



“Coming Out” as a Virgin (or Not): The Disclosure of Virginity Status Scale

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Abstract

Virginity is an invisible status and thus something that individuals typically must decide whether to disclose. The purpose of this study was to investigate the disclosure of virginity status (DVS), which refers to the extent an individual has revealed or concealed whether they subjectively identify as being a virgin or not to selected individuals or groups. Young adults ($N=760$) completed an online survey about sexuality. DVS appears to conform to a structure of disclosure to family, to peers, and to religious figures; lying about virginity status to family/peers and to religious figures emerged as distinct factors. Differences in DVS by gender and virginity status suggest that DVS may be dependent upon gendered sexual scripts of the group the target of disclosure belongs to.

Keywords Virginity · Gender · Self-disclosure · Sexuality · Sexual behavior

Introduction

The concept of virginity is rooted in sociocultural beliefs (Blank, 2008; Carpenter, 2001, 2002, 2005; Lichtenstein, 2000) and carries interpersonal significance (Higgins et al., 2010; Tang et al., 2013). Virginity loss can symbolize different ideas, including loss of innocence, maturity, and becoming an adult (Humphreys, 2013), as well as affect one’s self-identity, since revelation may lead to a different social identity (Carpenter, 2001). Virginity status refers to whether an individual subjectively identifies as being a virgin or not and is considered personal and private information that individuals may or may not wish to disclose to others. Self-disclosure is the intentional revelation of personal and private information about the self that another would have trouble finding out without being told (Pearce & Sharp, 1973).

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Disclosure is an important part of social and interpersonal relationships (Finkenauer et al., 2018; Jourard, 1971; Laurenceau et al., 1998). The purpose of this study was to investigate the disclosure of virginity status (DVS). In order to do so, we created the Disclosure of Virginity Status Scale (DVSS) to measure individuals' extent of "coming out" as a virgin, or not, across several life domains.

Defining Virginity

Virginity is an idea that is rooted in cultural and societal beliefs—it cannot be seen, tested, or measured (Blank, 2008). Although penile-vaginal penetration has often been considered to be the virginity-ending event, virginity and virginity loss are ultimately subjective and defined situationally (Bogart et al., 2000; Carpenter, 2001; McPhillips et al., 2001; Sanders et al., 2010). Ambiguity may exist due to subjective definitions of virginity loss and what activities constitute "having sex," particularly due to the heteronormative nature of virginity status (Barnett et al., 2017; Hill et al., 2016; Horowitz & Bedford, 2017; Horowitz & Spicer, 2013; Huang, 2018; Trotter & Alderson, 2007). This study sought to measure virginity self-disclosure based on one's personal standpoint of virginity status. Therefore, virginity status in the current study refers to whether an individual subjectively identifies as being a virgin or not.

Virginity Belief Framework

Personal beliefs about virginity and virginity loss may influence whether a person discloses their virginity status to others. Carpenter (2001, 2002) described and labeled three cognitive frameworks for virginity (e.g., gift, stigma, process) which may assist individuals in shaping and defining their sexual identities. Those who view their virginity as a gift place a high value on finding the right partner and are comfortable, or even proud, of their virginity both personally and socially (Eriksson & Humphreys, 2014). The nature of the gift scenario, such as being proud of their virgin status and planning virginity loss with a partner, suggests these individuals may be more likely to self-disclose their virginity status. However, Carpenter (2001) stated that individuals that view virginity as a gift are more likely than the other two groups to feel embarrassed after losing their virginity, which could lead to concealment of their new status. These individuals may therefore strive to maintain their identities as virgins until they are able to make the transition to an equally respectable non-virgin identity.

Conversely, the stigma framework characterizes individuals who are ashamed of their virginal status, viewing it as burdensome and embarrassing (Carpenter, 2002). These individuals do not openly disclose their virginal status, and may actively attempt to hide it by projecting a non-virgin social identity (Eriksson & Humphreys, 2014). However, after virginity loss they may self-disclose and actively boast about their non-virgin status (Carpenter, 2001).

The process framework is associated with individuals that view virginity loss as a natural step in maturation and a learning experience about sex, oneself, and one's

sexual companion (Carpenter, 2001, 2002; Humphreys, 2013). Since individuals that view virginity loss as a process do not see their virginity in terms of being proud or ashamed, this group is more likely to be open to talk about their virginity status to others both before and after their virginity loss (Carpenter, 2001). We felt it necessary to cover this literature to provide a framework for coming out as a virgin or non-virgin and what the individual implications for this may be for individuals. In this study, we were interested in developing a scale to measure this phenomenon and so limited our discussion of participants' virginity beliefs. However, this is data that we collected and will discuss in a future paper.

Self-Disclosure

Individuals who possess a concealable stigma—such as being or not being a virgin—must carefully consider whether or not they should disclose the information to others. When people disclose personal information to others, they risk experiencing negative outcomes, such as social rejection and discrimination (Pachankis, 2007). Individuals who do not self-disclose have reported lower social confidence and self-esteem as well as higher anxiety and depression than individuals who disclose (Ullrich et al., 2003). Disclosure can also provide an opportunity for positive outcomes, such as expressing thoughts and feelings, developing a sense of self, and building intimacy within personal relationships (Greene et al., 2006; Jourard, 1971). Self-disclosure is naturally satisfying, activates the same areas of the brain as food or sex (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012), and has been linked to relationship satisfaction and psychological health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Finkenauer et al., 2018; Jourard, 1971). Sexual self-disclosure in particular, which refers to the disclosure of sexual thoughts, behaviors and feelings, has been found to increase bonding, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction (Tang et al., 2013). Of particular interest for our research design, individuals have different patterns of sexual disclosure across social units, due to differing norms and pressures across domains (Kaufmann et al., 2015).

Gender Differences

Gender differences have been found in virginity beliefs, virginity loss, and general self-disclosure. Sexual double standards exist (Crawford & Popp, 2003; Essizoğlu et al., 2011) such as the view that virginity is a virtue in women but a negative trait in men. Men are more likely to view virginity as a stigma (Carpenter, 2002), to be reluctant virgins, and to have more negative affective reactions to being a virgin (Sprecher & Treger, 2015). Additionally, at first intercourse, in general men report more pleasure and anxiety, but less guilt than women (Sprecher, 2014). Men have also reported greater physiological and psychological satisfaction at first intercourse (Higgins et al., 2010). Meanwhile, women are more likely to view virginity as gift (Carpenter, 2002) and often have a broader definition of what constitutes “having sex” (Barnett et al., 2017; Trotter & Alderson, 2007). In a meta-analysis of 205 studies examining gender differences in self-disclosure, women disclosed more than

men when there was an established relationship with the person to whom they were speaking (i.e., friend, parent, or spouse; Dindia & Allen, 1992).

Current Study

In this study, we investigated disclosure of virginity status (DVS), which we defined as the extent to which an individual has revealed or concealed their virginity status to selected individuals or groups (e.g., family, friends, current partner, members of religious community). In order to do so, we created the Disclosure of Virginity Status Scale (DVSS). We investigated differences in this disclosure by gender and virginity status. The exploratory nature of the study is emphasized.

Method

Participants

Because disclosure of virginity status is more normatively a concern for single young adults and teens (Sprecher & Treger, 2015), we excluded individuals who identified as widowed, divorced, or married. Additionally, because virginity is often seen as a heterosexual phenomenon, or at the very least is defined differently for non-heterosexual individuals (Huang, 2018), for this project we excluded individuals who did not identify as heterosexual. With these exclusions in place, our sample consisted of 760 undergraduate students (age 18–29; $M=20.11$, $SD=2.13$) enrolled in a psychology course at a large public university in the southern United States. Participants were recruited through the department research website, where students can volunteer to participate in studies for course credit. Participants signed up to complete an online survey about human sexuality. Our sample was primarily made up of women with 489 self-identified women. Regarding race/ethnicity, 47.4% participants identified as White/Caucasian, 18.2% as Black/African American, 23.3% as Latinx, 7.2% as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4.0% as belonging to another race/ethnicity.

Procedure

This study was approved by the university committee for the protection of human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Students who chose to participate in the study took the survey online (remotely) and received course credit for participation.

Measures

Development of the Disclosure of Virginity Status Scale

In order to develop an item pool for a measure of the disclosure of virginity status, we consulted with a panel of sexuality researchers and psychotherapists as well as a panel of college students. Information from these sources suggested that there are two major components to the disclosure of virginity status: (1) the *target* of the disclosure, and (2) the *type* of disclosure. The target of the disclosure refers to the individual or group to whom one discloses or does not disclose their virginity status. That is, regarding the *target* of the disclosure, individuals may vary in their disclosure of virginity status from one individual to the next (e.g., disclosing to mother vs. disclosing to father) or across social milieus (e.g., disclosing to friends vs. disclosing to individuals from church). The *type* of disclosure refers to the nature of the disclosure itself, such as telling someone the truth or lying. Based on this feedback, we decided to collect data on these two dimensions: that is, a target-by-type approach. We consulted the literature for measures that involve ratings on multiple dimensions across multiple targets (e.g., (Kool et al., 2010), and in particular we modeled our item format and factor analytic strategy after Mohr and Fassinger (2000).

We generated a list of targets based on Mohr and Fassinger (2000)—*mother, father, siblings, extended family, relatives*—as well as those suggested by the panel: *other people in general, people I date, friends, acquaintances, leaders of my religious community, and members of my religious community*. The subscales of items were organized by the varying degree of knowledge about the individual's virginity status by the targets, as well as conditions in which the individual would have the opportunity to inform the targets about their status. Panel feedback suggested that the disclosure of virginity status may involve simply assuming that other individuals know, disclosures they have made explicitly, or even attempts to deceive others about their virginity status. Thus, we identified the following types of disclosure: *they know, have told, and have lied*.

Virginity Status

As previously noted, virginity is a complex psychosocial construct; we operationalized virginity status as individuals' subjective identification using the question: *Would you describe yourself as being a virgin?* to which participants responded with *yes* or *no*.

Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Principal axis factoring (PAF) with varimax rotation was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics software (Version 25). We subjected the item pool to multiple runs

of PAF, eliminating items with poor loadings (<0.3) or with undesirable levels of cross-loading (>0.65). Initial runs of PAF yielded a five-factor solution; however, two factors were ambiguous with minimal loadings. The items with unsatisfactory loadings corresponded to the following targets: *extended family/relatives*, *acquaintances*, and *other people in general*. We removed the items corresponding to these targets, leaving 15 items. Principal axis factoring of the factor structure of the 15 items was performed with varimax rotation, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin=0.75 and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity $\chi^2 [105]=8072.01, p < 0.001$. Three components with eigenvalues > 1.0 were revealed, explaining 61.1% of the total variance. With the corresponding items, we created family (6 items; Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.89$), peers (4 items; $\alpha=0.85$), and lies (5 items; $\alpha=0.84$) subscales. Factor loadings for these three subscales are displayed in Table 1.

Similar to Mohr and Fassinger (2000), a sizable number of participants selected “not applicable” on the six items in which the target involved religion; therefore, we excluded those items from the initial runs in order to analyze them separately among participants who had provided ratings for religion targets ($n=452$). This created a

Table 1 Factor loadings for DVSS family, peers, and lie items ($n=760$)

Item	Component		
	Family	Peers	Lie
You’ve told: Mother	.78		
You’ve told: Father	.76		
They know: Mother	.77		
They know: Father	.76		
You’ve told: Sibling(s)	.68		
They know: Sibling(s)	.69		
They know: Friends		.75	
They know: People I date		.75	
You’ve told: Friends		.72	
You’ve told: People I date		.72	
You’ve lied: Sibling(s)			.83
You’ve lied: Father			.82
You’ve lied: Mother			.82
You’ve lied: People I date		–.37	.57
You’ve lied: Friends		–.36	.54
<i>Eigenvalues</i>	3.61	2.78	2.78
<i>Variance explained</i>	24.0%	18.5%	18.5%
<i>Cumulative variance explained</i>	24.0%	42.5%	61.1%

Coefficients <0.3 are suppressed

two-factor solution explaining 80.05% of the variance, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin=0.63 and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity $\chi^2 [15]=3278.95, p < 0.001$. This yielded the religion subscale (4 items; Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.91$) and the lie to religion subscale (2

Table 2 Factor loadings for DVSS religion items ($n = 452$)

Item	Component	
	Religion	Lie to religion
They know: Members of my religious community	.81	
They know: Leaders of my religious community	.83	
You've told: Leaders of my religious community	.86	
You've told: Members of my religious community	.84	
You've lied: Leaders of my religious community		.97
You've lied: Members of my religious community		.97
<i>Eigenvalues</i>	2.82	1.99
<i>Variance explained</i>	46.94%	33.12%
<i>Cumulative variance explained</i>	46.94%	80.05%

Coefficients <0.3 are suppressed

items; $\alpha = 0.99$). Factor loadings for all items in these scales are in Table 2. The final Disclosure of Virginitly Status Scale is shown in Appendix 1.

Gender, Virginitly Status, and Disclosure of Virginitly Status

Descriptive statistics for the DVSS subscales are displayed in Table 3. Next, we used a MANOVA to investigate differences by gender and virginitly status on the DVSS family, peers, and lie subscales. Gender (Wilks' $\lambda = 0.97$, $F = 9.17$, $\eta^2_p = 0.04$), virginitly status ($\lambda = 0.85$, $F = 43.52$, $\eta^2_p = 0.15$), and the gender and virginitly status interaction ($\lambda = 0.97$, $F = 8.98$, $\eta^2_p = 0.03$) each had a significant multivariate effect ($df = 3, 754$; $p < 0.001$).

Table 3 Bivariate correlations of and descriptive statistics for all subscales among all participants ($N = 760$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
DVSS Family	–	.40***	–.27***	.49***	–.21***
DVSS Peers		–	–.08*	.21***	.05
DVSS Lie			–	–.16***	.77***
DVSS Religion				–	–.24***
DVSS Lie to Religion					–
<i>n</i>	760	760	760	483	508
<i>Possible Range</i>	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5
<i>M</i>	3.32	4.15	1.97	2.17	2.21
<i>SD</i>	1.35	1.08	1.08	1.24	1.50
α	.89	.85	.84	.91	.99

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. RCI=Religious Commitment Scale. VBS=Virginitly Beliefs Scale. DVSS=Disclosure of Virginitly Status Scale.

Regarding DVS to family, women had higher disclosure than men, but no differences were found by virginity status; however, there was a significant interaction between gender and virginity status in which male non-virgins disclosed the least and female virgins disclosed the most. For the DVS to peers, women had higher disclosure than men and non-virgins disclosed more than virgins; additionally, a gender and virginity status interaction was found in which female non-virgins disclosed the most while male virgins disclosed the least. Regarding lying about virginity status, men and women indicated that they lied about virginity status about the same, with non-virgins lying more than virgins. A significant gender and virginity status interaction was also found in which female non-virgins lied the most while female virgins lied the least. The univariate results of the multivariate analysis of variance are displayed in Table 4.

Religion and Lie to Religion Subscales

In a separate MANOVA, gender (Wilks' $\lambda=0.98$, $F=3.80$, $p=0.02$, $\eta^2_p=0.02$), virginity status ($\lambda=0.84$, $F=43.17$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2_p=0.16$), and the gender and virginity status interaction ($\lambda=0.97$, $F=7.60$, $p=0.001$, $\eta^2_p=0.03$) each had a significant multivariate effect ($df=2, 447$).

Regarding DVS to religious figures, there were no differences in disclosure by gender; however, virgins disclosed more to religious figures than non-virgins. There was also a significant interaction effect of gender and virginity status on disclosure where female virgins disclosed the most to religious figures while female non-virgins disclosed the least. Women indicated that they lied to religious figures more than men, and non-virgins lied more to religious figures than virgins. Additionally, there was a significant interaction effect of gender and virginity status on disclosure where female non-virgins lied the most to religious figures while female virgins lied the least. The univariate results the multivariate analysis of variance are displayed in Table 5. The descriptive statistics both multivariate analyses of variance are displayed in Table 6.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the disclosure of virginity status (DVS). In order to do so, we created the Disclosure of Virginity Status Scale (DVSS). DVS appears to conform to a structure of disclosure to family, to peers, and to religious figures; lying about virginity status to family/peers and to religious figures emerged as distinct factors. This is consistent with previous research finding that individuals, particularly those in this age/college group, may tend to have distinct patterns of disclosure to these social units (Kaufmann et al., 2015).

Using this scale, we were able to investigate differences in DVS by gender and virginity status. Compared to men, women had higher DVS to family and peers. Virgins had higher DVS to religious figures than non-virgins. Non-virgins had higher DVS to peers than virgins yet also endorsed higher rates of lying about their virginity

Table 4 Univariate analysis of variance for family, peers, and lies subscales ($N=760$)

Predictor	DVSS Family			DVSS Peers			DVSS Lie		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2_p
Gender	11.53	.001	.02	15.55	<.001	.02	3.37	.07	.004
Virginity Status	2.41	.12	.003	36.50	<.001	.05	66.96	<.001	.08
Gender x Virginity Status	25.31	<.001	.03	6.35	.01	.01	5.88	.02	.01

Table 5 Univariate analysis of variance for religion and lie to religion subscales ($N=452$)

Predictor	DVSS Religion			DVSS Lie to Religion		
	F	p	η^2_p	F	p	η^2_p
Gender	.03	.87	.00	7.59	.006	.02
Virginity Status	29.65	< .001	.06	66.14	< .001	.13
Gender x Virginity Status	7.41	.007	.02	9.60	.002	.02

status to family/peers as well as to religious figures. This suggests that virginity status may be something individuals talk about or conceal, depending on the target. This provides support for the notion that individuals consider the target of DVS an important part of the decision to disclose. Furthermore, the results that there was a gender and virginity status interaction across all of the target groups suggests that there are different patterns of DVS not just based on the target of the disclosure, but also on the characteristics of the individual disclosing. These characteristics are presumably linked to social sexual norms across different groups that alter the idealization or stigmatization of virginity by gender.

Female non-virgins disclosed the most to peers while male virgins disclosed the least. Meanwhile for DVS to family, female virgins had the highest disclosure while male virgins disclosed the least. This may be explained by changes in contemporary social sexual norms where sexual inexperience in young adults is stigmatized and “late” sexual debuts may have negative interpersonal consequences among peers (Gesselman et al., 2017). In previous research, both non-virgins and virgins, have reported being unlikely to consider a relationship with a virgin, and instead to be a preferred partner, individuals are expected to have at least some sexual experience (Gesselman et al., 2017). Additionally, a study evaluating the comfort of several self-disclosures found that DVS as a virgin was rated as a “negative” disclosure and was consistently rated as the most uncomfortable across gender and sexual orientation (Kaufmann et al., 2015). As the DVSS peers subscale includes the targets of *friends* and *people I date*, it may be that male virgins are concealing their virginity status due to fear of stigmatization from potential partners or friends. Meanwhile, female non-virgins may have higher DVS to peers than male non-virgins due to women having higher levels of general self-disclosure (Stokes et al., 1981), where they may be more likely to discuss their lives more intimately with peers, including their virginity status.

Disclosing to religious communities followed the same pattern as lying and lying to religion, but in reverse. Female virgins disclosed the most and lied the least to religious figures. Female non-virgins disclosed the least and lied the most to religious figures. When lying about virginity status to peers and family, female virgins lied the least while female non-virgins lied the most. These results likely reflect patriarchal and traditional notions of female sexuality, where female virgins may feel that DVS to religious communities as virgins may be welcomed and celebrated, while female non-virgins may feel a greater need to lie generally and to religious communities from fear of “slut-shaming” (Armstrong et al., 2014; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009;

Table 6 Descriptive statistics from MANOVAs

	First MANOVA (N = 760)				Second MANOVA (N = 452)					
	n	Family		Peers	Lie		n	Religion		Lie to Religion
		M (SD)	M (SD)		M (SD)	M (SD)				
Gender	271	3.24 (1.36)***	4.00 (1.15)***	1.82 (1.03)	156	2.30 (1.31)	1.95 (1.33)			
	489	3.37 (1.35)***	4.23 (1.04)***	2.04 (1.09)	296	2.18 (1.23)	2.47 (1.58)			
Virginity Status	210	3.59 (1.33)	3.81 (1.24)***	1.41 (.80)***	151	2.75 (1.40)***	1.42 (.93)***			
	550	3.22 (1.35)	4.27 (.99)***	2.18 (1.09)***	301	1.95 (1.08)***	2.72 (1.57)***			
Gender x Virginity	68	2.94 (1.42)***	3.41 (1.31)*	1.44 (.72)*	50	2.53 (1.57)**	1.46 (.99)**			
	142	3.90 (1.17)***	4.00 (1.16)*	1.39 (.84)*	101	2.85 (1.31)**	1.41 (.91)**			
	203	3.34 (1.33)***	4.19 (1.02)*	1.94 (1.09)*	106	2.19 (1.15)**	2.18 (1.40)**			
	347	3.15 (1.35)***	4.32 (.97)*	2.31 (1.08)*	195	1.83 (1.02)**	3.01 (1.58)**			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Miller, 2016). That is, it may be indicative of the importance of chastity and purity within religion for all, but its impact on women in particular since—according to traditional heterosexual scripts—women are intended to be sexual gatekeepers (Kim et al., 2007).

The role of social sexual norms can be seen in the results of the previous subscales as well, which reflect the shame and secrecy accompanied by virginity loss in women, in all realms aside from peers, where non-virgins appear to feel most comfortable in disclosing their virginity loss. Female virgins appear to be happy to disclose their virginity status to groups that they assume will celebrate it, such as family and religious figures. Meanwhile, *lack* of virginity loss appears to be accompanied by embarrassment and secrecy in men, but virginity loss is seen as more of an accomplishment for men than it is for women (Carpenter, 2002). Thus, male virgins perhaps disclosed the least to their family and peers due to fear of ridicule for not having sex at a “normal time.”

Although this study provides novel insights into DVS, it was limited in several ways. The sample was large and diverse, but the use of a convenience sample limits the generalizability of the results and introduces the possibility of volunteer bias. As participants volunteered to participate in a study about human sexuality, it is possible that participants are individuals that are more comfortable about sexuality and thus may be more inclined to disclose their virginity status. Moreover, we did not collect information on social class. Additionally, the sample was largely made up of women. Women tend to have higher levels of self-disclosure in general, and so the results of this sample may reflect that trend. Future studies should include more male and non-binary participants.

This study suggests a number of directions for future research with the DVSS. The results of this study highlight the importance of how individuals perceive virginity status, and how they believe their status will be perceived by others. As such, future studies should explore the relationship between disclosure of virginity status and virginity beliefs of participants in order to elucidate the role of participant's beliefs about virginity on their disclosure. Currently our interpretations rely on gendered sexual norms as a result of a patriarchal society; however, gender differences are not absolute. Thus, getting a better understanding of participants' virginity beliefs as individuals would allow us to have a better interpretation of why disclosure of virginity status may vary across different domains. Future studies could investigate DVS among LGBTQ+ populations. Virginity is an inherently heteronormative concept due to its focus on penetration (Averett et al., 2014; Trotter & Alderson, 2007), often making definitions of virginity loss among non-heterosexual individuals more nuanced (Horowitz & Bedford, 2017; Horowitz & Spicer, 2013; Huang, 2018). As there is limited investigation into the conceptualization of virginity loss in LGBTQ+ populations (Averett et al., 2014; Horowitz & Bedford, 2017; Horowitz & Spicer, 2013; Huang, 2018), it is necessary to gain a better understanding of the conceptualization of sexual debuts and the experiences of these among this group. Previous research has found that gay respondents find it more uncomfortable to disclose their virginity status as a virgin than heterosexual respondents (Kaufmann et al., 2015). This points to the need to further explore disclosure of virginity status in non-heterosexual groups, as this may be different depending on

virginity status and social sexual group norms across targets. We believe that the use of this scale to study these questions would allow for a better understanding of the intraindividual differences in coming out as a virgin or non-virgin across different domains, and what these differences mean to individuals.

Overall, these results point to the role of gendered sexual scripts regarding the social experience of virginity loss (Carpenter, 2002). It appears that, for women, virginity status is received very differently across group contexts, greatly impacting disclosure levels; for men, the impact of their virginity status upon their disclosure is mostly limited. Virginity status across group contexts causes women to move from one extreme of disclosure to another, depending on who the target is, while men typically have more moderate responses. As such, the gender and virginity status interactions occur very differently depending on the target of disclosure. In some contexts, female public declarations of abstinence are celebrated due to sexual suppression of women; but with peers, virginity loss is expected. Meanwhile, the opposite is true for men—particularly young men—who are expected to be sexual initiators regardless of context (Kim et al., 2007).

Appendix 1

Disclosure of Virginity Status Scale.

Virginity status refers to one's subjective identification as a virgin or not.

For each of the individuals listed below, please indicate whether they know your virginity status.

	N/A	Doesn't know	Probably Doesn't Know	Uncertain	Probably knows	They know
Mother	0	1	2	3	4	5
Father	0	1	2	3	4	5
Friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
People I date	0	1	2	3	4	5
Members of my religious community	0	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders of my religious community	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the individuals listed below, please indicate whether you've told them your virginity status.

	N/A	Haven't told	Probably haven't told	Uncertain	Probably have told	Have told
Mother	0	1	2	3	4	5
Father	0	1	2	3	4	5

	N/A	Haven't told	Probably haven't told	Uncertain	Probably have told	Have told
Friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders of my religious community	0	1	2	3	4	5
People I date	0	1	2	3	4	5
Members of my religious community	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the individuals listed below, please indicate whether you've lied to them about your virginity status.

	N/A	Have not lied at all	Haven't lied much	Uncertain	Have lied a little	Have totally lied
Mother	0	1	2	3	4	5
Father	0	1	2	3	4	5
Friends	0	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders of my religious community	0	1	2	3	4	5
People I date	0	1	2	3	4	5
Members of my religious community	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling(s)	0	1	2	3	4	5

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Declarations

Conflict of interest Michael Barnett declares that he has no conflict of interest. Idalia Maciel declares that she has no conflict of interest. Jenna Moore declares that she has no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants in the study.

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