

Nipping Mean Behavior Before It Starts: A Preventive Perspective



Liu-Qin Yang, Ph.D.
July 13, 2016

Overview of This Talk


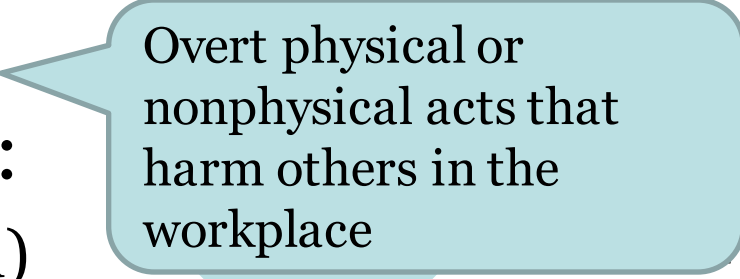
- Define mean behavior or workplace mistreatment
- Scope of the problem
- Consequences of the problem
- Inhibitors of the problem
- How to manage and prevent the problem

What is Mean Behavior at Work?



Mean Behavior or Workplace Mistreatment

Different forms

- Workplace incivility¹:
rude behavior with ambiguous intent to harm
- Unfairness²
- ...
- Workplace Aggression³:
Overt physical or nonphysical acts that harm others in the workplace
- Physical (e.g., pushed, shoved)
- Nonphysical (e.g., insulted, sworn at)

¹ Pearson et al., 2000

² Yang et al., 2014

³ Neuman & Baron, 2005

Scope of Workplace Aggression

- Prevalent across all occupations & industries.
 - Most large-scale studies reported 6%-41% prevalence rate¹
 - In 2009: over .5 million occurrences of nonfatal violence ¹
- Healthcare workers are particularly vulnerable to workplace aggression ²
 - Higher occurrence rates among nurses and in hospital settings³
 - Using an Oregon-wide nurse sample, Yang & Caughlin (2012):
 - **12%:** Experienced aggression on a weekly basis
 - **5%:** Experienced aggression on a daily basis

¹ e.g., Keashly & Jagatic, 2011; Schat et al., 2006; US Dept. of Justice, 2011

² Alterman et al., 2013; Gerberich et al., 2004; OSHA, 2015

³ e.g., Spector et al., 2014; Yang & Caughlin, 2016

Scope of Workplace Aggression (Con't)

- What are the common sources of aggression at work?
 - Client/patient/patient's family
 - Coworkers
 - Supervisors
- Among an Oregon-wide nurse sample, Yang & Caughlin (2012) found prevalence rates over 12 months:
 - **69%**: Experienced physical aggression from patients
 - **90%**: Experienced nonphysical aggression from patients
 - **12%**: Experienced physical aggression from coworkers
 - **68%**: Experienced nonphysical aggression from coworkers
- The prevalence rate would be even higher if we considered the underreporting issue.

A Quote from an Interviewee



“Umm I think working in the emergency room there is a lot of overt aggression from **patients** who are for example who are not getting the treatment that they want... a lot of time it's with drug seeking behavior and will a lot of times assault nurses or be both verbally and physically requiring extra security or that sort of thing ... in addition, sort of less direct form of aggression is there's just a lot of vehicle break-ins and theft in the hospital parking lot ...”

Another Quote

Please listen to this short excerpt of interview of a
healthcare worker



What is reported in media...

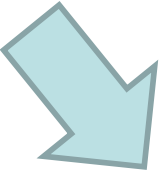



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Aggressive Behavior in the Workplace

by Ellie Williams, Demand Media



Workplace aggression erodes employee morale and productivity.

Aggressive behavior in the workplace puts employees at risk, hinders productivity and hurts the company's reputation. Even when aggression isn't blatant, it eventually erodes trust and morale and could lead to increasingly violent behavior. If employers want to prevent this, they must vigilantly monitor employee behavior and step in at the first sign of trouble.

The impact of workplace bullying



Karen Moskowitz / Getty Images



By Rex Huppke - Contact Reporter

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With workplace bullying, it's not just the hammers, it's the day-to-day needles that add up.

OCTOBER 16, 2015, 9:42 AM

When it comes to workplace bullying, we often focus on the hammers and not the needles.

Hammers are the obvious acts of oafish or even physically violent behavior, the situations where there's little nuance and a person is clearly being victimized.

Needles are the small, repetitive acts that often go unnoticed, and unreported, the needling that can drive someone to dread going to work.

In case you mi



Someday boss

OCT. 12, 21



Yes, won underre are ways

OCT. 2, 20



ICYMI ci stress

SEP. 18, 20



Money

U.S. +

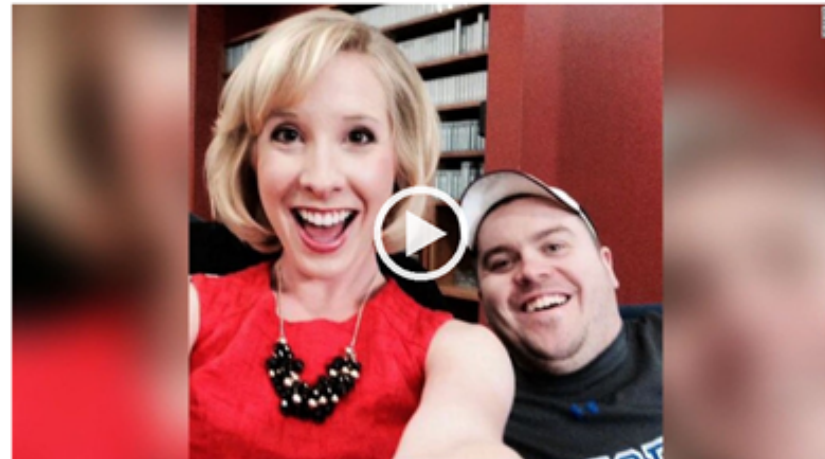
Business Markets Tech Media Personal Finance Sma

Careers

How common is workplace viole

by Jeanne Sahadi @CNMoney

August 26, 2015 6:06 PM ET



2 killed, 1 injured in attack on TV news crew

The shooting homicide in Virginia of two journalists on the air is a tragic reminder that workplace violence is real.

But Wednesday's horrific crime is a rare type of event.

Often violence at work is psychological in nature.

The most common but least reported types of workplace violence are bullying, intimidation and threats.

"I doubt there's a company with more than 10 employees that hasn't had that," said Joel Dvoskin, who runs the Threat Assessment Group, which offers workplace violence prevention services to Fortune 100 companies.

About 700 people a year are murdered on the job.

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

- Decreased employee health¹
 - ❖ Mental health: More anxiety, anger, depressive mood
 - ❖ Physical health: More psychosomatic symptoms, MSD symptoms
- Decreased employee productivity²

¹e.g., Chang et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2012

² e.g., Schat & Frone, 2011



Consequences of Workplace Aggression

- Decreased employee retention¹
- Decreased healthcare quality²
- Annual cost of billions of dollars for US companies³
 - ❖ Increased workers' compensation claims⁴

¹ e.g., Estryn-Behar et al., 2010

² e.g., Lanza, 2006

³ e.g., Gardner & Johnson, 2001; Pearson & Porath, 2005

⁴ e.g., Boyd, 1995

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 1: Yang et al., 2012)

Among a sample of 176 experienced hospital nurses

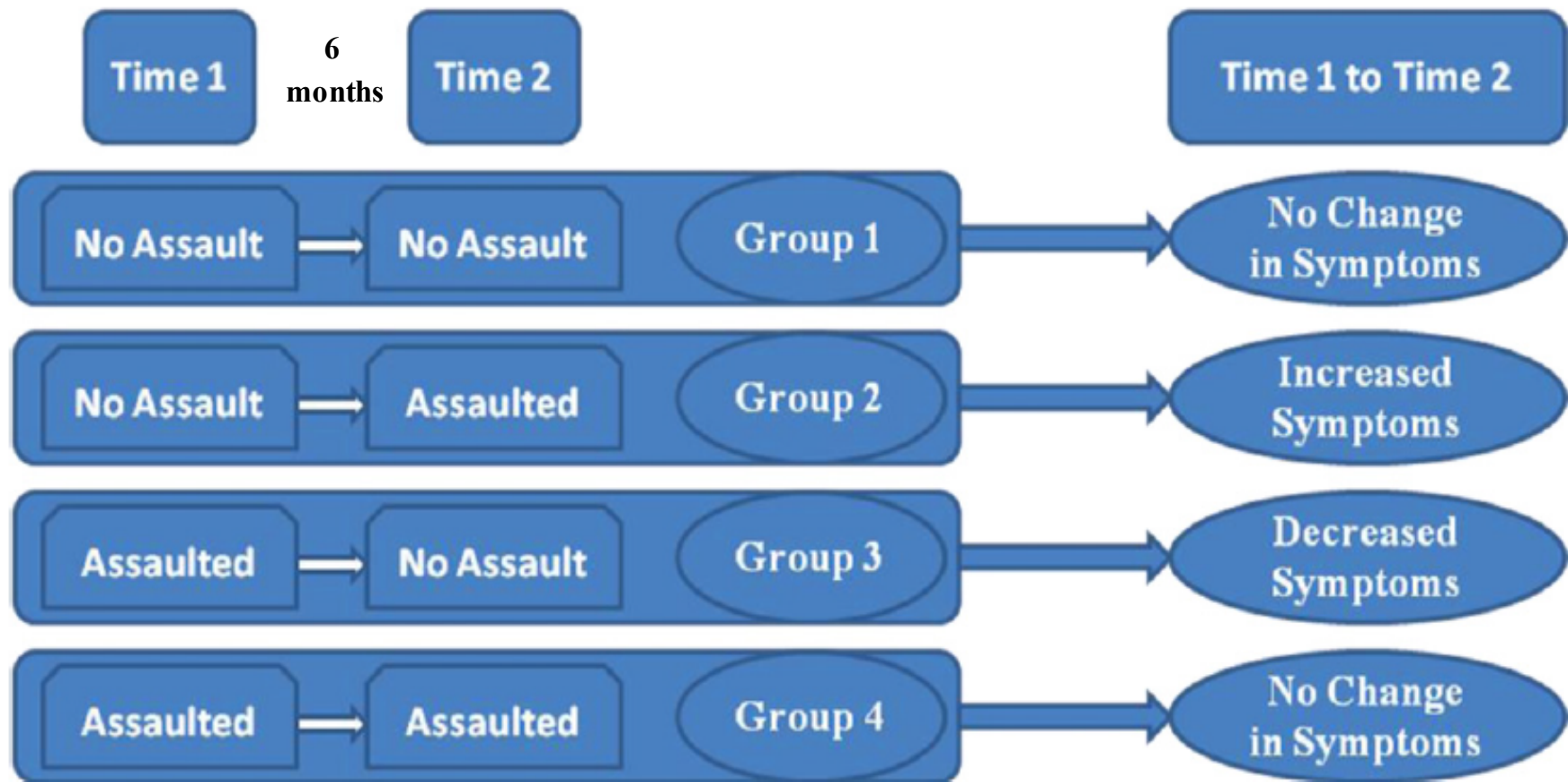


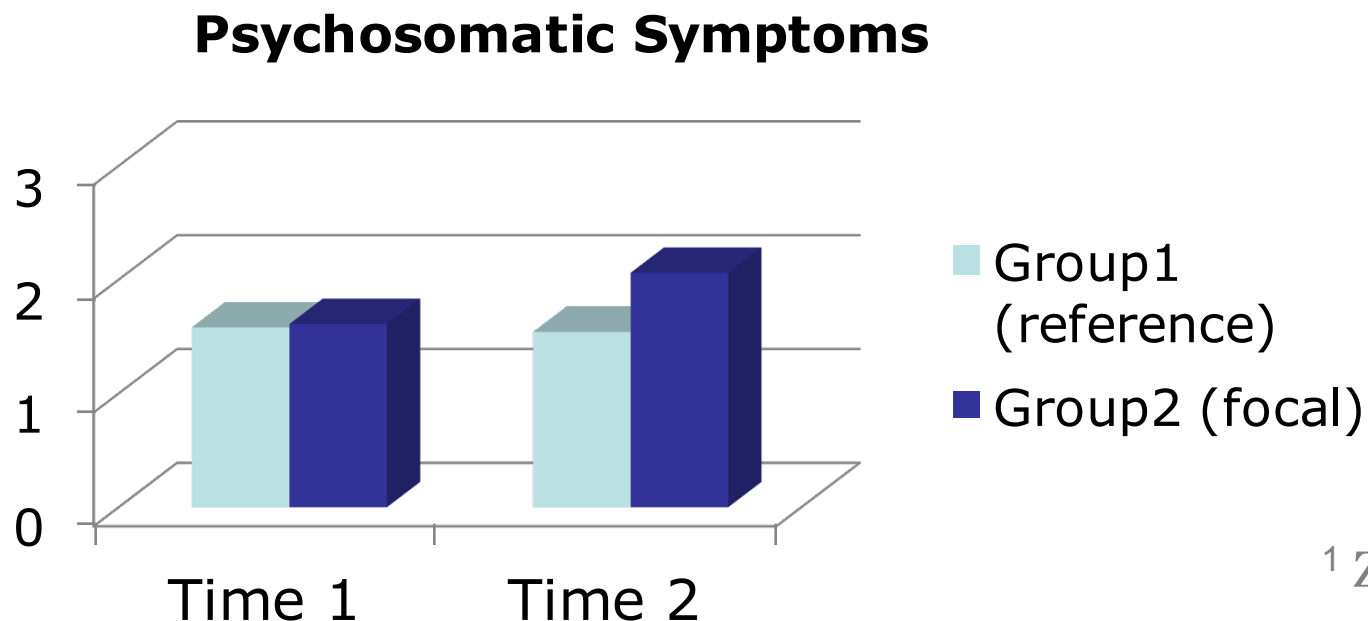
Fig. 1. The group classification and predicted consequences.

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 1: Yang et al., 2012)

Among a sample of 176 experienced hospital nurses

- **Findings**: exposure to physical assault is responsible for increased psychosomatic and musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) symptoms (e.g., headache, low back pain) in the recently assaulted group (G2). – **stress reaction model**¹



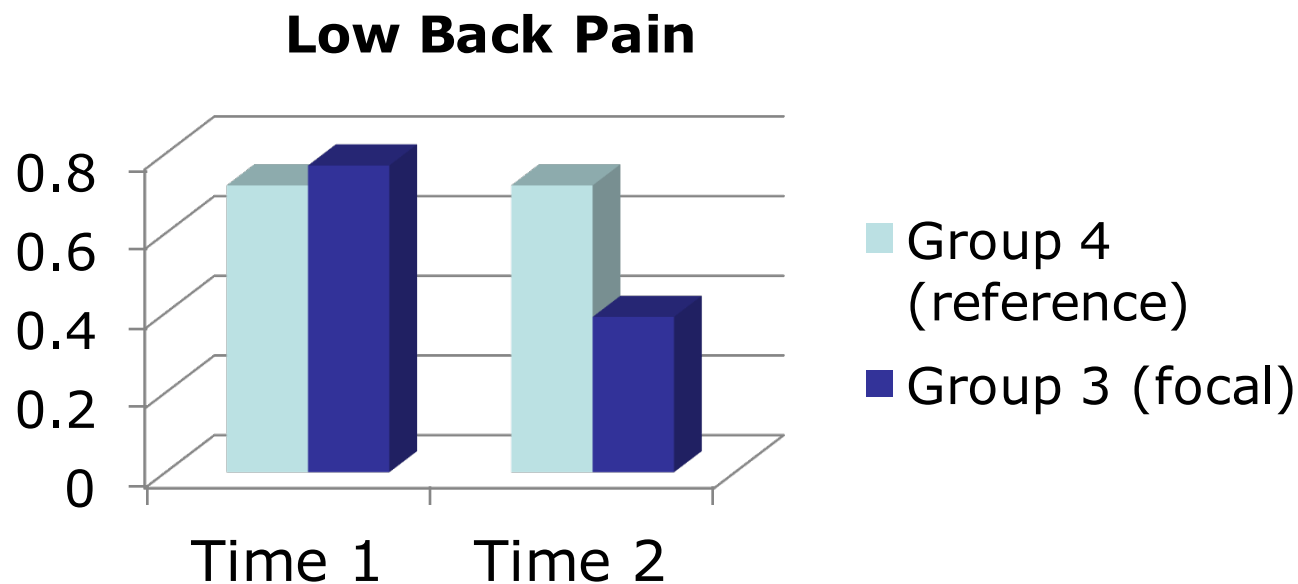
¹ Zapf et al., 1996

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 1: Yang et al., 2012)

Among a sample of 176 experienced hospital nurses

- **Findings**: reduced exposure (from assault to no-assault) contributes to lessened psychosomatic and MSD symptoms (G3). –**biopsychological recovery model**²

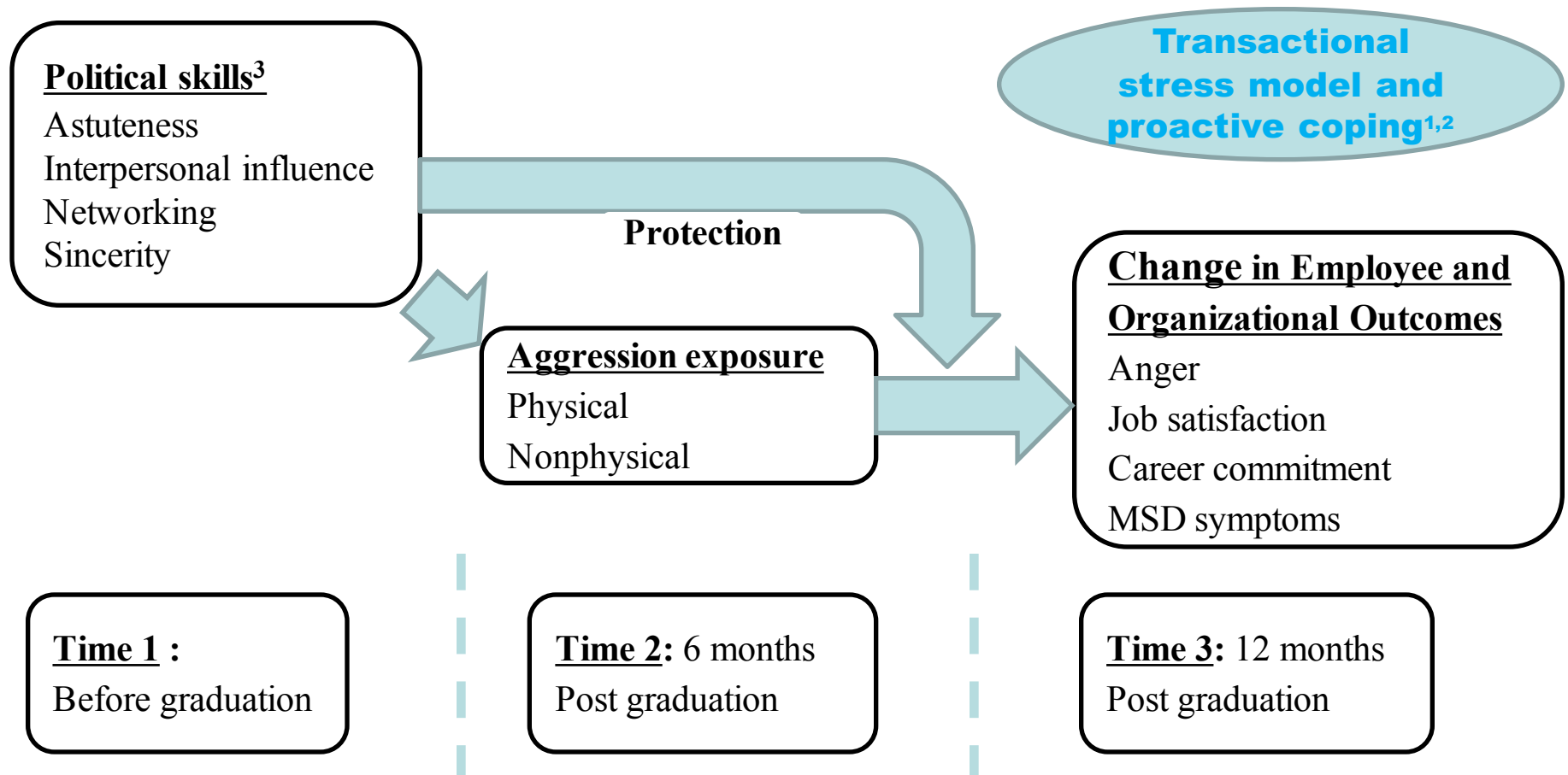


² Merlin & Lundberg, 1997

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 2: Zhou, Yang, & Spector, 2015)

Among a sample of 346 newly graduated nurses

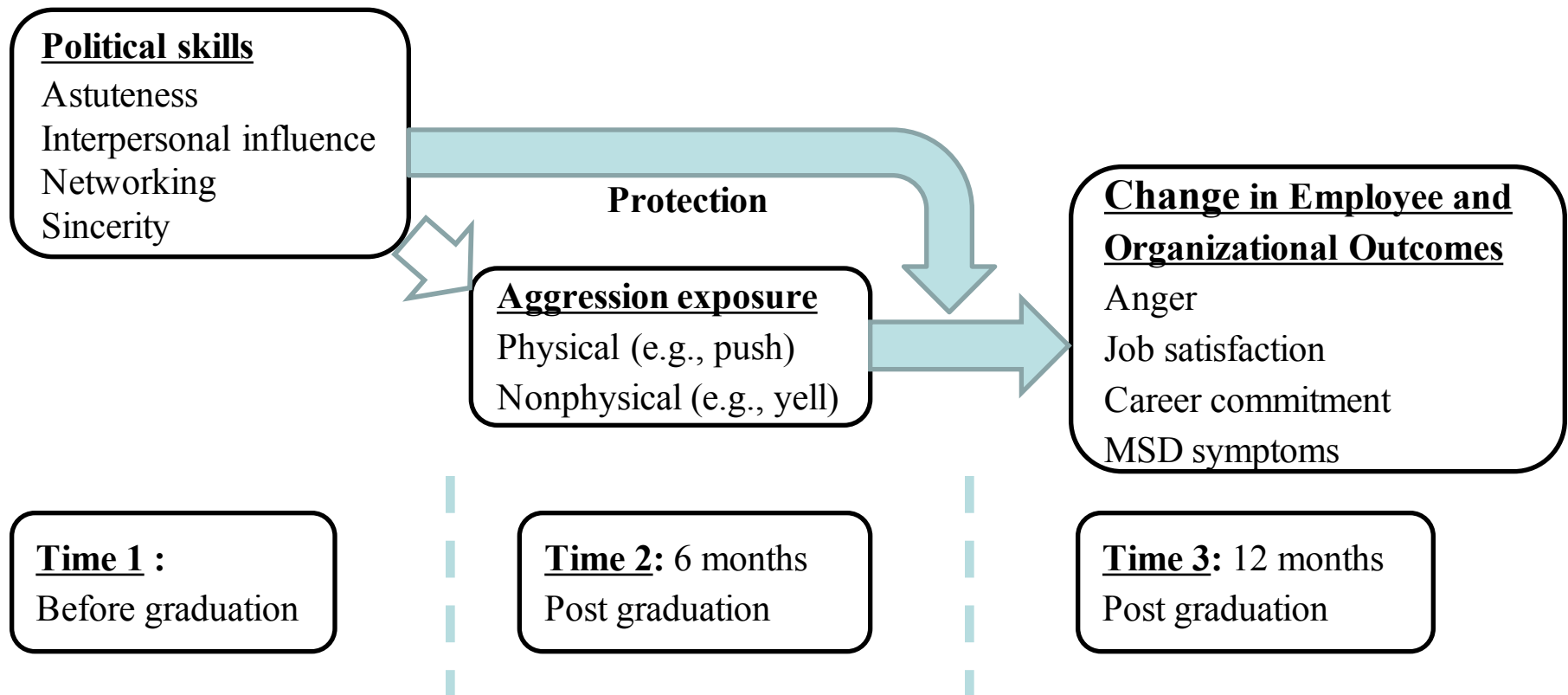


¹ Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 ² Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997 ³ Ferris et al., 2005

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 2: Zhou, Yang, & Spector, 2015)

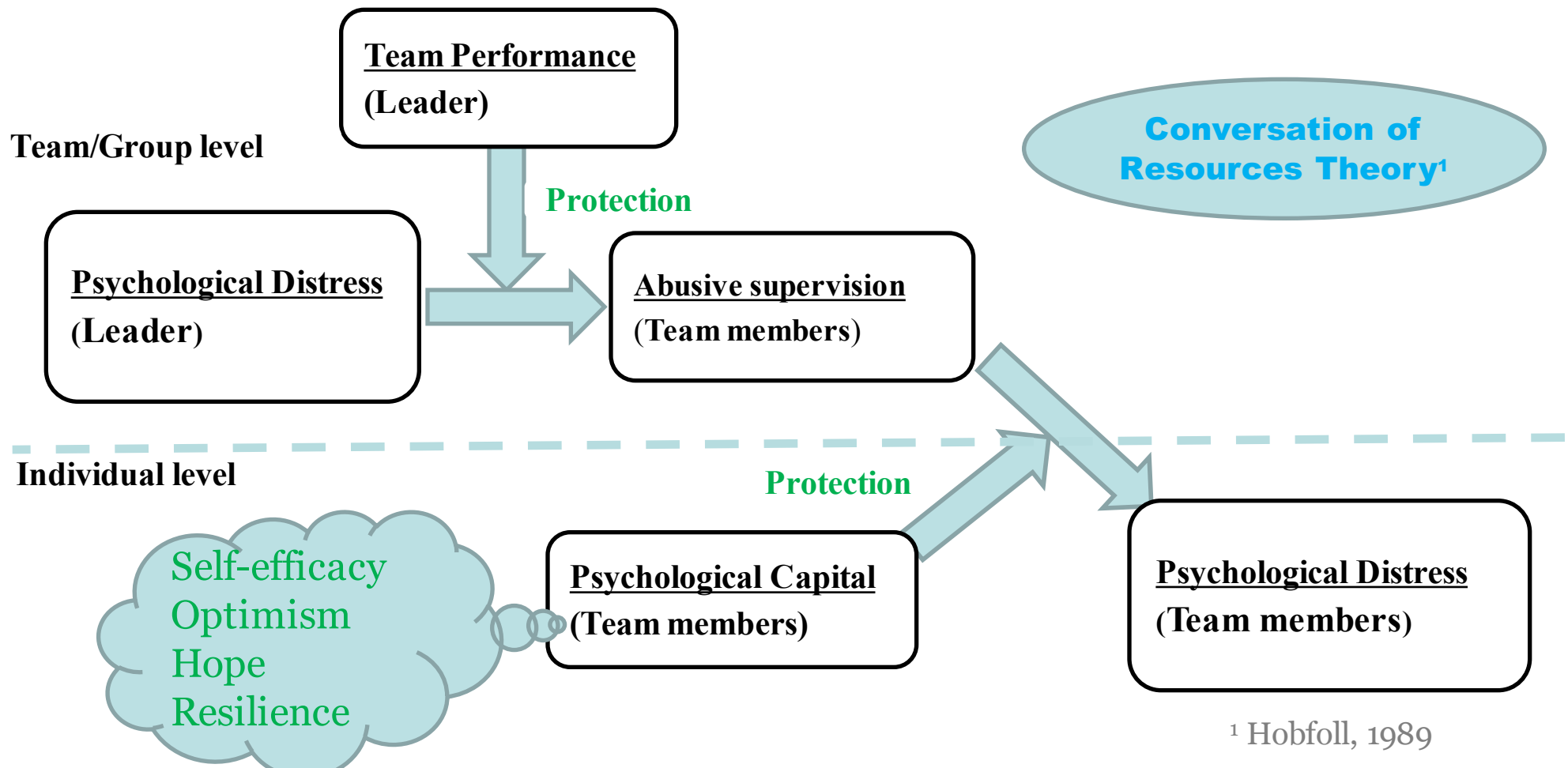
- **Finding**: Political skills have buffering/protection effects, such that negative consequences of exposure are lessened among more politically skilled new nurses.



Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 3: Li, Wang, Yang et al., 2016)

86 team leaders and 351 team members across industries



So, workplace aggression is prevalent and consequential!



Then, what can be done to ameliorate this serious issue?

Would positive organizational
climates/culture help?



Organizational Climate

Mistreatment (inhibition) climates: Employees' individual or shared perceptions of organizational *policies, procedures and practices* focused on deterring mistreatment. Can occur at 2 levels.¹

- **Individual-level**: Unique perceptions
- **Unit-level**: Shared perceptions

Three forms (*different from safety climate*)

- **Civility Climate**
- **Violence Prevention Climate**
- **Climate of Bullying**

¹Yang et al., 2014

Violence Prevention Climate (VPC¹)

- ***Policies and procedures:*** *Are there any formal rules and regulations about preventing violence?*
- ***Practices and response:*** *How well does the management actually enforce such policies and do they respond to occurring incidents properly?*
- ***Work pressure against violence prevention:*** *How much are the prevention policies and procedures compromised to meet work demands?*

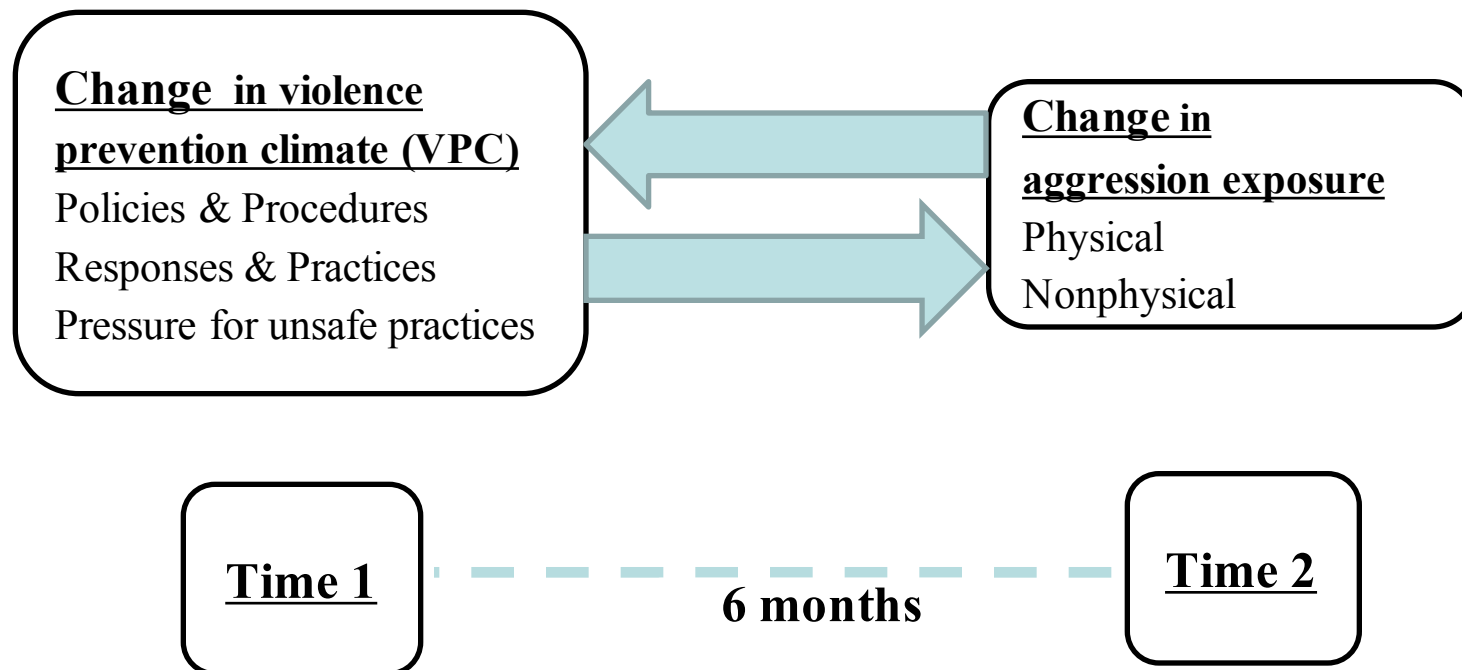
¹Kessler et al., 2008

Inhibitors of Workplace Aggression

(Study 1& 4: Yang et al., 2012; Spector, Yang, Zhou, in press)

Among 176 experienced and 126 newly graduated nurses

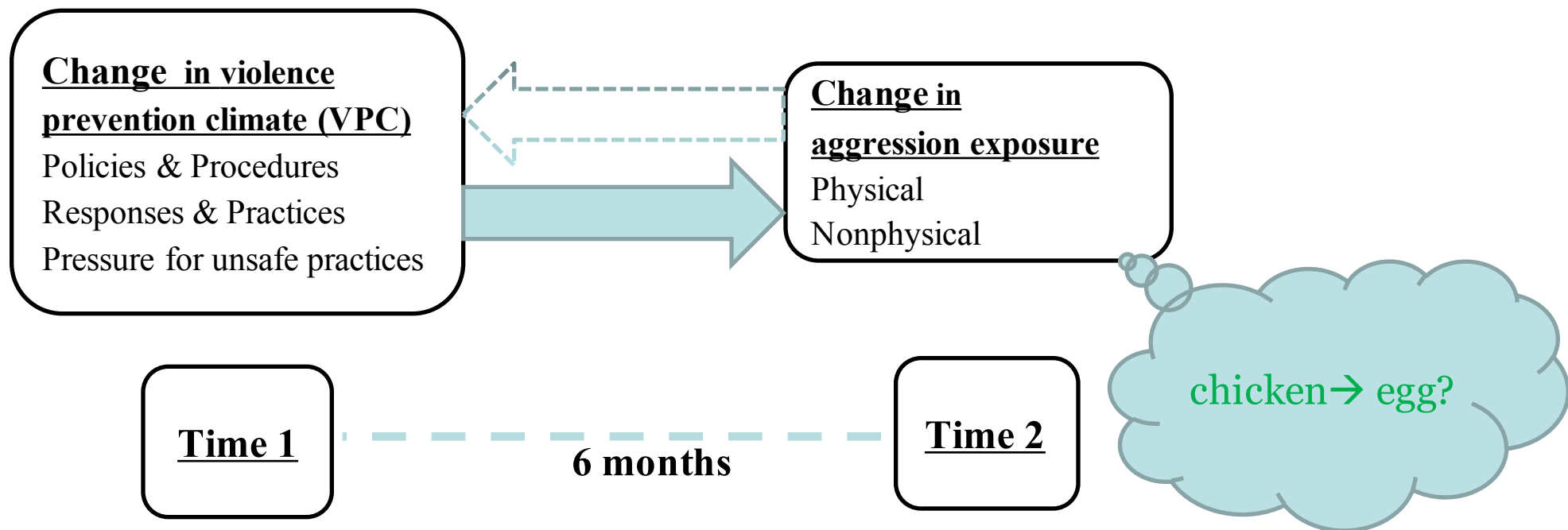
- Building on theory and evidence on safety climate and organizational climate in general, we examine the “chicken and egg” situation.



Inhibitors of Workplace Aggression

(Study 1& 4: Yang et al., 2012; Spector, Yang, Zhou, in press)

- **Finding:** violence prevention climate can be an organizational resource that curtails aggression, and fortunately exposure to aggression does not worsen climate.



So, positive organizational
climate/culture seems to help.



Then, what management practices
can foster such positive
organizational climate?

Why Focus on Management Practices?

- Aligned with the context model and organizational learning theory, management practices should and have been shown to shape organizational climate.¹
- *Negative* leadership in general are consistently linked to employees' exposure to workplace mistreatment,² yet positive leadership is understudied in this context.
- Supervisor and manager training can improve safety performance and employees' health, retention, and productivity.³

¹Argyris & Schön, 1996; Johns, 2006; Zohar & Luria, 2004

²for a review, see Barling et al., 2009

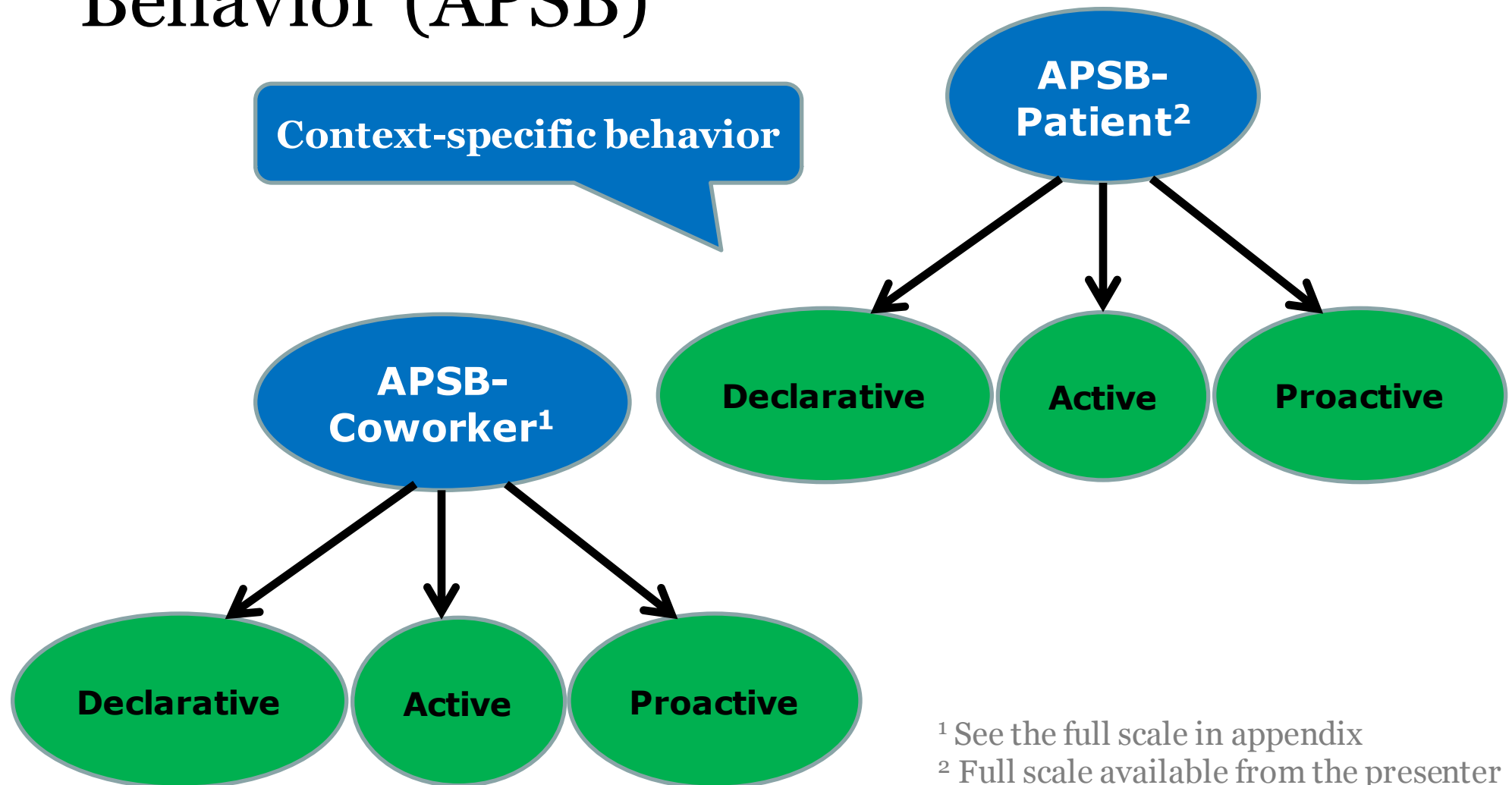
³Hammer et al., 2011; Sivanathan et al., 2005; Zohar & Luria, 2004

What Management Practices to Focus on?

- **Aggression-Preventive Supervisor Behavior:** specific behaviors that line supervisors demonstrate to directly or indirectly help their employees to prevent exposure to aggression¹
 - Declarative practices
 - Describe policies available in the organization for preventing coworker- or patient-initiated aggression incidents
 - Active practices
 - Encourage employees to update him/her regarding signs of potential coworker- or patient-initiated aggression
 - Proactive practices
 - Employees who get along are assigned to work together.
 - Employees are assigned to work with patients whom they get along with.

¹ Yang & Caughlin, 2016

Aggression-Preventive Supervisor Behavior (APSB)



¹ See the full scale in appendix

² Full scale available from the presenter

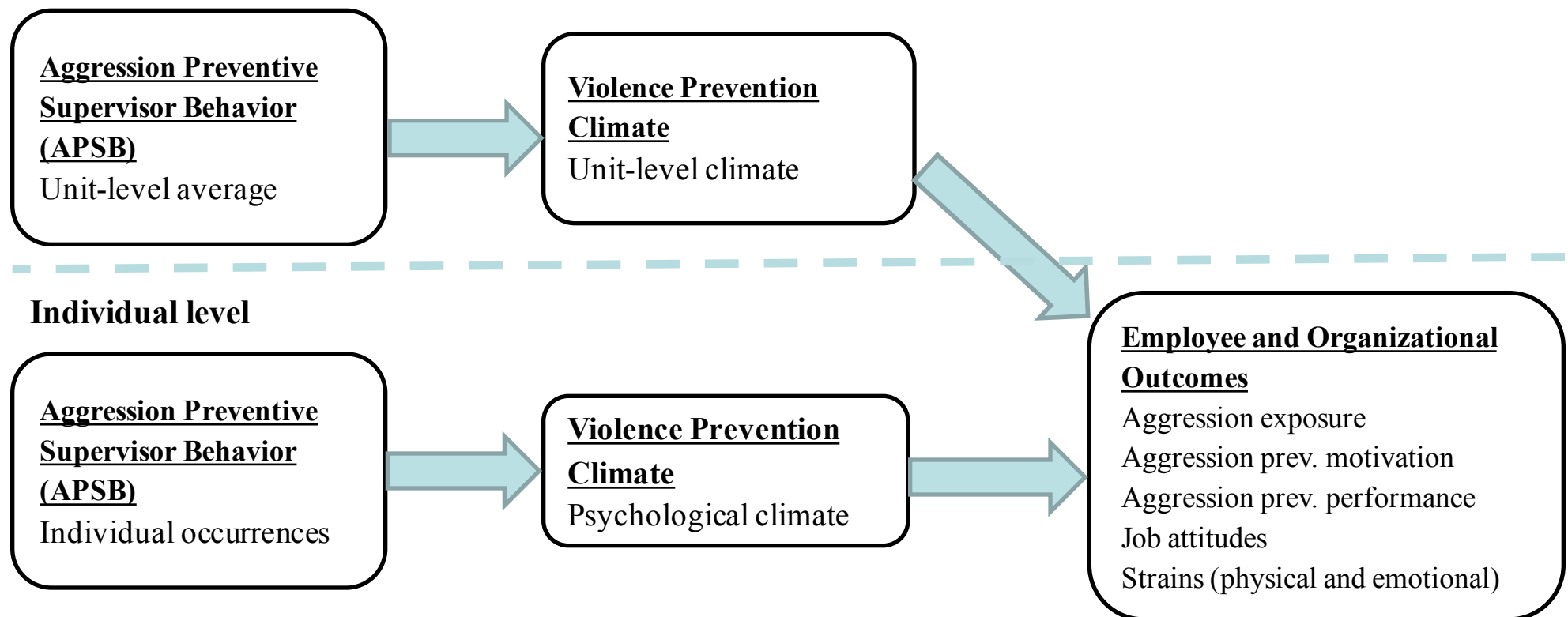
Inhibitors of Workplace Aggression

(Study 5: Yang & Caughlin, 2016)

Interview and survey methods;

20 healthcare workers and 574 experienced nurses (2 samples)

Unit/Group level

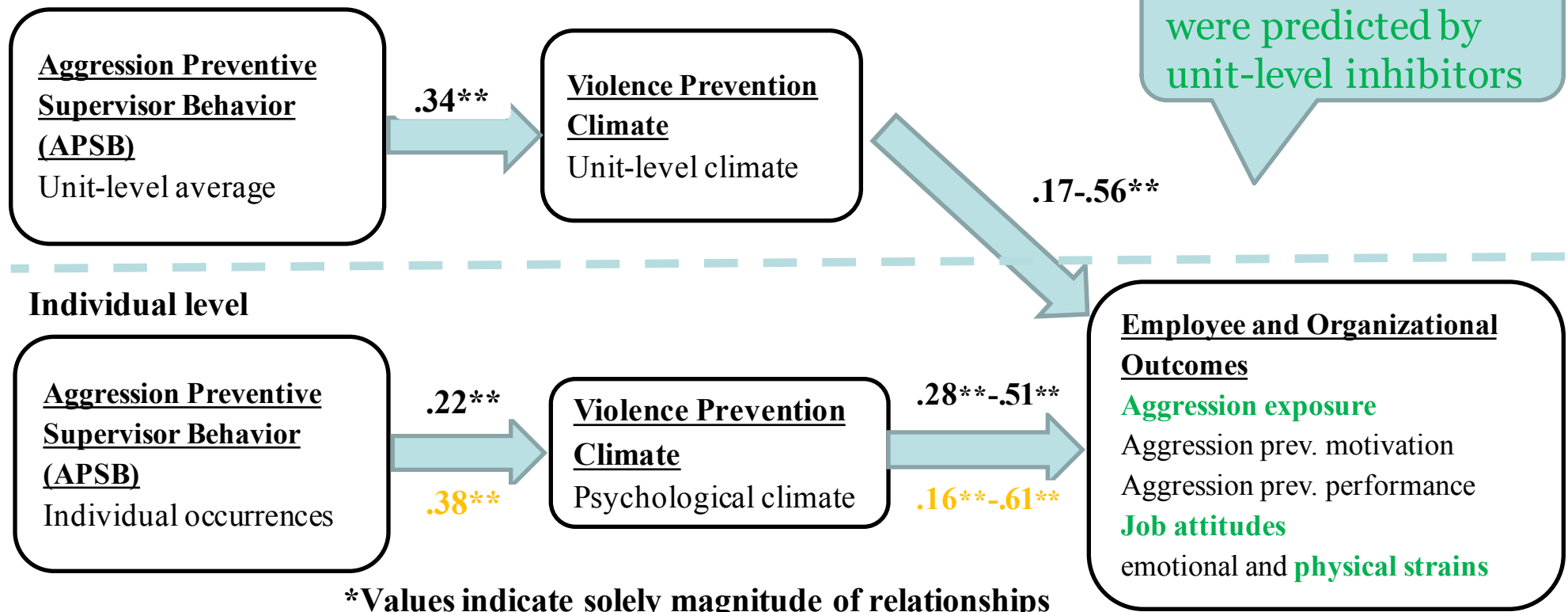


Inhibitors of Workplace Aggression

(Study 5: Yang & Caughlin, 2016)

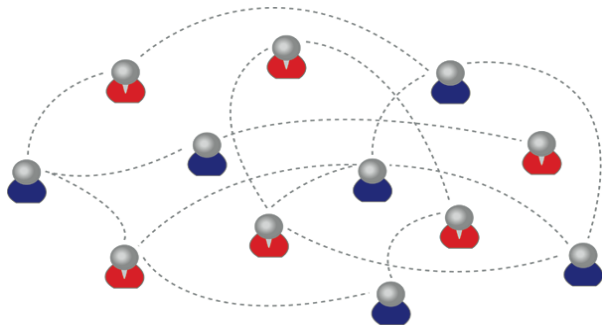
- We developed/validated a 9-item assessment scale of APSB.
- APSB predicts outcomes through shaping positive climate.

Unit/Group level



Additional Benefits of APSB

(Study 5 & ongoing research)



Aggression Preventive Supervisor Behavior (APSB)

Individual occurrences
Unit-level consistency

Peer
network

Employee and Organizational Outcomes

Aggression prev. performance
Psychological safety

Social
learning
process

Are there any possible interventions?



Aggression Prevention: Intervention for Better Resource Building

- Doing more with less: Employees are often under-resourced.
 - Healthcare workers and their supervisors are amongst the least resourced¹.
- Yragui, Yang, Hammer, Olson, McCurry & Wipfli (in progress): An integrated intervention to reduce/prevent nurses' exposure to patient and coworker aggression and work-nonwork conflict, through building their resources
 - Train supervisors' **APSB** to build workers' resources.
 - Facilitate supervisors' peer groups to build their resources

¹OSHA, 2015

Overall Summary

- Workplace aggression, an intense form of mistreatment, is **prevalent**, affecting worker well-being, retention and productivity, and costing the organization and society **tremendously**.
- Recent evidence indicates workers' political skills, positive organizational climate, and preventive supervisor practices as **promising inhibitors of workplaces aggression and its consequences**.
- Such evidence guides future efforts for interventions aimed at **promoting positive work environment and total worker health**.

Collaborators, Co-authors, and Funders

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Thank You

Questions?

Liu-Qin Yang (lyang@pdx.edu)

Appendix: APSB-coworker scale (Yang & Caughlin, 2016)

My direct supervisor...

1. Describes policies available in the organization for preventing aggression incidents between employees
2. Makes sure I am aware of the available organizational resources for preventing aggression between employees
3. Communicates the consequences of failing to follow organizational processes for preventing aggression between employees
4. Encourages me to update him/her regarding signs of potential coworker-initiated aggression
5. Steps in to resolve disputes between me and my coworkers before they escalate
6. Gives me advice for effectively working with specific aggressive coworkers
7. Assigns me to work with coworkers whom I get along with
8. Moves me and my coworkers around different shifts to ensure that people in the same shift work well together
9. Reduces the chances of direct interaction between me and another coworker who have a history of interpersonal conflict.

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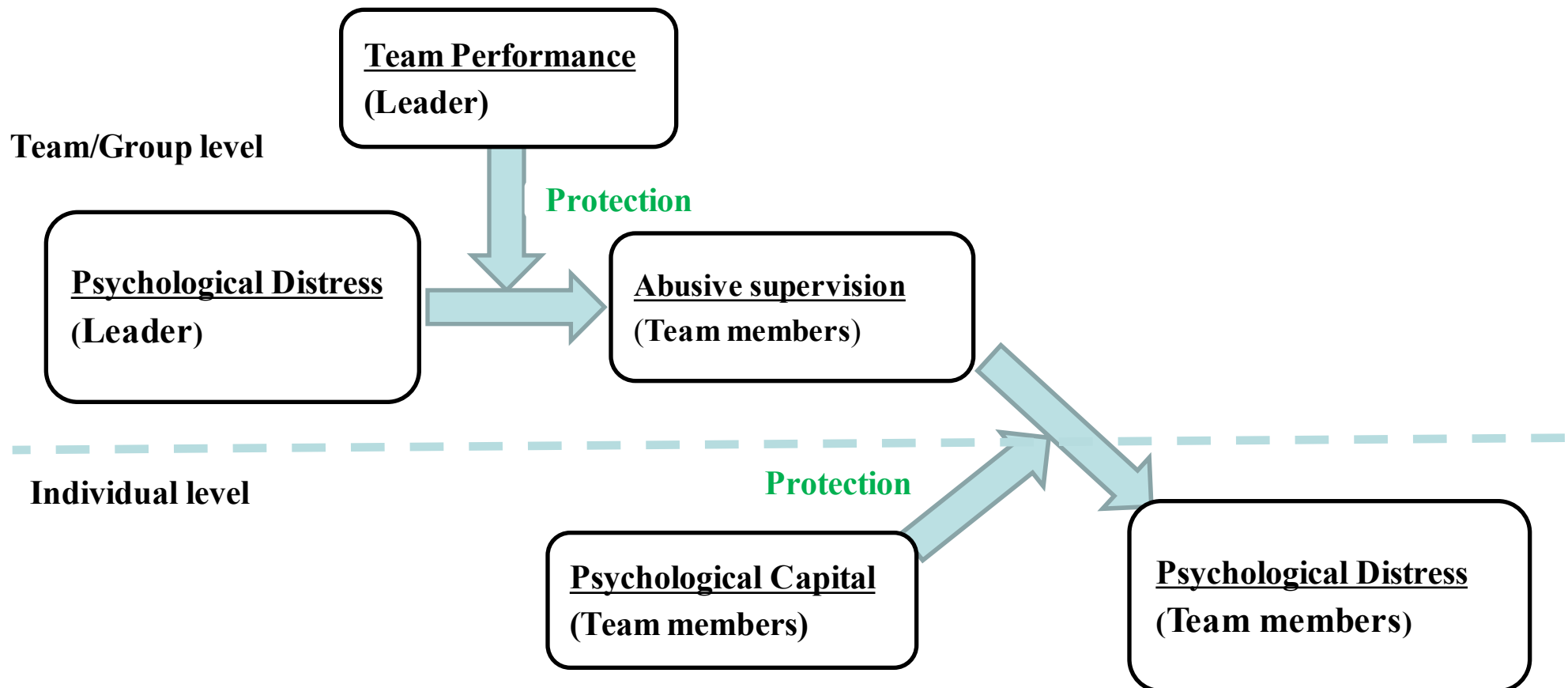
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Supplemental Slides

Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Study 5: Li, Wang, Yang et al., 2016)
86 team leaders and 351 team members



Meta-Analytic Results for the Relations between Overall Mistreatment Climate and Presumed Outcomes (Yang et al., 2014)

Presumed Outcomes	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	Mean <i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Mistreatment Reduction Motivation</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	4	1200	.38	.43
<i>Mistreatment Reduction Performance</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	4	1114	.39	.44
<i>Organizational Commitment</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	9	4157	.39	.47
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	21	7248	.39	.45
<i>Turnover Intentions</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	13	3626	-.33	-.39
<i>Emotional Strains</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	20	4777	-.24	-.29
<i>Anxiety</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	13	2645	-.18	-.23
<i>Anger</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	12	2854	-.18	-.22
<i>Depression</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	10	1934	-.26	-.30
<i>Physical Strains</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	14	3843	-.18	-.22
<i>Mistreatment Exposure</i>				
Overall Mistreatment Climate	28	88527	-.36	-.41
Overall Mistreatment Climate (Without Warren et al.)	27	12932	-.24	-.28

Meta-Analytic Results for the Relations between Different Types of Mistreatment Climate and Presumed Outcomes (Yang et al., under review)

Presumed Outcomes	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	Mean <i>r</i>	<i>ρ</i>
<i>Organizational Commitment</i>				
Civility Climate	5	3292	.42	.51
Aggression-Inhibition Climate	4	865	.29	.33
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>				
Civility Climate	8	4151	.42	.48
Aggression-Inhibition Climate	14	3465	.37	.42
<i>Turnover Intentions</i>				
Civility Climate	4	1070	-.34	-.41
Aggression-Inhibition Climate	9	2556	-.33	-.38
<i>Emotional Strains</i>				
Civility Climate	4	1182	-.31	-.36
Aggression-Inhibition Climate	16	3595	-.22	-.26
<i>Mistreatment Exposure</i>				
Civility Climate & Incivility Exposure ¹	9	4574	-.33	-.37
Aggression-Inhibition Climate & Nonphysical Aggression Exposure ²	13	3582	-.19	-.23
Aggression-Inhibition Climate & Physical Aggression Exposure ³	17	8439	-.16	-.19

Logistic regression of Time 2 violence exposure on Time 1 violence prevention climate (Yang et al., 2012)

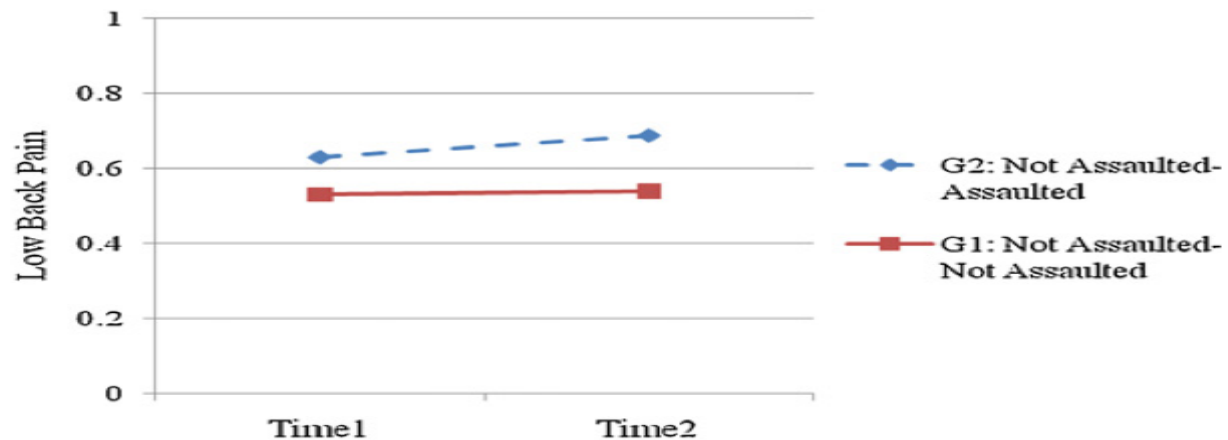
Variable	Violence exposure (Time 2)			
	Odds ratio	Lower bound (95% CI)	Higher bound (95% CI)	Wald Chi-Square
Hospital ID	1.08	0.43	2.75	0.03
Age	1.03	0.97	1.10	0.83
Tenure	0.95	0.90	1.01	3.11
Weekly work hours	1.02	0.96	1.09	0.32
Violence exposure (Time 1)	14.59	6.25	34.07	38.35**
Prevention practices (Time 1)	0.87	0.49	1.55	0.23
Prevention policies (Time 1)	1.29	0.81	2.06	1.14
Pressure against prevention (Time 1)	1.69	1.13	2.53	6.57**

Note: CI, confidence interval. ** $p < 0.01$.

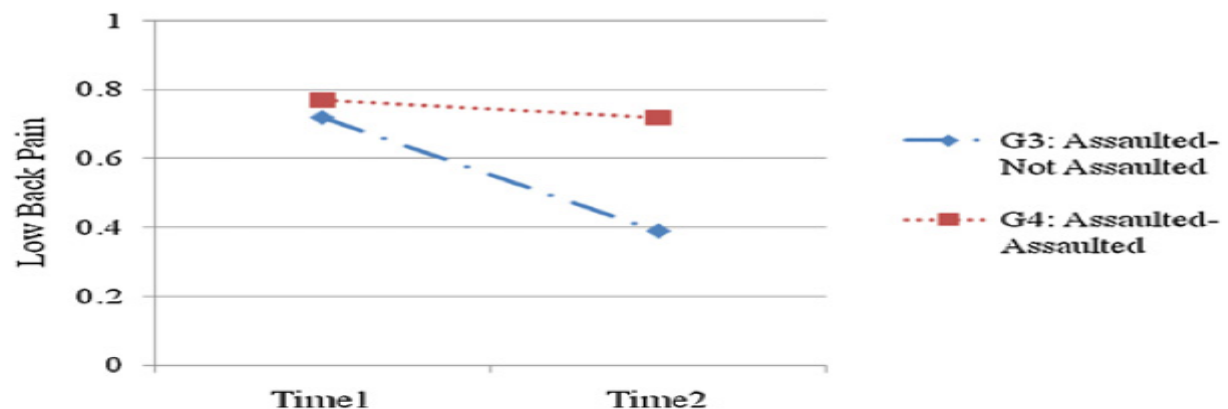
Consequences of Workplace Aggression

(Yang et al., 2012)

A
Relationship
among
nurses with
no history
of being
assaulted



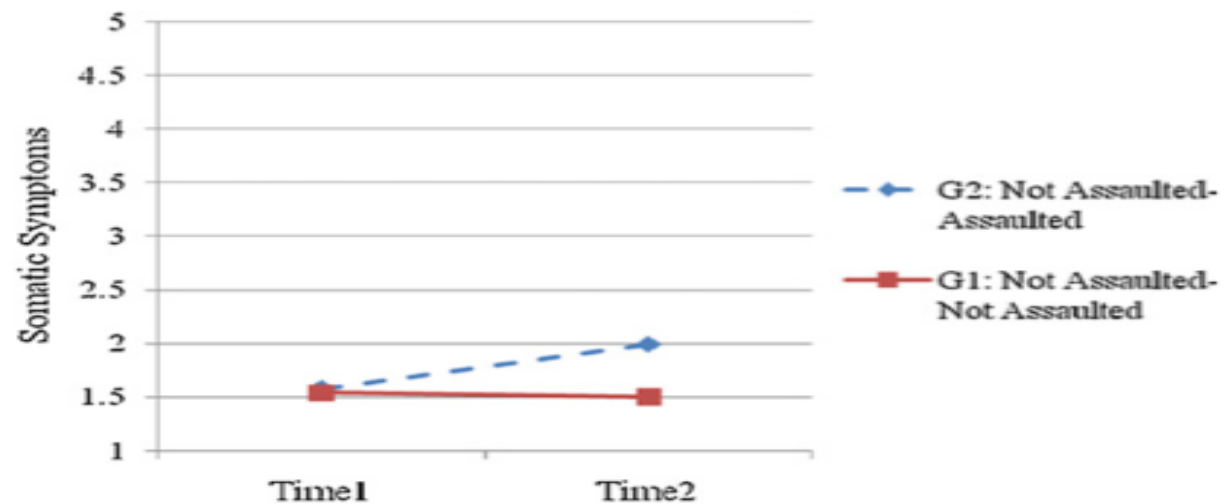
B
Relationship
among
nurses with
a history of
being
assaulted



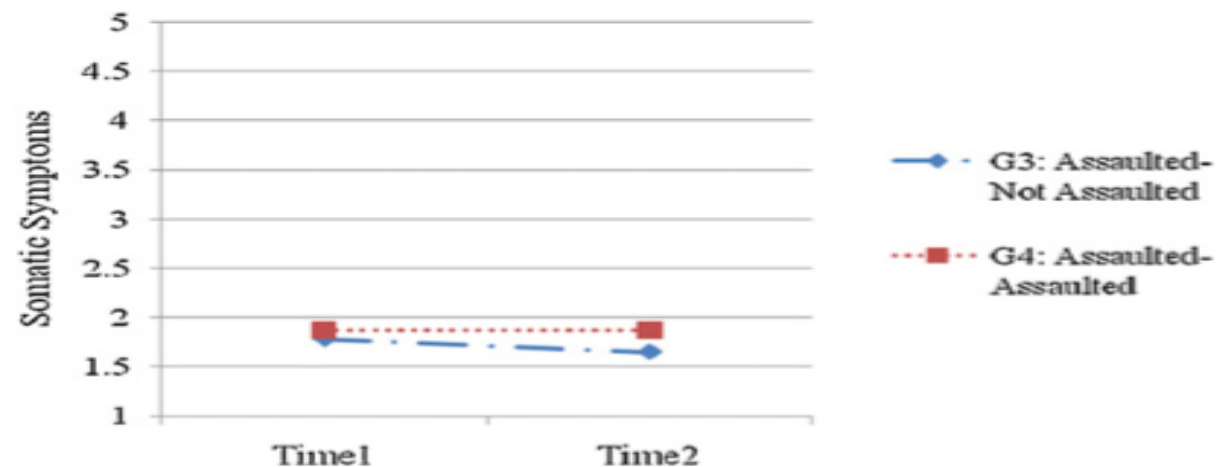
Consequences of Workplace Aggression

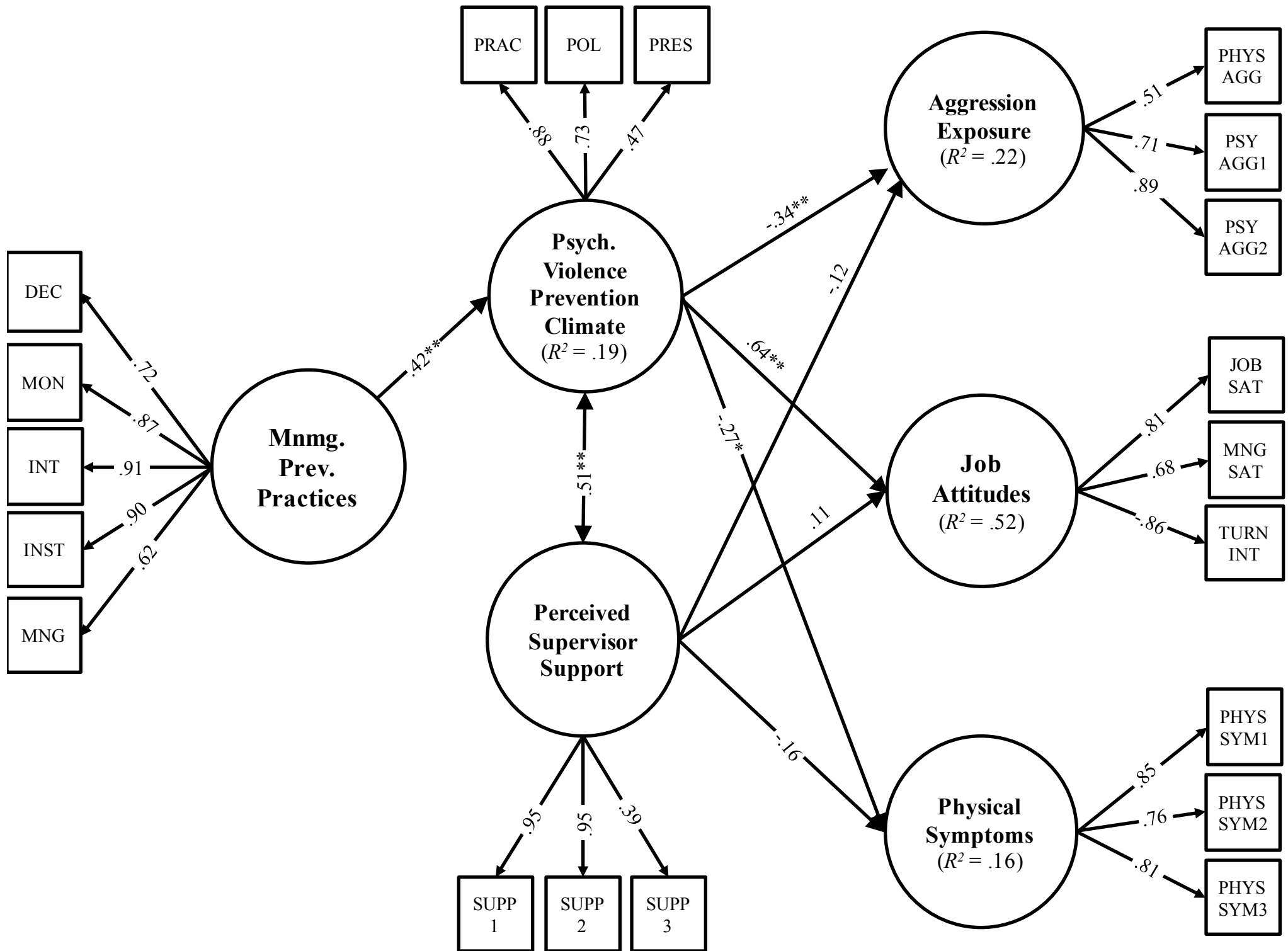
(Yang et al., 2012)

A:
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Aggression, Bullying , & Lateral Violence

Aggression/Violence: Physical or nonphysical behaviors that intentionally harm; from supervisors, coworkers, patients/customers, or patients' /customers' family (*Baron, 1977; Yang, 2009*)

Bullying: Harassing, offending, or social exclusion behaviors that occur repeatedly, regularly (e.g., weekly), and over a period of time (e.g., 6 months) (*Einarsen et al., 2003*); could be from any of the above 4 sources; <ongoing debate regarding "intent" & strict "criteria">

Lateral Violence: Bullying among nurses and other members of the health care team; one facet of aggression/violence or bullying or ...