based primarily on the highest education level completed by either parent (ranging from “did not finish high school” to “master’s degree or Ph.D.”). In cases where this information was missing, eligibility for public assistance, eligibility for free or reduced-cost school meals, and parental employment status were used to infer socioeconomic status. Student status over the past 12 months was categorized into three groups: full-time at a four-year college, part-time at a four-year college or attending a community or technical college, and not in school. Sexual orientation was assessed by the question “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?”; response options were “attracted to opposite gender,” “attracted to same gender,” “attracted to both genders” and “questioning.” Those attracted to the opposite gender were compared with all other groups combined.

**Analysis**

Chi-square tests were used to compare the prevalence of casual partnerships (dichotomous variable) by participants’ demographic and personal characteristics. General linear modeling was used to compare mean levels of each psychological well-being measure between the casual and committed partner variables, as well as across the four partner categories. Two models were run for each psychological measure: The first was unadjusted, and the second was adjusted for demographic and personal characteristics and the baseline level (assessed in Project EAT-I) of the relevant well-being variable. Least-square means generated by general linear modeling were interpreted as predicted probabilities of a positive response on the dichotomous suicidal ideation variable. To fully examine differences between each partner category, post hoc tests were run even when the overall F statistics were nonsignificant; however, these findings should be considered exploratory. In addition, unadjusted analyses using the casual versus committed partner variable were performed, first restricting the sample to college students and then to white participants, to facilitate comparisons with previous research on this topic. All analyses were stratified by gender and were conducted with SAS version 8.2.

**RESULTS**

Two-thirds of respondents were white, and the sample was well distributed across socioeconomic levels (Table 1). Thirty-seven percent of participants were full-time students at a four-year college, and 27% were part-time students at such colleges or were enrolled at a community or technical college; 37% were not in school. Most respondents (94%) said they were attracted only to the opposite sex.

Fifty-five percent of respondents reported that their most recent sexual partner was an exclusive dating partner, while 25% said their last partner was a fiancé(e), spouse or spousal equivalent. Twelve percent reported that their last partner was a close but not exclusive partner, and 8% said the partner was a casual acquaintance. Mean scores for body satisfaction, self-esteem and presence of depressive symptoms were generally midrange, and 16% of respondents said they had thought about killing themselves in the past year.

Twenty-nine percent of males and 14% of females reported that their last sexual partner was casual (chi-square=44.8, p<.001; not shown). The proportions of male and female respondents reporting a recent casual sex partner differed by race or ethnicity: Percentages ranged from 16% of Asian-American men to 58% of men who indicated they were of “other” racial or ethnic background; among women, percentages ranged from 5% of Asian-Americans to 36% of Native Americans (Table 2, page 234). No significant differences were found among males or females by socioeconomic status, student status or sexual orientation. Reporting of a recent casual partner appeared to be more frequent among men who were attracted to men or to both genders, or who were questioning, than among men who were attracted only to women (45% vs. 29%), but this difference was not significant.