

# Heartbreak and Social Media: Associations between Instagram Surveillance of the Ex-partner, Breakup Distress and Attachment Style.

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Research has shown that monitoring an ex-partner's Facebook profile can impede post-breakup healing, while remaining friends on Facebook correlates with lower breakup distress. Anxiously attached individuals tend to experience higher breakup distress and engage in more Facebook surveillance. With Instagram's increasing popularity among young people, investigating its role in breakup distress and attachment style is essential. This online survey (N = 168) examined the relationship between surveillance of an ex-partner's Instagram profile, breakup distress, and attachment style. It employed the German version of the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire, the Breakup Distress Scale, and an adapted version of the Interpersonal Electronic Surveillance Scale for Instagram. An open-ended question explored motives for Instagram surveillance. Anxious attachment style positively correlated with breakup distress, while there was no significant difference in Instagram surveillance between attachment styles. Attachment style did not moderate the correlation between breakup distress and Instagram surveillance. Nevertheless, a significant positive correlation between breakup distress and Instagram surveillance was found. No difference in breakup distress was observed between individuals who continued following each other on Instagram and those who did not. The most cited reasons for Instagram surveillance were "interest" and "missing the other person". These findings offer insights for interventions targeting individuals coping with breakup distress.

## Are you currently an Early Career Researcher?

Yes, I am still a student or have not yet received my Ph.D.

**Primary authors:** RIEMENSCHNEIDER, Liina; KLEBER, Janet (University of Klagenfurt)

**Presenter:** RIEMENSCHNEIDER, Liina

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