

# Family Climate Contextual Effects on Adolescent Threat Appraisals: A Longitudinal Investigation

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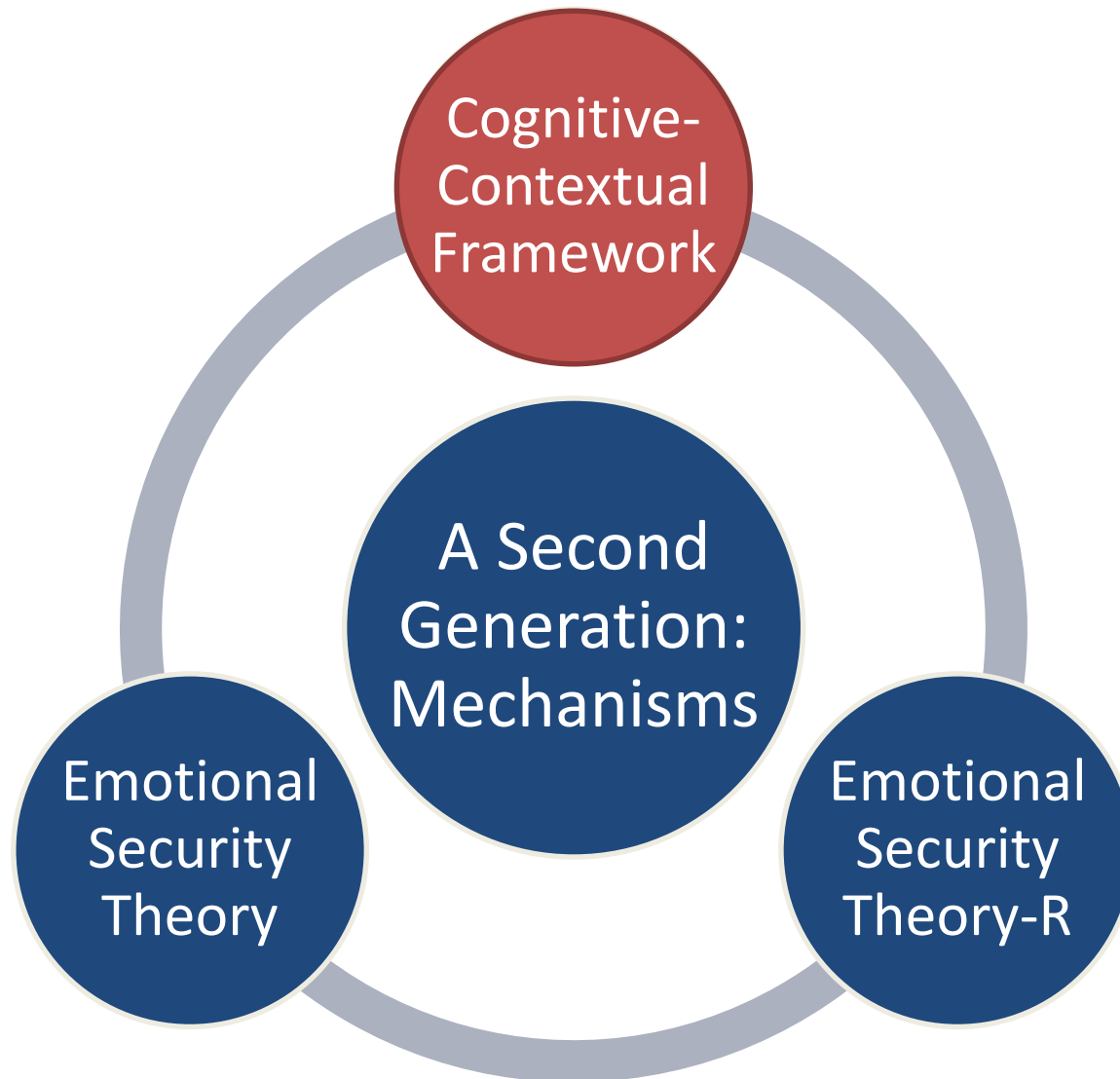
The Pennsylvania State University

# Acknowledgements

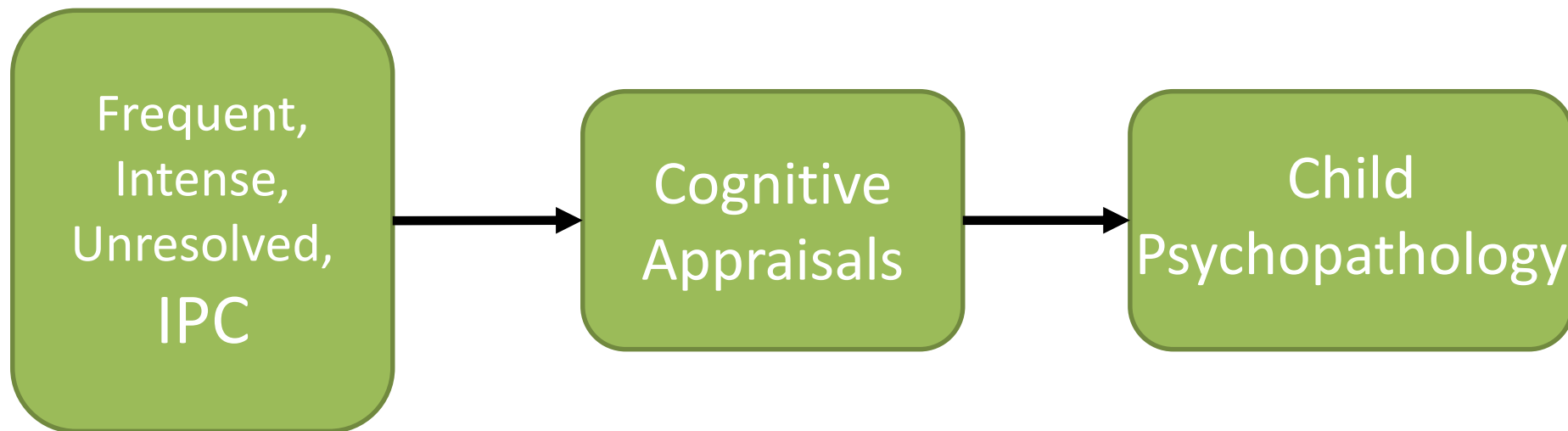
- PROSPER: Promoting School-Community-  
University Partnerships to Enhance Resilience
  - M. Greenberg, M. Feinberg, C. Redmond, R. Spoth
  - National Institute on Drug Abuse: DA 013709
- Karl R. and Diane Wendle Fink Early Career  
Professorship for the Study of Families
- John Grych

# Interparental Conflict (IPC): Robust Risk for Maladjustment

- Prevalence: experienced by nearly all children
  - Coparenting, 2-caregiver homes (Cummings & Davies, 1994)
- Consistently linked with children's psychological maladjustment (Buehler et al., 1997; Cummings & Davies, 1994; Grych & Fincham, 2001)
- Multifinality in types/severity of outcomes

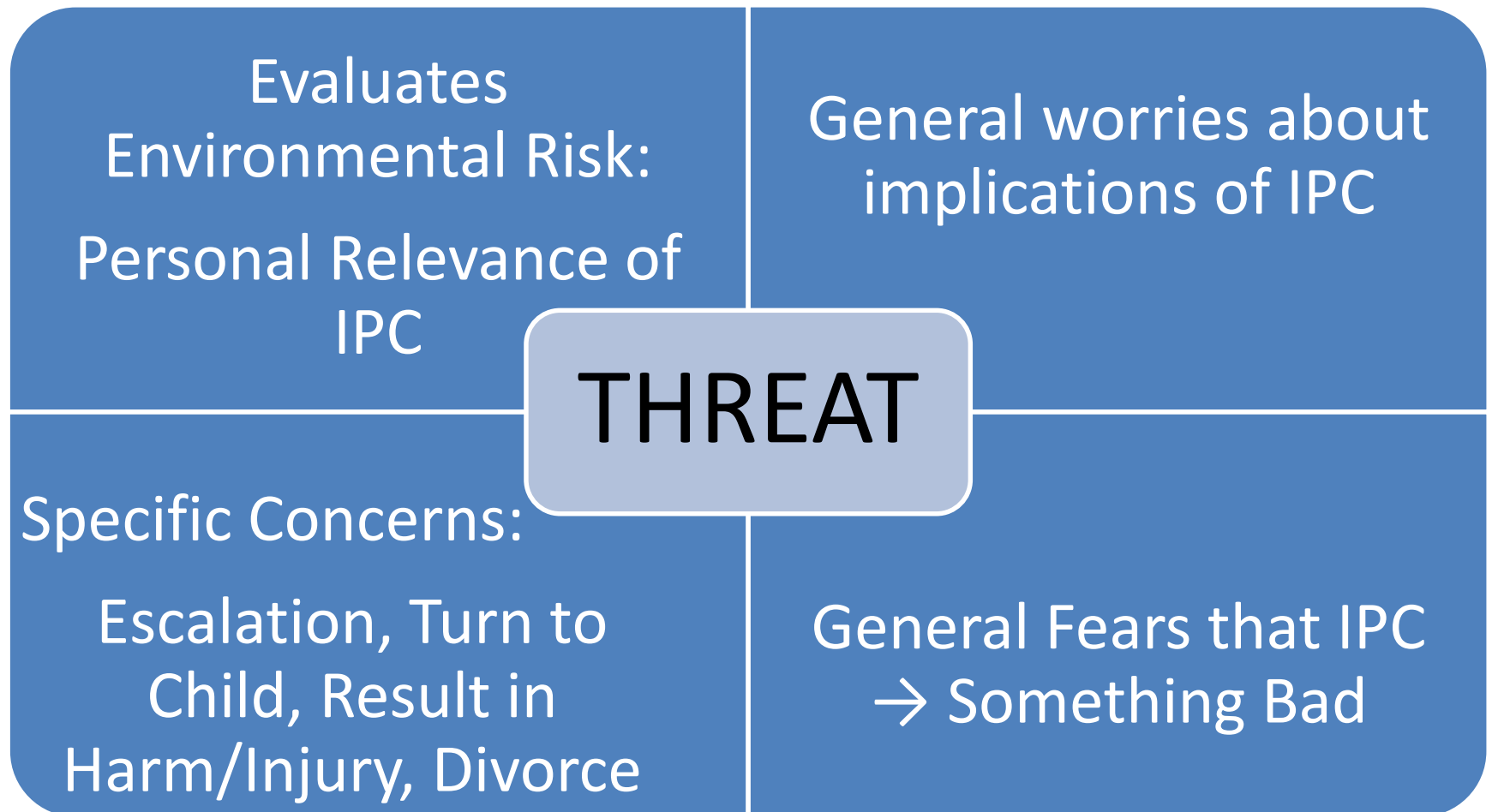


# Cognitive Appraisals: Mechanisms of Risk

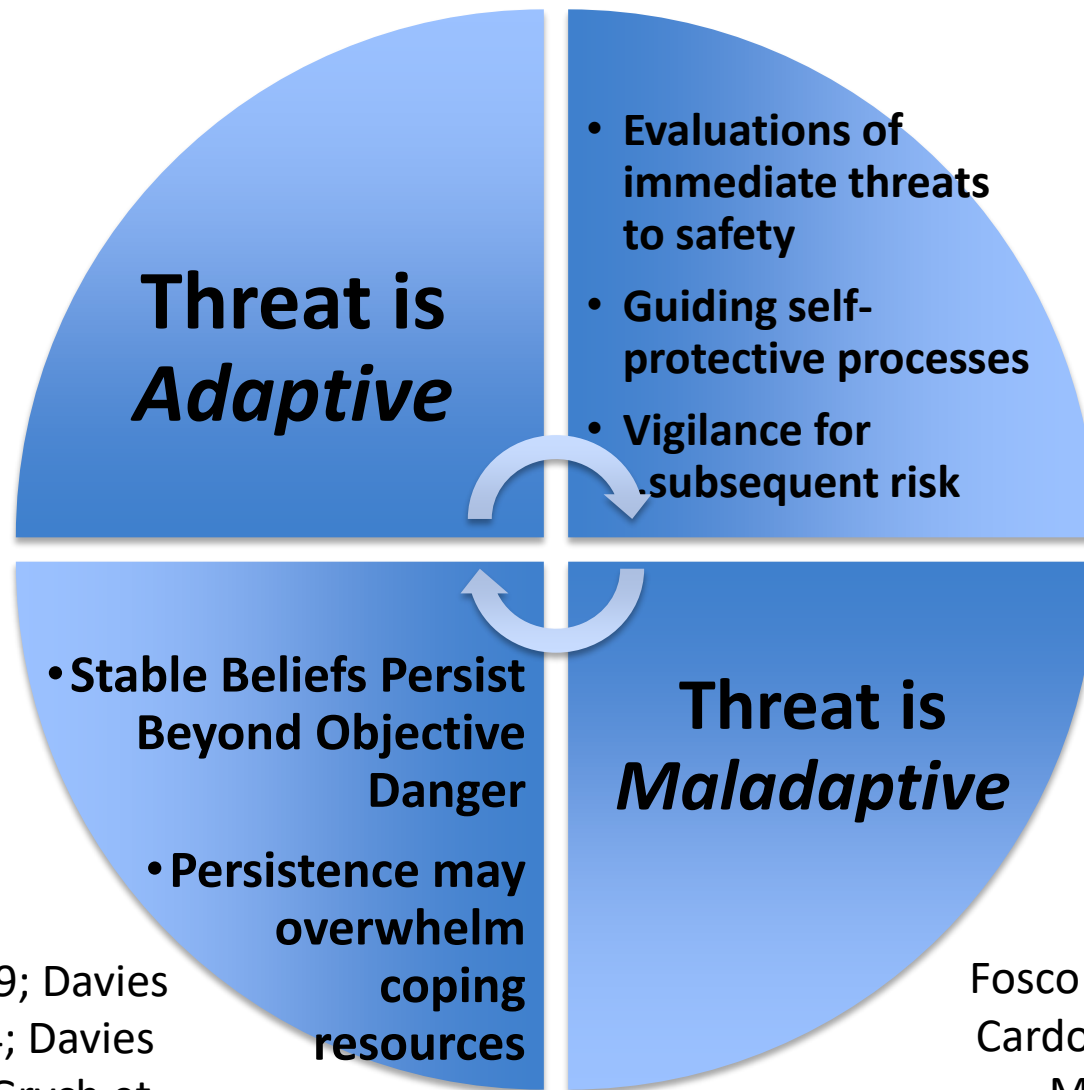


Grych & Fincham (1990)      Grych & Cardoza-Fernandez (2001)

Fosco, DeBoard-Lucas, & Grych (2007)




Atkinson et al., 2009; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Davies & Woitach, 2008; Grych et al., 1992; Fosco et al., 2007; Grych & Cardoza-Fernandez, 2001; Martin et al., 2014



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# Threat: Risk In Adolescence



Cross-Sectional and Meta-analytic Evidence, Internalizing, Externalizing

Longitudinal Change in Internalizing Problems

Predicts Escalations in Cigarette Use

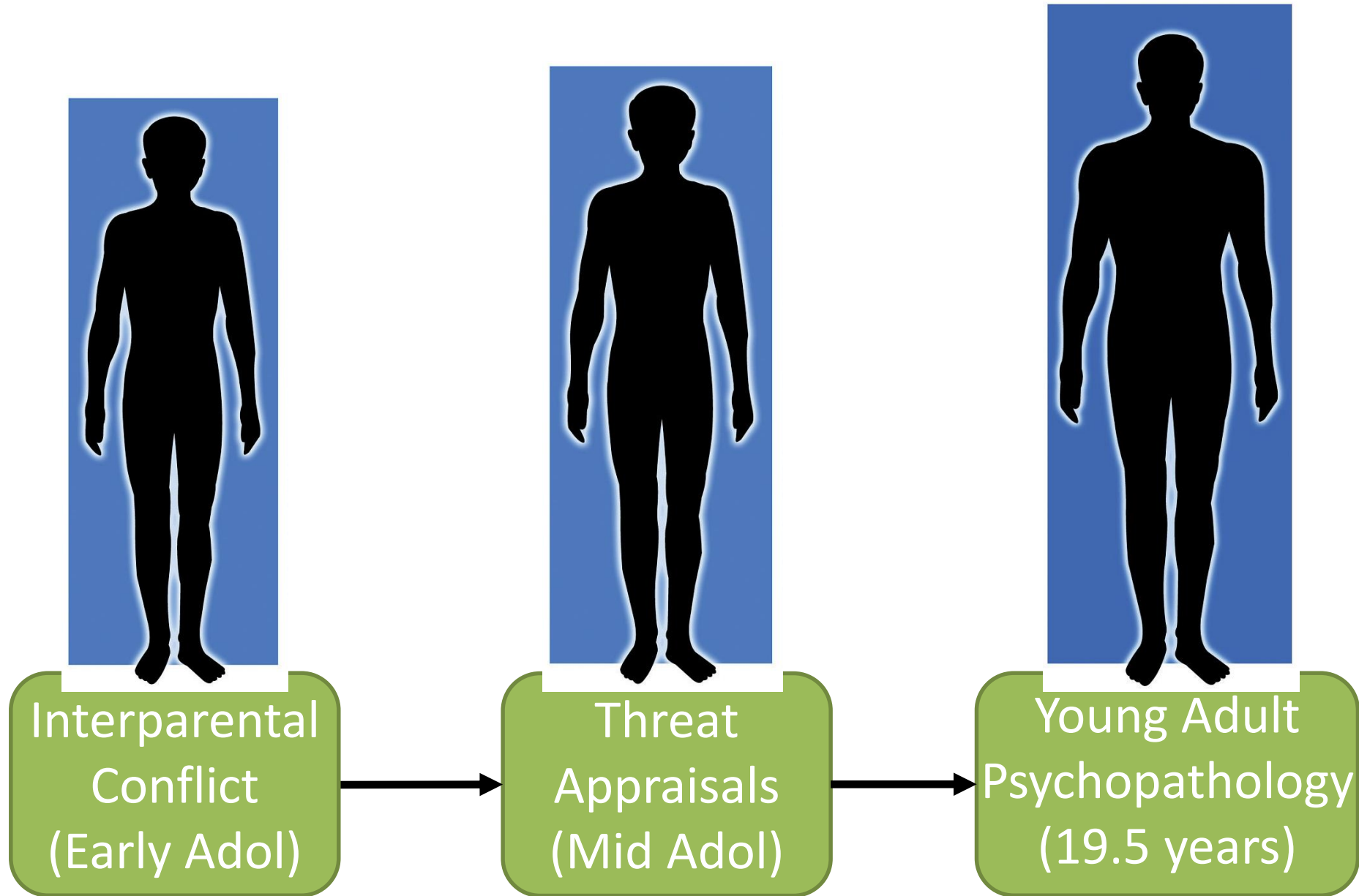
Poster: Predicts Increases in Social Anxiety and Lower-Quality Peer Relationships

Fosco & Feinberg, (2015); Fosco & Feinberg (Under Review)

Buehler et al., 2007; Gerard et al., 2005; Grych, Harold, & Miles, (2003); Fosco & Grych (2008);

# What are the lifespan developmental implications of IPC and threat?

- Most longitudinal research: 2-4 year duration
- How do experiences in one developmental period carry forward into later periods of life?
- Early childhood -> adolescence
  - Cummings et al., 2012



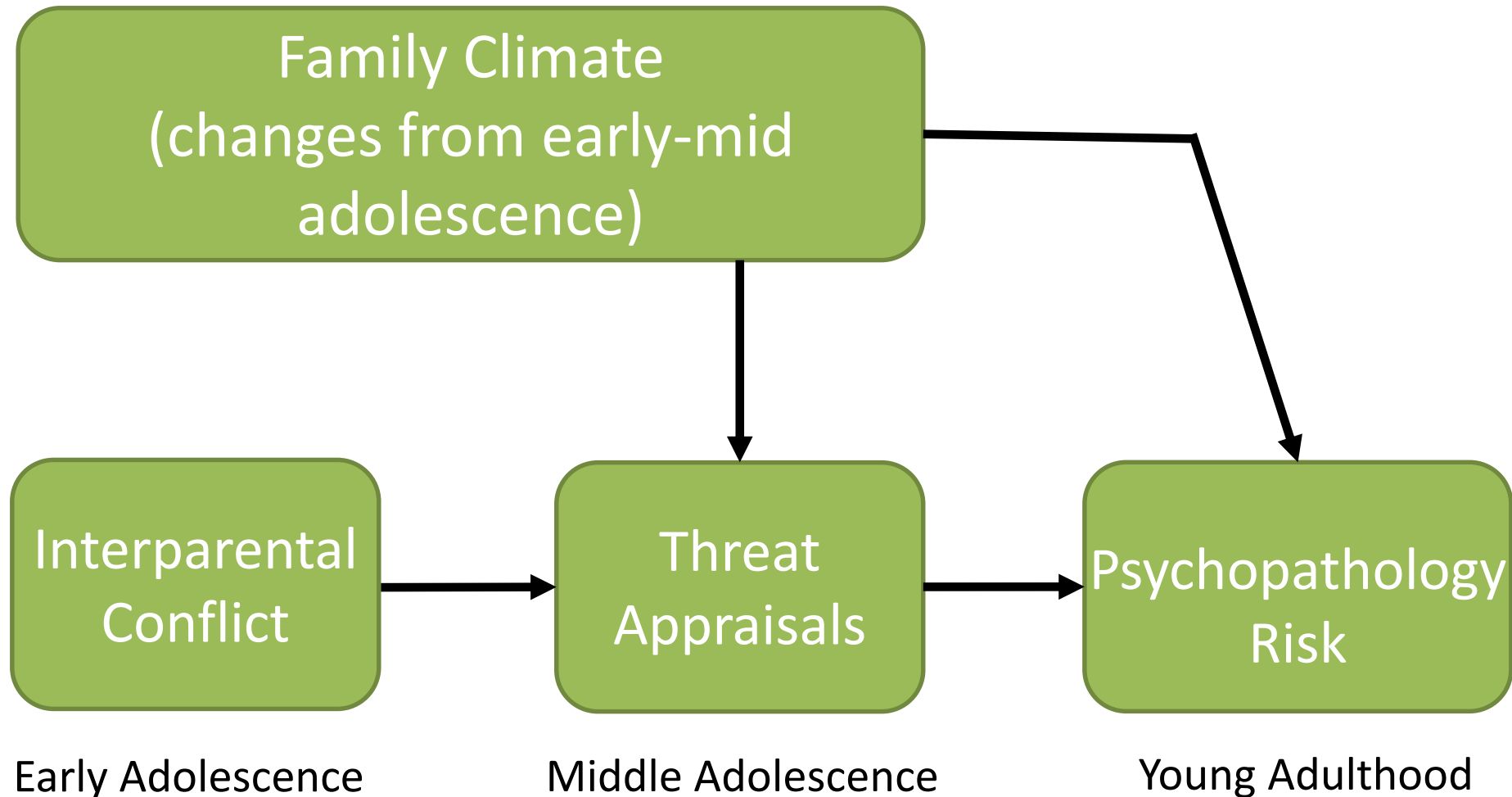
# Family Climate: Shapes Appraisals

- Adolescents are more attuned to broader family dynamics than younger children (Davies & Forman, 2002)
- Consistent with this:
  - Mother-adolescent closeness predicted threat, above and beyond the prediction of IPC (Grych et al 2004)
  - These findings generally not upheld earlier in development (DeBoard et al, 2010; Fosco & Grych, 2007)

# Family Change During Adolescence

- Repetti (2002): Important to consider dynamic processes in developmental models
- Adolescence = Family Change
  - Family conflict increases (Fosco et al., 2014)
  - Family cohesion decreases (Van Ryzin et al., 2013)
  - Monitoring/Involvement decreases (Dishion et al. 2003)

# Family Context for Threat Appraisals During Adolescence



# Research Questions

1. Do threat appraisals in adolescence confer risk for young adult emotional distress?
2. Are changes in the family climate over early-mid an important contextual factor for threat appraisals?
  - Or... for young adult emotional distress?

# Method

- Drawn from a community implementation of the PROSPER intervention delivery system in rural Iowa and Pennsylvania.
- Current sample = 225 two-caregiver families
  - Early adolescents: 53% female, 92% Caucasian
- Family assessments: Fall 6<sup>th</sup>, Spring 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>
- Adolescent data: Fall 6<sup>th</sup>, Spring 8<sup>th</sup>, Age 19-20

# The Current Sample

Original PROSPER Sample N = 11,690

PROSPER In-Home Family Sub-Sample  
n = 979

Youth Only In-School

Young-Adult  
Follow-Up  
N ≈ 2500

Overlap = 271 YA,  
225 from 2-caregiver homes

Fall  
6<sup>th</sup>

Spr.  
6<sup>th</sup>

Spr.  
7<sup>th</sup>

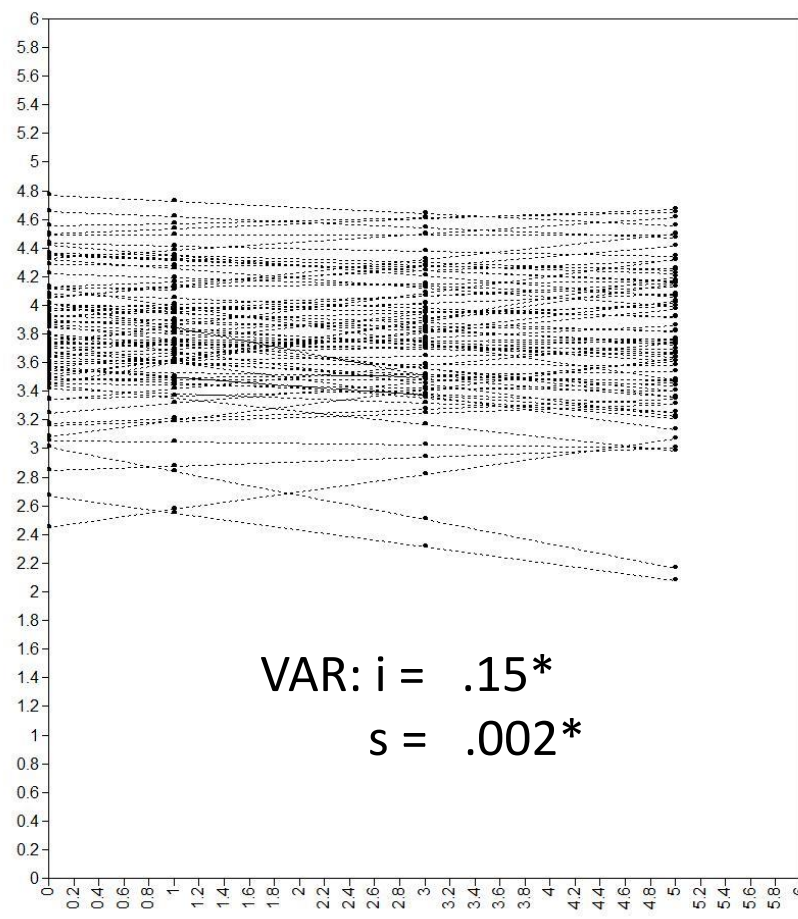
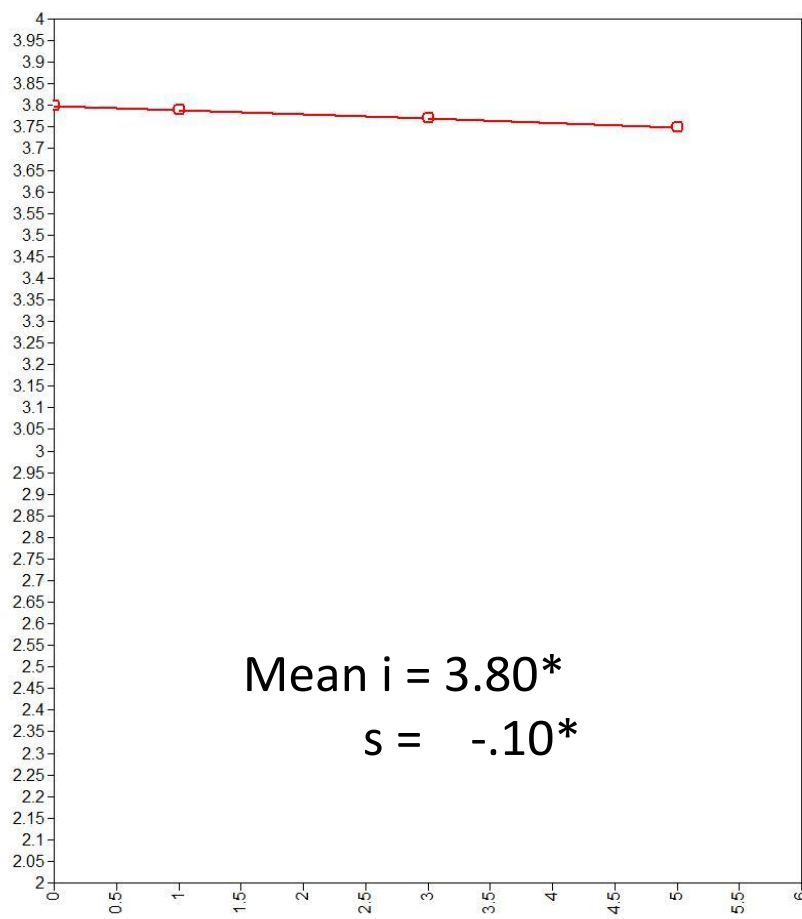
Spr.  
8<sup>th</sup>

Age  
19-20

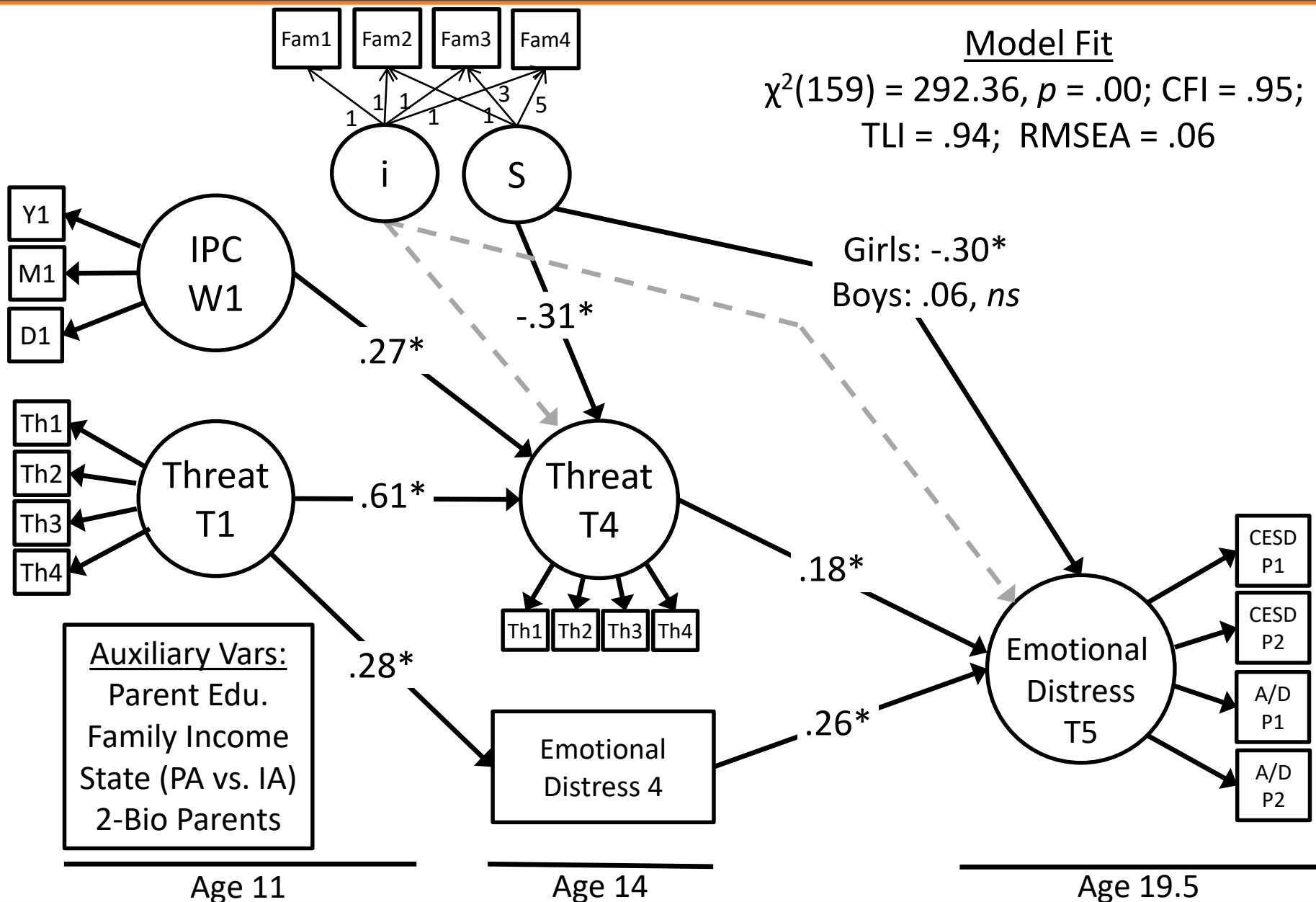
# Measurement

Construct	Reporter	Measure
Interparental Conflict	Parent	Self/Partner Hostility (Spoth et al. 1998)
	Youth	Frequency of Conflict (Single Item)
Threat	Youth	4 items from CPIC (Grych et al. 1992)
Family Climate	Parent/Youth	7 Items from FES (Moos & Moos, 1974) Cohesion, Conflict, Organization
Emotional Distress	Youth	YSR (Middle Adolescence)
	Young Adult	CES-D (parceled into two indicators)
		ASR (parceled into two indicators)

# Unconditional Growth Model: Family Climate



Model Fit:  $\chi^2(5) = 14.22, p = .01$ ; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .09



# Summary

- IPC and Threat in adolescence have longitudinal implications for young adulthood
  - Controlling for prior levels of threat, emotional distress
- Family Climate:
  - Change over early-mid adolescence impactful
  - Additive effects comparable to IPC wrt: Threat
    - Within literature: adolescence may be a key developmental period for family contextual factors related to threat
  - Long-term implications for young adult women

# Implications

- Advances a more integrated, family systems perspective on cognitive appraisals of interparental conflict
- Cognitive evaluations of the family may be a key pathway for understanding risk into later developmental periods.
  - Similar to Forman & Davies (2003; 2005) Security in the Family System formulation

# Limitations/Future Directions

- Inclusion of self-blame: implications for externalizing outcomes
- Replication with diverse samples

# Thank you!

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