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Dimensions of Anticipated Reaction in Information Management: Anticipating Responses and Outcomes

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Abstract

Many models, theories, and frameworks of information management (e.g., privacy, disclosure, secrets) incorporate the concept of receiver response, both anticipated and actual. Although most if not all information management literature highlights the importance of the response variable, each perspective conceptualizes and/or operationalizes response differently. The lack of consistency across perspectives limits research design, theory testing, and scholars' ability to make comparisons among and across theoretical frameworks, as well as their ability to evaluate research findings within the broader context of information management theory. This project presents a review and synthesis of receiver response within the context of information sharing and decision making, including both immediate responses and longer-term outcomes of sharing the information.

Keywords

Response; Disclosure; Privacy; Secrets; Information Management; Reasons for Disclosure

Personal or private information is generally understood in information management literature as information that is otherwise unknown to others. The designation of what "counts" as personal or private stems from individuals, and what is considered private by one individual may not be considered private by another.¹ Thus, one strategy that information management scholars employ when researching "personal" or "private" information is to allow individuals to decide what they consider personal or private. Information management, then, describes the strategies individuals enact in order to manage or control their personal or private information (e.g., with whom information is shared, when, over what channels, etc.).

Individuals manage both their own and others' personal or private information through a variety of strategies. Common strategies include disclosure, non-disclosure, secret keeping, or avoidance, and these management strategies may fall under the broader heading of privacy. Scholars have developed theories, models, and frameworks that explain and predict the management of private information through the various strategies. Information management scholarship incorporates a broad range of concepts, ranging from boundaries to

catharsis, but one consistent factor between frameworks is the incorporation of the receiver and contemplation of how that person might, and actually does, respond if the individual decides to disclose.

The concept of receiver response may be especially important to the process of communicating with others, especially as it pertains to how individuals imagine the intended receiver might respond (anticipated response). In some information management frameworks, especially those developed in psychology, anticipated response appears to play a minimal role in the process of disclosure or building intimacy.² However, anticipated response functions in a more prominent role in frameworks developed in communication. The focus of this review centers on models and theories that were created by communication scholars and that include variables related to response. For example, in Communication Privacy Management Theory³ anticipated response is conceptualized as “disclosure ramifications” that are part of rule development. Further, the Model of Disclosure Decision Making in a Single Episode,⁴ Disclosure Decision-Making Model (DD-MM),⁵ Cycle of Concealment Model (CCM),⁶ and Revelation Risk Model⁷ all highlight an anticipated response construct that is integral to the disclosure decision-making process. Some models were not included, for example, the Disclosure Process Model (DPM),⁸ which is an important information management framework, however, this model focuses less on anticipated response and more on actual responses, and was not created by communication scholars. Table 1 provides an overview of the models, which anticipated response construct they incorporate, and some topics studied using the models as frameworks, to provide an idea of the contexts these models cover.

The anticipated response construct in each of the models is related to key disclosure-process outcomes (e.g., likelihood of or willingness to disclose personal, private, or secret information) and is predictive of likelihood of disclosure,⁹ willingness to reveal future secrets,¹⁰ and actual secret revelation.¹¹ These results suggest that anticipated response is seminal in the process of coming to an information-management decision. However, there are numerous unarticulated assumptions about both the nature of anticipated response and its operationalization. This lack of clarity limits scholars’ ability to make comparisons across models and studies, and to determine the precise function of anticipated response within the process of information management. Further, examination of the items used to measure anticipated response concepts across communication models suggest a multi-faceted conceptualization of anticipated response that is inconsistent across studies. It is unclear how these different conceptualizations relate to each other and the overall construct of anticipated response, as well as how they inform scholars’ understanding about the overall disclosure process. Thoughtful review and unraveling of the multiple ways anticipated response is conceptualized and assessed in the dominant information management paradigms of communication would augment existing frameworks of information management by facilitating an understanding of how, when, and what types of responses are important to decisions about information management. Explicating the multiple dimensions of the anticipated response construct may inform interpersonal disclosure intervention design. For example, the Brief Disclosure Intervention (Greene et al., 2013) is designed to increase HIV + individuals’ feelings of disclosure efficacy. Isolating the dimensions of anticipated response would allow for the creation of a similar intervention focused on accurately

anticipating receiver responses and identifying appropriate targets for disclosure. Clarity in the construct may also enable extension into other more task-based communicative interactions (as opposed to those based on interpersonal relationships) where anticipated response may be relevant (e.g., organizational communication, physician–patient interactions, disclosure-related interventions).

Anticipated Response and Anticipated Outcome

The terms anticipated response, reaction, and outcome are used somewhat interchangeably throughout the information management literature. The primary goal of this paper is to isolate and describe the concept of anticipated reaction. Table 1 provides an overview of information management models within or strongly associated with the communication discipline that highlight an anticipated response construct that is integral to the disclosure decision-making process. The review of these perspectives reveals that potential disclosers may perceive two distinct reaction-related variables, anticipated “response” and anticipated “outcome.”¹² Although these terms are not used in the Disclosure Process Model, the conceptual distinction is present in the model. The DD-MM,¹³ meanwhile, captures both concepts of anticipated response and anticipated outcome under the umbrella of *anticipated reactions*. In order to be precise in the articulation of the concept of anticipated reaction within the process of information management, the following sections first present clarification on the distinction between the related concepts of anticipated response and anticipated outcome, followed by a description of dimensions of anticipated response and anticipated outcomes that emerged from the literature (see Table 2). Suggested operationalization is also provided (see Table 3).

Anticipated Response

Dimensions of anticipated response and outcome exist along a continuum of abstractness. That is, disclosers may consider any possible response or outcome in a very narrow, concrete way (e.g., “he would give me a ride to the doctor’s office” or “she would give me a hug”) as well as a very broad, abstract fashion (e.g., “the effect would be positive” or “we would become closer”; see Table 2). At the most abstract level, there is a great deal of overlap among the dimensions of anticipated response and anticipated outcome, and the subtle nuances among the concepts are much more difficult to distinguish. These nuances are more pronounced at the most concrete level; however, a narrow conceptualization affords the least potential for generalizability across contexts and thus has more limited utility to a range of scholars. For example, the dimensions of anticipated response and outcome relevant to some specific types of information (e.g., disclosing “The child is yours” or “I’m worried that you’ll get my HIV”) may not be relevant to other contexts. Such disclosures might generate unique responses and outcomes that are unlikely to generalize across relationships or situations. Therefore, this project endeavors to identify the dimensions of response and outcome that are applicable to a broad range of information topics and relational contexts.

I define “response” as the receiver’s immediate verbal/nonverbal communicative and/or behavioral action, answer, or reply to the disclosure. In order to conceptually clarify

response from other related variables such as outcome, I conceptualize response as the most immediate or short-term communicative action following disclosure and that is contextually related to a particular action (the disclosure) and person (the discloser). Anticipated response is what individuals consider might happen during the interaction in which they share their personal and private information. In contrast, anticipated outcome is what individuals think might occur following the initial response and as a result of sharing the information (described in more detail in subsequent sections). A response may be communicated in words (“I am angry with you”), actions (receiver stalks out of the room, slamming the door), or both. This conceptualization also includes silence, avoidance, or a subject change as an immediate response. A lack of response may be especially relevant when people communicate personal or private information through non-face-to-face (FtF) channels. For example, if the discloser leaves a phone message or sends an email and there is no reply, which may contribute to anxiety for the discloser. In many cases, the discloser would be unable to determine if the message was received or if the lack of a response was intentional.

A methodical review of the information management frameworks within or strongly associated with the communication discipline that highlights an anticipated response construct that is integral to the disclosure decision-making process (see Table 1) indicates four major dimensions of anticipated response: *emotional reaction*, *support* (emotional, instrumental, or informational), *reciprocity*, and *avoidance*. Subsequent sections provide more details regarding how these dimensions manifest in the literature as both anticipated and actual responses. Worth noting, disclosure recipients may respond to a single disclosure with a reaction that includes elements of multiple dimensions. It is reasonable to anticipate more than one response or outcome to a single disclosure, especially if the shared information is particularly significant.

The Dimensions of Anticipated Response

I used a number of different strategies to determine the dimensions of anticipated response. First, I methodically reviewed information management literature (theories, frameworks, and perspectives, as well as empirical research conducted absent theoretical framework), and confirmed the results of this review with experts in the field. I reviewed both anticipated and actual responses to disclosure, and there were frequently more examples of actual disclosure responses (see Table 3 for evidence of this assertion). Additionally, when possible I obtained and used items and scales developed by other scholars to measure concepts related to anticipated and actual response (in both published and conference papers) as well as items derived from a disclosure decision-making coding scheme¹⁴ (see Tables 2, 3, and 4 for more details). I propose that these dimensions best capture the dimensions of responses (both anticipated and actual) represented in the literature. I next discuss the first of the four dimensions: anticipated and actual emotional reaction to the disclosure of personal or private information.

Emotional Reaction

Anticipated emotional reaction is often conceptualized in terms of valence and is the broadest of the dimensions of anticipated response. Seminal information management

models and frameworks demonstrate evidence of emotional reaction to disclosure.¹⁵ Emotional reaction is similar to a more general evaluation of anticipated or actual response (“positive, negative, neutral”), which may have emotive content. Emotions “arise when an individual attends to a situation and sees it as relevant to his or her goals.”¹⁶ Examples of negative emotional reactions are reported most frequently in the literature, and many information management frameworks identify specific anticipated negative emotional reactions to disclosure. These types of responses are often designated as examples of why a potential discloser might decide not to share personal or private information (or secrets) with another person (for specific examples and suggested measurement see Table 3).

Illustrations of positive emotional reactions to information disclosure are not equally represented in the literature and are, in fact, quite limited.¹⁷ Limited evidence of positive responses may be attributable to participants’ tendencies to report about information or disclosure experiences that are negatively valenced, stigmatized, or identity-threatening (see Table 3).¹⁸ Examples of responses that are more positive in nature are present in the literature, and included within the dimension of support.

Support

The concept of support from relational partners and friends is well represented in the literature. Receivers may respond to disclosure by offering or withdrawing some form of support.¹⁹ The literature illustrates several dimensions of support that can be organized into the following sub-dimensions: emotional (for example, offering a shoulder to cry on or listening sympathetically), instrumental (for example, transporting the discloser to the doctor or providing loan money), and informational (for example, remarking “I know this great cancer information resource online; let me show it to you”). Some scholars have empirically tested the role of anticipated support in disclosure decision-making (for examples and suggested measurement see Table 3). As a caveat, support, though “positive,” is not always helpful or desired,²⁰ and disclosure likely does not always beget positive forms of support.

Reciprocity or Partner Disclosure

Receiver disclosure (also known as “reciprocity”) is a narrow dimension of anticipated response. However, the concept of disclosure “in kind” is well represented in the literature. Reciprocity is an integral component of Social Penetration Theory²¹ where, in general, intimate disclosures are said to encourage the same (compared to superficial disclosures, which are expected to encourage superficial receiver disclosure). The reciprocity concept is also demonstrated in other frameworks, for example, CPM’s²² disclosure prerequisites indicate a proclivity to choose disclosure targets who are “open in return.”²³ In the CPM conceptualization, reciprocity is not limited to disclosure responses about the same topic but consists of general openness. That is, in order for the receiver response to be viewed as reciprocal, the response does not have to be a disclosure about the same type of information or at the same level of depth and breadth (for examples and suggested measurement see Table 3).

Generally, reciprocal disclosure is conceptualized as sharing information that is also personal or private. I conceptualize the anticipated response dimension of anticipated

reciprocity more broadly than it has been conceptualized in prior literature. This is especially true of health-information disclosure examples in existing literature where the reciprocal disclosure is topically exact (e.g., when the discloser shares his or her breast cancer, the receiver also shares his or her breast cancer diagnosis²⁴).

Avoidance

In contrast to reciprocity, receivers may refuse to respond or avoid responding. Avoidance is the narrowest dimension of anticipated response to disclosure and refers to instances when receivers respond by *not* responding. A large body of literature discusses individuals' tendency to avoid talking about certain topics within relationships.²⁵ Avoiding certain topics (e.g., politics, in-laws, weight) in relationships may serve a number of functions,²⁶ such as conflict avoidance.²⁷ Topic avoidance is an important facet of information management and is reconceptualized in this project to reflect general communicative avoidance as a response to disclosure. Thus, as a dimension of anticipated response, anticipated avoidance is framed as a response (e.g., silence, topic change, refusal to discuss the information) to the initial disclosure (previously unknown, from the perception of the discloser; for discussion of "putative" secrets, or information that the discloser thinks is "unknown" to the receiver that the receiver is actually aware of²⁸) within the initial interaction. Table 3 provides examples and suggested measurement.

Anticipated Outcome

Research indicates that when individuals consider sharing their information, they consider both how others will respond in the initial interaction when they first share the information and the potential long-term effects or outcomes of sharing the information. Potential disclosers may consider outcomes to their relationship with the receiver, their relationship with others, potential outcomes for the receiver only, or potential outcomes for themselves. Relationship outcomes may stem from the evaluation of the receiver or the receiver's response where the discloser may make character judgments about the receiver based on his or her response. For example, the discloser may decide that the receiver "is a really angry person." These assessments are likely subject to fundamental attribution errors (see Ross²⁹ and Derlega and Winstead³⁰ for discussion of the attributional approach to disclosure). That is, people are likely to attribute the receiver's "negative" responses to a flaw in the receiver, whereas they might attribute their own equally negative feedback to the response to more situational or environmental factors. This negativity bias is especially important to bear in mind, considering the preponderance of empirical investigations that rely on retrospective reports of disclosure experience solely from the perspective of the discloser. Outcomes are frequently considered in terms of finality. Conceptualizing outcomes in terms of a conclusion, such as relationship dissolution, may only be applicable to certain disclosure topics (e.g., infidelity, unexpected pregnancy, STI transmission) as it may be difficult to isolate the cumulative effect of one disclosure later in time if the information is more innocuous or does not directly affect the relationship between the discloser and the receiver.

The Dimensions of Anticipated Outcome

When considering how to manage information, individuals consider what might happen in the initial interaction as well as what might happen in the future. Studies have demonstrated that anticipated response and anticipated outcomes, although correlated as expected, are empirically distinct in the perceptions of participants.³¹ I categorize anticipated disclosure outcomes into four dimensions derived from the Derlega perspective.³² These dimensions reflect (1) outcomes for the discloser, (2) outcomes for the receiver, (3) outcomes for the relationship between the discloser and the receiver, and (4) the relationship between the discloser and people other than the receiver. The examples of the four dimensions of anticipated outcomes are well illustrated in the literature (although often these examples have been conceptualized as “responses”).

According to CPM, when people share information with others, they become co-owners of that information. Sharing information in relationships is like throwing a stone into a body of water. There is the initial impact and splash (response) as well as the waves that emanate from the point of entry (outcomes). The model of disclosure decision-making in a single episode³³ is one of the few models of information management that clearly separates anticipated response from actual reaction (behavioral, emotional, cognitive) and from actual outcomes (for disclosure, recipient, and relationship). The model³⁴ indicates that outcomes for the discloser, disclosure target, and relationship are separate from reactions, which this paper refers to as responses. The model specifies that reactions between the discloser and recipient may influence the outcomes experienced. Table 2 provides more information regarding outcomes as defined by the model of disclosure decision-making in a single episode.

This paper also adopts a conceptualization of disclosure that is focused on individual responses to the communication of information with a particular person and different from overall disclosures or disclosure over time. Relationship dissolution, for example, is a relational event and represents a relational effect rather than an isolated response. The feedback “I am breaking up with you” is a communicative and enacted response that may follow a specific disclosure. However, this particular statement is predicated by a series of relational events over the length of the relationship and is likely connected to more factors in the relationship than one isolated disclosure event.³⁵

Consistent with the conceptualization of anticipated response, anticipated outcome is conceptualized from the perspective of the discloser as it relates to one specific piece of information shared with one specific person. Actual outcomes may emerge directly from receivers’ responses; however, outcomes remain conceptualized from the perspective of the discloser. The dimensions of anticipated outcome include the feedback that results from or refers to the sharing the information and the receiver’s subsequent response, as well as any character judgments disclosers make about receivers based on the response(s). Moreover, sharing information may have multiple outcomes. That is, a single disclosure may have outcomes for the discloser and/or the receiver, for the relationship between the discloser and the receiver, and/or for the discloser’s relationships with others.

Discloser-Oriented Outcomes

The potential psychological and tangible effects of information sharing on the discloser are represented by discloser-oriented outcomes.³⁶ Discloser-oriented outcomes may be broadly conceptualized in terms of valences positive, negative, or neutral. Examples of anticipated discloser-oriented outcomes often represented in the literature include catharsis, identity threat, revenge, and differential treatment (see Table 4 for examples and suggested measurement). Sharing information may also result in outcomes more directly related to the receivers of that information, discussed next.

Receiver-Oriented Outcomes

The psychological or tangible costs and benefits of the disclosure that predominantly affect the receiver represent the dimension of anticipated receiver-oriented outcomes *from the perspective of the discloser*.³⁷ Receiver perspectives (how receivers perceive their responses and the outcomes of the disclosure) are underrepresented in the literature³⁸ and should be explored in future research. This project, not dissimilar from other disclosure models (e.g., CCM, DD-MM, RRM), conceptualizes receiver-oriented outcomes through the interpretation of the discloser. Examples of receiver-oriented outcomes present in the literature are receiver preparation or education, sacrifices made by the receiver, and receiver suffering/experiencing pain (see Table 4 for examples and suggested measurement). In addition to disclosure outcomes that are related to the disclosers themselves and to the receivers of information, when considering how to manage information individuals may also anticipate outcomes that are related to the relationship between themselves and their intended receiver.

Relationship-Oriented Outcomes

The anticipated relationship-oriented outcomes dimension describes the potential benefits or costs to the relationship between the discloser and the receiver.³⁹ This dimension is specifically limited to the effects of information management on the relationship between *the discloser and the receiver*. Potential relationship-oriented disclosure outcomes between the discloser and the receiver include (but are not limited to) three examples prevalent in the literature: alteration of relationship status, liking, and boundary violation (see Table 4 for example and suggested measurement).

Other-Oriented Outcomes

The final outcome represents the psychological and/or tangible risks and rewards to disclosers' relationships *with individuals other than the receiver* (other-oriented outcomes) and receivers' relationships with individuals other than the discloser. Because the general focus of this project is on the discloser, the receiver-oriented outcome dimension encompasses the potential costs and benefits to receivers' relationships with other people. That is, receivers may "suffer" in the form of stress on relationships between receivers and individuals other than the discloser in addition to potentially being exposed to pain, suffering, embarrassment, shame, or other negative consequences contingent on the discloser's information management. However, the other-oriented anticipated outcome

dimension is only meant to include potential consequences to the disclosers' relationship with others, in order to remain parallel to the discloser-oriented outcomes dimension, and to be consistent in the focus on discloser perspective. Although both discloser- and other-oriented dimensions of anticipated outcome are relevant to effects on the discloser (e.g., self-appraisal), the potential outcomes of the disclosure on disclosers' relationships with individuals other than, or in addition to, the receiver are a separate dimension because other-oriented dimensions are present in extant literature and are conceptually distinct (see Table 4 for examples and suggested measurement).

Discussion and Future Implications

The concept of anticipated reaction has implications for the broader spectrum of information management research as well as applied research. One way to use the dimensions of anticipated reaction is to help identify the areas of overlap within existing scholarship. For example, future research might use the dimensions of anticipated reaction identified in this manuscript to determine which constructs in the extant literature (e.g., criteria for revealing secrets, and functions of secrets⁴⁰) are similar and which distinctions actually matter in terms of theory and practice, and actual disclosure decision-making. The dimensions of anticipated reaction presented in this paper offer systematic description and measurement that bring together the elements of criteria, functions, and reasons related to anticipated reaction. For example, the criteria of "they would need to disclose something similar" would fall under the dimension of anticipated reciprocity, and both the secret function of "protect others" and the disclosure reason "protecting the other" would fall under the dimension of anticipated receiver-oriented outcomes. In Derlega's reasons for and against HIV disclosure,⁴¹ catharsis may be considered an anticipated discloser-oriented outcome of disclosure. Derlega's fear of rejection may manifest as anticipated emotional reaction or lack of anticipated support. The duty to inform and protect the other may manifest as anticipated receiver-oriented outcomes of disclosure. The current paper systematically integrates and synthesizes aspects of these multiple perspectives and allows greater precision in explanation and prediction of information management.

Inconsistency in anticipated reaction conceptualization limits scholars' ability to understand how or even why anticipated reaction predicts information management. The dimensional structure of anticipated reaction may also be useful in understanding how different dimensions of anticipated reaction have predicted information management in existing research. For example, instead of claiming that the overall concept of anticipated reaction predicted likelihood of disclosure or secret revelation, the dimensions of anticipated reaction presented here enables researchers to express how, in past research, anticipated *support* predicted (or failed to predict) information-management decisions. Based on these findings, we can speculate about how the process may have unfolded differently if a different dimension of anticipated reaction had been tested. That is, it allows us to pinpoint more specifically what drives information-management decisions and answer questions such as: Does anticipated emotional support determine decision-making, as tested in the DD-MM? Do negative emotional reactions or fear of perceived negative anticipated outcomes result in continued secret concealment (similar to what was demonstrated in the CCM and RRM)? Are some responses or outcomes more salient to information-management decisions than

others? We may discover that anticipated support is more salient in health-related disclosure contexts, whereas emotional reaction is more salient in other contexts (e.g., disclosure of stigmatized information). In the same vein, we may learn that anticipated reciprocity is more important to information-management processes in the early stages of a relationship, or that anticipated avoidance may be more central to information management in the context of a relationship with differential power. Therefore, future research designs should allow for comparison of the different dimensions of anticipated reaction in predictive models of information management (e.g., the CCM, DD-MM, RRM). Additionally, future research should consider individuals' processes for determining how others may respond to their personal or private information.

The dimensions of anticipated reaction could also be used in applied contexts. This could range from intervention design (e.g., an intervention that helps individuals identify appropriate disclosure targets and access social support) to projects designed to inform families about difficult topics. For example, some sources advocate frequent communication between individuals who have cancer and their families⁴² but sometimes neglect to realize that disclosure requires response, sometimes creates receiver burden, and that many of the positive outcomes resultant from disclosure (e.g., catharsis) are contingent upon that receiver reaction. Understanding reaction dimensions could inform family communication, help alleviate receiver burden, and work to create family-communication interventions that teach individuals how to respond in a way that is beneficial to both disclosers and receivers.

Conclusion

Over the past several decades, scholars have worked to explain, predict, and control how individuals manage information. Some of this work has focused on modeling and empirically testing the process of coming to a decision to disclose or continue to conceal personal or private information (e.g., CCM, DD-MM, RRM). A primary factor in this process is individuals' perceptions of how another might respond to their information during the interaction where they disclose the information (anticipated response), as well as the potential outcomes of sharing the information for themselves, receivers, and their relationships (anticipated outcome; together under the umbrella term of anticipated reaction). Many information management models incorporate anticipated reaction variables that consistently demonstrate predictive power in information-management decisions.⁴³ However, despite the importance of anticipated reaction in multiple theories, models, and programs of research within information management (e.g., CCM, CPM, and DD-MM, as well as Derlega's and Vangelisti's programs of research in disclosure and in secrets) the concept of anticipated reaction has not been clearly or consistently articulated. This absence of clarity is problematic for several reasons. First, ambiguity surrounding the conceptualization and operationalization of anticipated reaction to information management inhibits full explanation and prediction of information-management decisions. Further, due to the significance of the concept of anticipated reaction in disclosure decision-making (as demonstrated in existing research⁴⁴), a unified and clearly articulated conceptualization of anticipated reaction would allow for more targeted interventions in applied settings (e.g., in disclosure interventions⁴⁵). Finally, an articulated, unified conceptualization of anticipated reaction will allow scholars to examine the existing literature to determine which constructs

are the same and which are different, as well as to isolate how the differences matter within the context of information management.

The goals of theory are to explain, predict, and control.⁴⁶ The capacity of existing information management theories and models is limited in the pursuit of these goals by the conceptual and methodological inconsistency surrounding anticipated reaction. Although most, if not all, information management theories agree that anticipated reaction is important in information management, there is limited consistency in the conceptualization and measurement of this concept within and across perspectives. The formulation of clear conceptualization and measurement of anticipated reaction can augment both existing frameworks of information management and future research in this area. The clarity surrounding the concept of anticipated reaction provided by the present study also enables extension of the anticipated reaction concept into other contexts where anticipated response may be especially relevant (e.g., in applied contexts in family communication, organizational communication, physician-patient interactions, and/or counseling, as well as in related literature, such as work on the MUM effect, the noticeable pause before delivering bad news). This project used extant literature to determine and explicate dimensions of anticipated reaction as the first step in the process of providing clarity to the role of anticipated reaction in information management.

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Table 1

Models Highlighting an Anticipated Response Construct that is Integral to the Disclosure Decision-making Process

Model/Author	Anticipated Response Construct	Topics Studied
Communication Privacy Management Theory (CPM) ^a	Disclosure Ramifications	<p>Quantitative</p> <p>Topic avoidance/permeability of boundaries^b</p> <p>Topic avoidance/relational satisfaction^c</p> <p>Tension between information disclosure and privacy within e-commerce relationships^d</p> <p>Two-study investigation of private disclosures in in-law relationships^e</p> <p>Qualitative</p> <p>The role of dialectical tensions in stepfamily members' boundary coordination efforts^f</p> <p>Privacy dilemmas created when "informal" healthcare advocates participate in a patient's visit with a physician^g</p> <p>Relationship between anticipated and actual responses to HIV disclosure^h</p>
Model of Disclosure Decision Making in a Single Episode ⁱ	Anticipated Response as part of the third step of the disclosure decision-making process	No known measures of anticipated response as conceptualized by this model
The Disclosure Decision-Making Model (DD-MM) ^j	Anticipated Response and/or Anticipated Reaction	<p>Disclosed and undisclosed health information in individuals with a non-visible health condition^k</p> <p>Ongoing disclosure decisions between partners managing a heart condition^l</p> <p>How assessment of information and potential receiver affect disclosure efficacy, willingness to disclose, and actual disclosure decisions in a longitudinal dyadic study^m</p>
Cycle of Concealment Model (CCM) ⁿ	Anticipated Response as related to expectation of negative response	The effect of secret revelation on a relationship ⁿ
Revelation Risk Model (RRM) ^o	Risk Assessment	<p>Risk assessment and willingness to disclose^o</p> <p>Using RRM, DD-MM, and CPM to ground an investigation of disclosure decision-making in couples managing information about infertility^p</p>
The Disclosure Processes Model (DPM) ^q	Responsiveness and/or supportive response	No known measures of anticipated response as conceptualized by this model

^aSee Petronio, *Boundaries of Privacy: Dialectics of Disclosure*.

^bSee Caughlin and Golish, "An analysis of the association between topic avoidance and dissatisfaction."

^cSee Caughlin and Afifi, "When is topic avoidance unsatisfying?"

^dSee Metzger, "Communication privacy management in electronic commerce."

^eSee Serewicz, and Canary, "Assessments of disclosure from the in-laws."

^fSee Afifi, and Schrod, "Uncertainty and the avoidance of the state of one's family/relationships in stepfamilies, post-divorce single parent families, and first marriage families."

^gSee Petronio et al., "Family and friends as healthcare advocates."

^hSee Greene and Faulkner, "Self-Disclosure in Relationships of HIV-Positive African-American Adolescent Females."

ⁱSee Greene, Derlega, and Mathews, "Self-Disclosure in Personal Relationships."

^jSee Greene, "An Integrated Model of Health Disclosure Decision-Making."

^kSee Greene et al., "Disclosure Decisions in Existing Relationships Online."

^lSee Checton and Greene, "Beyond Initial Disclosure."

^mSee Greene et al., "Assessing information and relationships in disclosure decisions."

ⁿSee Afifi and Steuber, "The Cycle of Concealment Model."

^oSee Afifi and Steuber, "The Revelation Risk Model (RRM)."

^pSee Steuber and Solomon, "Factors That Predict Married Partners' Disclosures about Infertility to Social Network Members."

^qSee Chaudoir and Fisher, "The Disclosure Processes Model."

Table 2

Definitions, Descriptions, and Examples of Overlapping Concepts Related to Anticipated Reaction, Response, and Outcome

Term	Definition/Description	Example(s)
Anticipated Reaction	Consideration about what might happen if information is disclosed to another person ^a	"I would have to know she won't attack me for my family's views" ^b
Expected Response and/or Expected Reactions	Conceptualized as six themes: expectations of negative emotional reactions, receiving support, being treated differently, targets telling others, being treated no differently, and being unsure of a target's response ^c	"I wouldn't tell that boy for nothing, man, when he gets mad he say little stuff, you know. And he's always making trouble, always saying little stuff" ^d
Anticipated Response	A concept that includes a subjective assessment by the discloser about the potential response of the receiver once information is shared ^e	"If I knew that this family member would react positively to my secret, I would reveal it to him/her" ^h
Anticipated Outcome	Outcomes may be influenced by the reactions between the discloser and the recipient ^f	"... the partners in the relationship may click as friends; they may decide to meet at a future time to talk again; they may feel intimate" ⁱ
	Outcomes manifest as a desire to avoid or achieve a particular outcome ^g	An HIV discloser hopes "they will not break up with me" ^j

^aSee Greene, "An Integrated Model of Health Disclosure Decision-Making;" Greene and Faulkner, "Self-Disclosure in Relationships of HIV-Positive African-American Adolescent Females;" Vangelisti, Caughlin and Timmerman, "Criteria for Revealing Family Secrets."

^bSee Vangelisti, Caughlin and Timmerman, "Criteria for Revealing Family Secrets," 8.

^cSee Greene and Faulkner, "Self-Disclosure in Relationships of HIV-Positive African-American Adolescent Females," 305.

^dIbid., 306.

^eSee Greene, "An Integrated Model of Health Disclosure Decision-Making," 229.

^fSee Derlega and Winstead, "Personal Accounts of Disclosing and Concealing HIV-Positive Test Results," 414.

^gSee Zea, Reisen, Poppen, Echeverry and Bianchi, "Disclosure of HIV-Positive Status to Latino Gay Men's Social Networks."

^hSee Afifi and Steuber, "The Revelation Risk Model (RRM);" and Afifi and Steuber, "The Cycle of Concealment Model."

ⁱSee Derlega and Winstead, "Personal Accounts of Disclosing and Concealing HIV-Positive Test Results," 414.

^jSee Zea et al., "Disclosure of HIV-Positive Status to Latino Gay Men's Social Networks."

Table 3

Dimensions, Examples, and Suggested Measurements of Anticipated Responses

Dimension	Examples	Suggested Measurement ^d
Emotional Reaction	<p>Receiver withdrawing, losing their temper, and/or sulking^b</p> <p>Receiver insulting the discloser, criticizing the discloser's shortcomings, making the discloser feel stupid, and/or attacking the discloser's character^d</p> <p>Receiver "getting angry"^{a,c}</p> <p>Receiver showing disappointment^{ad}</p> <p>Receiver blaming the discloser^{abc}</p> <p>Receiver responding w/disapproval and ridicule^{bc}</p>	<p>At first, my friend would have a negative emotional reaction</p> <p>The first thing my friend would do or say would be negative</p> <p>My friend would initially freak out</p> <p>My friend would initially become upset</p> <p>My friend would initially judge me</p>
Support	<p>Positive</p> <p>Receiver providing support, assistance, or help that is emotional and/or instrumental^{befg}</p> <p>Anticipation of support positively predicts both disclosure efficacy and likelihood of disclosure^d</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Receiver withdrawing support leading to "being cut off from the family"^h</p> <p>Receiver revealing fear about how a diagnosis may create burden for him/herⁱ</p>	<p>At first, my friend would comfort me</p> <p>The first thing my friend would do is offer to help me</p> <p>My friend would initially offer emotional support</p> <p>My friend would initially offer instrumental support (accompany to doctor, loan money)</p> <p>My friend would initially withdraw emotional support</p> <p>Before long, my friend would withdraw instrumental support ("cut me off")</p>
Reciprocity/ Partner Disclosure	<p>Receiver sharing "thoughts, feelings, facts and information" in response to the disclosure^j</p> <p>Receiver reciprocity is required before disclosure^k</p>	<p>Initially, my friend would also share personal or private information</p> <p>My friend would initially share personal/private thoughts and/or emotions</p>
Avoidance	<p>Receivers "refusing to discuss" the secret or private information^d</p> <p>Receivers responding with "silence"^l</p> <p>Receivers do not acknowledge receipt of information disclosed via media channels (e.g., email, IM, text)^d</p>	<p>At first, my friend would refuse to discuss the information</p> <p>My friend would immediately change the subject</p> <p>At first, my friend wouldn't respond (s/he would be silent, not acknowledge the information)</p>

^a Instructions for the items preceded a 5 or 7 point Likert-type scale and were as follows: "These items ask more specifically about what you think would happen if you decided to share this information with this person. How do you think this friend would INITIALLY respond if you were to tell him/her this information?" Measurement items were derived from existing literature and previously published scales noted throughout this table, particularly in the "Examples" column.

^b See Afifi and Steuber, "The Cycle of Concealment Model."

^c See Derlega et al., "Reasons for HIV Disclosure/Nondisclosure."

^d See Afifi and Steuber, "The Revelation Risk Model (RRM)."

^e See Vangelisti, Caughlin and Timmerman, "Criteria for Revealing Family Secrets."

^f See Greene, "An Integrated Model of Health Disclosure Decision-Making."

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^g See Petronio, Boundaries of Privacy: Dialectics of Disclosure.

^h See Limandri, "Disclosure of Stigmatizing Conditions."

ⁱ See George and Gwyther, "Caregiver Burden, the Physical, Emotional and/or Financial Toll of Providing Care."

^j See Reis and Shaver, "Intimacy as an Interpersonal Process;" Manne et al., "The Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy;" and Manne et al., "Couples' Support-Related Communication."

^k See Vangelisti, Caughlin and Timmerman, "Criteria for Revealing Family Secrets."

^l See Derlega, Lovejoy and Winstead, "Personal Accounts of Disclosing and Concealing;" Derlega et al., *Self Disclosure*; and Derlega et al., "Why Does Someone Reveal Highly Personal Information?"

Table 4

Dimensions, Examples, and Suggested Measurements of Anticipated Outcomes

Dimension	Examples	Suggested Measurement ^a
Discloser-Oriented Catharsis	Pressure of concealing the information builds up and “breaks” (similar to a fever) upon disclosure ^b Relates to expressive therapy ^c and relief at “getting it out” ^d	After time, revealing the information would make my friend think better of me
Identity Threat	Sharing information, or making others co-owners of information, makes individuals vulnerable to “influence, embarrassment... social invalidation,” and rejection ^{e,f} Receiver makes discloser “feel bad” about him/herself ^g	Revealing this information would ultimately harm the way my friend sees me In the end, revealing the information would really harm my friend’s perception of the person I truly am
Revenge	Receiver potentially uses the information against the discloser; viewed as a component of defense ^h and secret keeping ^{ei}	
Differential Treatment	Receiver becomes “cold, distant, or less affectionate” ^f Receiver may act “in a patronizing or overprotective manner” ^j	Telling would negatively affect how my friend would feel about me down the road
Receiver-Oriented Education	Desire to inform receiver; also known as other-focused reasons ^k	
Receiver Sacrifices	A criterion for keeping a secret A reason for nondisclosure ^j	It would ultimately hurt my friend’s feelings if s/he knew the information
Receiver Suffering or Experiencing pain	Trying to prevent receiver feeling shame or embarrassment; not disclosing because of receiver’s failing health ^l Trying not to create stress for the receiver ^g	I think telling my friend would eventually negatively impact his/her emotional health After time, I think my friend would experience emotional pain over things I am going through
Relationship-Oriented Alteration of Relationship status	Reflecting on the relationship between the discloser and receiver, and considering relational security, ^e loss of relationship, ^m and wondering if relationship will be as “good” after disclosure ^g	I think telling my friend would eventually end or severely alter our relationship If I revealed the information, in the end, my relationship with my friend would never be as good as it is now
Liking	Concern that receiver will no longer like the discloser after revelation ⁿ	Ultimately, my friend would no longer like me if s/he knew the information
Boundary Violation	Representing the unwanted further sharing of personal information especially by co-owners ^o and Prior Restraint Phrases (PRPs) where the discloser specifically asks the receiver not to further share the information ^p	
Other-Oriented	Concerns that relationships with other friends or family members might be negatively affected by disclosure ^{hg}	Revealing the information (to my friend) would eventually create stress for other people who are important to me If I told my friend, I would ultimately lose a bond that I have

Dimension	Examples	Suggested Measurement ^a
		with other people Other people would never trust me in the future if I told my friend the information

^a Instructions for the items preceded a 5 or 7 point Likert-type scale and were as follows: “The next set of items ask about the more LONG TERM OUTCOMES of what you think would happen if you decide to share this information with your friend. What do you **think** would happen **down the road (in a few months or so)** if you were to tell him/her this information?” Measurement items were derived from existing literature and previously published scales noted throughout this table, particularly in the “Examples” column.

^b See Stiles, “I have to talk to somebody: A fever model of disclosure.”

^c See Pennebaker, *Emotion, disclosure, and health*.

^d See Afifi and Caughlin, “A Close Look at Revealing Secrets and Some Consequences that Follow.”

^e See Derlega and Margulis, “Why loneliness occurs.”

^f See Derlega et al., “Reasons for HIV Disclosure/Nondisclosure.”

^g See Afifi and Steuber, “The Cycle of Concealment Model.”

^h See Afifi and Steuber, “The Revelation Risk Model (RRM).”

ⁱ See Gross and Thompson, *Emotion regulation: Conceptual foundations*.

^j See Barbee et al., “Helpful and Unhelpful Forms of Social Support for HIV-Positive Individuals.”

^k See Derlega and Winstead, “HIV-Infected Partners’ Attributions for the Disclosure or Nondisclosure;” and Jourard, *Self-disclosure: An experimental analysis of the transparent self*.

^l See Vangelisti and Caughlin, “Revealing Family Secrets.”

^m See Altman and Taylor, *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships*.

ⁿ See Kelly and McKillop, “Consequences of Revealing Personal Secrets.”

^o See Derlega et al., “Reactions to an HIV-Positive Man;”

^p Venetis et al., “You can’t tell anyone but...”