

- 3. The attribute of compassion and the soothing function, both commonly associated with the female caregiver, may be manifested in participants' ability to soothe their partners.**

The finding in the Phase II online questionnaire that 81 individual participants (66.3% of 122) indicated that his partner always "Tries to bring me out of it when I am restless, bored, depressed or otherwise upset" speaks to a soothing function that resonates with the number one attribute of the female parent, "compassionate." It is possible that this soothing function hearkens to the earliest of interactions, the parent bonding with child. However, the soothing function is not necessarily one bounded by gender. Within this sample, many participants reported mothers who worked primarily in the home caring for their families. In those cases, it may have been possible that females provided primary contact with participants and, thus, were associated with the soothing function. However, that a female provided a primary soothing function does not exclude the possibility that a male caregiver (or others who assisted in caregiving for that matter) enhanced that soothing function and/or facilitated some other aspect of a regulatory, soothing function. Nevertheless, if in this case females were the caregivers who provided the soothing function, it is a testament to the fluidity of object relating that the same characteristic would be re-found in a male partner. *Participants were able to use positive early representations of internalized parental caring patterns in their current romantic relationships.*