

EDUCATION AND COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING AS THERAPEUTIC  
INTERVENTION TO INCREASE HARMONY IN ROMANTIC  
RELATIONSHIPS WITH TRANSVESTIC FETISHISTS

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By

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**DISSERTATION APPROVAL**

This dissertation submitted by Kimberly Austin has been read and approved by three committee members of The American Academy of Clinical Sexologists at Maimonides University.

The Dissertation Committee has examined the final copies and the signatures that appear here verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given in final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

This dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## VITA

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## ABSTRACT

This case study was conducted to determine if education and cognitive restructuring could facilitate harmony and increase marital satisfaction in the relationships of transvestic fetishists with their female significant others. This study followed one couple with typical demographics in their journey to improve the quality of their relationship. A 10 point scale was used to determine pre-treatment and post-treatment marital satisfaction of both partners and pre-treatment and post-treatment jealousy scores of the female partner. By the end of this study, both partners reported higher marital satisfaction and the female reported less jealousy.

Additionally, two other cross-dressers were interviewed for comparisons. One was a transvestic fetishist whose wife chose not to participate and the other identified as transgender. These comparisons helped to not only distinguish transvestic fetishists from transgenders, but also to develop understanding of acceptance of wives.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There is very little research on cross-dressing as a whole and this is even more true for transvestic fetishists as they are very elusive due to the societal stigmas that are placed on them. Because transvestic fetishists are so secretive about their cross-dressing even to those who are closest to them, there is no solid data on their numbers in the population at large. It is the belief of this writer that researching phenomenon about which little is known is not only crucial to the understanding of such topics, but also to the advancement of the field of sexology in general. However, learning more about cross-dressers may not be enough to create harmony with individuals who share personal relationships with those who cross-dress. Therapeutic interventions may help to increase quality of life for those who cross-dress as well as those more intimately related to them.

It is true that people are not born prejudice, but become that way through misinformation and ignorance (Rudd, 1999). In fact, studies have shown that being highly educated correlates with decreased homophobia. Social contact theory suggests that interaction between varying groups offers an opportunity to dispel myths and decrease stereotyping by educating individuals in a real life setting (Lance, 2002). Research suggests that there may be some validity to this theory. Studies indicate that by having the opportunity to socialize with those of varying sexual orientation decreased homophobic opinions (Ceglian & Lyons, 2004). The one drawback to exposure to an alternative demographic is if the person has a negative experience (Lance, 2002). Unfortunately, it only takes one person to cause others to form unfavorable opinions about a certain group, which is why exposure to a number of individuals in a particular group is suggested to have an understanding of the group as a whole. Another detriment to interaction with dissimilar groups is that if the negative aspect of the group is true then the stereotype is reinforced. In fact, there are some studies that suggest that interaction with homosexuals actually

increased prejudice among heterosexuals (Lance, 2002). Nonetheless with all of the evidence considered, it is possible that with education, misconception can be eliminated which can possibly alleviate some prejudice directed at men who cross-dress.

However, emotions are also at play in that what one thinks about a certain demographic or situation can lead to particular emotions, be they positive or negative (McKay et. al, 1997). This is why other therapeutic interventions are necessary. Thus, various paradigms were considered as treatment modalities to assist significant others of transvestic fetishists to analyze their thoughts about their partner's cross-dressing, determine if there is any evidence supporting these thoughts and to help them transition into a more positive way of thinking. Studies that discuss the efficacy of treating these couples were reviewed and the results of these studies are included in this writing.

### Psychoanalytic Approach

Therapists who use the psychoanalytic approach not only believe that psychological maladies are rooted in unresolved childhood issues, but also that sexual diversities specifically develop out of an Oedipal complex and describe these differences as perverse (Argentieri, 2009; Mehler, 2009). As for transvestites and transsexuals, psychoanalysts believe that cross-dressing behavior also derives from narcissism (Argentieri, 2009; Chiland, 2009).

Those who follow the psychoanalytic paradigm state that cross-dressing develops from the male child over identifying with the mother while rejecting the behaviors and attitudes of the father (Argentieri, 2009). Though this has been suggested by researchers who adhere to other therapeutic approaches, research does not suggest that this is the case as various studies contradict each other with some stating that transvestites and transsexuals had an overbearing father while others suggest that they were more likely than other males to have a weak father (Woodhouse, 1989). Therefore, if the case were that transvestites and transsexuals have weak fathers, then the theory behind psychoanalysis that cross-

dressing occurs as a result of the child over identifying with the mother's gentleness would be contradictory.

As for narcissism, most therapists would agree with psychoanalysts that this tendency can be detrimental to the mental health of the client and that children are narcissistic to a degree in that they can only view the world through their own perspective (Argentieri, 2009; Chiland, 2009). For instance, a child might create an idea of the world that has no basis in reality, but results from their own limited experience. In this case, psychoanalyst's conviction that transvestites have an element of narcissism may be accurate in that they create the ideal woman and the ideal experiences of women according to their own beliefs. One example of this is that transvestites embrace the positive aspects of being a woman such as the glamour and the over-sexualization of women, but do not necessarily wish to empathize with women when it comes to doing housework (Boyd, 2003; Woodhouse, 1989). Though there seems to be an element of narcissism in transvestites, this does not indicate pathology as psychoanalysts would suggest. Thus, narcissism in transvestites is more of a trait to be described in laymen's terms as opposed to an actual diagnosis.

In regards to transsexuals, psychoanalysts believe that the narcissism itself should be treated in therapy instead of treating the condition with hormones and sex reassignment surgery. They insist that changing one's sex physically is only a superficial treatment of the symptoms without solving the underlying psychological issues. It is the regard in the psychoanalytical paradigm that the therapist can help transsexuals cope with the idea that their symptoms are caused by narcissism and to accept their bodies as they are (Argentieri, 2009; Chiland, 2009). Though many therapists may entertain the thought that this is a possibility and treat a client for a year or more to determine if this is fact, they also consider that hormones and sex reassignment surgery may be an option. With all things considered, the psychoanalytic approach does not appear to be the best therapeutic intervention for transvestites and transsexuals.

### Solution-Focused Therapy

Solution-focused therapy is often used in marriage counseling and, as the name suggests, focusses on the solution rather than the problem. It consists of a combination of assuming that the client has the ability to solve their own problems and facilitation cognitive restructuring as well as helping the clients to set goals. Solution-focused therapy utilizes what is known as the miracle question and scaling. The miracle question asks the clients if they woke up one day to find that a miracle had happened to solve their relationship problems, how they would know. Scaling is asking the clients to rate aspects of the relationship as therapy progresses to determine efficacy and how close the clients feel they are to their therapeutic goals (Dzelme, K. and Jones, R., 2001).

Dzelme and Jones (2001) attempted to utilize solution-focused therapy to assist a couple in incorporating the husband's cross-dressing into their life. Once the couple had had a few therapy sessions, it was discovered that the problems that the couple were having stemmed from the husband's use of phone sex to meet his needs and not really from the cross-dressing itself. However, the husband turned to phone sex as a result of the wife's lack of participation in his cross-dressing. These researchers were able to assist the wife in regaining the husband's trust and other problems typical of many couples in which the husband does not cross-dress, but nothing in the way of incorporating cross-dressing into their lives.

These researchers, however, did find that they were successful in helping the wife to communicate her feelings about her husband's cross-dressing to him, but that is where progress on this issue stopped. In fact, their research reflects that the husband was left to yield unto the wishes of his wife to decrease his cross-dressing (Dzelme, K and Jones, R., 2001). This could be problematic for the couple as the problem was not solved in that the wife felt free to complain about the husband's cross-dressing, but yet the husband's need to cross-dress was unmet which could lead to the husband returning to his old

habit of phone sex, the real original problem for the wife. Not only this, but the couple may be worse off after the solution-focused therapy in that the husband may have been left to feel resentment towards the wife for her being able to discuss her negative feelings about his cross-dressing and his ability to cross-dress less. Though it is important for the wife of a transvestite to be allowed to express her feelings, it could also be beneficial if the wife asks her husband questions about his cross-dressing allowing him to communicate as well.

Though solution-focused therapy may not be a good option in and of itself in treating transvestites and their wives, there are elements of this form of therapy that may be beneficial. Cognitive restructuring could be useful in changing the way the wife thinks about her husband cross-dressing which would in turn change the way she feels about this activity. Also, scaling could be effective in that it helps the therapist as well as the clients determine progress of treatment.

### Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Wolgast, Lundh, & Viborg (2012) contend that the basis of acceptance commitment therapy is to alleviate adversity by helping the client to, “escape, avoid and alter emotions”, as a means of establishing acceptance. Also, the researchers argue that an important component of acceptance commitment therapy is mindfulness which they say can decrease stress by encouraging the client to be candid and without criticism (Wolgast, Lundh & Viborg, 2012). However, the authors do not describe how to reach mindfulness.

Research has attempted to prove that acceptance commitment therapy and cognitive restructuring have some distinct differences, but also have some common aspects as well. Advocates of acceptance commitment therapy criticize cognitive restructuring in that they claim that changing and controlling one’s own thoughts can actually perpetuate psychological issues. Furthermore, it is alleged that acceptance commitment therapy corrects this by helping the client to differentiate themselves from the

content of their thoughts through cognitive defusion as well as assist with changing these thoughts. The goal of cognitive defusion is to change the meaning of thoughts before changing the maladaptive thoughts themselves or number of maladaptive thoughts (Wolgast, Lundh & Viborg, 2012). This seems similar to cognitive restructuring.

In fact, in one study, researchers proclaimed that cognitive defusion is what differentiates acceptance commitment therapy from cognitive restructuring and in the same study stated that cognitive restructuring helped to facilitate cognitive defusion in that cognitive restructuring helped clients to differentiate themselves from the content of their thoughts (Wolgast, Lundh & Viborg, 2012). It appears that the researchers contradict themselves by saying that what makes these two forms of therapy different is exactly what makes them the same.

Another contradiction in the writings of Wolgast, Lundh & Viborg (2012) is that they claim acceptance commitment therapy should be utilized before cognitive restructuring, but then later in the same writing state that acceptance commitment therapy picks up where cognitive restructuring leaves off. The authors profess that the technique cognitive defusion in acceptance commitment therapy should be used before cognitive restructuring strategies, but later the same article states that cognitive restructuring is an early intervention because it assists in altering thoughts and that acceptance commitment therapy should be used later as it impedes aversive thought reactions to emotions (Wolgast, Lundh & Viborg, 2012).

Furthermore, these researchers reported in their findings that cognitive restructuring involved what they termed cognitive refocusing, cognitive reappraisal and distractive focusing while acceptance commitment therapy utilized thought avoidance and active acceptance (Wolgast, Lundh & Viborg, 2012). However, cognitive refocusing and distractive refocusing is similar to thought avoidance in that cognitive refocusing and distractive refocusing are clearly ways to avoid other thoughts. As for active acceptance, it is hypothesized that education can help partners of transvestites to understand that truths about

transvestic fetishism such as the fact that the transvestite will never stop and that his cross-dressing does not necessarily mean that he is gay or will want sex reassignment surgery.

### Cognitive Approach

Cognitive restructuring is a process by which the therapist attempts to assist the client in changing maladaptive thought patterns by asking questions that challenge these thoughts. When the client encounters an unproductive thought, the therapist asks the client to present evidence for this thought, think of other ways to look at the situation and to explain what would happen if the thought has evidence. Cognitive restructuring is used in various types of therapies including cognitive-behavioral therapy and rational emotive therapy. Additionally, cognitive restructuring is currently used to treat a plethora of psychiatric conditions such as depression, anxiety and phobias (Prochaska & Norcross, 1999). Not only do researchers advocate cognitive restructuring to help wives understand that their husbands who cross-dress are no different than any other man (Woodhouse, 1989), but also studies show that wives who have learned to deal with their husbands' cross-dressing say that their attitude and their thoughts about the cross-dressing changed (Rudd, 1999; Boyd, 2005). This being the case, then an examination of thoughts could reveal why individuals feel the way they do about cross-dressers and restructuring of such thoughts could help create more positive feelings.

### The Premise of the Current Study

The attempt in the current case study is to utilize education with cognitive restructuring to encourage more enrichment in the romantic relationship of a transvestic fetishist and his wife, which this writer hopes will lead to further studies that could generalize such therapeutic interventions for other intimate relationships. As there are many misconceptions about transvestic fetishists and cross-dressers in

general as well as society's thoughts on gender, one could easily see how the discovery by a wife of her husband's cross-dressing may cause turmoil to erupt in the relationship. Though there are various types of cross-dressers who do so for a variety of reasons, this study focuses on the romantic relationships of transvestic fetishists and the differences between transvestic fetishists and those who are transgender.

There are various types of cross-dressers who do so for a variety of reasons. According to the DSM-IV-TR, an individual meets criteria for transvestic fetishism if he is a heterosexual male who has for at least six months found the thought or act of cross-dressing stimulating sexually and the thoughts or behaviors disrupt a critical area in his life such as employment, marital relations or other social relationships (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Notice the last criteria states that to be diagnosable, one must be experiencing marked distress in an area of daily living due to the thoughts or behaviors involved in cross-dressing. That being said, there are many types of men who cross-dress, but do not meet this criteria. For example, the type of cross-dresser that may come to mind for most individuals is the one more commonly seen in gay clubs or during what is referred to as drag shows, which are generally lip sync performances by men in very glamorous women's clothing. Though they can be seen in gay clubs, there are some who are heterosexual (Boyd, 2003). Other cross-dressers, who can be called transgender, cross-dress to express their feminine side and may prefer to dress in women's clothing daily (Rudd, 1999), but may not wish to use hormones and do not intend to have sex reassignment surgery (Boyd, 2003). Yet another variation of cross-dresser feels that they were born in the wrong body and ultimately wish to seek complete sex reassignment surgery and to become the opposite gender altogether who will be referred to in this study as transsexuals (Boyd, 2003; Woodhouse, 1989). This study focuses on transvestic fetishists or those exhibiting fetishistic transvestic fetishism which is defined by The World Health Organization simply as cross-dressing for the sole purpose of sexual gratification (Langstrom & Zucker, 2005).

For this study, the term cross-dresser will be used to refer to any man who wears women's clothing whether it be for sexual gratification, as a step toward sex reassignment surgery, as a means of

expressing femininity or for sheer entertainment. The term transvestic fetishist, sometimes referred to as transvestite, is used specifically to describe a man who wears women's clothing for the sexual excitement of it. Transgender refers to individuals with fluid gender who may cross-dress full time or even take hormones with no desire for sex reassignment surgery while transsexual refers to men who feel that they are trapped in a woman's body. Other terms used in this study are en homme and en femme which refer to mode of dress whether dressed in men's wear or women's clothing respectively.

There is a double standard in our society that women can wear men's clothing, but men cannot wear the clothing of women (Boyd, 2003; Cegliean & Lyons, 2004; woodhouse, 1989). This double standard is one reason why some theorists argue that society is the problem and not the transvestic fetishist as they believe that it is societal attitudes that cause the problems with transvestic fetishists and not the act of cross-dressing itself (Rudd, 1999; Woodhouse, 1989) especially since it has not been proven that transvestic fetishism is harmful to anyone in any way other than the harm caused by the thoughts of individuals that cause unrest (Woodhouse, 1989). This lends support to the idea of cognitive restructuring as a legitimate method to relinquishing negative attitudes and creating understanding.

Gender politics are also at play with society's view as a whole of cross-dressers. Western societies tend to perpetuate the idea that women are beneath men; therefore, it is difficult for individuals to understand why someone who is privileged would imitate someone who is seen as having less power (Woodhouse, 1989). With this thinking in mind, it would be easy to understand why women are not looked down upon when they wear pants as it is seen as they are aspiring to be more like those who have the social power. Rudd (1999) admitted that she had trouble accepting her husband's cross-dressing as a result of all that she had learned about gender growing-up. However, today the lines of gender are becoming less defined (Rudd, 1999), thus perhaps cross-dressers will eventually become more accepted in future generations.

### Demographics of Transvestic Fetishists

Transvestic fetishists are not demographically dissimilar to men in the general population in regard to many variables such as mental and physical health, family situations in childhood, relationships, promiscuity and substance abuse (Boyd, 2003; Langstrom & Zucker, 2005; Rudd, 1999). Most transvestites are Christian and politically conservative (Bloom, 2002). There is also a high percentage of transvestic fetishists who are married with children (Rudd, 1999) and the vast majority tends to be heterosexual (Docter & Prince, 1997; Langstrom & Zucker, 2005). In fact, there is a lower incidence of homosexuality in transvestic fetishists than in the general population (Rudd, 1999). Another interesting fact is that 3% of males who are not transvestic fetishists were found to show sexual response with the idea of cross-dressing (Langstrom & Zucker, 2005).

Some differences were found in that transvestic fetishists tend to have higher I.Q.s and to have a higher degree of education as well as are more likely to be married to women with higher intelligence (Rudd, 1999). Also, those who are members of a cross-dressing support group tend to be of a higher status (Docter & Prince, 1997). However, one study discovered that transvestic fetishists are twice as likely as the average male to be divorced and also attributed this to the fact that their wives couldn't tolerate their cross-dressing (woodhouse, 1989).

### Myths and Realities of Transvestic Fetishists

A common misconception is that transvestic fetishists are homosexual. This belief among many people is not based on fact. Research shows that percentage of homosexuals in the transvestic fetishist population is less than in males in the general population (Rudd, 1999). Some believe that transvestic fetishists may be the most extreme heterosexuals in that they love women so much that they want to be close to them by wearing their clothes (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999).

Another misconception is that transvestic fetishists must have been molested as children as they are sexually excited by wearing the clothing of the opposite sex. However, scientific evidence has found

no such correlation between transvestic fetishism and childhood sexual abuse (Langstrom & Zucker, 2005). Additionally, there is no evidence to support that cross-dressing is a result of poor parenting (Rudd, 1999).

Some researchers state that they have found that many transvestic fetishists have an overly strict father which may cause them to cross-dress while others contradict this by saying that transvestic fetishists cross-dress as a result of an absentee or weak father (Woodhouse, 1989). It appears that one study negates the other. Woodhouse (1989) argues that since researchers have blamed transvestic fetishism on everything from divorced parents to enmeshed mothers that there should be a higher incidence of the phenomenon in the general public.

Some say that transvestic fetishists must be mentally ill, but research has found that transvestic fetishists were not more likely to have a diagnosis of mental illness than the average male (Ruud, 1999) and that scores on personality and sexual functioning were comparative to males in the general population with the only difference in transvestic fetishists being that they were more likely to embrace new experiences and to seek excitement (Brown, et al., 1996; Langstrom & Zucker, 2005). In another study, transvestic fetishists tested to be more androgynous than other men in the general population (Woodhouse, 1989). Additionally, transvestic fetishists have a higher tendency towards exhibitionism, voyeurism and masochism as well as view pornographic material more frequently than the average male. They also tend to experience sexual arousal more easily than most men (Langstrom & Zucker, 2005) which may or may not be a plus to significant others. In conjunction with being more easily aroused, transvestic fetishists in particular tend to masturbate more than the average male (Boyd, 2003). Some studies have suggested that transvestic fetishists masturbate 10 times more often in a month than do men who are not transvestic fetishists (Langstrom & Zucker, 2005).

However, transsexuals and transgendered individuals had more psychological and body image issues than transvestic fetishists (Brown, et al., 1996). Thus, it is possible that psychological issues could

be because the stress of societal conformity as well as the fact that transgendered individuals and transsexuals may be experiencing an adjustment disorder.

Transvestic fetishists have reported that they started cross-dressing in early childhood (Rudd, 1999) or adolescence (Boyd, 2003; Langstrom & Zucker, 2005) and that the experience was sexually stimulating (Doctor and Prince, 1997). It has been theorized that it is for this reason that there is no cure (Woodhouse, 1989). Others suggest that there is no cure because it is not an illness (Rudd, 1999).

There is much evidence to support that transvestic fetishists will never stop cross-dressing (Boyd, 2003). In Rudd's (1999) book, My Husband Wears My Clothes, a transvestic fetishist related a story from his childhood in which his father had caught him cross-dressing and broke his nose, but he still cross-dressed the next day. Hormone therapy has been utilized, but resulted in an opposite effect in that it increased sex drive thus increased the need to cross-dress in transvestic fetishists (Woodhouse, 1989). Many transvestic fetishists believe that marriage will cure them of their cross-dressing just to find out that this does not work either (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999; Woodhouse, 1989). Rudd (1999) found in her interviews with cross-dressers that rather than a cure, transvestic fetishists want to see a therapist who could help them feel more comfortable revealing their cross-dressing behavior.

Many wives of transvestic fetishists will say that they make great husbands (Boyd, 2003; Brown, 1994). One reason for this is that transvestic fetishists tend to be far less likely to commit adultery. Some wives also report that transvestic fetishists have high levels of parenting skill. Furthermore, wives who have accepted the husband's cross-dressing report high levels of satisfaction in their marriages (Rudd, 1999).

A study by John Hopkins University, Money and Russo found that self-esteem was higher in males with gender identity disorders if their cross-dressing behavior was accepted. Otherwise, they cross-dressed no more or less than did the children who were in environments that were intolerant (Rudd, 1999).

## Acceptance

Some wives feel that the path to acceptance is much like Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's 5 stages of grief in that they feel that the relationship they had with their husband has experienced a sort of death. It is true that some may face a pattern that starts with denial of the husband's cross-dressing followed by anger. In the third stage, bargaining, the wife attempts to set boundaries. When this does not settle her mind, she then may become depressed. The last stage is acceptance in which the wife may decide to terminate the relationship or choose to stay in the bargaining stage of her grief (Boyd, 2003). In such a case, perhaps cognitive restructuring may be helpful in that instead of seeing the situation as the death of a relationship, the wife could look at it more as if the relationship is evolving.

Rudd (1999) agrees that there are various stages of acceptance, but she believes that the stages are different from Boyd's stages. Rudd states that the stages are confusion, fear and resentment, indulgent stage which is when the wife simply tolerates the behavior, adjustment and acceptance. Rudd (1999) also believes that acceptance can be broken down into two levels, intellectual and emotional. Rudd states that intellectual acceptance was easier for her. This makes sense as emotions are not rational (McKay, Mathew, Martha Davis and Patrick Fanning, 1997). This lends support that cognitive restructuring may help merge the two levels of acceptance.

A good first step towards the partner's acceptance is for the cross-dresser to understand himself before he tells his partner as he cannot expect his partner to understand him if he doesn't understand himself (Rudd, 1999). It is helpful for the cross-dresser to determine if he is a transvestic fetishists, transgender or transsexual. Self-exploration can be facilitated by speaking with other cross-dressers, but it is also advised that the cross-dresser see a therapist who is familiar with and unbiased towards cross-dressing (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999).

It is equally important for a wife to evaluate everything that made her fall in love and marry her husband in the first place as acquiring skills to better live with the husbands cross-dressing may be a more

desirable option than divorce. Additionally, a wife can benefit by examining her own thoughts and feeling about her husband's cross-dressing. She could ask herself if her husband thinks of her no differently when she wears jeans and a t-shirt (Rudd, 1999). This examination of thoughts is the first step to cognitive restructuring. Though a wife can perform self-examination, it is advised that the couple seek professional help with a therapist who is equipped to assist with such situations (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999).

It is advised that the transvestic fetishist ease the wife into the idea of cross-dressing (Rudd, 1999). It may be easier for her to accept if he wears one article of clothing at a time to get her used to it, so it is not so much of a shock. It is also advised that the husband may want to show his wife a photograph of himself en femme before she sees him dressed in person (Rudd, 1999).

The amount of time a transvestic fetishist wants to spend en femme can affect a wife's level of acceptance (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999). It may help a wife to understand that a cross-dresser is more likely to begin cross-dressing as a part of daily living between the ages of 50 and 65 when many people experience extreme adjustments such as divorce or death of family members and longtime friends (Doctor & Prince, 1997). Also a transvestic fetishist should expect a wife's acceptance to wax and wane (Rudd, 1999). Furthermore, acceptance can be facilitated with the transvestic fetishist's appreciation of the partner's acceptance at any level and even in small ways. The transvestic fetishist can do this by leaving a love letter stating his gratitude or giving a small gift when she has shown acceptance of any kind (Rudd, 1999; Woodhouse, 1989).

#### Problems That Occur in Relationships with a Transvestic Fetishist

There are three concerns that partners of transvestic fetishists reported more frequently than others. The first one being a fear that the transvestic fetishist is secretly homosexual. Secondly, they wonder if being with a transvestic fetishist means that they themselves may be lesbian (Boyd, 2003;

Rudd, 1999) and thirdly, they worry that the transvestic fetishist may ultimately wish to be transsexual. As for sex, the common problems that occur are that transvestic fetishists are oversexed and tend to fulfill their own needs while other cross-dressers have little to no sex drive at all. The most common issue that wives have is that the transvestic fetishist is too passive when it comes to sex and the wife must be the initiator (Boyd, 2003).

The issue of fear that transvestic fetishist may be homosexual has been previously addressed in this writing which suggests that education may be an effective treatment to allay this fear. As for women feeling that they may be lesbian, there was no research found that showed women who are married to transvestic fetishists are any more likely to be lesbian than women in the general population. This topic will be expanded upon later.

It is true that some cross-dressers will eventually wish to cross-dress all or most of the time and some may even want to take hormones as well as have sex reassignment surgery. Though even the cross-dresser himself may not initially know which path he will eventually take, there are some clues that may help him and his wife determine if transitioning is a possibility (Boyd, 2003). As stated previously in this writing, DSM-IV-TR has only two criteria which must be met to make a diagnosis of transvestic fetishism. They are that the person must be a heterosexual male and find cross-dressing sexually exciting. However, the criterion for gender identity disorder, which is associated with transsexuals, is more extensive. In the DSM-IV-TR includes a history of wanting to be or stating that one is the opposite sex from which they were born, cross-dressing, insistence on participation in the roles of the perceived gender, and fantasies of being the perceived gender (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). As one can see, the only similarity between these two types of cross-dressers is the wearing of women's clothing.

To compare transvestic fetishists and transgender men side by side, transgender men prefer the role of women (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) whereas men who are solely transvestic fetishists are comfortable being men in their everyday lives (Doctor & Prince, 1997). Also, transvestic

fetishists cross-dress primarily for sexual gratification (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) while transgendered and transsexuals experience little if any sexual arousal as a direct result of cross-dressing (Doctor & Prince, 1997). In addition to the differences listed in the DSM-IV-TR, there are other differences between transvestic fetishists and those who are transgender or meet criteria for gender identity disorder. Transvestic fetishists tend to have an over-sexualized ideal of women, thus, they tend to prefer clothing that is consistent with this image. However, transsexuals favor more practical clothes so that they look more like genetic women. Also, transsexuals buy into the social media skinny ideal which is not seen in transvestic fetishists (Boyd, 2003). Unfortunately, sometimes these signs are overlooked. A key note here is that if the wife is more accepting, sex reassignment surgery is less likely (Rudd, 1999).

It has been mentioned previously that transvestic fetishists are more easily sexually excited and tend to masturbate more (Boyd, 2003; Langstrom & Zucker, 2005) which may cause obvious problems if the sex drive of the wife is not equally as strong. A wife may even feel that she is not enough sexually for her husband (Rudd, 1999). If the transvestic fetishist is consumed with the idea of sex, they may spend much of their free time viewing cross-dresser and pre-op transsexual pornography. They may also chat on-line with other transvestic fetishists as well as participate in on-line fantasies with other transvestic fetishes. Most cross-dressers do this strictly with the intention of facilitating masturbation though some do set up meeting with others in person. These behaviors can result in a wife feeling intimidated and angry.

Another aspect of transvestic fetishism that causes jealousy in a relationship is that transvestic fetishists create for themselves; their ideal woman and their ideal experiences of being a woman (Boyd, 2003). Men are not always told of the intricacies of a woman's life, thus, the only model they have is the one that they must create for themselves; images of women as seen by them in the world around them and by the comments made by other men (Woodhouse, 1989). This may be why they create this fantasy, over-sexed version of women. Some transvestic fetishists even go so far as to say that they know what it's like

to be a woman, but they may not realize that they only know the parts that they want to know (Boyd, 2003).

This over-sexed version of a woman is perhaps the most difficult with which to deal. Additionally, the wife of a transvestic fetishist may feel less than adequate because she may not fit the ideal that the transvestic fetishist has created (Boyd, 2003). In fact, a sense of jealousy may be experienced by the wife in that even though there is no other physical woman involved; the husband has created his version of the ideal woman. This can create similar feelings as if he is having an affair (Woodhouse, 1989).

As transvestic fetishists can be preoccupied with sexual thoughts, internet erotica can cause tension in the relationship for many reasons. Excessive use of internet erotica can create stress within a relationship whether the man is a transvestic fetishist or not. Thus, it appears in this situation that the cross-dressing is not so much the problem as the time spent downloading material with sexual content. Wives of cross-dressers, as with many women who are not with transvestic fetishists, tolerate their partner's masturbation and use of erotica as this is seen as a better option for their men than physical affairs, though many people in general equate on-line affairs with physical infidelity (Boyd, 2003).

Even if there is no on-line affair, more than anything it is the content of cross-dresser erotica, such as sadomasochism and same sex intercourse, that wives and girlfriends find disturbing (Boyd, 2003). However, it must be pointed out that the same could be said in a relationship with a man who is not a transvestic fetishist in that many women would be worried if they knew that their men were interested in these forms of erotica. Much of cross-dresser erotica includes the cross-dresser performing fellatio on another man. The fantasy of a man receiving oral sex is a popular one for men whether they are transvestic fetishists or, but as transvestic fetishists over-sexualize women (Boyd, 2003), it is no surprise that this is a common theme. Some wives fear that if their husband views same sex erotica with two men that he must be gay. This is not necessarily the case. One couple that Boyd (2003) interviewed related

that the transvestic fetishist husband went on a date with a man to see whether or not he was interested in men and found that he liked women. Therefore, it seems that if a transvestic fetishist knows where his sexuality lies, he can better explain his situation to a potential mate so that she knows what she is dealing with from the beginning.

When transvestic fetishists are dishonest about the fact that cross-dressing is sexually arousing, passionate intimacy may suffer as the partner may mistake the transvestic fetishist's lack of interest in sex without cross-dressing as a lack of interest in sex with her (Boyd, 2003). The wife may feel that she is not pretty enough or sexy enough and may be intimidated by the husband's female persona (Woodhouse, 1989). Rudd (1999) stated that she herself felt that her husband cross-dressed because she wasn't feminine enough for him.

Boyd (2003) reported that many women tell her that they began a relationship with "a man and they want a man in bed", meaning that they want him to be the initiator when it comes to having sex. Women are also raised to think that initiation of sexual relations by a woman is frowned upon. This further complicates the sexual relationship between a transvestic fetishist and a woman as the woman may feel that if the husband is playing the part of the female that she must play the part of the male (Boyd, 2003; Woodhouse, 1989). Also, it is important that the husband be able to function sexually en homme for his partner for if he cannot, this creates additional problems (Boyd, 2003).

There are other concerns that are experienced by others such as the husband not putting the wife's make-up back and the cost of a second wardrobe for the cross dresser (Boyd, 2003). Already one of the number one problems in marriage is money. So finances could pose a real problem in the marriage, especially if the husband spends more on his feminine attire than what is spent on the wife's clothing (Rudd, 1999; Woodhouse, 1989). Another point of contention is when the husband's cross-dressing begins to consume the majority of the couple's life including such things as vacations and conversation topics (Boyd, 2003).

Another problem is how the wife finds out about her husband's cross-dressing. Timing and presentation is crucial (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999). A wife's acceptance of her husband's behavior depends on how she finds out, her perception of cross-dressing and who tells her (Ceglian & Lyons, 2004). Another important factor is when she is told. Many of the wives who discovered their husbands' cross-dressing after marriage are less likely to have favorable attitudes (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999). Rudd (1999) agrees that men should tell their wives before marriage, but even she admits that she is not sure what she would have done if her husband had told her before marriage. The fear of losing the woman they love is a huge deterrent from telling wives their secret. (Weinberg & Bullough, 1988). However, many experts agree that it is best if he tells her before marriage (Boyd, 2003; Woodhouse, 1989; Rudd, 1999) especially since the longer a couple has been together, the more resentful the wife becomes (Wienberg & Bullough, 1988).

Another mistake that transvestic fetishists may make is attempting to open the possibility of cross-dressing by taking their wives to drag shows in gay bars (Rudd, 1999). Rudd (1999) does not advocate this as it may exacerbate the idea that many women already have that cross-dressing is linked to homosexuality. Another point to consider is that, once again, the female impersonators represent an ultra-glamorous version of women which the wife may find intimidating (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999; Woodhouse, 1989).

Rudd (1999) believes that the transvestic fetishist should tell his wife through verbal or written communication. This makes sense as women tend to be more verbal while men are more visual. Rudd (1999) points out that some cross-dressers, because men are visual, think that it is best to tell the wife by showing her in ways such as being cross-dressed when she gets home, but this is not a good idea. It is also advised that men should be careful of the wording that they use when telling a wife or girlfriend and to express his appreciation of her feminine qualities as well as explain that he would like to embody these as well as nurturing and tenderness are highly valued in both men and women (Rudd, 1999).

If children are involved, the husband and wife both should decide if and when to tell the children. If one decides to tell the children without the other's permission, resentment may occur (Rudd, 1999). If the cross-dresser is transgender or transsexual as opposed to a transvestic fetishist, he may be more inclined to tell children than the transvestic fetishist as the transvestic fetishist uses cross-dressing just for sexual recreation and does not plan to incorporate it into his life any other way. As this writing focuses on transvestic fetishists only, a discussion on telling children will not be addressed. However, telling children is an important therapeutic issue to explore in additional research and in providing services for transvestic fetishist who have children because of its potential effect on their well-being.

Other concerns in the relationship could also arise: A wife may fear that her participation or even just her acceptance will encourage her husband to take his pastime a step farther. She may also worry that there is a genetic component that could be transferred to her children. A wife may additionally feel contempt for the fact that her husband has found a hobby and a way to relax much like some wives are jealous when their husband goes golfing with friends. Also in regards to jealousy, a wife may feel that there is another woman living in her home and taking up time with her husband (Woodhouse, 1989).

### Making the Relationship Work

Research and previous writings have made suggestions that may help with some of the issues that are encountered by partners of transvestic fetishists, but still there are gaps that need to be filled. As stated earlier in this writing, education can help to allay some of the concerns, such as fear that the transvestic fetishist may be homosexual or may want to fully transition into a female, that are typically held by wives and girlfriends. However, cognitive restructuring for individuals and couples may be able to fill in the gaps and provide solutions that education alone cannot. According to this writer, one way the therapy can assist the couple is by helping one or both partners to accept and enjoy cross-dressing as an integral part of their sex life together. In other cases, therapy may assist couples in realizing that the relationship may not work; e.g. the case of a male cross-dresser for sexual fulfillment but his female

partner cannot or will not accept this. One or both partners may decide that staying together is not an option.

As for the concern of the transvestic fetishist being hypersexual, a wife could be flattered that her husband wants her in particular more than any other woman to participate with him in his cross-dressing. However, it is important for each partner to remember that though the transvestic fetishist is not entitled to have his wife participate in his fantasies, it is unrealistic for the wife to expect the transvestic fetishist to stop cross-dressing (Boyd, 2003).

Lack of sexual interest can be frustrating for the wife of a transvestic fetishist or any wife for that matter. There are some suggestions for the wife of a transvestic fetishist. The transvestic fetishist may need or desire accoutrements during sex which some wives may find deterring (Woodhouse, 1989), but if wives understand that many men like to have their wives wear sexy lingerie for added sexual stimulation they may be more willing to indulge their husbands. Also, women may want to sexually stimulate their transvestic fetishists by reading cross-dresser erotica to them in bed as a means to keep the transvestic fetishist from avoiding sex with his wife or finding autoeroticism more satisfying than sex with his wife (Boyd, 2003).

As for helping the wife become familiar and comfortable with taking initiative, Boyd (2003) recommends erotic films featuring women taking control in sexual situations. To take it a step further, women may find strap-on play exciting and empowering. However, it is recommended that the couple review instructional videos (Boyd, 2003). This makes sense from a cognitive restructuring standpoint in that if the couple has a bad first experience, they may not try it again and may also refrain from adventuring out in other ways.

One wife interviewed by Boyd (2003) admitted that the fact that her husband took the time to be attractive made her feel a sense of power. Cognitive restructuring is evident here. Many women may find it refreshing for a husband to want to look good for them for a change. This takes the pressure off of

worrying about how they look and therefore enable them to relax and enjoy the experience. Women often worry about their age and weight. This doesn't have to be a problem for wives of transvestic fetishists because she will excite him practically no matter what she looks like if she will take the effort to don a skirt and high heels (Boyd, 2003).

Another way to increase marital satisfaction is for the husband to ensure that his wife's sexual needs are met as this aspect of marriage has been proven to be a major determinant in a wife's decision to continue with the marriage (Doctor & Prince, 1997; Weinberg & Bullough, 1988; Woodhouse, 1989). It is wise for both partners to realize that it is not the sole responsibility of the wife to keep passion alive in the marriage. The husband must make equal effort as his marriage may depend on it.

In addition to the more common issues, there are other problems that wives of transvestic fetishists face that may be helped by cognitive restructuring. Those who have been raised in strict Christian families may feel that cross-dressing is immoral since there is a passage in The Holy Bible in Deuteronomy 22:5 that states that no one, male or female shall wear the clothes of the opposite sex. However, many of these women who say that cross-dressing goes against their faith wear pants and think nothing of putting on their husbands t-shirt. It may behoove the wife to examine why she feels that it is ok for a woman to wear men's garments but a man cannot wear the clothes of a woman (Rudd, 1999). It may also be wise for both partners to refrain from using The Bible as a weapon.

Rudd (1999) reminds wives to realize that when their husband's reveal that they cross-dress that this is an act of great trust on the part of the husband and that if he feels that he cannot share these things with her, he may just do them anyway without her knowledge. This statement could bring things into perspective for the wife and is a good example of cognitive restructuring.

Before considering entering into a relationship, it is wise for a transvestic fetishist, as well as anyone else, to choose someone who is a good fit. Though this can be difficult to determine at times, research shows that women with certain characteristics are more likely to be accepting. Studies show that

women who are more androgynous tend to be more open-minded about sexuality and less critical than most women (Ceglie & Lyons, 2004). Women who exhibit independence and egalitarianism in their relationships are more compatible with transvestic fetishists (Boyd, 2003). Transvestic fetishists may also benefit by marrying women who have more prestigious careers (Weinberg & Bullough, 1988).

Additionally, women who do not have these characteristics are much more afraid that others will find out about their husband's cross-dressing (Ceglie & Lyons, 2004) as they may feel that they themselves do not have enough redeeming qualities to over-come exposure.

There is evidence that the self-esteem of the wife is connected to creating harmony in a relationship with a transvestic fetishist (Boyd, 2003) as those with higher self-esteem have a more centered locus of control. This may be why Weinberg & Bollough (1988) found that a wife's feeling of self-control was more strongly correlated with higher ratings of marital happiness even more so than self-esteem. Thus, increasing a wife's feeling of self-control through cognitive restructuring may also increase marital bliss.

Studies have also shown that women with higher self-esteem tend to be more supportive, adjust more easily and report a greater degree of happiness as opposed to wives with low self-esteem who blamed themselves for their husband's cross-dressing (Weinberg & Bollough, 1988). This makes sense as those with low self-esteem tend to look at themselves as the problem.

Higher self-esteem is also correlated with the wife's ability to see the positive aspects of having a transvestic fetishist husband and to rate sexual encounters with their husband as higher than before discovering their husbands' desire to cross-dress. Additionally, high self-esteem is related to desire to join a support group which is important as 27% of wives who do not join a support group have a higher tendency to feel like they have no one to talk to about their situation (Weinberg & Bullough, 1988). Additionally, significant others of transvestic fetishists who attend support groups have a higher rate of marital satisfaction including in the sexual aspect of the relationship (Brown et. al., 1996). Though there

is evidence to support that support groups are helpful to wives, Boyd (2003) points out that there can be some pitfalls such as being snubbed for being accepting and also, if the group is too negative, the wife herself may become negative (Weinberg & Bullough, 1988).

It is not uncommon for transvestic fetishists and their wives to have various contracts and negotiations such as no cross-dressing in public and no plucking eyebrows. It is advised that the wife listen to why a certain aspect of cross-dressing is important for the transvestic fetishist. Likewise, the transvestic fetishist should listen to the concerns of his wife as to why she does not want him to do certain things at certain times. If the wife dictates every aspect of his cross-dressing, he may resent her as he may feel that his needs are stifled by her. Boyd (2003) points out that if a wife feels that she can dictate to her transvestic fetishist husband what he can and cannot wear when he has his free time then he should be allowed to do the same to her and request that she wear stockings and high heels more often. Temporary bargaining may be a good way to ease the partner into the transvestic fetishist's cross-dressing so that it is not too much too soon (Boyd, 2004).

Some ways to make the relationship work can be applied to any couple. Rudd (1999) suggests the husband should help around the house. In fact, a study done by The University of Illinois Chicago found that husbands who help with chores have more sex with their wives (ManWifeDog, 2012). Besides, the wife may find it insulting that her husband tells her that he knows what it is like to be a woman when he has only dressed in beautiful clothing as opposed to doing housework. Rudd (1999) suggests that the couple can do the chores together and then both get dressed in beautiful, sexy clothes together afterwards. This being said, it is possible that if the transvestic fetishist husband does chores while dressed en femme, the wife's negative attitude toward cross-dressing may decrease.

Additionally, it is advised that a transvestic fetishist should ensure that the needs of the significant other are met as this may increase her ability to accept his cross-dressing but also because neglecting the needs of a partner is a common mistake that transvestic fetishists make. Of course this is good advice for

any couple, but it is especially important for the transvestic fetishist to do this en homme. The transvestic fetishist and the partner should make time that is exclusive to the both of them alone together to develop their relationship as well (Rudd, 1999).

The couple should also remember that communication is key in a relationship. It is good for each partner to examine their own thoughts on taking initiative when it comes to sex. This is good advice for the wife and the transvestic fetishist as he may also be uncomfortable with taking initiative even when en homme (Boyd, 2003). Both partners must be made to feel that they can openly express themselves, their thoughts and their fears (Rudd, 1999). Boyd (2003) points out that, as with any relationship, that partners should avoid criticism of the other person and neither should bring up past trespasses especially if they have nothing to do with cross-dressing.

Talking about cross-dressing can be difficult for both partners. Cognitive restructuring may be a way to help facilitate communication. Boyd (2003) stated that she had found talking about cross-dressing with her husband easier if she used his name en femme rather than to refer to him as a cross-dresser. Whereas Rudd (1999) related that she prefers the term cross-dresser to the term transvestic fetishist. These women found that a simple change in terminology helped them to cope and talk about cross-dressing with their husbands.

Some wives are turned off not only by the fact that their husbands are dressed like women, but also because they are sometimes dressed poorly as women. It may help wives to understand that when a transvestic fetishist first begins to dress en femme, it is like when teenage girls are first experimenting with clothing and make-up. It is advised that women avoid a tone of disdain when giving suggestions about improving the transvestic fetishist's look. If this is done, the transvestic fetishist's look will improve dramatically in a relatively short period of time (Rudd, 1999) which may help wives to find the cross-dressing more palatable. Additionally, it may help the wife to love her husband no differently when en femme if she can understand that her husband is still a man regardless of his attire. It would also

benefit the transvestic fetishist to understand that his wife has lost some normalcy in her life and should make a point to continue with behaviors that are typical of the average male/ female relationship such as acts of chivalry and date nights with him en homme at least once per week (Rudd, 1999).

The insecurities of many women cause them to blame their transvestic fetishist husbands for the way they feel. A wife may feel that she is not needed as she may believe that her husband can wear women's clothing and have everything (Woodhouse, 1989). Rudd (1999) advises, "Make her feel like she is the most important person in the world" and "never praise other women more than you praise your wife."

It is important to remember that transvestic fetishism cannot be cured. It is best to seek counseling from a professional to help the transvestic fetishist accept himself and for the wife to accept him. Unfortunately, many therapists are not equipped with the knowledge to help transvestic fetishists and their wives. Therefore, it is advised that couples in crisis seek a specialist in sex therapy before deciding to end the relationship as reading a book is not enough alone to help the couple (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999).

#### Joys of being with a Transvestic Fetishist

Finding the joys in a relationship with a transvestic fetishist is a strong argument for cognitive restructuring. One of the blessings of being in a relationship with a transvestic fetishist is that they understand what it takes to look feminine whereas other men may complain that a woman takes too long to get ready when she dresses up, but then complain that she does not wear skirts and heels when she is able to be ready quickly (Boyd, 2003; Rudd, 1999).

Some wives have found that taking part in various aspects of cross-dressing together such as learning make-up and fashion tips can help each partner to evolve as individuals as well as a couple (Rudd, 1999). Shopping for clothes together could also be a good couple's outing (Boyd, 2003).

Additionally, research has shown that many wives report their husbands having more positive feminine traits while cross-dressing (Boyd, 2003; Weinberg & Bullough, 1988).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **METHOD**

#### Procedure

As transvestic fetishists are very private (Woodhouse, 1989) and thus, very difficult to find, this dissertation is done in a case study format which follows one couple's progress in marital satisfaction. This researcher contacted organizations that were considered to be alternative lifestyle friendly as this would be the most likely way to find couples who could be met with in person. Alternative lifestyle functions were attended and only one couple was found in which the male was a heterosexual transvestic fetishist and both partners were willing to participate.

#### Participants

The participants were a married couple who were both in their early 40's and professionally employed. Both had above average intelligence per their reports and have college degrees with Jonathan having a four year degree and Victoria having a graduate degree. The couple had no children together and had no plans for children in the future. Otherwise, this couple can be described as characteristic of conventional couples in the United States in that they both have average incomes and have typical interests such as golfing, movies and dining out. The names of the participants have been changed and certain demographics are non-specific to protect the privacy of the participants.

There were two other participants who were interviewed to make comparisons and differentiations, but did not receive treatment for various reasons. One participant agreed to be interviewed and wanted to participate in treatment with his wife, but could not as his wife declined to be a part of the study. The other participant who agreed to be interviewed did not qualify to receive the treatment as this participant is transgender and therefore, does not meet criteria for transvestic fetishist.

Mathew is a transvestic fetishist in his mid-40s who is highly educated and intelligent as well as professionally employed. He is currently married with children. His wife is also in her mid-40s, and professionally employed, with a graduate level education. Mathew's wife opted out of participation in the study and has repeatedly told Mathew that she disagrees with his cross-dressing per Mathew's report.

The other participant who was interviewed is Sophia who is a Columbian born, professionally employed biological male who's age in the mid-50s. Sophia identifies as transgender. Since she considers herself to be feminine in gender, feminine pronouns are used when referring to her. Sophia is married, but the relationship is strained and she and her wife were separated at one time. She explains that the problems in the marriage have nothing to do with the fact that she is transgender, but because of a lack of conjugal participation on the part of the wife. Sophia further clarified that she did not cross-dress until after their separation.

### Methodology

Before starting this project, both partners were asked background questions that appear in the appendices of this writing. Additionally, both were individually asked to rate marital satisfaction on a scale with 0 having no marital satisfaction and 10 as being extremely satisfied. Additionally, the wife was asked, also when alone, to rate her jealousy on a scale with 0 being that no jealousy is experienced and a score of 10 being that extreme jealousy was experienced. A total of 11 sessions were held including the intake 2 individual sessions with Jonathan, 3 individual sessions with Victoria, and 5 joint sessions.

Next, the wife was asked to explain her knowledge about and thoughts on transvestic fetishism to determine her level of understanding and her own personal thoughts on transvestic fetishism. The wife was also asked to explain any difficulties that she has with her husband's transvestic fetishism.

This researcher then educated the wife on transvestic fetishism with the research stated earlier in this writing and asked how her thoughts had changed. The wife's thoughts on transvestic fetishism were examined and through the use of the Socratic Method, cognitive restructuring was attempted. The transvestic fetishist husband was also invited in on some sessions to help educate his wife and to help with problem solving once the wife's thoughts were revealed.

At the conclusion of treatment, both partners were again asked to assess marital satisfaction with the same scale given pre-treatment. The wife's jealousy post-treatment was also measured with the same pre-test scale. Pre-tests were then compared to post-test to determine efficacy of treatment.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

As both participants had reported high levels of marital satisfaction, Victoria with a rating of 8 and Jonathan with a rating of 9, this researcher decided to determine how this couple makes their relationship work and can other couples benefit from what can be learned about this couple. Cognitive restructuring was still able to be implemented since Victoria rated her jealousy at a 5.

#### Why Victoria and Jonathan's Relationship Works

This couple had much in their favor from the beginning. First of all, Victoria was familiar with the fact that the majority of transvestic fetishists are heterosexual. She stated that because of this, she viewed transvestic fetishists only as men who like to wear a different type of clothing from other men. Victoria also had prior exposure to other cross-dressers of varying types though she had never actually met a transvestic fetishist before she met with Jonathan.

Additionally, Victoria had many traits that research has found to be favorable for having a relationship with a transvestic fetishist. She has above average intelligence and is college educated. Though Victoria's normal mode of dress is business-length skirts, stockings and court shoes, she describes her personality as androgynous. She also reported that she had received career counseling in college where she was given personality tests that indicated that she has a more androgynous personality. After encounters with Victoria, this researcher would agree with that finding. Victoria reports having high self-esteem and that she feels that she has a high level of control over her life. Lastly, Victoria is professionally employed and even had her own business at one point.

Another plus is the way Jonathan handled telling Victoria about his being a transvestic fetishist. Jonathan met Victoria through an online dating site in which, in his profile, he had disclosed his cross-dressing and posted a picture of himself cross-dressed which was the only picture on his profile for

privacy reasons. Jonathan explained, “I knew that I couldn’t be with a woman who couldn’t accept my cross-dressing so I just put it out there. I thought that if a woman can get past this the rest is gravy.”

Jonathan knew that his cross-dressing would deter most women but felt that the ones that could get past it would be worth it.

Victoria was informed of the issues that most wives of transvestic fetishists have and was asked her thoughts and feelings about them. Upon interviewing Victoria, it was discovered that her cognitions were very different from the wives in previous research. For one thing, Victoria reported why she has no fear that Jonathan will have sex with another man. Victoria stated, “I have been completely honest about the fact that I, unlike many women, enjoy seeing two men together and Jonathan has let me know that this is not an option”.

When asked if she ever felt like she might be lesbian as many wives of transvestic fetishists have reported feeling, Victoria stated that she had never felt that way for two reasons. First, she pointed out that men do not question their sexuality when they kiss a woman wearing jeans and a t-shirt. Secondly, she had this to say, “Regardless of how he is dressed, I am very much aware that he is a man. I think this is because even when cross-dressed, Jonathan sits and talks like a man.”

When asked if Jonathan’s over-sexed version of a woman is a problem with her as it is with so many wives, Victoria pointed out the double standard that women place on men. Victoria stated:

“I get it. Men like women in sexy clothes. What I don’t get is why it’s a problem when women also sexually objectify men whether they want to admit it or not. If you doubt it, go to an all-male review. All of the dancers are ultra-fit and the women are going crazy over them. Until these women go to a strip show featuring a bunch of over-weight men in sweat suits, they don’t have a right to complain.”

Victoria also said that she is not bothered by the fact that Jonathan fantasizes about being dressed in women's clothing during sex because she has her own fantasies that she plays out in her head. Victoria further stated that she is thankful that all she has to do to be sexy for Jonathan is to wear stockings, heels and a tight skirt, "It's easier than losing 20 lbs. or being 20 years younger".

As for taking initiative when it comes to sex, Victoria professed, "I've always been sexually assertive and sometimes men are disturbed by this, but with Jonathan I am free to be me". She further related that she thinks of taking control with sex as a way of gaining power over the powerful and thus gain her own sense of power through the cross-dressing and domination of her husband during sex. Victoria also explained that, even though she is not sexually excited by Jonathan's cross-dressing, she is not deterred by it either, "Women are not viewed as less feminine or disgusting when they wear pants. Jonathan's cross-dressing is no different".

It was pointed out to Victoria that many times a wife's identity is tied to her husband's and that this is part of the reason that wives of transvestic fetishists struggle with their husband's cross-dressing. When asked if this is the case with her she had this to say,

"Well if that's true then I am one sexy bitch. When in semi-public setting, I catch men looking at Jonathan and I have to smile because it's the same way they look at me. Even women comment on how gorgeous he is en femme and want to hug him. That's flattering to me because no one wants to be with the person no one wants to be with."

Victoria was asked if the expense of Jonathan's cross-dressing was ever a problem. She said that it wasn't because she and Jonathan have their own money and separate bank accounts. She adds, "I look at it as having doubled my wardrobe and not only is he not complaining, he paid for it."

### Problems That Occurred in their Relationship

Even though this couple had so much in their favor, there were still some issues of jealousy that Victoria faced. Therefore, cognitive restructuring was utilized to determine if changing Victoria's thoughts would solve the problems.

Victoria did admit that Jonathan's looking at erotica was an issue because it made her feel that she falls short of the women that are in the erotica that Jonathan views and that he would rather look at them than at her. "I went through a lot of trouble to have boudoir pictures made and professionally touched as a gift for him", she stated, "and he looked at them once!"

As communication between Victoria and Jonathan was facilitated, Victoria realized that she had jumped to conclusions and that Jonathan was looking at the clothing, not the women wearing them. She came to an understanding that people like variety and that budget and space limitations make it impractical to buy new clothes constantly making internet erotica a more practical choice. Victoria smiled as she commented, "Thankfully for me it is variety in clothes instead of variety of women, but still, if I had known this, I might have put my efforts into another gift that he would have liked more, like a subscription to a transvestic fetishist website."

It helped greatly that Jonathan told Victoria that he would rather see her in the clothes. "Even if it is a line", Victoria explains, "it was a good call on his part. Besides, I look at other men but it doesn't mean that I don't love him or think he isn't sexy or that I wish he was like them". She also realized that as long as her needs are being met that there is no real harm in Jonathan's looking at erotic material other than the thoughts that she was producing herself. Additionally, Victoria admitted that she herself has various fantasies; therefore, it should not be a problem for Jonathan to do the same.

Furthermore, Victoria reported that she realized that she could use the fantasies that Jonathan was viewing on-line to create these fantasies in real life for him and become an actual reality fantasy as opposed to just a virtual reality fantasy. She stated that an added benefit was that she felt more

comfortable talking to him about her own fantasies. Victoria stated, “If he feels comfortable enough to share his cross-dressing fantasies, then surely I can feel comfortable sharing my desires. Plus, I do his fantasy and then he does mine. It’s a fair trade.”

Victoria admits that she still occasionally feels a brief moment of jealousy when Jonathan mentions that he talked to another cross-dresser, but her thoughts on it now is no different than Jonathan talking to any other man that shares any other interests of Jonathan’s. Victoria states, “If it wasn’t innocent, Jonathan probably wouldn’t mention it. Besides, I want him to know that he can be open and honest with me without penalty. This way, if I have a problem with something, we can deal with it upfront instead of my being blind-sided.”

Another issue that Victoria had is that, because her normal attire is skirts, stockings and court shoes, she wondered if Jonathan loves her or her clothes. Jonathan was asked, “What do you love about [Victoria] as a person?” Jonathan was able to list several of Victoria’s personality characteristics which set her mind at ease. Six months later, Victoria reported that she has not had that thought again.

Victoria, like so many wives of transvestic fetishists, felt that she fell short of Jonathan’s image of a woman. Through cognitive restructuring, Victoria was able to see that if a man can embody the perfect woman, then it should be easier for her to do so than he. Victoria realized that, “If he, in all his masculine glory, can transform into this beautiful, sexy woman, then imagine what he can do for me.” Victoria admitted that Jonathan telling her of his insecurities while cross-dressed helped her to feel better about herself.

Victoria related that she feels slightly jealous when Jonathan tells her that he bought his feminine persona, Tiffany, an article of clothing and uses his en femme name. She explains, “When [Jonathan] says that he bought [Tiffany] a new skirt, it feels like he is telling me that he has bought something for another woman”. However, when Jonathan tells her that he bought a skirt for himself, she does not have any feelings of jealousy. Something else that helps ease the feelings of jealousy is that when Jonathan buys

himself an article of clothing, he buys Victoria a matching one or an article that she would like. Victoria stated that instead of being jealous when Jonathan buys himself an article of clothing, she feels elated because she knows that she is getting a gift as well which she also understands helps her to become the embodiment of his version of the perfect female.

During conversations, Victoria revealed that she had also felt jealous when Jonathan was cross-dressed and she was dressed similarly, but Jonathan was staring at himself posing in the mirror instead of looking at her. She admitted that if Jonathan had been dressed as a man this would not have bothered her. This confused Victoria. Upon examination of her thoughts, Victoria again realized that men love variety and he sees Victoria dressed like this all the time, but he rarely sees himself dressed this way. Additionally, Victoria was reminded that Jonathan is also excited by the wearing of women's clothing.

At the conclusion of the study, both Jonathan and Victoria rated their marital satisfaction as a 10 and Victoria rated her jealousy as a 2. This suggested that education and cognitive restructuring were successful in increasing marital satisfaction for both partners and decreasing jealousy for the female partner.

### Comparisons of Three Cross-Dressers

As stated earlier, two other participants were interviewed to compare information and to increase understanding. The information provides first-hand insight into transvestic fetishism as well as into transgenderism since one of the deepest fears of wives is that their husbands who cross-dress may one day want to transition into a female body. Having an understanding of the differences and similarities between transvestic fetishists and transgender can help cross-dressers understand themselves so that they can discuss their desires with potential and current partners. Additionally, comparisons between the two transvestic fetishists can provide therapists and individuals with knowledge that can assist in building healthy relationships, romantic or otherwise.

As previously mentioned, exposure to different demographic groups can decrease prejudice as long as the experience is positive. Jonathan related that when he first started coming out cross-dressed in semi-private venues that there was only one other cross-dresser that was in the fetish community and unfortunately this person wasn't well liked, not because he cross-dressed, but because he wasn't liked as a person. This caused the people that Jonathan met to have misconceptions about cross-dressers and about him personally as well. Jonathan further stated that as people got to know him, they realized that not all cross-dressers fit the stereotype that the other cross-dresser presented. Jonathan has helped to increase understanding of cross-dressers and is respected in the fetish community.

Jonathan was asked about narcissism in cross-dressers as Psychoanalysts advocate that transvestites have some narcissistic traits (Argentieri, 2009; Chiland, 2009). This view was discussed earlier in that transvestites are only interested in the aspects of being a woman that they find appealing. Jonathan admitted, "I cook and do dishes, but it's because I love [Victoria] and want to take care of her. It has nothing to do with the fact that I cross-dress."

Jonathan further reveals that transvestites exhibit narcissism in that they like to be seen. He stated that many transvestites have hundreds of pictures of themselves on their profiles on social media sites. Jonathan related:

"I used to rig up a Polaroid [camera] so that I could pose and pull a string to take my picture. This was before cell phones and digital cameras. I would never use a regular camera because I didn't want the person who was developing the pictures to see me."

Jonathan's statement also demonstrates the conundrum faced by many transvestites in that they want to be seen, but fear the consequences of others finding out that they cross-dress.

Sophia had a different answer for this question. She reported that she doesn't like or dislike having her picture taken any more than the average person and doesn't look at the pictures of other cross-dressers as much as Jonathan and Mathew.

A harmonious marital relationship is more likely possible if it involves compatible people and if it has the right start. Thus, comparisons between the wives and relationships of Jonathan and Mathew were examined. Information gathered is from Victoria's self-report and Mathew's report on his wife's information. Both wives are intelligent, highly educated, professionally employed, independent and seem self-confident. Research indicates that women who are more receptive to a romantic partner cross-dressing have all of these traits. There were only two differences between the two wives. Victoria stated that she has an androgynous personality and did not describe her family as religious while Mathew reported that his wife has a feminine personality and comes from a very religious family. It cannot be said that gender of personality and religiousness are highly determining factors of a wife's acceptance by this case study alone; however, it may prove worthy to conduct more research in which these traits are isolated and compared between groups.

One other aspect sets the two women apart and that is the way in which they were told about their husband's cross-dressing. Earlier, it was stated that Jonathan had met Victoria on a dating website on which he included the fact that he was a cross-dresser in his profile, thus, Victoria knew before she even agreed to meet him. This was not the case for Mathew and his wife. Mathew reported that he told his wife shortly after they were married. He explained that he told her one night when they were driving home and then cross-dressed after they arrived to show her. He stated that she did not approve and that they have had many arguments about it over the years. Mathew further reported that his wife told him that if she even finds a trace of make-up on his face she will divorce him. Though both women were made aware of their husband's cross-dressing at different points in the relationship and in different ways, this alone does not indicate that if Mathew had informed his wife in the manner in which Jonathan informed his wife that Mathew's wife would be accepting. It is possible that if Mathew had told his wife earlier in the relationship, especially before marriage, she may not have married him. However, if this was the case, Mathew may have had the chance to marry someone more accepting.

A major issue that may emerge in a relationship with a cross-dresser is that the cross-dresser may desire to have sexual relations with men. Statements from Mathew and Sophia can shed some light on the matter. Mathew related that though he is not attracted to men that when he is cross-dressed he sometimes thinks that he would like to experience sex with a man. Upon further investigation it was revealed that Mathew doesn't necessarily want to have sex with a man, but rather to be taken in the same fashion as when a man has sex with a woman. When asked if he would prefer to have a woman use a strap-on during sex rather than to have sex with a man, Mathew answered in the affirmative.

For Sophia, understanding her sexuality was a journey. Sophia reported that she has always been attracted to women and had girlfriends as a teenager. She stated that she was not attracted to men in and of themselves, but she was attracted to the idea of being sexually taken as a woman which a man provides. Sophia remembers:

“...I lived on Bourbon Street when I was nineteen and there were a lot of TGs.... I was attracted to them. I did play around with a couple of them. I was madly in love with one....I became curious about having sex with a guy after having an encounter with a guy...who invited me to dinner and then his hotel room. That was the first time I ever [performed oral sex on a man]. The whole time I felt like I was the girl and it made me want to know what it was like to have sex being the girl.”

Though both Mathew and Sophia have a desire to have sex as a woman, Jonathan does not share this trait with them. He has never thought about having sex with a man nor has he thought about having sex with a woman with a strap-on. However, Jonathan did say that he likes for the woman to be in the superior position during intercourse.

Studies show that transvestic fetishists have an inclination towards exhibitionism, voyeurism and masochism. All three cross-dressers in this study reported that they have involvement in the bondage

discipline and sadomasochistic community in varying ways. Once again though, Mathew and Sophia are more similar to each other than to Jonathan. All three interviewees reported enjoying being bound, but this is where the similarity ends. Jonathan reported that he remembers wanting to be tied up as early as four years old, but has no desire for pain. Mathew and Sophia on the other hand enjoy pain to different degrees with Sophia reporting fulfillment from a greater level of pain than Mathew.

Though all three participants admitted to cross-dressing at an early age, one aspect that sets Sophia apart from Jonathan and Mathew is that Sophia never masturbated while wearing women's clothing growing up while this was always the purpose for cross-dressing for Jonathan and Mathew. Sophia explained:

“... A large part of the sexual gratification was not fetishistic in nature. I was creating my sex appeal and extending my sexuality in a feminine fashion. It was as if being dressed allowed me to be more myself sexually. I often thought of myself or behaved as a girl in bed so this feeling was only more enhanced by the clothes.”

Sophia further stated that sometimes her cross-dressing is extra sexy in nature in order to be sexually attractive to a potential partner and does not see it any differently than when a biological woman dresses to capture the sexual desires of others. The fact that Jonathan and Mathew cross-dress for direct sexual gratification and Sophia cross-dresses for indirect sexual gratification could be one determining factor in differentiating between a transvestite and a transgender person.

Another difference that sets Sophia apart from Jonathan and Mathew is that she says that she dresses because that is who she truly is as a person and cross-dresses nearly 100% of the time whereas Jonathan and Mathew have no such feeling or desire. Jonathan stated, “As soon as I orgasm, I'm ready to take [the women's clothing] off.” It appears that for Sophia, cross-dressing is a reality, but for Jonathan and Mathew, it is a fantasy.

Mode of dress also seems to be another dissimilarity. For Mathew and Jonathan, it's the sexier the clothes the better. Jonathan reported that he likes to wear short spandex skirts, six-inch high heels and double-D false breasts. Mathew prefers a business look that he finds sexually appealing. However, Sophia wears a more mainstream look. Sophia stated, "I am not really the slut type and being that does nothing for me." Also, Jonathan and Mathew dress as women where Sophia dresses more like a teenage girl. Sophia explained that this is because she feels as though she is no different than any other young girl starting out. She didn't start to dress fully until later in life so her life as a female is just starting and she is catching up on what she missed out on. As she describes it she is, "the teenager [she] never was as a girl." Though Sophia does admit that when in public, she dresses her age, but that she attends fetish parties in which she can dress as she wishes. Sophia stated:

"I tend to dress as who I am most of the time or as far as I can get away with it. At B.D.S.M. parties I am that young girl that lies in my heart that is discovering her girlyness and wants to be seen as a desirable young girl."

Sophia explained that she doesn't act as a young girl because she is older and acts accordingly, but that her mode of dress is young because she is just discovering herself as a female. It seems that at the fetish parties, no one looks down at her for dressing too young for her age.

One other clue that demonstrates the differences between Sophia and the transvestites in the study is that Sophia has a desire to take hormones. Sophia related her experience with hormones as trying:

"I have taken herbals that never worked too well. I also took [hormones] that I got in the black market. I got severe leg cramps and ended up telling my doctor about it. He very strongly advised me against taking any estrogens because of health risks."

Nonetheless, Sophia's desire to be a female led her to try hormones again. The leg cramps returned so she decided to refrain from hormones. She stated that she is at a point in her life that she

realizes that she doesn't have much time left to be female and wants to enjoy what time she has left.

Sophia also would like breasts but the expense is no feasible right now with the prospect of paying tuition for her child. However, she has looked into other procedures to make her body appear more feminine; but again, the cost is too much for her right now.

As for Jonathan and Mathew, they both stated that they have never wanted hormones or any feminizing procedures. They both say that they are very happy with their male bodies and have no desire to change them.

Even Sophia's attitude about sex is vastly different from that of Jonathan and Mathew. "When I was in college", Jonathan remembers, "my dorm room should have had a revolving door I had so many girls going in and out of there." This is a fairly typical outlook of young males. However, Sophia has very different feelings about sex. She recalls being taken to a gay bath house, "I was really turned off by all of the rampant promiscuity..." It can be argued that this is a similar attitude that might be expressed by a biological woman as opposed to that of a teenage male.

One aspect that Sophia had to encounter that Jonathan and Mathew did not was telling her child as Sophia lives her life entirely as a woman while Jonathan and Mathew only cross-dress for pleasure. Sophia explained that her wife's acceptance was very helpful in this matter. Additionally, Sophia's child was very young when told so the child grew up with Sophia's cross-dressing as a normal part of life.

It is obvious that there can be some crossover in the characteristics of transvestic fetishists and transgenders, thus, making it difficult in some cases for even the cross-dresser to make a distinction. However, it is believed by this writer that with therapy the cross-dresser can develop a deeper understanding of whether he is a transvestic fetishist or transgender which is a good first step in helping a relationship with them.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **DISSCUSSION**

As with all studies, this one had limitations. The most obvious limitation is that because transvestic fetishists are so private, they are difficult to find. Also, even if transvestic fetishists with significant others can be located, getting the partner to agree to participate is highly unlikely. Another limitation is that the wife in the case study had certain traits which made her a good candidate for the treatment employed in the study. Other wives who lack these traits may be more reluctant to attend treatment and also impede treatment even if they do attend counseling sessions.

There are many possibilities for further research on this topic. One would be to test how exciting it is for the wife to wear the transvestic fetishist's choice of clothing instead of him compared to his wearing of the garments as this may prove to be an acceptable compromise for the couple if the wife cannot tolerate the transvestic fetishists cross-dressing during sex. A similar study would be for the transvestic fetishist to compare his level of excitement while fantasizing that he is wearing the clothing during sexual relations as compared to the actual wearing of the garments for similar reasons.

A study to test if a treatment to raise the self-esteem of the wife would help her increase acceptance and marital satisfaction would be a worthwhile endeavor since previous research has suggested that women with higher self-esteem have more positive attitudes toward cross-dressing and higher self-esteem has been correlated with willingness to attend support groups for wives of transvestic fetishists (Boyd, 2003; Weinberg & Bullough, 1988). It is this researcher's belief that if the self-esteem of the wife is raised, she may be more willing to enter therapy with the transvestic fetishist husband.

As stated in the background research in the current study, transvestic fetishists make very good husbands. A subsequent study could determine if they make good husbands because they are appreciative of the acceptance of their cross-dressing and if so, as society and women specifically become more accepting, will the quality of the transvestic husband diminish.

As transvestic fetishists often have other paraphilias such as autoerotic asphyxia (Langstrom & Zucker, 2005), education and cognitive restructuring may be able to be used to help couples find a level of comfort with other paraphilias and sexual preferences. Therefore, a similar study addressing this may be beneficial.

### Considerations for Therapists

The first step for therapists is to ask questions to help the cross-dresser understand if he is a transvestic fetishist or transgender. It is important for therapists to remain open to any person or couple's expression of sexuality. Completing a comprehensive assessment that includes sexual factors is a very important aspect of the therapeutic process. This is something that many therapists fail to do. Asking specific questions related to sexual history and preferences is one way that therapists can open the door for clients to discuss their sex lives, and to explore any aspect that might be bothering them or interfering with their relationship. Questions about gender identity, hormone use and sex reassignment surgery should be addressed. Comparisons of demographics of transvestic fetishists and transgender may prove helpful, but as seen in this study this alone is not perfectly correlated.

If the cross-dresser is not currently in a romantic relationship, he should be advised to consider telling his potential mate before marriage at the very least, but also once he is considering his romantic partner as a life partner. The cross-dresser may be encouraged to look on websites that cater to uniting cross-dressers with those who are receptive to those who cross-dress.

It is advised, as with any other romantic relationship, that the cross-dresser and his partner have their own bank accounts with their own money. This will decrease arguments and animosity when the cross-dresser buys cross-dressing items for himself.

Also, boundaries must be in place. Not just when and where cross-dressing will take place, but also courtesies such as if one partner borrows something from the other such as make-up or clothing they should ask first and treat the item with respect, and return the item with an expression of gratitude.

It is evident that Cross-dressers, especially transvestic fetishists, are under-researched and lack of knowledge is a contributing factor to the perpetuation of prejudices which complicate various aspects of the lives of those who cross-dress diminishing quality of life as well as inhibiting satisfaction in their romantic relationships. Continuation of studies on issues such as these is imperative not only to the expansion of knowledge of those in mental health fields, but also to society as a whole in that education the population can to some extent prevent some of the problems that cross-dressers encounter associated with the general public and more notably with romantic partners. However, education is just the beginning of changing the way people think about cross-dressers especially for those who have close or intimate relationships with cross-dressers in that these individuals may have thoughts about the situation that are more personal. Therefore, therapeutic interventions may be necessary to facilitate understanding on both parties and create more harmonious relationships.

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## APENDIX A

### Background Questions Asked of Both Partners Together

1. What is your age?
2. What is your current level of education?
3. In what field is your education?
4. In what field is your career?
5. What are your hobbies?
6. How did you meet?
7. Victoria, how did you learn about transvestic fetishism?
8. Jonathan, what made you take that approach to finding a mate?
9. Jonathan, when did you first start cross-dressing?
10. Jonathan, Tell me about your first cross-dressing experience.

## APENDIX B

### Questions Jonathan Was Asked Alone

1. Why do you cross-dress?
2. How often do you masturbate?
3. How often do you view erotica?
4. What kind of erotica do you view?
5. How often do you cross-dress?
6. Is this consistent with how often you would like to cross-dress?
7. On a scale from one to ten with ten being most satisfied and one being least satisfied, how would you rate your level of marital satisfaction?
8. What issues do you have in your relationship that are a result of your cross-dressing?

## APENDIX C

### Questions Victoria Was Asked Alone

1. What did you think about Jonathan when you first saw his profile?
2. What were your thoughts on transvestic fetishism Jonathan's profile?
3. On a scale from one to ten with ten being most satisfied and one being least satisfied, how would you rate your level of marital satisfaction?
4. On a scale from one to ten with ten being the most jealous and one as having no jealousy, how would you rate your level of jealousy?
5. What issues do you have in your relationship that are a result of Jonathan's cross-dressing?

## APENDIX D

### Questions Mathew Was Asked

1. What is your age?
2. What is your current level of education?
3. In what field is your education?
4. In what field is your career?
5. What is your wife's age?
6. What is your wife's current level of education?
7. In what field is your wife's career?
8. Is your wife's personality feminine, masculine or androgynous?
9. Would you say that your wife has a high level of self-esteem?
10. Does she have her own successes in life?
11. Could she survive on her own if the marriage was dissolved?
12. Does she feel that her identity is solely connected to your identity?
13. Does she feel like she is her own person or does she think of herself as just your wife or just the mother of your children?
14. What is your wife's religious affiliation?
15. How often does she attend church now?
16. Was her family religious?
17. How long have you been married?
18. Do you have children?
19. How did your wife learn of your cross-dressing?
20. When you told her, were you already married?
21. How did you tell her about your cross-dressing?
22. What was her response?
23. What does she say about your cross-dressing when she is in a very emotional state?
24. How long have you been cross-dressing?
25. What was your first experience with cross-dressing?
26. How do you like to dress when you are cross-dressed?
27. Do you consider your mode of cross-dressing to be sexy?
28. Do you cross-dress solely for sexual gratification or do you wish to be female?
29. How often do you masturbate?
30. Are you attracted to men, women or both?
31. Have you ever wanted to have sex with a man?
32. Is this only when you are cross-dressed?
33. What about having sex with a man is appealing to you?
34. Have you ever had sex with a man?
35. Do you think that being taken by a woman with a strap-on would give you this same satisfaction as if you were to be with a man?
36. Have you and your wife considered counseling?

## APENDIX E

### Questions Sophia Was Asked

1. What is your age?
2. What is your current level of education?
3. In what field is your education?
4. In what field is your career?
5. Do you consider yourself to be transgender?
6. How often do you dress as a female?
7. Have you ever been married?
8. Has the fact that you are transgender ever been a problem in your marriage?
9. How did you wife find out?
10. How did she handle the news when you told her?
11. Does your child know?
12. How did you tell him?
13. How did he take the news?
14. What are her thoughts about your being transgender?
15. How old were you when you first had a desire to dress as a female?
16. Have you ever wanted to take hormones or have surgery to make your body more feminine?
17. Do you dress as a female for sexual gratification?
18. Are you attracted to men, women or both?
19. If you are not really attracted to men, what draws you to be curious about having sex with a man?
20. How often do you masturbate?
21. How often did you masturbate before you were married?
22. Do you like to take pictures of yourself more so than the average person?
23. Do you like to have others take pictures of you more than the average person?
24. How does your girlfriend feel about your being transgender?
25. Did she know from the beginning?