



PREDICTING AN END TO ONE'S RELATIONSHIP



Breakups happen from time to time, and research has shown that people who actively consider breaking up start taking steps to end the relationship. However, breakup decisions do not typically revolve around just one person. We tend to consider our partner's thoughts and feelings too!



In a paper by **SMU Assistant Professor of Psychology Kenneth Tan** and his co-researchers, they wondered if people also thought about whether their partners had plans to break up - also termed *perceived partner dissolution consideration* (PPDC). If so, how accurate are these perceptions? [Read more here.](#)



KEY FINDINGS

There are distinct differences between perceiving that a partner wants to break up versus perceiving that a partner is committed to the relationship.

For example, someone may be actively considering breaking up as they are leaving the country, but is nonetheless still committed to the relationship.



We can be both accurate yet biased regarding PPDC. In 2 studies featuring 235 couples from Singapore, couples were able to accurately predict that their partner wanted to break up. However, being biased, they underestimated *how much* their own partner wanted to break up.



For people who tend to fear abandonment and rejection (i.e., having an anxious attachment style), they become hypervigilant to relationship threats. This resulted in anxiously-attached people overestimating how much their partner wanted to break up.



Underestimation of the PPDC is beneficial as it could lead to less worry about partners threatening to end the relationship. Anxiously-attached individuals' overestimation of their partner's breakup intentions could ironically lead to destructive behaviours that might hasten a breakup.

