

8. The desire for sexual monogamy may have a correlation to participants' feeling that there was a lack of permanence and stability in their parents.

The most thought-provoking finding regarding monogamy is particularly interesting with respect to its possible relation to stability. Bivariate analysis of participant rankings of attributes for caregivers/parents (male and female), partners (ideal and real) and relationships (ideal and real) revealed a negative correlation at the .01 level of significance between male and female caregiver attribute statements and participant rankings of attribute statements regarding ideal relationships as they relate to stability and monogamy: The less participants agreed with the statement that they felt their male and female caregivers were permanent and stable parts of their lives, the more participants agreed with the statement that in an ideal relationship, they only would have sex with their partners and their partners only would have sex with them. *In short, when thinking about ideal relationships, monogamy was more desired by participants who expressed a less than strong feeling that their parents were permanent and stable parts of their lives.*

With respect to the participant's desire to have sex with his partner only attribute, there was a stronger correlation with the mother attribute rather than the father attribute of permanence and stability. However, the correlation between the mother attribute and a participant's desire that his partner only have sex with him dropped in significance from .01 to only .05. This difference in correlation strength and significance suggest a phenomenon that might be further explored. The literature does not speak to the possible relationship between perceptions of parents and the desire for monogamy. However, research has shown that monogamous and non-monogamous coupled men appeared similar with respect to their prior relationships, and did not appear to differ with respect to frequency of sex with primary partners, nor in their stated relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, or attachment styles.¹ *This finding could suggest that for some participants, being monogamous conveyed a sense of stability especially where they reported that their parents were less than stable/permanent.* In this construct, monogamy in their current relationships could be seen as having a compensatory function, filling in an early deficit. Conversely, this finding also could suggest that a lesser desire for monogamy existed where parents were described as stable/permanent. Use of the term "deficit" does place a positive value on stability. In contrast, this construct puts a more neutral value on monogamy/non-monogamy and places it more in the realm of manifestation of unconscious desire or expression of early development *vis a vis* childhood experiences of caregivers rather than conscious decision in adulthood. *It is possible that among this sample male desire to be monogamous or non-monogamous was a function of early experiences of stability of the caregiver.*

¹ Bricker, M., & Horne, S. (2007, December). Gay men in long-term relationships: The impact of monogamy and non-monogamy on relational health. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 6(4), 27-47.