and his/her friends are getting old. Further it implies that the hearer was not really that valued because the friends will find "something else to do." Threatens negative face because the hearer is directly told what to do and how to feel. Further, the message does not legitimate the hearer's feelings (e.g., "cheer up").

OFFER:

(HP, TN) "Well, there is no use getting down about it, you should cheer up and do something about it. I decided that from now on, I will drive you down to the old restaurant, and pick up any of your friends that can't drive. You will all enjoy getting together again, and it will be good for you. Thanks to me, you will still be able to have a social life. I am sure everyone in the group is really
going to miss having lunch with you each week. I know how much your friends loved being with you. I bet it will be really tough on everyone if you guys don't get to be together."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it emphasizes that fact that the hearer was valued and loved by his/her friends. Threatens negative face because the hearer is given no choice about whether or not to accept the offer. The message also tells the hearer how to feel (e.g., cheer up). Further, the sender states that the hearer must now depend on him/her to have a social life.

(HP, HN) "I am sure everyone in the group is really going to miss having lunch with you each week. I know how much your friends loved being with you. I don't know about you, but I would feel really lonely if I couldn't get to see my friends when I wanted to. So what were you thinking about doing to get together with them? If you'd like, I could drive you down to the old restaurant and pick up your friends that don't have cars. I think it would be a lot of fun, and I know they would love to see you again. Let me know if you feel up to it."

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because it emphasizes the fact that the hearer is valued and loved by his/her friends. Honors Negative face because it legitimizes the hearer's feelings, and provides offers that the hearer can accept or reject. Also, the hearer asks the sender what he/she is planning to do, thus implying autonomy.

(TP, HN) "So what were you thinking about doing to get together with them? If you'd like, I could drive you down to the old restaurant and pick up your friends that don't have cars. Let me know if you feel up to it. Boy, you guys are not getting any younger! I can remember when you would all meet down at the old restaurant every week. Now, nobody can get out and around anymore. Don't be surprised if you don't hear from the old group as much as you used to, especially if you're not meeting anymore. You know what they say 'out of sight, out of mind.'"

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes that the hearer is getting old and is losing mobility. Also, implies that the hearer is not that important to his/her friends. Honors Negative face because it legitimizes the hearer's feelings, and provides offers that the hearer can accept or reject. Also, the hearer asks the sender what he/she is planning to do, thus implying autonomy.

(TP, TN) "Boy, you guys are not getting any younger! I can remember when you would all meet down at the old restaurant every week. Now, nobody can get out and around anymore. Don't be surprised if you don't hear from the old group as much as you used to, especially if you're not meeting anymore. You
know what they say "out of sight, out of mind. Well, there is no use getting down about it, you should cheer up and do something about it. I decided that from now on, I will drive you down to the old restaurant, and pick up any of your friends that can't drive. You will all enjoy getting together again, and it will be good for you. Thanks to me, you will still be able to have a social life."(44D)

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because it emphasizes that the hearer is getting old and is losing mobility. Also, implies that the hearer is not that important to his/her friends. Threatens negative face because the hearer is given no choice about whether or not to accept the offer. The message also tells the hearer how to feel (e.g., cheer up). Further, the sender states that the hearer must now depend on him/her to have a social life.

CONCERN:

(HP, TN) "You must be very frustrated to be stuck in a situation that is completely out of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later. I really care about you and I hate to see you feeling down. I know you really enjoyed meeting the old gang for lunch each week, and I know they loved being with you."(43D)

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because the hearer feels cared for and valued. Threatens negative face because the hearer is made to feel helpless, or not in control of his/her situation.

(HP, HN) "I really care about you and I hate to see you feeling down. I know you really enjoyed meeting the old gang for lunch each week, and I know they loved being with you. I am sure it is very hard to not be able to see your friends when you want to. It must be very frustrating to be in a situation like this. I don't know about you, but I would be feeling a little down or even lonely. How are you doing with it?"(46C)

RATIONALE: Honors positive face because the hearer feels cared for and valued. Honors negative face because the hearer is not made to feel trapped by the situation. Rather, the sender expresses how he/she would feel in a similar situation. Thus, the hearer’s feelings are legitimized and he/she is not being told how to feel. Finally, the inquiry “how are you doing” allows the hearer the freedom to express his/her own feelings rather than being told how to feel.

(TP, HN) "I am sure it is very hard to not be able to see your friends when you want to. It must be very frustrating to be in a situation like this. I don't know about you, but I would be feeling a little down or even lonely. But, you guys can't meet for lunch anymore. Everyone is either too sick or too old. Besides,
it's only lunch, I don’t see what the big deal is anyway. I’m sure everyone will find somewhere else to eat their lunch. How are you doing with it?"(47b)

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the hearer is made to feel that his/her activities with friends are insignificant and unimportant. Also, this message points out that the hearer is getting old and losing mobility. Further the hearer is made to feel unimportant since his/her friends will just find somewhere else to eat their lunch. Honors negative face because the hearer is not made to feel trapped by the situation. Rather, the sender expresses how he/she would feel in a similar situation. Thus, the hearer’s feelings are legitimized and he/she is not being told how to feel. Finally, the inquiry “how are you doing” allows the hearer the freedom to express his/her own feelings rather than being told how to feel.

(TP, TN) “Of course you guys can’t meet for lunch anymore. Everyone is either too sick or too old. Besides, it’s only lunch, I don’t see what the big deal is anyway. I’m sure everyone will find somewhere else to eat their lunch. You must be very frustrated to be stuck in a situation that is completely out of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later.”(48a)

RATIONALE: Threatens positive face because the hearer is made to feel that his/her activities with friends are insignificant and unimportant. Also, this message points out that the hearer is getting old and losing mobility. Further the hearer is made to feel unimportant since his/her friends will just find somewhere else to eat their lunch. Threatens negative face because the hearer is made to feel helpless, or not in control of his/her situation.
Appendix B

INSTRUMENT DESIGN MATRIX

Facework Strategy Combination
HPTN= Honor Positive Face, Threaten Negative Face
HPHN= Honor Positive Face, Honor Negative Face
TPHN= Threaten Positive Face, Threaten Negative Face
TPTN= Threaten Positive Face, Threaten Negative Face

Within Each Cell
The letters within cells signify which version of the questionnaire the message will appear on (e.g., Version A, B, C, or D).

The numbers within each cell are used to identify each individual message (e.g., Messages 1 through 48).

Instrumental Support Situation #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>Offers</th>
<th>Concern</th>
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<td>7D</td>
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Emotional Support Situation #1

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<td>TPHN</td>
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### Emotional Support Situation #2

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<td>43A</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPHN</td>
<td>40C</td>
<td>44D</td>
</tr>
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Appendix C

INSTRUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT SHEET

We’re interested in learning about how to provide better services and support to our senior citizens. In this survey, we would like you to give YOUR OPINIONS about different things people might say to you. Obviously, there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. We just want you to put yourself in the situations we describe and tell us how different messages make you feel.

In addition, there are some questions that ask for background information about you and your family. If, at anytime, you do not feel comfortable answering a question, just leave it blank.

Please DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY. This way, all information that you give will be anonymous and confidential. I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have. This will probably only take you about 15-30 minutes to complete. Please TAKE YOUR TIME and do not rush. In order to provide better services to senior citizens we need accurate information, so please make sure to read each question CAREFULLY.

Thank You,

Scott Caplan
Master’s Candidate

I agree to participate in this study.

_________________________  _______________________
Signature                  Date
Appendix D

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION A

1. In what year were you born?

2. Are you Male:_____ or Female:_____?

3. Please check the term that best describes your ethnic background?
   ____ Hispanic       ____ Black/African American
   ____ Asian          ____ White              ____ Other

4. Which best describes your relationship with your friends right now?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfying</td>
<td>Somewhat Satisfying</td>
<td>Somewhat Unsatisfying</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Please check the highest level of education you have completed?
   ____ Elementary School       ____ Junior High School
   ____ College                  ____ High School
   ____ Graduate School

6. Which best describes you?
   ____ Married                  ____ Never Married
   ____ Divorced/Single          ____ Widowed
7. Please write the NUMBER of children you have: ____ Sons ____ Daughters

8. If you do have children, would you say they live close by? ____ Yes ____ No

9. Which best describes your religious affiliation?
   ____ Jewish
   ____ Christian
   ____ Other

10. Which best describes your relationship with your family right now?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Very Somewhat Somewhat Very
   Satisfying Satisfying Unsatisfying Unsatisfying

11. Overall, how would you rate your current financial situation?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Very Somewhat Somewhat Very
   Secure Secure Insecure Insecure

12. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are:

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Very Somewhat Somewhat Very
   Happy Happy Unhappy Unhappy
On the following pages you will read FOUR different problems that people might have in their everyday lives. As you read these situations, please try to imagine how YOU would feel if faced with the problem. You will then read some messages that different people might say to help you deal with the problem. Once again, please try to imagine how you would feel if you ACTUALLY heard these messages.

We'd like you to tell us how these messages would make you feel and whether or not you think these messages would actually help you deal with the minor problem.

Please remember there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Just try to respond to them as honestly as you can. PLEASE READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY.

PROBLEM 1

Problem 1: You have always walked to the grocery store and carried your groceries back home, on your own. Lately, you have been having some trouble with your back and your joints. The doctor has advised you to avoid carrying heavy objects. Since you don't have a car, you will need a ride to the grocery store, and you will need to ask somebody for help carrying groceries back into your home afterwards.

On the next few pages, you will read some messages that someone might say to you to help you with the problem. Please tell us how these messages would make you feel . . .
Imagine someone said this to you about the GROCERY problem...

"I think you are a really great person, and I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. I care about you, and I don't want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the grocery store. I think it's time you get someone to help you out when you go grocery shopping."

13. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

14. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____Spouse   _____Daughter   _____Grandson
_____Son   _____A Friend   _____Granddaughter   _____Other

15. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I have a choice Sort of like I have no choice Very much like I have no choice

16. Overall, how helpful would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
Now imagine someone said this to you, about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"Maybe we could start going grocery shopping together, if that’s all right with you. I would really like to have more time to be together and talk. I really like talking to you and I value your advice. Ever since you went to the doctor, I've been worried about you hurting yourself carrying all of your groceries. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you've always been. I really enjoy the time we spend together."

17. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

18. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____ Spouse  _____ Daughter  _____ Grandson

_____ Son  _____ A Friend  _____ Granddaughter  _____ Other

19. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I have a choice Sort of like I have no choice Very much like I have no choice

20. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"The doctor says you’re not as young as you used to be. I remember when you were in really great shape, but now your back is starting to go bad on you. I’m worried that you could really hurt yourself when you go grocery shopping. I don’t know about you, but I would be very frustrated and confused about what to do. Do you think there is anything you can do to make grocery shopping a little easier on your back?" 

21. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>Extremely good</td>
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<td>Not at all good</td>
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</table>

22. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

23. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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24. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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</table>
Here is another problem . . .

**SITUATION 2**: Imagine that someone very close to you has received a new job and just moved his/her family to another state several hundred miles away. You are used to seeing them for Thanksgiving, but this year they will not be able to come in. You really miss this person, and you are starting to feel a little bit lonely.

Now please imagine how the following messages would make you feel . . .
Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"You should try visit them soon, and make sure to call them on the holiday. But first, you need to cheer up and get out and meet some new people. It’s a shame they had to move away, but business is business. I guess they won’t be able to visit you for Thanksgiving this year. I’m sure it’s hard to move so far away, but they’ll get adjusted in no time and so will you.”

25. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

26. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

____ Spouse  ____ Daughter  ____ Grandson

____ Son  ____ A Friend  ____ Granddaughter  ____ Other

27. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I Sort of I have a choice have a choice I have no choice I have no choice

28. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"I am sure he/she will really miss you, especially around Thanksgiving. I know how much he/she enjoyed living so close to you, especially around holiday time. I know it will really be tough to be so far away from them this holiday. I decided you should come to our house for Thanksgiving. We enjoy your company, and you need to get out of the house."

29. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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30. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

31. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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32. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"I am sure it’s really hard to be away from your family on such an important holiday. I know it must be very tough to be in a situation like this. I don’t know about you, but I would be feeling a little down, or maybe even lonely. How are you doing with it? I really care about you, and I hate to see you down. I know you are used to spending your Thanksgiving holiday with them."

33. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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34. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- [ ] Spouse
- [ ] Daughter
- [ ] Grandson
- [ ] Son
- [ ] A Friend
- [ ] Granddaughter
- [ ] Other

35. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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36. Overall, how HELPFL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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PROBLEM 3

Here is another problem think about . . .

SITUATION 3: Imagine that it has been one of the worst winters in many years. There has been a snow storm almost every week for the past month. You have been struggling with the flu for a few days, and you doctor has advised you to limit you time out in the cold weather. This year you will need to find someone to help you shovel the snow from your walkway.

Now imagine how you would feel if someone said the following messages to you . . .
How would you feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"You might think about keeping an eye out for the kids walking around the neighborhood after it snows. Maybe there are some kids in the neighborhood who are looking to make a little bit of money by shoveling driveways. The doctor says your not as young as you used to be. You've got to realize that you will only get sicker if you go out in cold weather like this to shovel the walkway."

37. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<th>Extremely good</th>
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38. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

39. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very much like I have a choice</th>
<th>Sort of like I have a choice</th>
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<th>Very much like I have no choice</th>
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40. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A Little helpful</th>
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<th>Very Unhelpful</th>
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Imagine how you would feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem...

"You just got over another one of your bad cases of the flu. The doctor said that you had better start taking care of yourself before you get any worse by staying out of the cold. Since I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, I'll come over and shovel yours too. After I shovel for you, you'll be able to get out of the house." (324)

41. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

42. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____ Spouse _____ Daughter _____ Grandson
_____ Son _____ A Friend _____ Granddaughter _____ Other

43. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I Sort of like Very much like
I have a choice have a choice I have no choice I have no choice

44. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
Here's one last message someone might say to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"Don't worry; there's no use getting upset about it. We all reach a point where we need to start relying on other people to do things that we just can't do anymore. There's not much you can do about it, it happens to everyone sooner or later. I really care about you and I would hate to see you get sick again, especially since you are recovering so well. I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might get sick again if you go out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning."

45. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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46. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- ____Spouse
- ____Daughter
- ____Grandson
- ____Son
- ____A Friend
- ____Granddaughter
- ____Other

47. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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48. Overall, how **HELPFUL** would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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PROBLEM 4

Imagine you are having this problem . . .

PROBLEM 4: Imagine that for the past 15 years, you have met the same group of friends for lunch. Each week you went to the same restaurant that you all really liked. These lunch meetings were a great way to catch up with your friends and to socialize. Recently, more and more members of your group have not been able to attend the lunches. Some people are too sick, others can't get around as easily, and some have moved away. You have been feeling down and a little lonely about not being able to meet with your friends the way you used to.

On the next few pages, please tell us how you would feel about different things people might say to you to help deal with this problem . . .
Imagine someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"I am sure it's hard on everyone that you guys aren't having lunch anymore. I know all of your friends really enjoyed spending that time with you, and they must really be missing you too. If it were me, I would be feeling a little lonely right now. Maybe there is a way you guys can still get together, if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably a lot of new people you could meet in the neighborhood as well." (384)

49. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

50. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____ Spouse _____ Daughter _____ Grandson
_____ Son _____ A Friend _____ Granddaughter _____ Other

51. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I Sort of like Very much like
I have a choice have a choice I have no choice I have no choice

52. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
What if somebody said this to you instead about the LUNCH problem . . .

“So what were you thinking about doing to get together with them? If you’d like, I could drive you down to the old restaurant and pick up your friends that don’t have cars. Let me know if you feel up to it. Boy, you guys are not getting any younger! I can remember when you would all meet down at the old restaurant every week. Now, nobody can get out and around anymore. Don’t be surprised if you don’t hear from the old group as much a you used to, especially if you’re not meeting anymore. You know what they say “out of sight, out of mind.”

53. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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54. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

55. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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56. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Finally, imagine if someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"Of course you guys can't meet for lunch anymore. Everyone is either too sick or too old. Besides, it's only lunch, I don't see what the big deal is anyway. I'm sure everyone will find somewhere else to eat their lunch. You must be very frustrated to be stuck in a situation that is completely out of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later."

57. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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58. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

59. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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60. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Appendix E

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION B

1. In what year were you born?

2. Are you Male: ___ or Female: ___ ?

3. Please check the term that best describes your ethnic background?
   _____ Hispanic       _____ Black/African American
   _____ Asian          _____ White            _____ Other

4. Which best describes your relationship with your friends right now?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Very Satisfying Somewhat Satisfying Somewhat Unsatisfying Very Unsatisfying

5. Please check the highest level of education you have completed?
   _____ Elementary School   _____ Junior High School
   _____ College             _____ High School
   _____ Graduate School
6. Which best describes you?
   _____Married  _____Never Married
   _____Divorced/Single  _____Widowed

7. Please write the NUMBER of children you have: _____Sons
   _____Daughters

8. If you do have children, would you say they live close by? _____Yes
   _____No

9. Which best describes your religious affiliation?
   _____Jewish
   _____Christian
   _____Other

10. Which best describes your relationship with your family right now?


11. Overall, how would you rate your current financial situation?


12. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are:


On the following pages you will read FOUR different problems that people might have in their everyday lives. As you read these situations, please try to imagine how YOU would feel if faced with the problem. You will then read some messages that different people might say to help you deal with the problem. Once again, please try to imagine how you would feel if you ACTUALLY heard these messages.

We'd like you to tell us how these messages would make you feel and whether or not you think these messages would actually help you deal with the minor problem.

Please remember there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Just try to respond to them as honestly as you can. PLEASE READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY.

**PROBLEM 1**

Problem 1: You have always walked to the grocery store and carried your groceries back home, on your own. Lately, you have been having some trouble with your back and your joints. The doctor has advised you to avoid carrying heavy objects. Since you don't have a car, you will need a ride to the grocery store, and you will need to ask somebody for help carrying groceries back into your home afterwards.

On the next few pages, you will read some messages that someone might say to you to help you with the problem. Please tell us how these messages would make you feel...
Imagine someone said this to you about the GROCERY problem . . .

"Since you say your back is going bad on you, you should start to ride on the bus provided by the local senior center. Promise me that you will go tomorrow and sign up. I really don't have a lot of time these days to help you. My family and my job take up all of my free time. I can't be in two places at once, so I can't help you with your shopping."

13. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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14. WHO would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

____ Spouse  ____ Daughter  ____ Grandson

____ Son  ____ A Friend  ____ Granddaughter  ____ Other

15. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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16. Overall, how helpful would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Now imagine someone said this to you, about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"Ever since you went to the doctor, I've been worried about you hurting yourself carrying all of your groceries. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you've always been. I really enjoy the time we spend together, and since you need some help with the groceries, I will take you shopping, and help you carry the groceries back into the house."

17. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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</table>

18. WHO would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

19. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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20. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
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Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"Do you think there is anything you can do to make grocery shopping a little easier on your back? I don't know about you, but I would be very frustrated and confused about what to do. I really care about you, and I don't want to see you in any pain or discomfort. I admire the way you can take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might hurt yourself if you're not careful carrying heavy groceries."

21. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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22. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- ___Spouse
- ___Daughter
- ___Grandson
- ___Son
- ___A Friend
- ___Granddaughter
- ___Other

23. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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24. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Here is another problem...

**SITUATION 2:** Imagine that someone very close to you has received a new job and just moved his/her family to another state several hundred miles away. You are used to seeing them for Thanksgiving, but this year they will not be able to come in. You really miss this person, and you are starting to feel a little bit lonely.

Now please imagine how the following messages would make you feel...
Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"It's a shame they had to move away, but business is business. I'm sure it's hard to move so far away, but they'll get adjusted in no time and so will you. I guess they won't be able to visit you for Thanksgiving this year. Maybe there is a way you can get out to visit them if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably lots of people you might enjoy meeting around here."

25. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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26. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

27. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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28. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"Boy, what are you going to do about Thanksgiving this year? I guess they will be too busy to come in just for dinner. Since you don't have plans, I've decided you should come to our house for Thanksgiving. We enjoy your company, and you need to get out of the house anyway. Don't be surprised if you don't hear from them for a while, it's probably really hard for them to get adjusted to their new life out there. (209)

29. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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30. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

31. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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32. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"I really care about you, and I hate to see you down. I know you are used to spending your Thanksgiving holiday with them. I am sure it's really hard to be away from your family on such an important holiday. I know it must be hard to be in a situation that's completely of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later."

33. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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34. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

35. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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36. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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PROBLEM 3

Here is another problem think about . . .

SITUATION 3: Imagine that it has been one of the worst winters in many years. There has been a snow storm almost every week for the past month. You have been struggling with the flu for a few days, and you doctor has advised you to limit you time out in the cold weather. This year you will need to find someone to help you shovel the snow from your walkway.

Now imagine how you would feel if someone said the following messages to you . . .
How would you feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. You've always done such a good job of taking care of things around the house. I care about you and I don't want you to see you hurt yourself or getting sick by going outside and trying to shovel the snow all by yourself. Maybe there are some kids in the neighborhood who are looking to make a little bit of money by helping shovel driveways. You might think about keeping an eye out for the kids walking around the neighborhood after it snows."

37. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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38. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- [ ] Spouse
- [ ] Daughter
- [ ] Grandson
- [ ] Son
- [ ] A Friend
- [ ] Granddaughter
- [ ] Other

39. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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40. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Imagine how you would feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"Since it's so cold out, you'll probably need some help shoveling the snow off of the walkway. I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, so maybe I could stop by and help you with yours. Let me know if you want me to stop by. You just got over another one of your bad cases of the flu. The doctor said that you had better start taking care of yourself before you get any worse."^{(31b)}

41. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\text{Extremely good} & \text{Sort of good} & \text{Not very good} & \text{Not at all good} \\
\end{array}
\]

42. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

43. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\text{Very much like} & \text{Sort of like} & \text{Sort of like} & \text{Very much like} & \text{I have a choice} & \text{I have no choice} & \text{I have no choice} \\
\end{array}
\]

44. Overall, how helpful would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\text{Very helpful} & \text{A Little helpful} & \text{A Little Unhelpful} & \text{Very Unhelpful} \\
\end{array}
\]
Here's one last message someone might say to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"I remember when you used to be in top-notch shape, but the doctor says your not getting any younger. Now you get sick every time it gets a little chilly out. I don't want to see you get sick again by going out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning. Don't worry; there's no use getting upset about it. We all reach a point where we need to start relying on other people to do things that we just can't do anymore. There's not much you can do about it, it happens to everyone sooner or later."

45. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

46. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse  - Daughter  - Grandson
- Son  - A Friend  - Granddaughter  - Other

47. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I Sort of like Very much like
I have a choice have a choice I have no choice I have no choice

48. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
PROBLEM 4

Imagine you are having this problem . . .

PROBLEM 4: Imagine that for the past 15 years, you have met the same group of friends for lunch. Each week you went to the same restaurant that you all really liked. These lunch meetings were a great way to catch up with your friends and to socialize. Recently, more and more members of your group have not been able to attend the lunches. Some people are too sick, others can’t get around as easily, and some have moved away. You have been feeling down and a little lonely about not being able to meet with your friends the way you used to.

On the next few pages, please tell us how you would feel about different things people might say to you to help deal with this problem . . .
Imagine someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"You should call all of them up and invite them to your house for dinner one night. But first, you need to cheer up, there is no use getting upset. You need to just get up and get on with your life. I am sure it's hard on everyone that you guys aren't having lunch anymore. I know all of your friends really enjoyed spending that time with you, and they must really be missing you too."

49. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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50. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

51. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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52. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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What if somebody said this to you instead about the LUNCH problem . . .

"I'm sure everyone in the group is really going to miss having lunch with you each week. I know how much your friends loved being with you. I don't know about you, but I would feel really lonely if I couldn't get to see my friends when I wanted to. So what were you thinking about doing to get together with them? If you'd like, I could drive you down to the old restaurant and pick up your friends that don't have cars. I think it would be a lot of fun, and I know they would love to see you again. Let me know if you feel up to it."(238)

53. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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54. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

55. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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56. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Finally, imagine if someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"I am sure it is very hard to not be able to see your friends when you want to. It must be very frustrating to be in a situation like this. I don't know about you, but I would be feeling a little down or even lonely. But, you guys can't meet for lunch anymore. Everyone is either too sick or too old. Besides, it's only lunch, I don't see what the big deal is anyway. I'm sure everyone will find somewhere else to eat their lunch. How are you doing with it?"

57. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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58. WHO would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

59. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<td>Very much like</td>
<td>Sort of like I have a choice</td>
<td>Sort of like I have a choice</td>
<td>Very much like I have no choice</td>
<td>I have no choice</td>
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</table>

60. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix F

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION C

1. In what year were you born?

2. Are you Male: ___ or Female: ___?

3. Please check the term that best describes your ethnic background?

   ___ Hispanic   ___ Black/African American
   ___ Asian     ___ White        ___ Other

4. Which best describes your relationship with your friends right now?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfying</td>
<td>Somewhat Satisfying</td>
<td>Somewhat Unsatisfying</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfying</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

5. Please check the highest level of education you have completed?

   ___ Elementary School   ___ Junior High School
   ___ College             ___ High School
   ___ Graduate School

6. Which best describes you?

   ___ Married             ___ Never Married
   ___ Divorced/Single     ___ Widowed
7. Please write the NUMBER of children you have: ____ Sons
   ____ Daughters

8. If you do have children, would you say they live close by? ____ Yes
   ____ No

9. Which best describes your religious affiliation?
   ____ Jewish
   ____ Christian
   ____ Other

10. Which best describes your relationship with your family right now?

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<tr>
<td>Very Satisfying</td>
<td>Somewhat Satisfying</td>
<td>Somewhat Unsatisfying</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfying</td>
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11. Overall, how would you rate your current financial situation?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Secure</td>
<td>Somewhat Secure</td>
<td>Somewhat Insecure</td>
<td>Very Insecure</td>
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12. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days—would you say you are:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Somewhat Happy</td>
<td>Somewhat Unhappy</td>
<td>Very Unhappy</td>
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On the following pages you will read FOUR different problems that people might have in their everyday lives. As you read these situations, please try to imagine how YOU would feel if faced with the problem. You will then read some messages that different people might say to help you deal with the problem. Once again, please try to imagine how you would feel if you ACTUALLY heard these messages.

We'd like you to tell us how these messages would make you feel and whether or not you think these messages would actually help you deal with the minor problem.

Please remember there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Just try to respond to them as honestly as you can. PLEASE READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY.

PROBLEM 1

Problem 1: You have always walked to the grocery store and carried your groceries back home, on your own. Lately, you have been having some trouble with your back and your joints. The doctor has advised you to avoid carrying heavy objects. Since you don't have a car, you will need a ride to the grocery store, and you will need to ask somebody for help carrying groceries back into your home afterwards.

On the next few pages, you will read some messages that someone might say to you to help you with the problem. Please tell us how these messages would make you feel . . .
Imagine someone said this to you about the GROCERY problem . . .

"I really don't have a lot of time these days. My family and my job take up all of my free time. I can't be in two places at once, so I can't help you with your shopping. You know, maybe there are some people who could use your advice when they go shopping. If you're up to it, you might enjoy car-pooling and sharing some of the work with someone else."(3C)

13. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely good</td>
<td>Sort of good</td>
<td>Not very good</td>
<td>Not at all good</td>
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</table>

14. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

15. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much like</td>
<td>Sort of like I have a choice</td>
<td>Sort of like I have no choice</td>
<td>Very much like I have no choice</td>
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16. Overall, how helpful would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Now imagine someone said this to you, about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"Since you are not allowed to carry heavy groceries anymore, I've signed you up to ride on the bus provided by the senior center. They will pick you up at 10:00 to take you to the store, and they will carry your groceries in for you afterwards. But hey, what can you do? The doctor says your back is going bad. It happens to everybody sooner or later."

17. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<tr>
<td>Extremely good</td>
<td>Sort of good</td>
<td>Not very good</td>
<td>Not at all good</td>
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</table>

18. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

19. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<tr>
<td>Very much like</td>
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<td>Sort of like</td>
<td>Very much like</td>
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<td>I have a choice</td>
<td>I have a choice</td>
<td>I have no choice</td>
<td>I have no choice</td>
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20. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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</table>
Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"I really care about you, and I don't want to see you in any pain or discomfort. I really admire the way you can take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might hurt yourself if you're not careful with heavy things like carrying the groceries. Don't worry about it; there is no use getting all worked up over it. We all reach a point where we need to really depend on other people to help us get things done. It happens to everyone sooner or later."

21. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<td></td>
<td>Extremely good</td>
<td>Sort of good</td>
<td>Not very good</td>
<td>Not at all good</td>
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</table>

22. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

23. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<td></td>
<td>Very much like I have a choice</td>
<td>Sort of like I have a choice</td>
<td>Sort of like I have no choice</td>
<td>Very much like I have no choice</td>
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24. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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</table>
Here is another problem . . .

**SITUATION 2:** Imagine that someone very close to you has received a new job and just moved his/her family to another state several hundred miles away. You are used to seeing them for Thanksgiving, but this year they will not be able to come in. You really miss this person, and you are starting to feel a little bit lonely.

Now please imagine how the following messages would make you feel . . .
Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"I'm sure it's very hard to be away from them, especially on Thanksgiving. Maybe there is a way you can get out to visit them if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably lots of people you might enjoy meeting around here. I'm sure it was very hard for him/her to move so far away. It's never easy to move away from people that you care about. I know they really enjoyed living so close to you, and they will really miss you."

25. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<tr>
<td>Extremely good</td>
<td>Sort of good</td>
<td>Not very good</td>
<td>Not at all good</td>
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26. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

27. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<td>Very much like</td>
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<td>Very much like</td>
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<td>I have a choice</td>
<td>I have a choice</td>
<td>I have no choice</td>
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28. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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</table>
Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"Boy, what are you going to do about Thanksgiving this year? I guess they will be too busy to come in just for dinner. Don't be surprised if you don't hear from them for a while, it's probably really hard for them to get adjusted to their new life out there. So what were you thinking about doing for Thanksgiving? If you'd like, you can have Thanksgiving dinner with me. Let me know if you feel up to it or if there is anything else I can do to help."

29. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

30. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____ Spouse _____ Daughter _____ Grandson

_____ Son _____ A Friend _____ Granddaughter _____ Other

31. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I have a choice Very much like
I have no choice have a choice I have no choice

32. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"I know it must be hard to be in a situation that's completely of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later. Of course they had to move away, how could anyone pass up an opportunity like that? Besides, they didn't have that much keeping them here anyway. I am sure it's really hard to be away from your family on such an important holiday."

33. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

```
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good
```

34. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

```
Spouse Daughter Grandson
Son A Friend Granddaughter Other
```

35. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

```
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I have a choice Very much like
Sort of like I have no choice I have no choice
```

36. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

```
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
```
PROBLEM 3

Here is another problem think about . . .

SITUATION 3: Imagine that it has been one of the worst winters in many years. There has been a snow storm almost every week for the past month. You have been struggling with the flu for a few days, and you doctor has advised you to limit you time out in the cold weather. This year you will need to find someone to help you shovel the snow from your walkway.

Now imagine how you would feel if someone said the following messages to you . . .
How would you feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"I think you should hire some kids in the neighborhood to shovel the walkway for you. I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself. You've always done such a good job of taking care of things around the house. But, I care about you and I don't want to see you hurt yourself or getting sick by going outside and trying to shovel the snow all by yourself."

37. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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38. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- [ ] Spouse
- [ ] Daughter
- [ ] Grandson

- [ ] Son
- [ ] A Friend
- [ ] Granddaughter
- [ ] Other

39. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<td>Very much like I have a choice</td>
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<td>Sort of like I have no choice</td>
<td>Very much like I have no choice</td>
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40. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<td>Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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Imagine how you would feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem.

"Since you're just getting over the flu, I am worried about you getting sick again from all of this cold weather. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you have always been. I'd hate to see you get sick again just because your walkway needs shoveling. I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, so maybe I could stop by and help you with yours. You know I'd always like to have a little more time to talk with you anyway. Let me know if you want me to stop by."

41. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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42. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

43. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<td>Sort of like I have a choice</td>
<td>Sort of like I have no choice</td>
<td>Very much like I have no choice</td>
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44. Overall, how helpful would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<td></td>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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Here’s one last message someone might say to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"Do you think there is anything you can do to make shoveling the walkway a little less threatening to your health? I don’t know about you but I would feel very confused about what to do. I remember when you used to be in top-notch shape, but the doctor says your not getting any younger. Now you get sick every time it gets a little chilly out. I don’t need you getting sick again by going out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning."

45. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely good</th>
<th>Sort of good</th>
<th>Not very good</th>
<th>Not at all good</th>
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</table>

46. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

47. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very much like I have a choice</th>
<th>Sort of like I have a choice</th>
<th>Sort of like I have no choice</th>
<th>Very much like I have no choice</th>
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</table>

48. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A Little helpful</th>
<th>A Little Unhelpful</th>
<th>Very Unhelpful</th>
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</table>
PROBLEM 4

Imagine that for the past 15 years, you have met the same group of friends for lunch. Each week you went to the same restaurant that you all really liked. These lunch meetings were a great way to catch up with your friends and to socialize. Recently, more and more members of your group have not been able to attend the lunches. Some people are too sick, others can’t get around as easily, and some have moved away. You have been feeling down and a little lonely about not being able to meet with your friends the way you used to.

On the next few pages, please tell us how you would feel about different things people might say to you to help deal with this problem...
Imagine someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem...

"It's a shame you are all getting so old that you can't even get out for lunch anymore. I'm sure everyone will have no problem finding something else to do since they can't meet you anymore. You should call all of them up and invite them to your house for dinner one night. But first, you need to cheer up, there is no use getting upset. You need to just get up and get on with your life."

49. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

50. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____ Spouse _____ Daughter _____ Grandson
_____ Son _____ A Friend _____ Granddaughter _____ Other

51. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I Sort of like Very much like
I have a choice have a choice I have no choice I have no choice

52. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
What if somebody said this to you instead about the LUNCH problem . . .

"Well, there is no use getting down about it, you should cheer up and do something about it. I decided that from now on, I will drive you down to the old restaurant, and pick up any of your friends that can't drive. You will all enjoy getting together again, and it will be good for you. Thanks to me, you will still be able to have a social life. I am sure everyone in the group is really going to miss having lunch with you each week. I know how much your friends loved being with you. I bet it will be really tough on everyone if you guys don’t get to be together."

53. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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54. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

55. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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56. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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</table>
Finally, imagine if someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"I really care about you and I hate to see you feeling down. I know you really enjoyed meeting the old gang for lunch each week, and I know they loved being with you. I am sure it is very hard to not be able to see your friends when you want to. It must be very frustrating to be in a situation like this. I don't know about you, but I would be feeling a little down or even lonely. How are you doing with it?"*

57. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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58. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- ____ Spouse
- ____ Daughter
- ____ Grandson
- ____ Son
- ____ A Friend
- ____ Granddaughter
- ____ Other

59. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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60. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Appendix G

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION D

1. In what year were you born?

2. Are you Male: _____ or Female: _____?

3. Please check the term that best describes your ethnic background?
   - Hispanic
   - Black/African American
   - Asian
   - White
   - Other

4. Which best describes your relationship with your friends right now?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Very Satisfying Somewhat Satisfying Somewhat Unsatisfying Very Unsatisfying

5. Please check the highest level of education you have completed?
   - Elementary School
   - Junior High School
   - College
   - High School
   - Graduate School

6. Which best describes you?
   - Married
   - Never Married
   - Divorced/Single
   - Widowed
7. Please write the NUMBER of children you have: _____Sons
       _____Daughters

8. If you do have children, would you say they live close by? _____Yes
       _____No

9. Which best describes your religious affiliation?
       _____Jewish
       _____Christian
       _____Other

10. Which best describes your relationship with your family right now?

       1  2  3  4  5  6  7
       Very Satisfying Somewhat Satisfying Somewhat Unsatisfying Very Unsatisfying

11. Overall, how would you rate your current financial situation?

       1  2  3  4  5  6  7
       Very Secure Somewhat Secure Somewhat Insecure Very Insecure

12. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days--would you say you are:

       1  2  3  4  5  6  7
       Very Happy Somewhat Happy Somewhat Unhappy Very Unhappy
On the following pages you will read **FOUR** different problems that people might have in their everyday lives. As you read these situations, please try to imagine how **YOU** would feel if faced with the problem. You will then read some messages that different people might say to help you deal with the problem. Once again, please try to imagine how you would feel if you ACTUALLY heard these messages.

We'd like you to tell us how these messages would **make you feel** and whether or not you think these messages would actually help you deal with the minor problem.

Please remember **there are no right or wrong answers** to any of the questions. Just try to respond to them as honestly as you can. **PLEASE READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY.**

**PROBLEM 1**

**Problem 1:** You have always walked to the grocery store and carried your groceries back home, on your own. Lately, you have been having some trouble with your back and your joints. The doctor has advised you to avoid carrying heavy objects. Since you don't have a car, you will need a ride to the grocery store, and you will need to ask somebody for help carrying groceries back into your home afterwards.

On the next few pages, you will read some messages that someone might say to you to help you with the problem. Please tell us how these messages would make you feel . . .
Imagine someone said this to you about the GROCERY problem . . .

"You know, maybe there are some people who could use your advice when they go shopping. If you're up to it, you might enjoy car-pooling and sharing some of the work with someone else. I know I've always enjoyed the times we've gone out shopping together. You are the best bargain hunter I know, and I always appreciate the way you help me when I shop. I care about you, and I don't want you to hurt yourself carrying heavy bags from the grocery store."

13. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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14. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- [ ] Spouse
- [ ] Daughter
- [ ] Grandson
- [ ] Son
- [ ] A Friend
- [ ] Granddaughter
- [ ] Other

15. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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16. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Now imagine someone said this to you, about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"The doctor says your back is not what it used to be. It happens to everybody sooner or later. You know, maybe we could save some time and some gas money just by shopping together. What do you think?"

17. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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18. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

19. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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20. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the same GROCERY problem . . .

"Don’t worry about it; there is nothing you can do about it so it’s no use getting all worked up over it. We all reach a point where we need to really depend on other people to help us get things done. It happens to everyone sooner or later. The doctor says you’re not as young as you used to be. I remember when you were in really great shape, but now your back is starting to go bad on you, and I’m worried that you could really hurt yourself when you go grocery shopping."

21. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

22. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

___ Spouse   ___ Daughter   ___ Grandson
___ Son      ___ A Friend   ___ Granddaughter   ___ Other

23. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I have a choice Sort of like I have no choice Very much like I have no choice

24. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful
PROBLEM 2

Here is another problem . . .

**SITUATION 2.** Imagine that someone very close to you has received a new job and just moved his/her family to another state several hundred miles away. You are used to seeing them for Thanksgiving, but this year they will not be able to come in. You really miss this person, and you are starting to feel a little bit lonely.

Now please imagine how the following messages would make you feel . . .
Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem...

"I'm sure it was very hard for him/her to move so far away. It's never easy to move away from people that you care about. I know they really enjoyed living so close to you, and they will really miss you. You should try visit them soon, and make sure to call them on the holiday. But first, you need to cheer up and get out and meet some new people."

25. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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26. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

27. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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28. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Imagine someone said this to you to help you deal with the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

"I know how much he/she enjoyed living so close to you, especially around holiday time. I know it will be really tough to be so far away from them this holiday. So what were you thinking about doing for Thanksgiving? If you'd like, I would love to have Thanksgiving dinner with you. I think it would be a lot of fun, let me know if you feel up to it or if there is anything else I can do to help. I am sure he/she will really miss you, especially around Thanksgiving." (IBD)

29. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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30. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

31. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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Finally, imagine someone said this to you about the MOVING AWAY problem . . .

“Of course they had to move away, how could anyone pass up an opportunity like that? Besides, they didn’t have that much keeping them here anyway. I know it must be very hard for you right now. I don’t know about you, but I would be feeling a little down, or even lonely. How are you doing with it?”

33. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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34. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

35. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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PROBLEM 3

Here is another problem think about . . .

SITUATION 3: Imagine that it has been one of the worst winters in many years. There has been a snow storm almost every week for the past month. You have been struggling with the flu for a few days, and your doctor has advised you to limit your time out in the cold weather. This year you will need to find someone to help you shovel the snow from your walkway.

Now imagine how you would feel if someone said the following messages to you . . .
How would you feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"The doctor says your not as young as you used to be. You've got to realize that you will only get sicker if you go out in cold weather like this to shovel the walkway. I think you should hire some kids in the neighborhood to shovel the walkway for you."

37. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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38. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- □ Spouse
- □ Daughter
- □ Grandson
- □ Son
- □ A Friend
- □ Granddaughter
- □ Other

39. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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40. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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</table>
Imagine how you would feel if someone said this to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"Since I have to shovel my own walkway in the morning, I'll come over and shovel yours too. After I shovel for you, you'll be able to get out of the house. Since you're just getting over the flu, I am worried about you getting sick again from all of this cold weather. I care about you and I want you to stay as healthy as you have always been. I'd hate to see you get sick again just because your walkway needs shoveling."

41. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely good</td>
<td>Sort of good</td>
<td>Not very good</td>
<td>Not at all good</td>
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42. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

43. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much like</td>
<td>Sort of like I have a choice</td>
<td>Sort of like I have no choice</td>
<td>Very much like I have no choice</td>
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44. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A Little helpful</td>
<td>A Little Unhelpful</td>
<td>Very Unhelpful</td>
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Here's one last message someone might say to you about the SNOW problem . . .

"I really care about you and I would hate to see you get sick again, especially since you are recovering so well. I have always admired the way you could take care of yourself, but I am worried that you might get sick again if you go out in this weather to shovel your walkway each morning. I don't know about you but I would feel very confused and frightened about what to do. Do you think there is anything you can to do make shoveling the walkway a little less threatening to your health?"

45. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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</table>

Extremely good  Sort of good  Not very good  Not at all good

46. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

_____Spouse  _____Daughter  _____Grandson

_____Son  _____A Friend  _____Granddaughter  _____Other

47. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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Very much like  Sort of like  I have a choice  Sort of like  I have no choice  Very much like  I have no choice

48. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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</table>

Very helpful  A Little helpful  A Little Unhelpful  Very Unhelpful
Imagine you are having this problem . . .

**Problem 4:** Imagine that for the past 15 years, you have met the same group of friends for lunch. Each week you went to the same restaurant that you all really liked. These lunch meetings were a great way to catch up with your friends and to socialize. Recently, more and more members of your group have not been able to attend the lunches. Some people are too sick, others can't get around as easily, and some have moved away. You have been feeling down and a little lonely about not being able to meet with your friends the way you used to.

On the next few pages, please tell us how you would feel about different things people might say to you to help deal with this problem . . .
Imagine someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"If it were me, I would be feeling a little lonely right now. Maybe there is a way you guys can still get together, if you want. Also, if you feel up to it, there are probably a lot of new people you could meet in the neighborhood as well. It's a shame you are all getting so old that you can't even get out for lunch anymore. I'm sure everyone will have no problem finding something else to do since they can't meet you anymore."

49. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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50. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

____ Spouse  ____ Daughter  ____ Grandson

____ Son  ____ A Friend  ____ Granddaughter  ____ Other

51. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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52. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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What if somebody said this to you instead about the LUNCH problem . . .

"Boy, you guys are not getting any younger! I can remember when you would all meet down at the old restaurant every week. Now, nobody can get out and around anymore. Don't be surprised if you don't hear from the old group as much as you used to, especially if you're not meeting anymore. You know what they say "out of sight, out of mind. Well, there is no use getting down about it, you should cheer up and do something about it. I decided that from now on, I will drive you down to the old restaurant, and pick up any of your friends that can't drive. You will all enjoy getting together again, and it will be good for you. Thanks to me, you will still be able to have a social life."

53. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

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54. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

- Spouse
- Daughter
- Grandson
- Son
- A Friend
- Granddaughter
- Other

55. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

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56. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

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Finally, imagine if someone said this to you about the LUNCH problem . . .

"You must be very frustrated to be stuck in a situation that is completely out of your control, but hey, what can you do? It happens to everyone sooner or later. I really care about you and I hate to see you feeling down. I know you really enjoyed meeting the old gang for lunch each week, and I know they loved being with you."

57. How much would this message make you feel good about yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Extremely good Sort of good Not very good Not at all good

58. Who would be most likely to say this message to you? (Please pick only ONE)

   ___Spouse   ___Daughter   ___Grandson
   ___Son     ___A Friend    ___Granddaughter    ___Other

59. Would this message make you feel like you could choose how to deal with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very much like Sort of like I Sort of like Very much like
I have a choice have a choice I have no choice I have no choice

60. Overall, how HELPFUL would this message be to you in dealing with the problem?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very helpful A Little helpful A Little Unhelpful Very Unhelpful