

Parental Maltreatment History and Youth Stress Reactivity: Intergenerational Transmission through Emotion Regulation

Kimberly Osborne, Erinn B. Duprey, EdM,
Margaret Caughy, ScD, & Assaf Oshri, PhD



Childhood Maltreatment

- ▷ Linked to socioemotional impairments in adulthood (Anda et al., 2006; Felitti et al., 1998)
- ▷ Disrupts developing regulatory systems

Intergenerational Transmission

- ▷ The next generation are more likely to display poor emotional development (Collishaw, et al., 2007; Miranda, de la Osa, Granero, & Ezpeleta, 2013)

Emotion Regulation (ER)

- ▷ The ability to accurately identify, understand, and modulate emotional experiences as appropriate in a given situation (Kaufman et al., 2016)



Issues with ER in childhood

- ▷ Linked to self-harm behaviors, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, depression, and conduct problems (Beauchaine, Gatzke-Kopp, & Mead, 2007; Kaufman et al., 2016).



Heart

Autonomic Nervous System

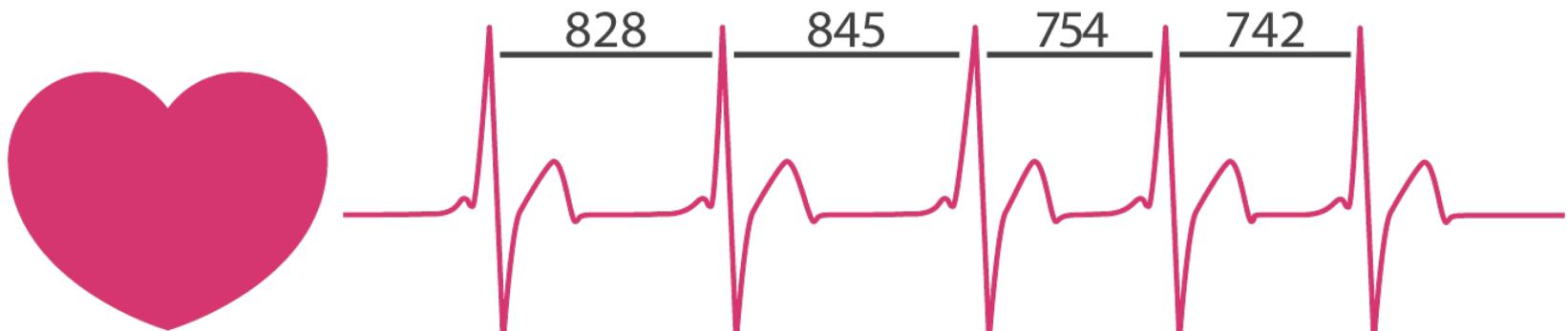
HRV)

- ▷ HRV is the normal variability in heart rate (fight-or-flight) due to respiration.

Sympathetic Nervous System

Parasympathetic Nervous System
(rest and digest)

- ▷ Decreases in HRV when exposed to stress or challenge indicate more parasympathetic activity
 - Prior research supports sex differences in the parasympathetic control of HRV (Koenig et al., 2017)

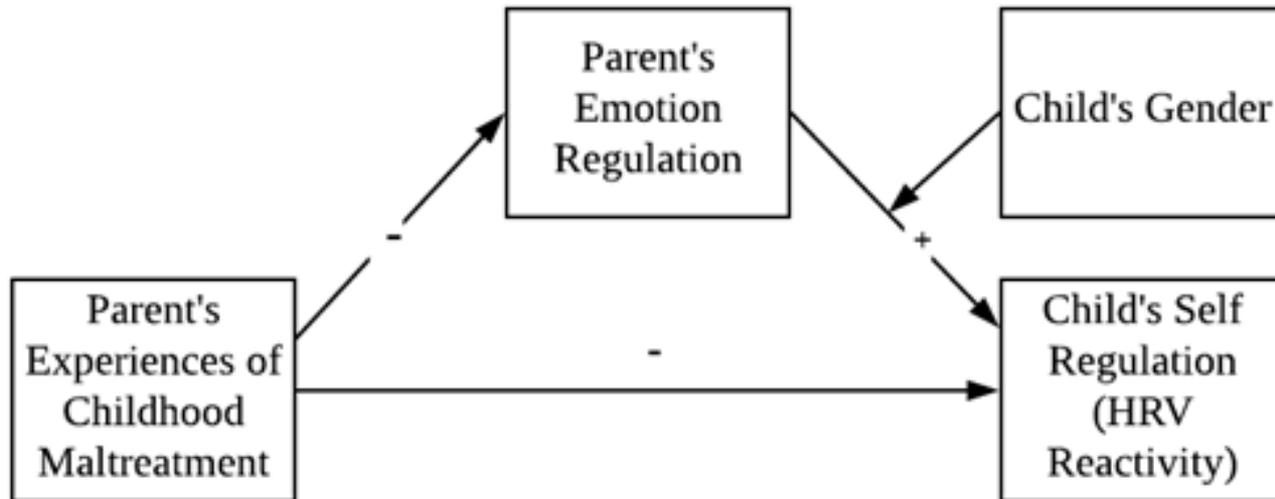


Mechanism for the Intergenerational Transmission of socioemotional impairments

Parental
Maltreatment
History

Parent's
Emotion
Regulation

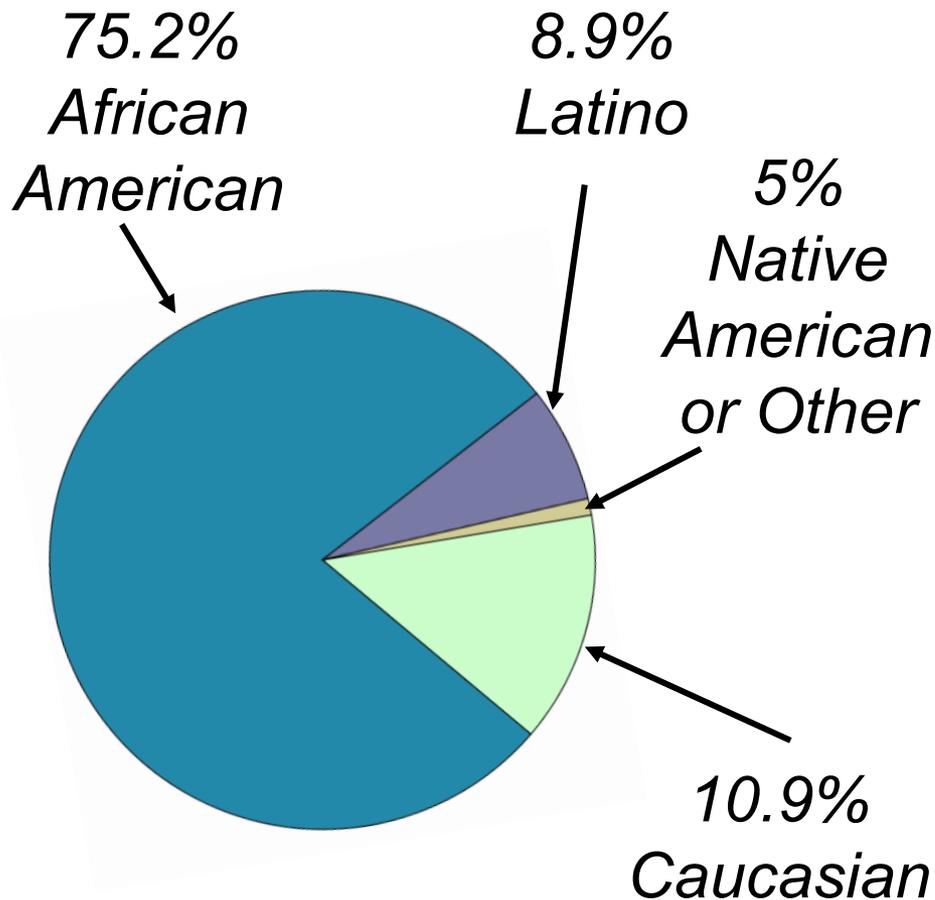
Child's
Physiological
Emotion
Regulation



Hypothesis 1: Parents' poor ER will act as an indirect mechanism linking childhood maltreatment history to children's physiological dysregulation of emotion.

Hypothesis 2: Pre-adolescent girls will demonstrate more physiological dysregulation than their male counterparts and be more affected by parental ER in the home.

Characteristics of the Sample



N = 101 parent-child dyads
All below 200% of the federal poverty line
Child Age:
9- 12 years old
Child Sex:
52.5% Female
Primary Caregiver Sex:
95% female
Case with Child Services:
8.8% open
16.5% closed

Construct

Measure

Parent's Experiences
of Childhood
Maltreatment

=

Childhood Trauma
Questionnaire (CTQ;
Bernstein & Fink, 1997)

Parent's Emotion
Regulation

=

The Difficulties in
Emotion Regulation
Scale Short Form
(DERSSSF; Kaufman et al., 2016)

Emotion Regulation
of the Child

=

HRV-reactivity.
Higher scores = less
regulation (Laborde,
Mosley, & Thayer, 2017)

Model 1

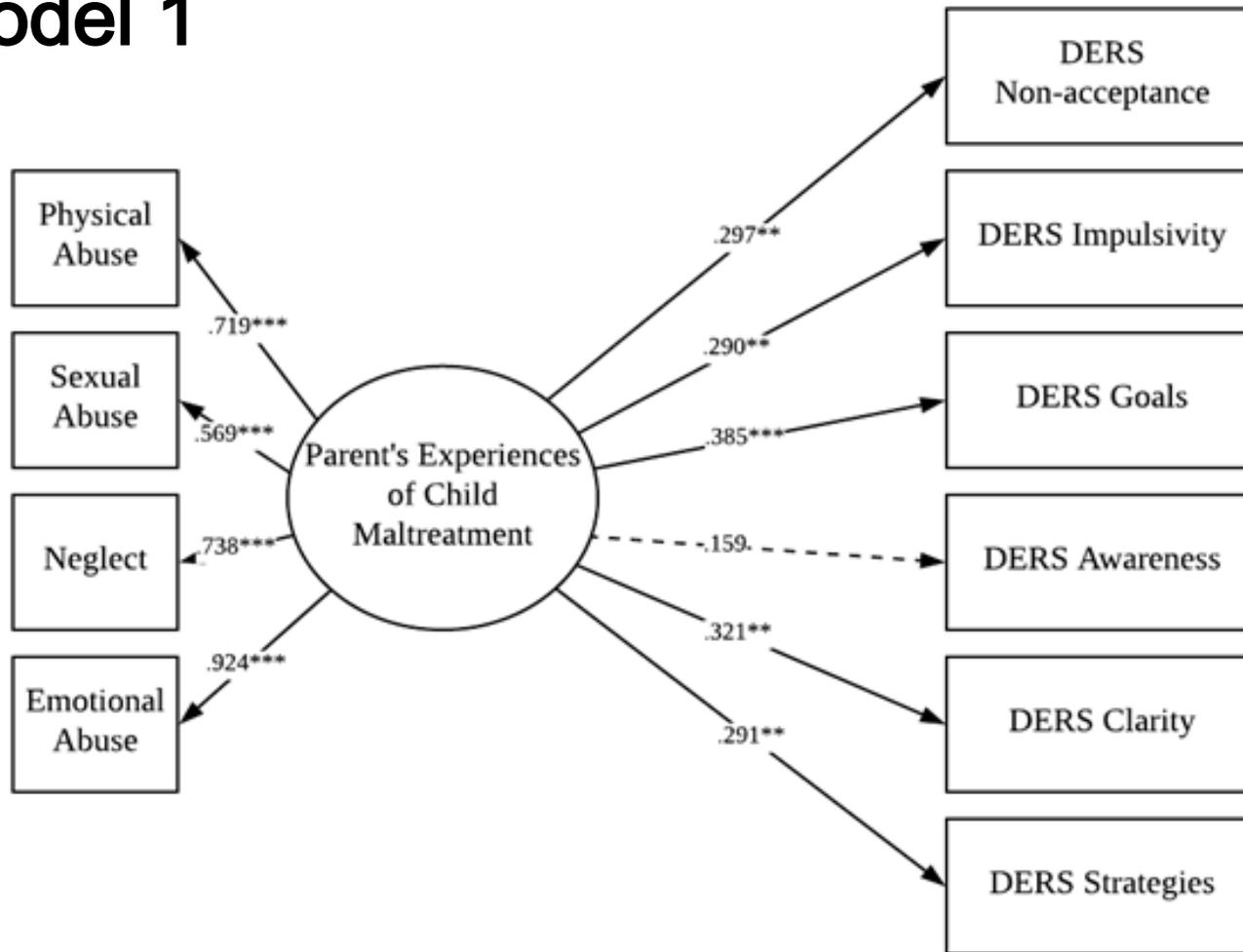


Figure 1. Structural equation model. Model fit was good: CFI = .974, TLI = .951, RMSEA = .054, SRMR = .068.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Model 2

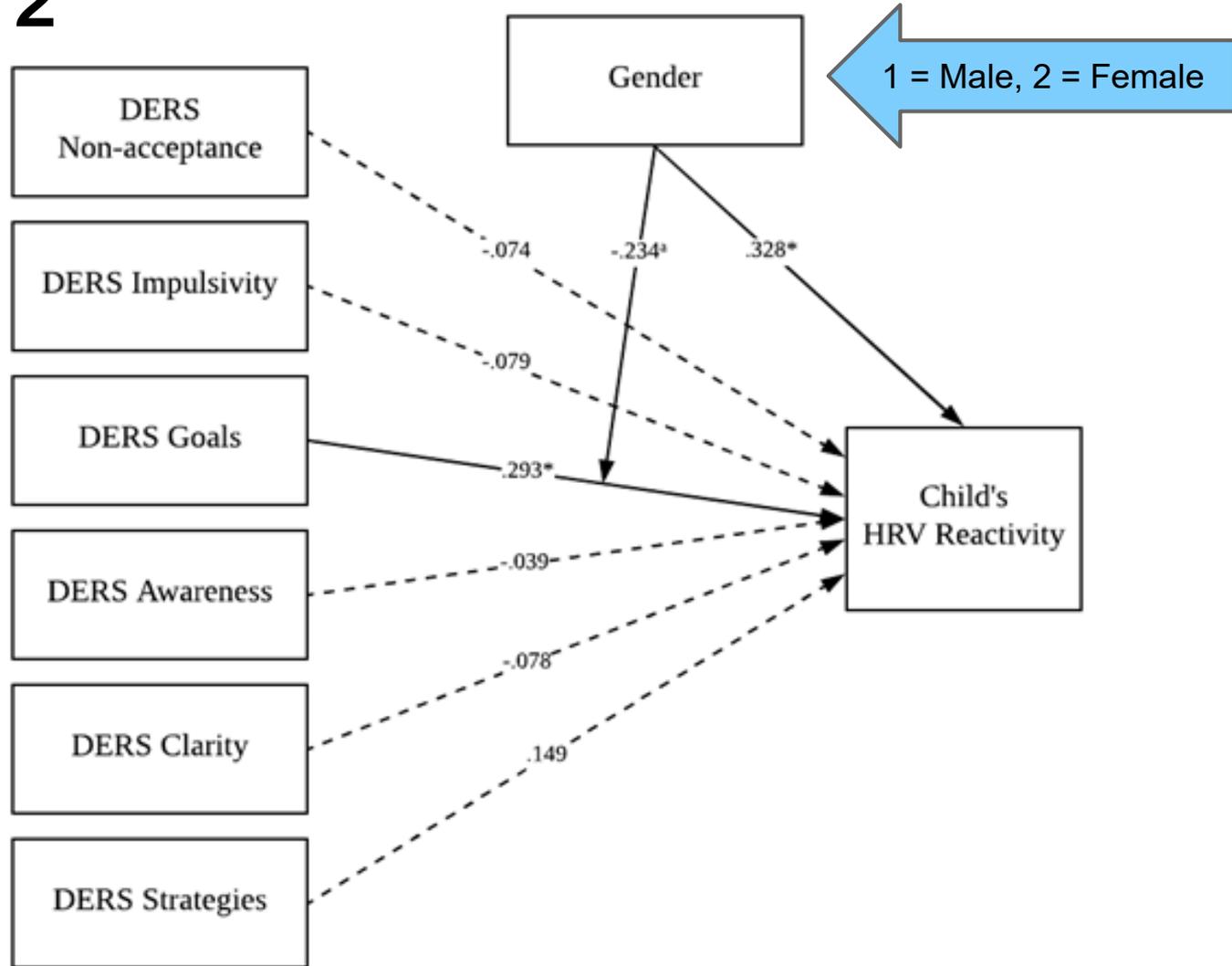


Figure 2. Structural equation model. Model fit was good: CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA < .001, SRMR < .001
^a $p < .10$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

Model 3

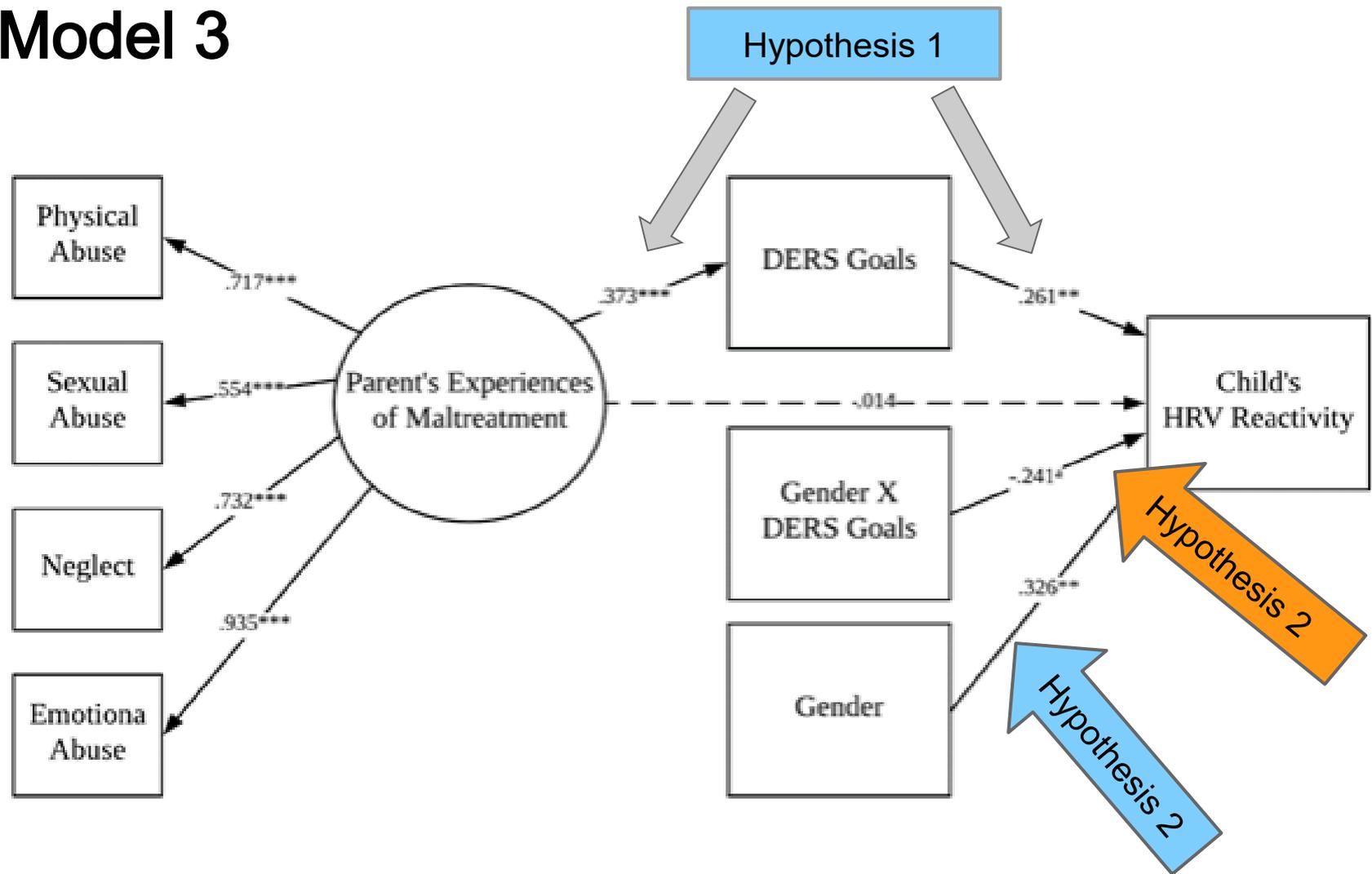


Figure 3. Structural equation model. Model fit was good: CFI = .977, TLI = .965, RMSEA = .044, SRMR = .053.

Note. Gender is coded as 1 = male and 2 = female.

^a $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

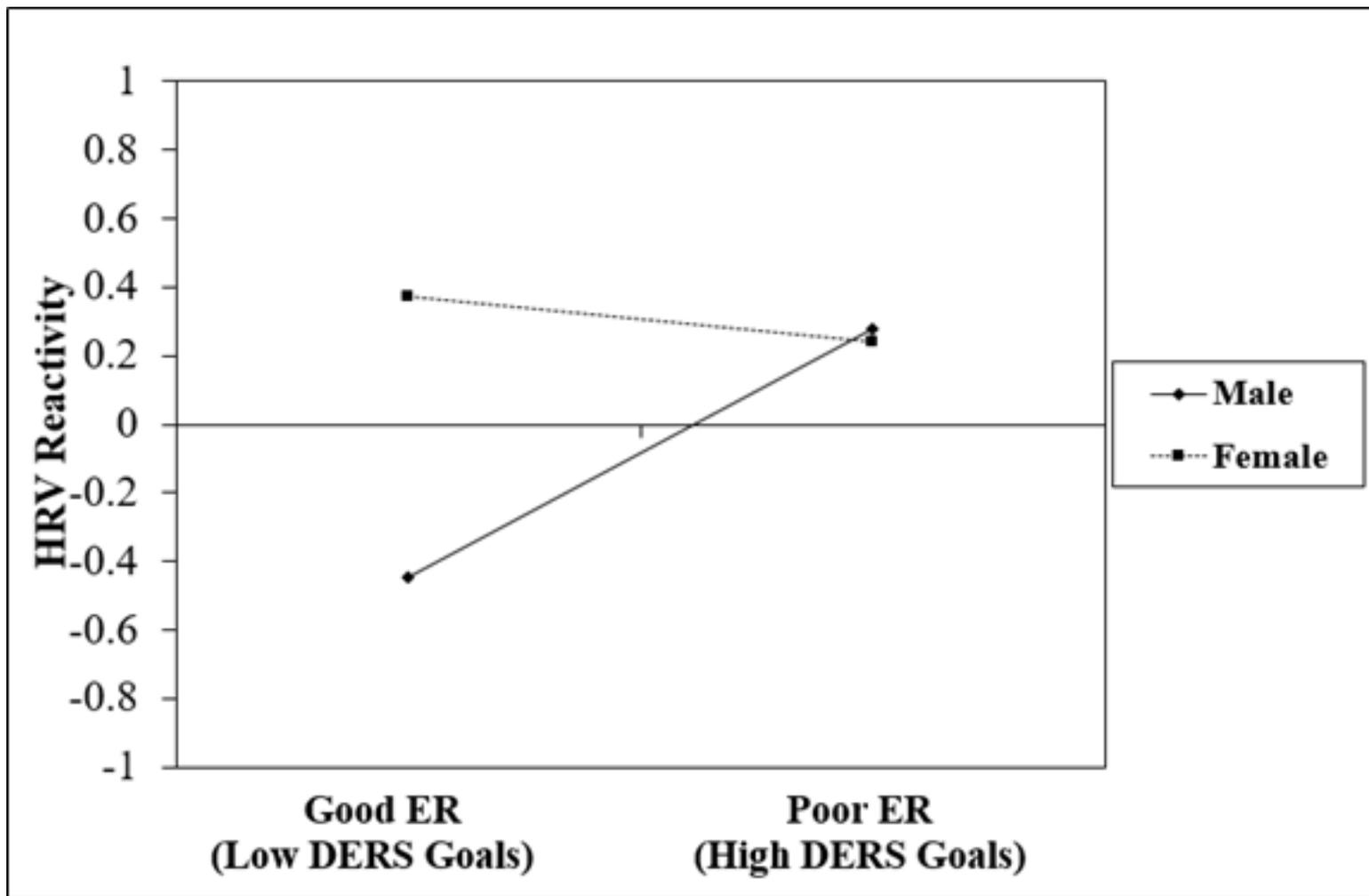


Figure 4. The association between parent's emotion regulation (DERS Goals) and child's HRV reactivity, moderated by gender.

Higher HRV-Reactivity scores indicate less regulation.

Summary

- ▷ The intergenerational transmission of poor emotion regulation is a potential risk for children
- ▷ Girls age 9 – 12 appear to be more physiologically vulnerable
- ▷ Boys appear to be more vulnerable *to* their parent's ER difficulties.
- ▷ Perhaps reduced ER socialization in the home is more detrimental to boys, while girls receive this socialization more often from other adults in their lives and the broader society.



Implications

- ▷ Behavioral interventions for children should include components on both socio-emotional intelligence and methods to regulate physiological reactivity
- ▷ Policies that address gross inequalities in wealth can ameliorate additional stressors influencing emotion regulation for parents and the development of emotion regulation in children



Thank you!
Questions?



You can find me at:

Kimberly.Osborne@uga.edu

www.sdcclab.org

www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/research-youth-development-institute

Discussion Questions

1. How do you personally regulate your emotions? Do you sense them on a physiological level?
2. What factors do you perceive as important in changing experiences for families in similar positions? If we were to design an intervention, in what ways could we utilize the results found in this study?

Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- ▷ Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- ▷ Photographs by [Unsplash](#)