



TELFER

Organizational Response to COVID-19: Research Insights

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Funding, Purpose, and the “So What?” Factor

Funded by

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF)
- Research Nova Scotia (RNS)

Purpose

- To study the impact of organizational responses (communication, policies, leadership) on employees’ health, wellbeing, and work outcomes

So What Factor

- Findings from this research can be used to develop actionable best practices related to successful organizational response to present and future crises

Research Team

- Dr. Kevin Kelloway (Saint Mary's University)
- Dr. Jennifer Dimoff (University of Ottawa)
- Dr. Stephanie Gilbert (Cape Breton University)
- Dr. Jane Mullen (Mount Allison University)
- Research Assistants: Rachael Jones-Chick, Vanessa Myers, Jaqueline Shaw, Tabatha Thibault (Saint Mary's University)

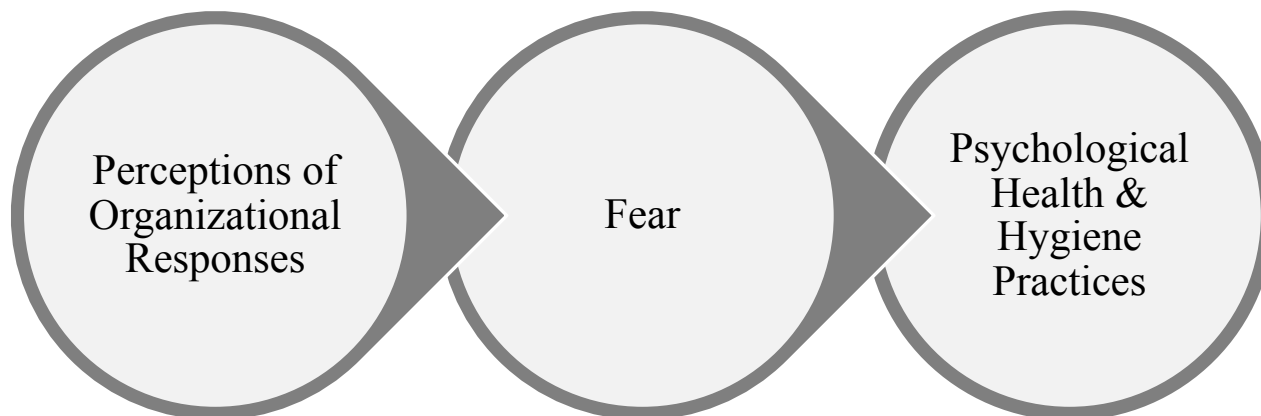
For more information about the team and this research,
please visit www.ohpdata.com

Background

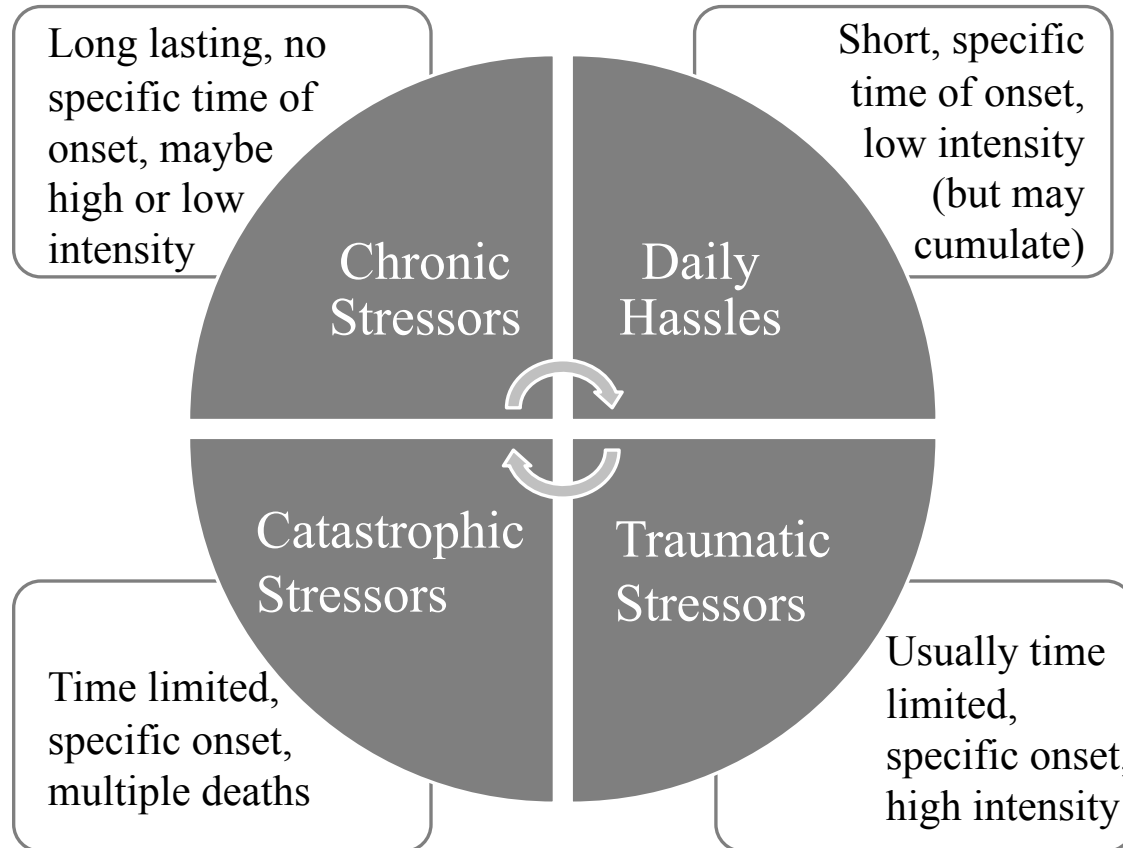
- Organizations increasingly need to respond to disease outbreaks
- Organizations can be a vehicle of public health

Kelloway, Mullen and Francis (2012)

- Norwalk outbreak in a university
- Found that perceptions of organizations' response and exposure predicted fear, and fear predicted mental health and hygiene practices



Types of Stressors

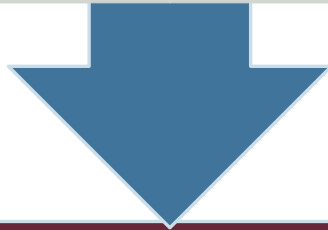




Pandemic as a traumatic stressor

Specific time of onset

Generally high severity (but substantial variation)



May be evolving into a chronic stressor

Becoming a part of everyday life

No end in sight

Difficulty of maintaining vigilance

Background

General Model

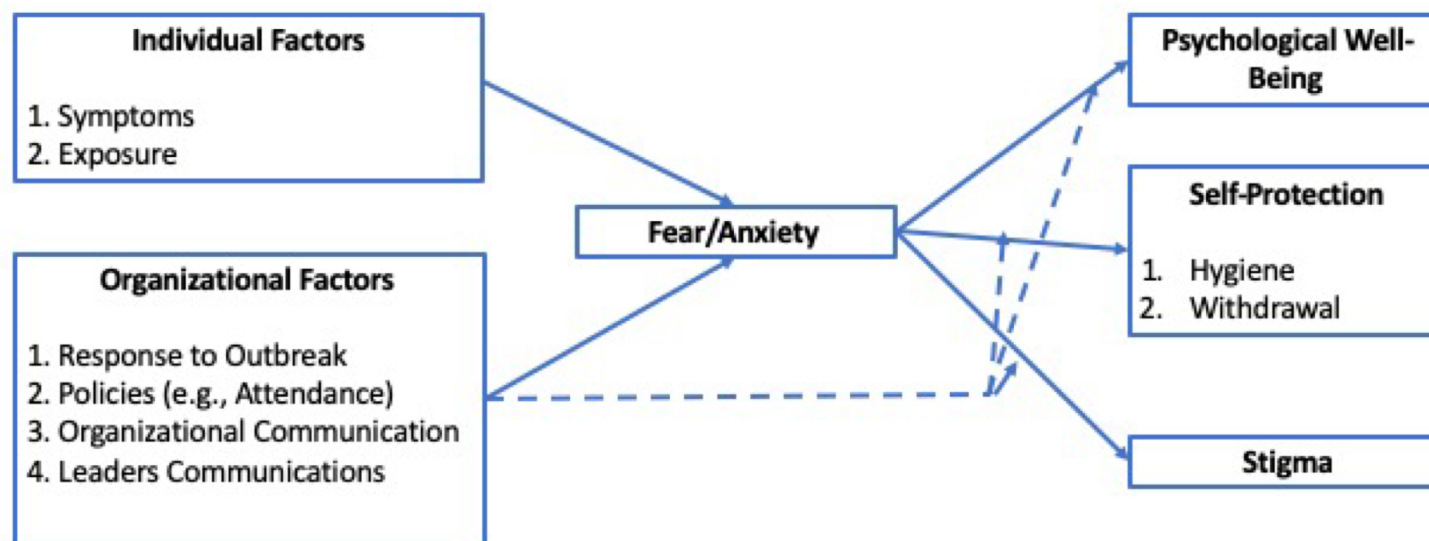
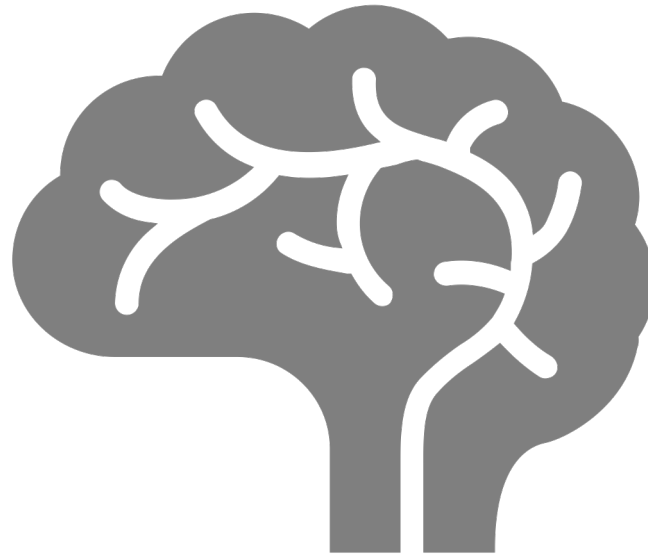


Figure 1: Proposed Model

Notes: Dashed lines indicate moderated effects.

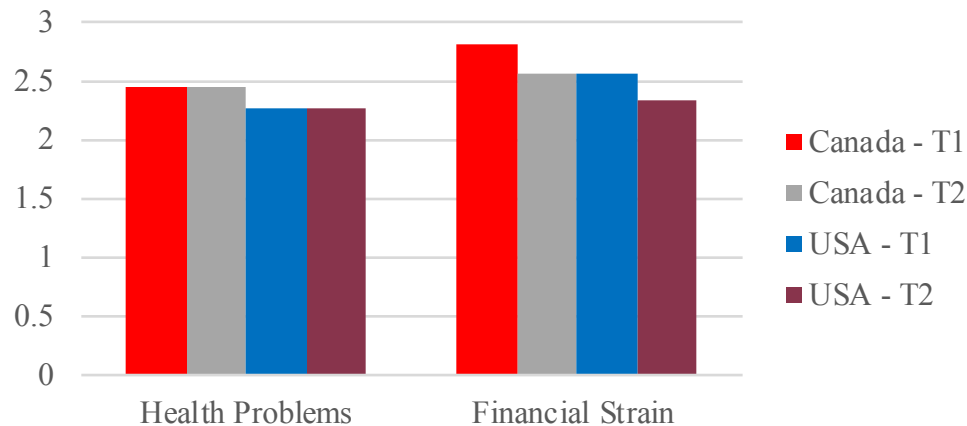


**Is the pandemic a traumatic stressor? If so,
for who?**

Study #1: Organizational Response

	TIME 1 (N=2057)		TIME 2 (N=1368)	
Country	Canada	US	Canada	US
	1252 (60.9%)	805 (39.1%)	793 (58%)	575 (42%)
AGE	50.31 years	49.95 years	→	
SEX	48.4% female	53.9% female	→	
Full time	87%	80.6%	→	
Tenure	12 years	11.59 years	→	

Generally low levels of chronic stress



Overall health = poorer in Canada
Financial strain = higher in Canada



Financial strain declines in both the U.S. and Canada
Overall health remains stable over time

The pandemic as a traumatic stressor: PTSD

- PTSD— assessed with a six-item checklist designed to screen for PTSD in the general population
- Prevalence of PTSD varies widely by occupation and exposure



2-4% of general
population



8-32% prevalence rate
among first responders

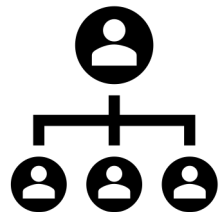
PTSD Prevalence

	Canada	U.S.
Mean Score	12.14	10.62
Prevalence Estimate	29.4%	20.9%

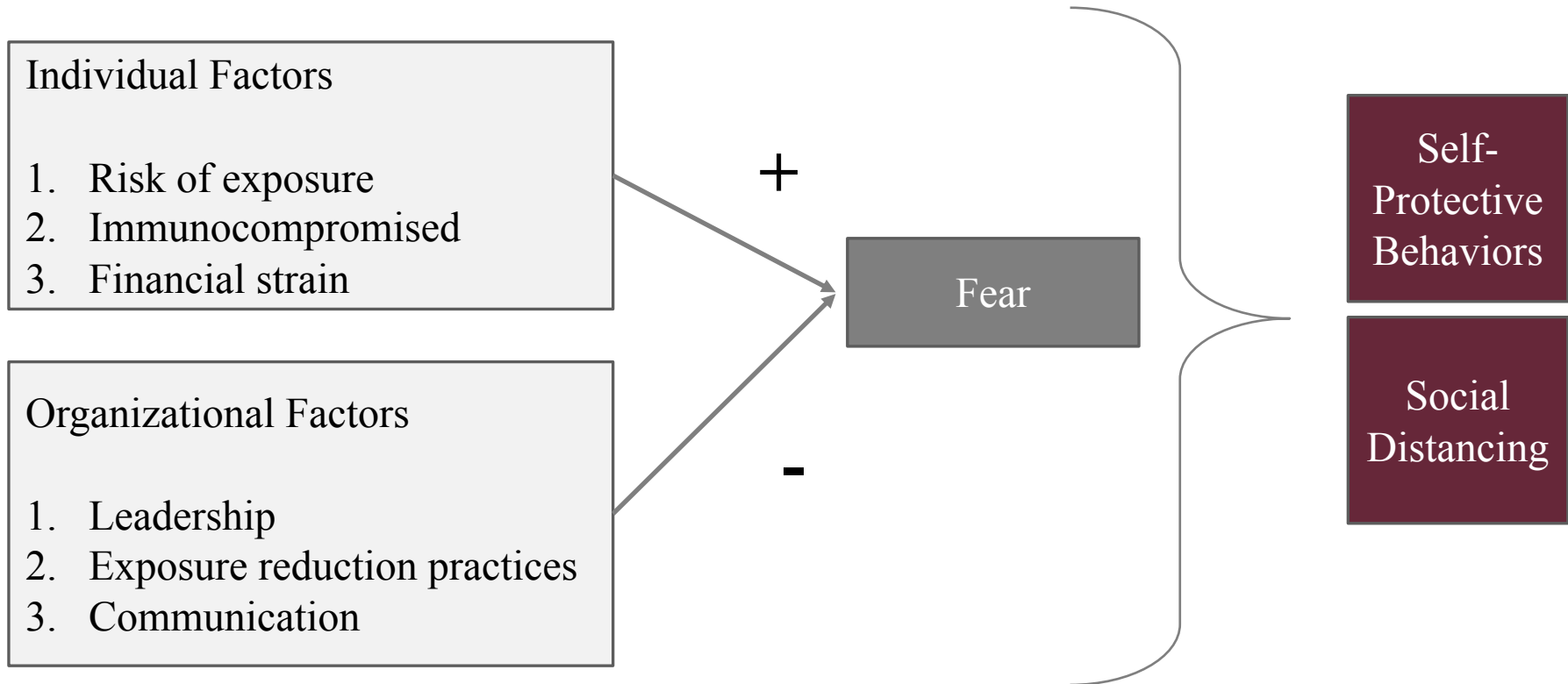
- PTSD scores very high – prevalence comparable to front-line responders.
- PTSD is higher among Canadians
- Similar findings in an independent sample of retail employees (high prevalence, higher in Canada)

Correlates and Predictors of PTSD

CANADA	U.S.
PASSIVE LEADERSHIP +	PASSIVE LEADERSHIP +
RESILIENCE -	RESILIENCE -
FEAR OF INFECTION +	SUPERVISOR SUPPORT -
FINANCIAL STRAIN +	FINANCIAL STRAIN +
GENERAL HEALTH -	GENERAL HEALTH -



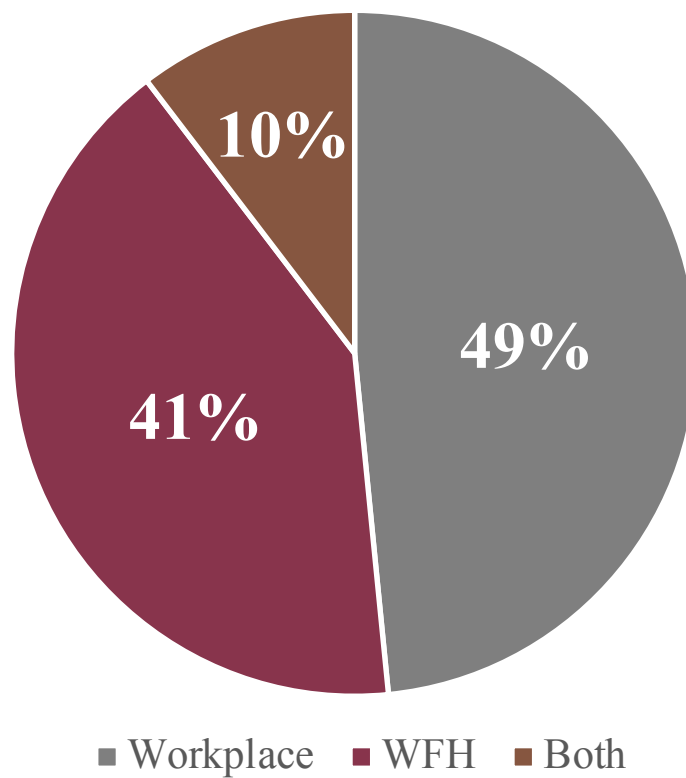
Individual & Organizational Contributors



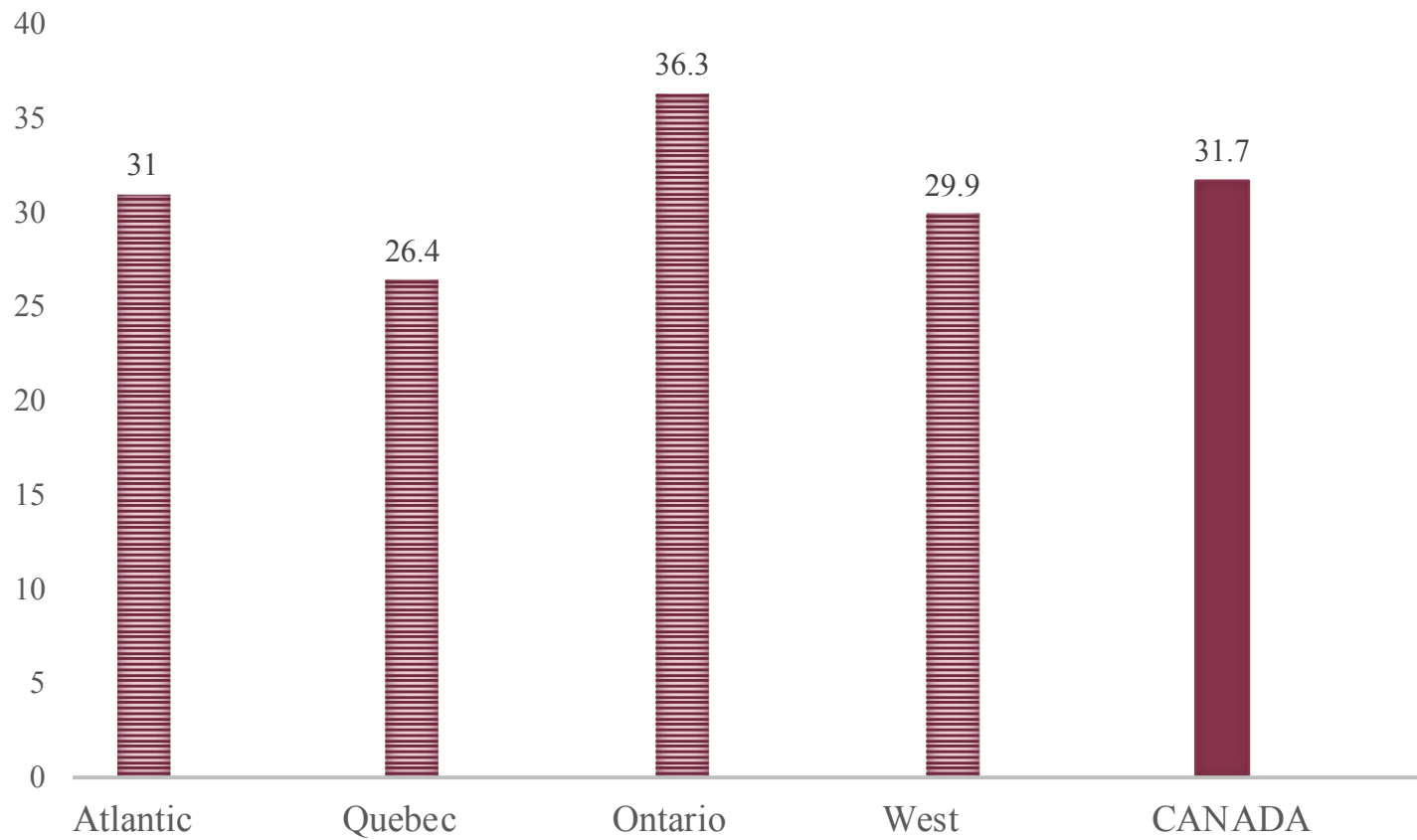
Study #3: Health and PTSD

- 1400 working Canadians complete a telephone survey
- Weighted by labor force composition
- To maintain adequate sample size, collapsed into Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, West
- Include a screen for PTSD, based on findings from Study #1

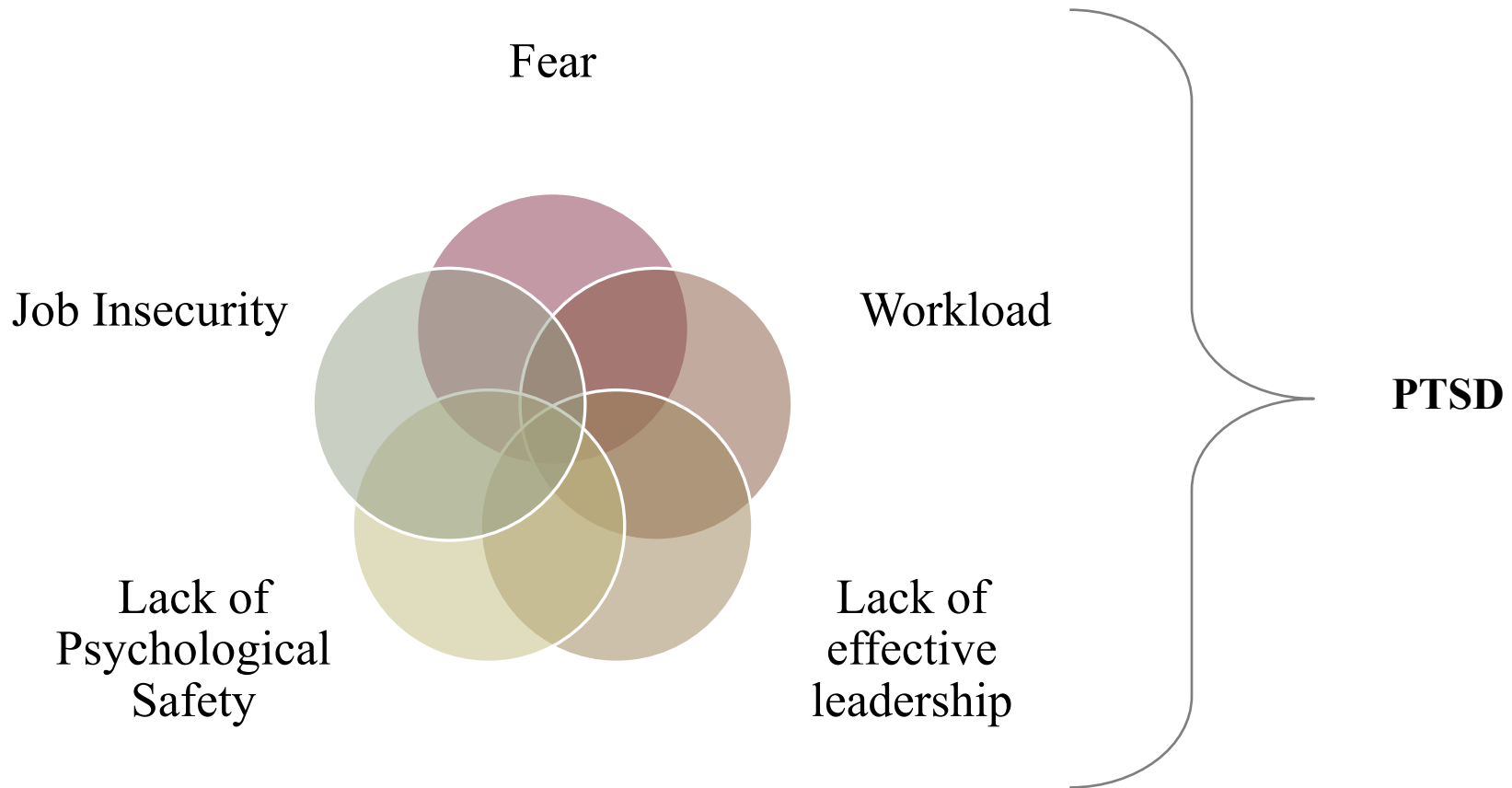
Where are they working?



% with Minimum PTSD Cutoff



What contributes to PTSD?



Major Individual-Level Findings



Family Situation



Competing
Responsibilities

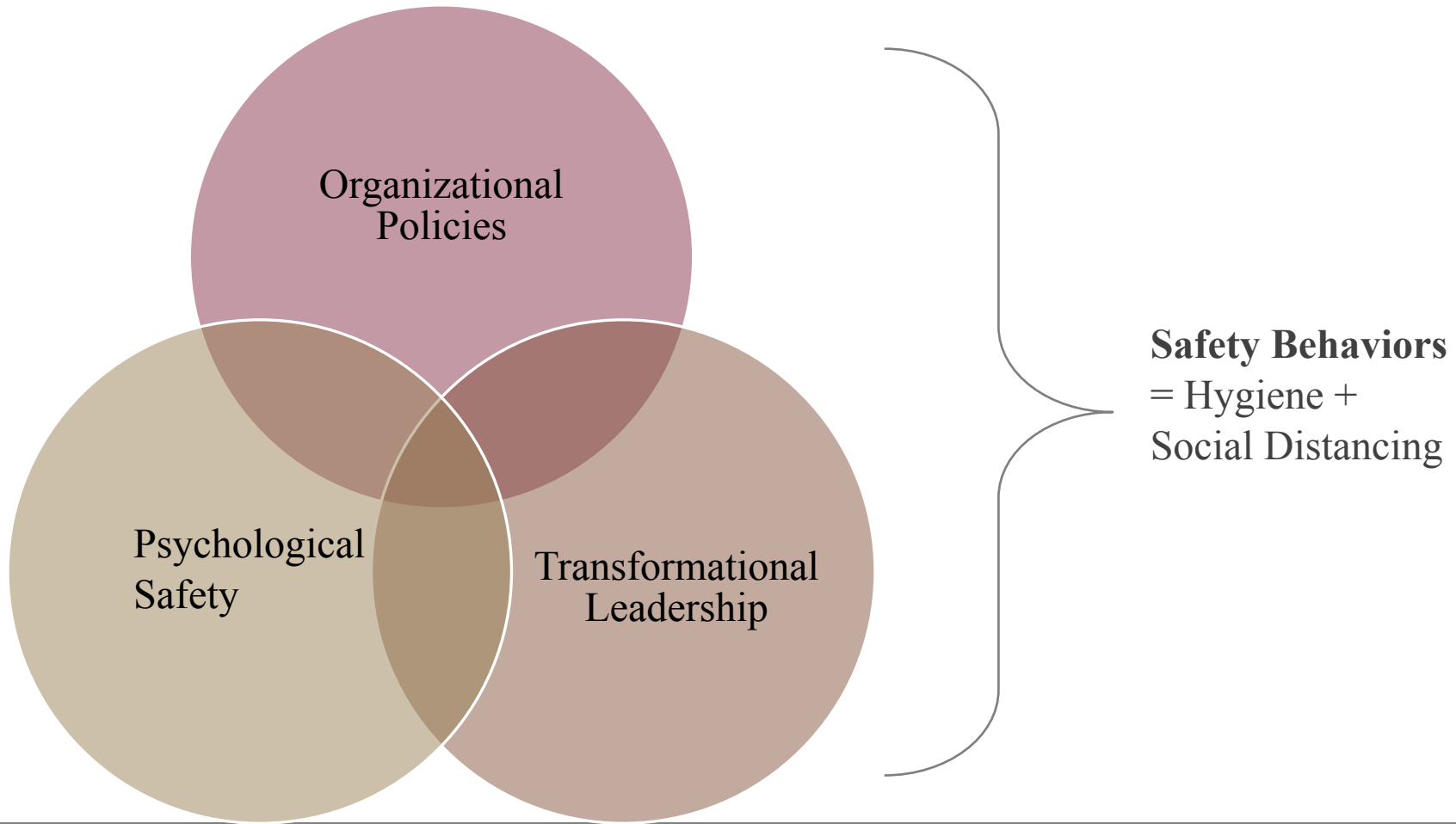


Personality



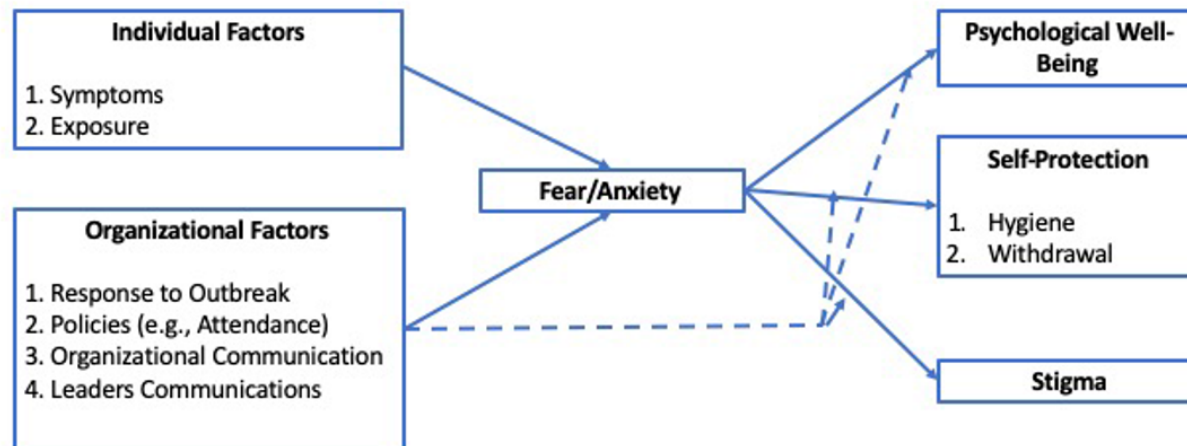
Work-from-Home
Environment

What predicts Safety Behaviors?



Discussion

- Our model is based on the idea that the pandemic can be viewed as a traumatic stressor
- Data are generally supportive –with fear being an important predictor of individual response
- Organizational actions and leadership are a strong influence on fear and, as a result, individual response



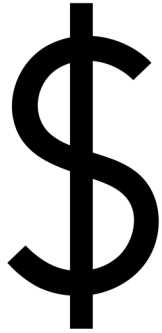
Implications

Employees are stressed and traumatized

- Still quite high levels of fear
- Very high levels of PTSD (may reflect anxiety)

Importance of organizational response

- Maintaining public health standards
- Importance of individual leadership and leadership support



We're all in the same storm – but in very different boats

EMERGENCE OF DIFFERENT
OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS
WITH DIFFERENT
STRESSORS

Thank you!

For more information about the research studies or about opportunities to participate in this research, please contact Dimoff@telfer.uottawa.ca or visit www.ohpdata.com