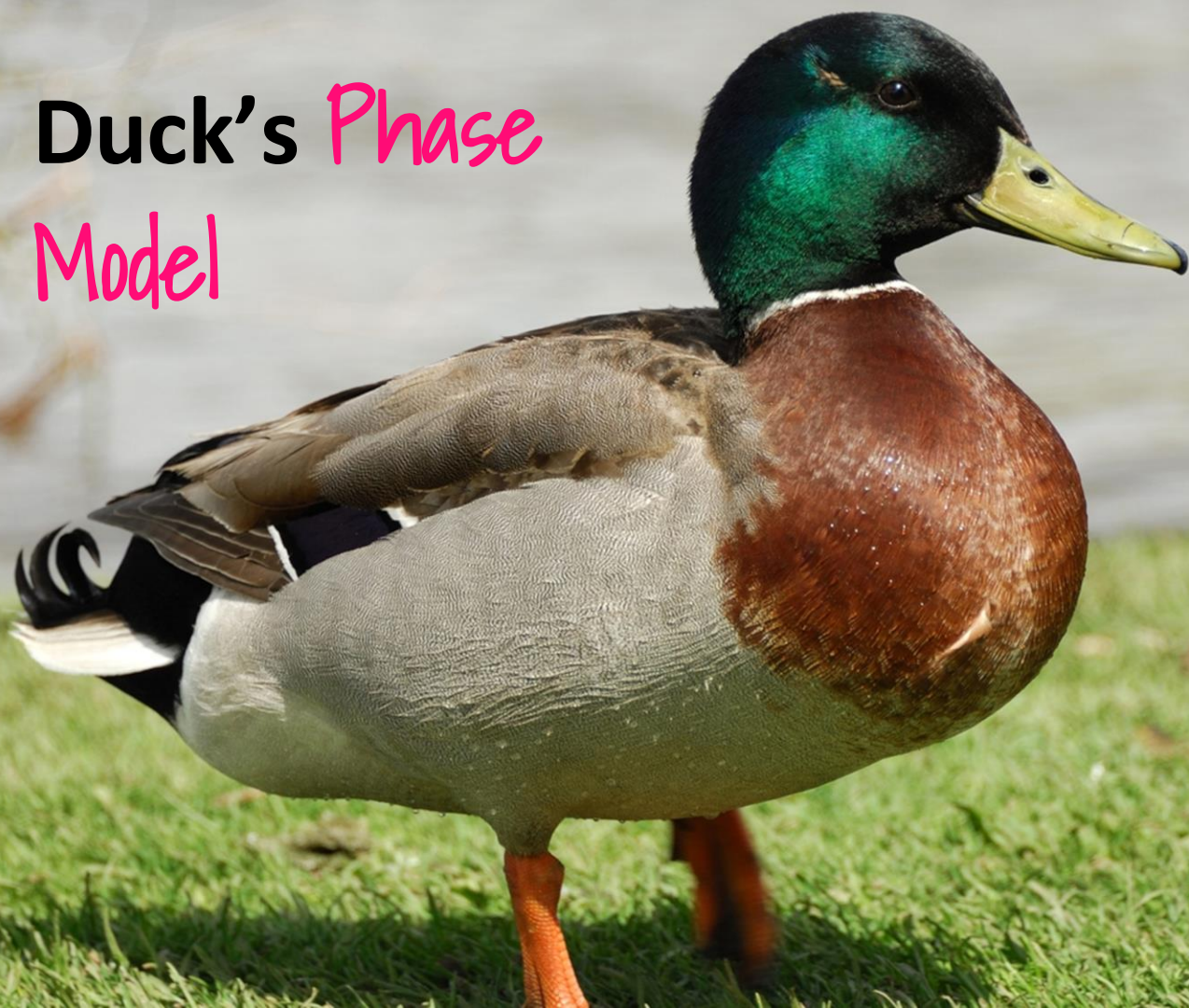


Duck's Phase
Model



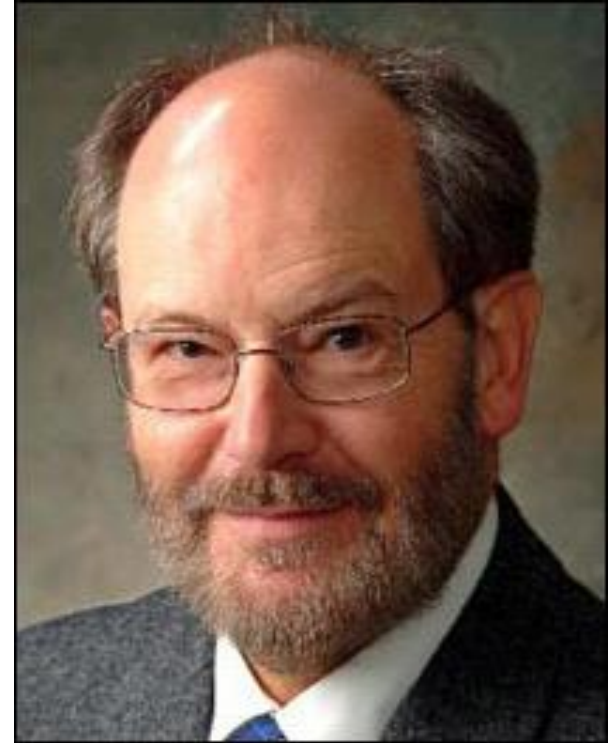
4.3.2 Relationships

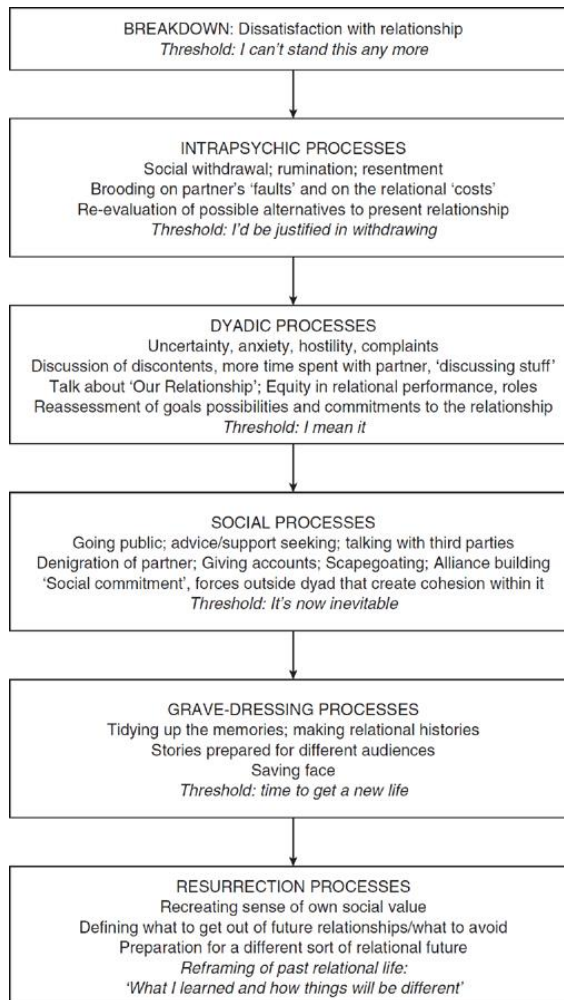
- The evolutionary explanations for partner preferences, including the relationship between sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour.
- Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis; filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity.
- Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model of commitment, satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment.
Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave dressing phases.
- Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships.
- Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation.

Introduction

Duck's (2007) phase model suggests that the breakdown of a relationship is not a single event, but rather a system of stages or phases which a couple progress through which incorporate the end of the relationship.

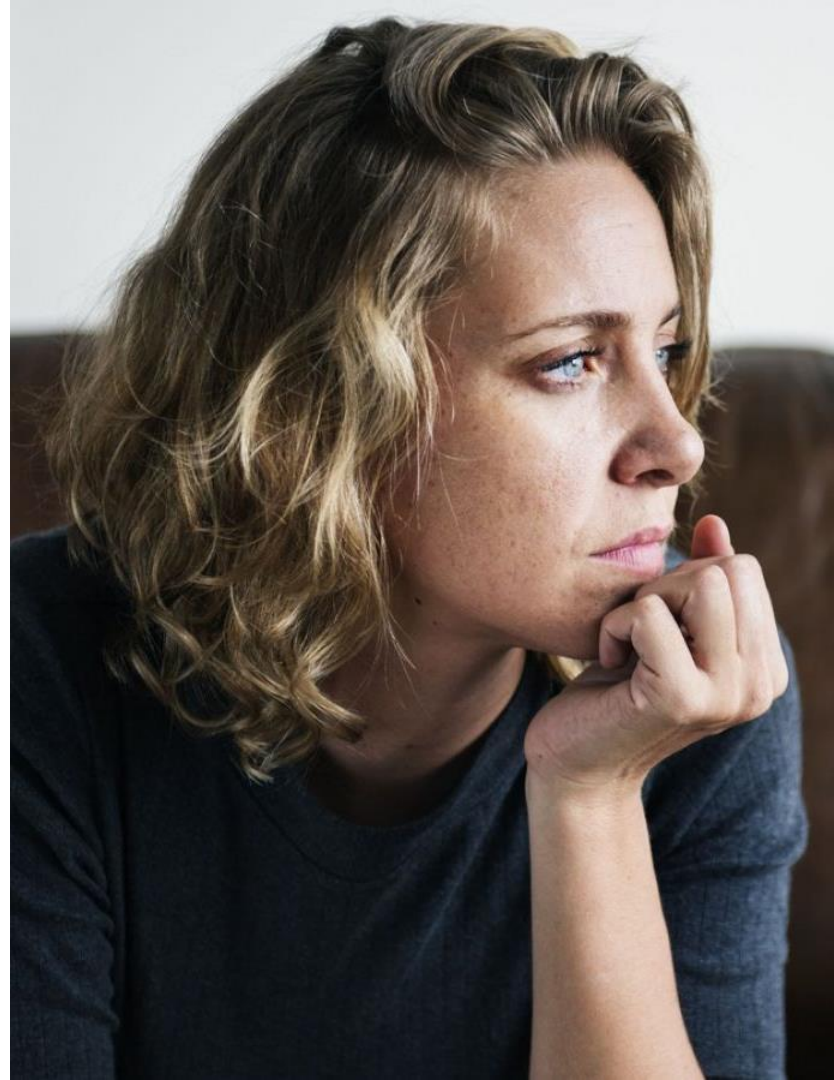
- Intra-psychoic phase
- Dyadic phase
- Social phase
- Grave-dressing phase





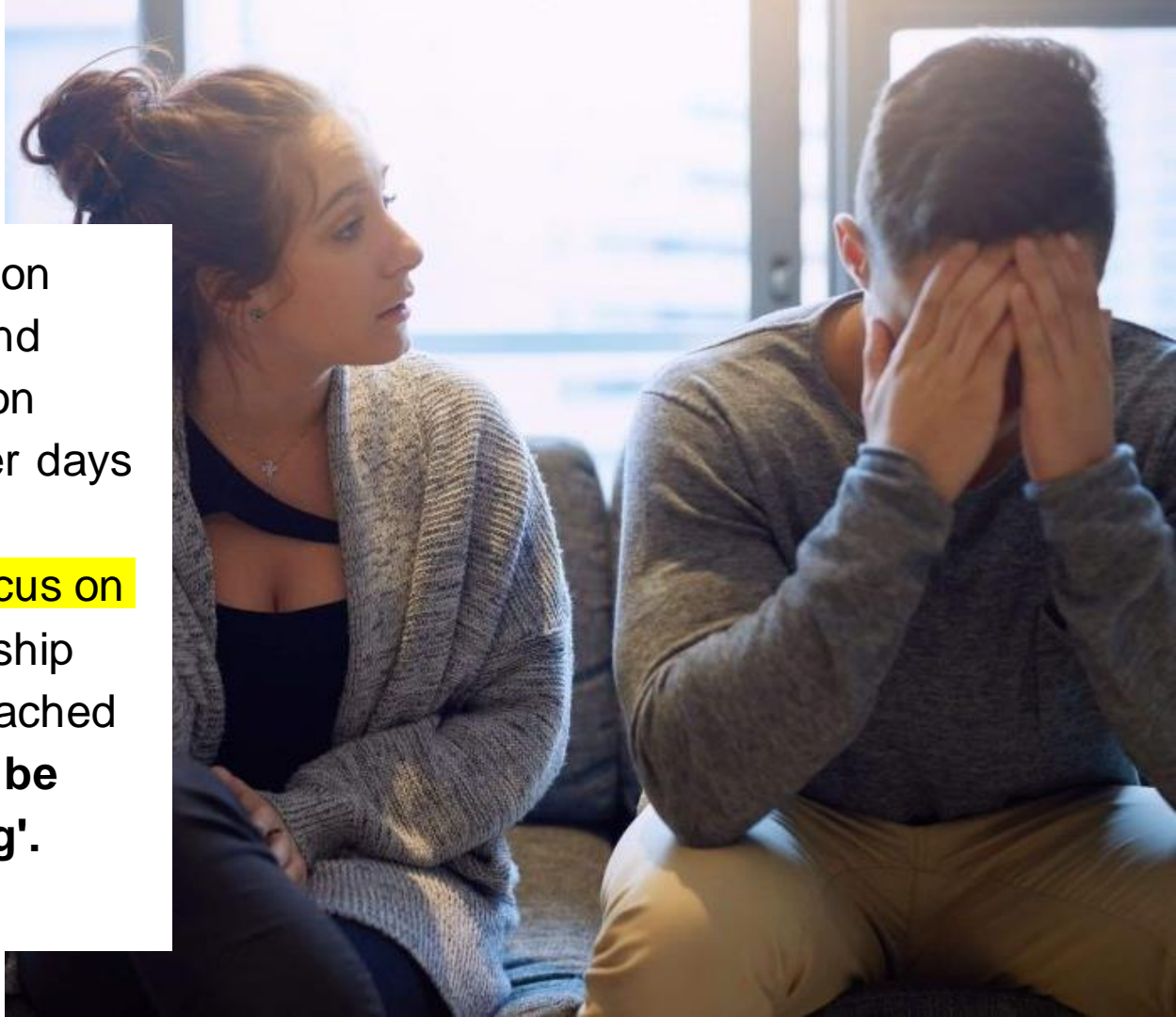
1. Intra-psychic *stage*

- This is when a person **admits** to himself or herself that they are **dissatisfied** with their relationship
- They spend time **thinking about the pros and cons** of the relationship and possible alternatives
- This stage focuses on a person's internal thought process that occurs **before confronting the partner**
- They reach a **threshold** of thinking **'I can't stand this anymore'**



2. Dyadic *stage*

- This occurs when a person **confronts their partner** and voices their dissatisfaction
- This can take place over days or weeks
- Discussions will often **focus on the equity** in the relationship
- The **threshold** that is reached at this stage is: **'I would be justified in withdrawing'**.





3. Social Phase

- Once the conflict reaches this stage, it is more difficult for a couple to mend their relationship
- Friends and family will take sides, intervene in the couple's relationship and offer advice, which makes reconciliation much more problematic.
- The threshold at this stage is 'I mean it'. The social phase usually leads to the dissolution of the relationship.

4. Grave Dressing

- Having left their partner, both sides construct their version of why their relationship broke down.
- They will minimise their faults and maximise their partner's and at the same time trying to retain their social value and not lowering their chances to attract a new partner.
- This process is called 'grave-dressing', signifying the closure of the previous relationship and readiness to start a new one.
- The **threshold** here is, unsurprisingly, **'It's now inevitable'**.



Updated **Model**

Duck & Rollie (2006) proposed an addition to the model:

The resurrection phase

They suggested that at this stage people move beyond the pain and distress associated with ending the relationship and experience personal growth.



Which **one** of the following sequences shows the correct order of Duck's phases of relationship breakdown?

Shade **one** box only.

A Dyadic, intra-psychic, social, grave dressing

B Intra-psychic, dyadic, social, grave dressing

C Intra-psychic, social, dyadic, grave dressing

D Social, dyadic, intra-psychic, grave dressing

(Total 1 mark)

Barbara and Jamima are both having relationship difficulties with their respective partners.

Barbara says, 'I'm really fed up and I wish the relationship was over. But I can't tell him, because he thinks everything is fine.'

Jamima says, 'We are getting through it slowly. We've told the children what's going to happen to them and sorted out the money side. My mum was upset but she's OK about it now. Friends take sides of course.'

Referring to Barbara's and Jamima's comments, outline **two** phases of relationship breakdown proposed by Duck.

(Total 4 marks)

[AO2 = 4]

Level	Marks	Description
2	3 – 4	Knowledge of the relevant phases of Duck's model is mostly clear and accurate. The knowledge is applied appropriately to both cases. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of terminology.
1	1 – 2	There is limited/partial knowledge of relevant phase(s) of Duck's model. There is some appropriate application. The answer may lack coherence. Use of terminology may be either absent or inappropriate. OR one relevant phase of Duck's model is covered at Level 2.
	0	No relevant content.

Application (and selection) of relevant phases:

- intrapsychic phase – one person is privately dissatisfied with the relationship, considering ending the relationship, worrying about problems to come, considering expressing dissatisfaction to partner
- Barbara is in the intrapsychic phase because she wants to end it and is worrying about telling partner who is unaware of how she feels
- social phase – the breakdown has happened, other people are told/it becomes public, there is negotiation about practicalities, eg division of assets, childcare responsibilities etc
- Jamima is in the social phase – friends and mum know, they are taking steps to arrange for children and sort out money.

Stage	Key points	Threshold

From the *mark* scheme

- **intra-psychic** stage partners express their feelings and plans to save the relationship are considered
- **dyadic stage** partners assess each other's behaviour and evaluate the costs of withdrawing
- **social phase** partners engage in activities aimed at getting over the relationship breakdown and announce they are splitting
- **grave-dressing** partners questions their decision and then consider how the break-up has impacted their social network.

A03 Does not explain *the reasons*

- A limitation of Duck's theory is that whilst the model may be a relevant description of the breakdown of relationships, it does not explain what leads to the initial breakdown of the relationship.
- For example, other models of relationships such as Social Exchange Theory explains why partners choose to stay (or not) in relationships which increases the usefulness of these model.

AO3 Does not explain *the reasons*

- Therefore whilst the model explains the stages of a relationship breakdown it does not give many strategies to overcome a relationship breakdown, apart from increased communication.
- The stages of grief model is similar in this way, but still is useful in helping people deal with loss as they can understand the process and therefore the model has good real life application to help people overcome a relationship breakdown.

A03 Real life *application*

- A strength of Duck's phase model is that it has good real-life applications in a relationship counselling context.
- The model allows relationship therapists to identify the phase of a breakdown that a couple are in and then identify strategies which target the issues at that particular stage.

A03 Real life *application*

- A strength of Duck's phase model is that it has good real-life applications in a relationship counselling context.
- The model allows relationship therapists to identify the phase of a breakdown that a couple are in and then identify strategies which target the issues at that particular stage.
- For example, Duck (1994) recommends that couples in the intra-psychic phase should be encouraged to think about the positive rather than the negative aspects of their partner.
- This means the model is useful in a real world setting and can help improve people's relationships.

A03 Ethical *Issues*

- A limitation into carrying out research in this area is that it is a sensitive topic which participants may find distressful.
- For example, ppts are asked to revisit a traumatic period of their life, which may cause psychological harm. They are then asked personal questions which may invade the ppts privacy and they may also be asked to report of domestic abuse which presents issues of confidentiality.

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- For example, ppts are asked to revisit a traumatic period of their life, which may cause psychological harm. They are then asked personal questions which may invade the ppts privacy and they may also be asked to report of domestic abuse which presents issues of confidentiality.
- The guiding principle of all research should be do the pros outweigh the cons, so psychologists must ask themselves if they truly have the interests of the ppts in mind when exploring the area of relationships.
- Ethics committees will be more strict when dealing with potentially vulnerable ppts and researchers must carefully consider all ethical guidelines.

