

Abstract

Consensual non-monogamy (CNM) refers to relationships in which all partners agree that they can have sexual or romantic relationships with other people. This paper presents the most common forms of CNM (polyamory, swinging or open relationships), the ways in which they are established, the specific benefits and challenges, factors influencing the willingness to establish them, and social perceptions and their impact on these relationships. The aim of the research was to explore selected individual factors related to the willingness to establish CNM relationships. Specifically, we focused on attitudes towards CNM, previous partner experiences and primary family experiences. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 participants who were involved in CNM relationships with two or more partners. Thematic analysis revealed that respondents perceived CNM relationships as freer and more natural, but at the same time emphasized responsibility and higher communication demands than in monogamous relationships. The majority of respondents had an experience of monogamy prior to CNM that influenced their current relationships. Reasons for entering into a CNM relationship included falling in love with another person, need for freedom, independence, physical intimacy, satisfaction of needs, new experiences, departure from social norms, and disillusionment with monogamy (in both own and parental relationships). Some respondents were inspired to enter into CNM by a partner and the appearance of public figures spreading awareness of CNM. For most female respondents, negative past experiences reduced their trust in monogamous relationships. Nine respondents were aware of infidelity by a parent or grandparent. The divorce rate of our respondents' parents does not differ from the average of the Czech population. The results may be beneficial for therapists, counselors working with CNM clientele and at the same time contribute to the destigmatization of CNM.

Key words: Consensual Non-Monogamy (CNM); Partner Relationships; Relational Motivation; Polyamory; Swinging; Open Relationships