

**Abigail Caselli**  
**Assistant Professor, Western New England University**

**1. What first drew you to relationship science?**

I took a human sexuality course during my sophomore year of college. I remember being amazed that there is a way to scientifically study people's romantic relationships and sexual well-being. That course definitely set my interests!

**2. What's a project you're especially proud of right now, and why?**

I recently had a manuscript accepted in the Journal of Sex Research that replicated a study in Muise et al. (2019) while focusing on a sample of individuals in same-gender interracial relationships. In this study, we found that engaging in self-expansion was associated with a range of benefits for relationship quality and sexual well-being. I am especially proud of this work because it extends prior findings to a population that is often understudied in relationship science. It is also meaningful to me because an undergraduate collaborator played a significant role in the project, making the publication both scientifically and personally rewarding.

**3. What do you find most exciting or rewarding about studying relationships?**

I genuinely enjoy the research process. There is something exciting about watching an idea evolve into a testable hypothesis and then analyzing the data to see whether your predictions are supported. I also find it incredibly rewarding to involve students in that process. Helping them engage in the scientific study of relationships and watching them develop as researchers is one of the most meaningful parts of my work.

**4. What are you working on next, or what question are you most excited to pursue?**

I'm currently working on a project with my undergraduate research assistants that builds on my prior research examining the role of perspective-taking in the context of discrimination. Earlier versions of this work focused on individuals in interracial relationships. Specifically, we found that the White partner in an interracial relationship who considers their partner's perspective during discrimination experiences a broadening of their worldview, which has benefits for relationship quality. In this next phase, we are expanding the scope to examine other types of relationships in which couples may experience discrimination. I'm especially excited about exploring how perspective-taking may function as a protective factor across diverse relational contexts.

**5. What advice would you give to students or early-career scholars interested in relationship science?**

For undergraduate students: get involved in research as early as you can. Participating in research completely changed how I viewed relationship science and ultimately set me on this career path. It gives you hands-on experience, exposes you to the process behind the findings you read about in class, and helps you clarify what excites you most.

For early-career scholars: network intentionally. I have been incredibly fortunate to build meaningful collaborations through conferences and mentorship programs offered by professional organizations. Those relationships have shaped my research in important ways and opened doors to opportunities I would not have found on my own.