

## Exploring Communication Breakdowns in Marriages Affected by Emotional Neglect

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### Reviewers

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### 1. Round 1

#### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The claim “This chronic lack of emotional attunement can lead the neglected partner to internalize feelings of unworthiness...” is well-stated but could be supported by a direct empirical citation illustrating how emotional neglect leads to cognitive distortions or schema development.

While this paragraph effectively outlines the research gap, the sentence “the silent suffering experienced by many spouses... remains under-theorized” could benefit from more specificity—what aspects of “suffering” are missing in the literature (e.g., affective, cognitive, relational)?

In the quote “I’d ask a simple question, and she’d accuse me of attacking her,” clarify whether gender dynamics played a role across responses. Did men report being misinterpreted more often, or was this balanced?

The description “denial, minimizing issues...” is insightful. Consider linking this pattern with common defense mechanisms (e.g., projection, repression) to align with psychological theory.

The discussion of intergenerational patterns is compelling but underdeveloped. Please consider referencing transgenerational transmission of trauma or learned helplessness models to support your interpretation.

Response: Revised and uploaded the new document.

*1.2. Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

In “Marriages affected by emotional neglect often exhibit dysfunctional communication cycles marked by avoidance, hostility, or misinterpretation of intent,” consider distinguishing between reactive and proactive miscommunication to deepen the analysis.

The sentence “Digital saturation... has sometimes fostered distraction or avoidance” is valid but underdeveloped. Consider briefly mentioning empirical evidence or studies showing screen time’s direct correlation with decreased marital satisfaction.

The statement “These patterns were not isolated incidents...” is strong, but please elaborate on whether these patterns varied across demographic factors (e.g., age, education level, marital duration).

The statement “Several participants internalized the neglect as a reflection of their inadequacy” would benefit from elaboration on whether such internalizations were mediated by previous trauma, gender norms, or cultural expectations.

In “Even when participants desired emotional closeness, many feared...”, please consider exploring the paradox of approach-avoidance in neglected partners, referencing attachment insecurity if applicable.

Response: Revised and uploaded the new document.

**2. Revised**

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.