



**TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS IN THE OBSERVATIONAL ASSESSMENT
OF COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR**

**Brandon Moncur, Julia Moncur, (Dr. Nick Perry, Dr. Brian Baucom)
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

Historically, the vast majority of what we know about how couples handle conflict has been based on white, heterosexual, middle-to-upper-class, and well-educated study subjects. Efforts are currently underway to broaden the diversity of couples studied to include same-sex couples, rural dwelling couples, and couples of lower socioeconomic statuses. Typical barriers to participation in these research studies have included time commitment, distance to travel to assessment sites, and a lack of resources for child care and transportation. Furthermore, recruiting participants outside major metropolitan areas is also a significant challenge. Researchers in the Couple Laboratory for Observational Studies (CLOSE) lab are using novel technologies, such as Adobe Connect, a web-based conferencing software, to more efficiently recruit and study these harder to reach study cohorts. Recently, the CLOSE lab has focused on how same-sex couples handle conflict. Utilizing Adobe Connect, researchers now have the ability to observe and measure communicative behavior directly in study subjects located remotely. Communication styles during conflict among same-sex couples may be observed in their own homes, scheduled at their convenience, and free of extra costs for transportation or for childcare. With Adobe Connect, the CLOSE lab has successfully recruited 60 same-sex couples and recorded ten-minute conversations, in real time, discussing a relationship conflict. Advantages to this method include a more user-friendly platform for assessment of couples which significantly reduces study burden for participants and facilitates recruitment of larger and more diverse study cohorts. Generalizability of results from these data will further advance knowledge on the study of conflict among couples.