

# The Social Ecology of Resilience: The Many Ways Families and Communities Nurture a Child's Wellbeing

**Michael Ungar, Ph.D.**

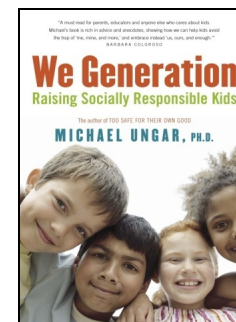
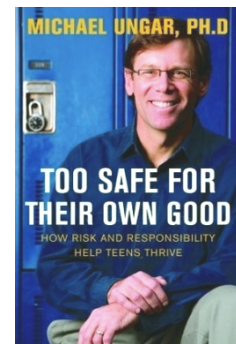
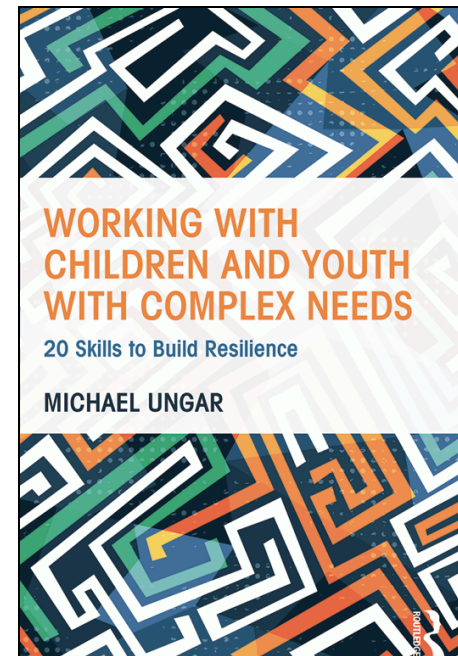
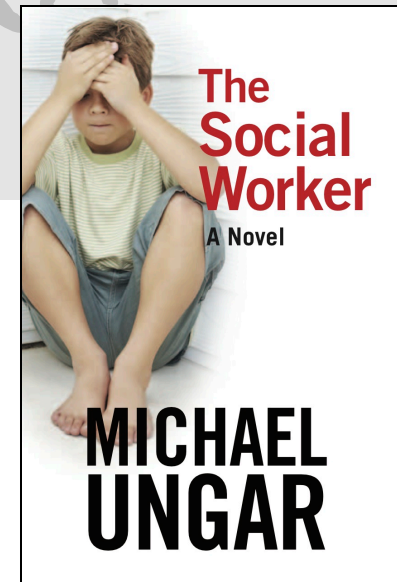
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# *Adverse Childhood Experiences vs. Benevolent Childhood Experiences*

## 🌟 ACE (Anda et al., 2006)

- ❑ Verbal abuse
- ❑ Physical abuse
- ❑ Sexual abuse
- ❑ Emotional abuse
- ❑ Neglect
- ❑ Witnessing IPV
- ❑ Divorce or separation
- ❑ A caregiver w/mental illness
- ❑ A caregiver w/addiction
- ❑ A caregiver who was incarcerated.

## 🌟 BCE (Narayan et al., 2017)

- ❑ Felt safe with a caregiver
- ❑ One good friend
- ❑ Beliefs that gave comfort
- ❑ Liked school
- ❑ A teacher who cared
- ❑ Good neighbors
- ❑ Adult who gave support (other than caregiver)
- ❑ Opportunities for good times
- ❑ Comfortable with self
- ❑ Home routines



# *Diagnostic Criteria for Resilience*

(Ungar, 2015)

- ✪ Domain 1: Assess adversity
  - ✪ Severity
  - ✪ Chronicity
  - ✪ Ecological level
  - ✪ Attributions of causality
  - ✪ Cultural and contextual relevance



# *Diagnostic Criteria for Resilience*

## ✿ Domain 2: Assess resilience

- ✿ In **low risk** contexts, assess individual qualities—temperament, personality, cognitions
- ✿ In **high risk** contexts, assess *both* individual qualities and...
  - Availability of resources
  - Accessibility of resources
  - Strategic use of resources
  - Positive reinforcement of coping strategies
  - Adaptive capacity of the environment



# *Diagnostic Criteria for Resilience*

- ✚ Domain 3: Multidimensional considerations
  - ▣ Temporal
    - Sociohistorical
    - Developmental
  - ▣ Cultural



## *Resilience is...*

- ✦ In the context of exposure to significant adversity
- ✦ resilience is the capacity of individuals and groups to *navigate* their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing, and...
- ✦ their capacity to *negotiate* for these resources to be provided...
- ✦ in culturally meaningful ways.

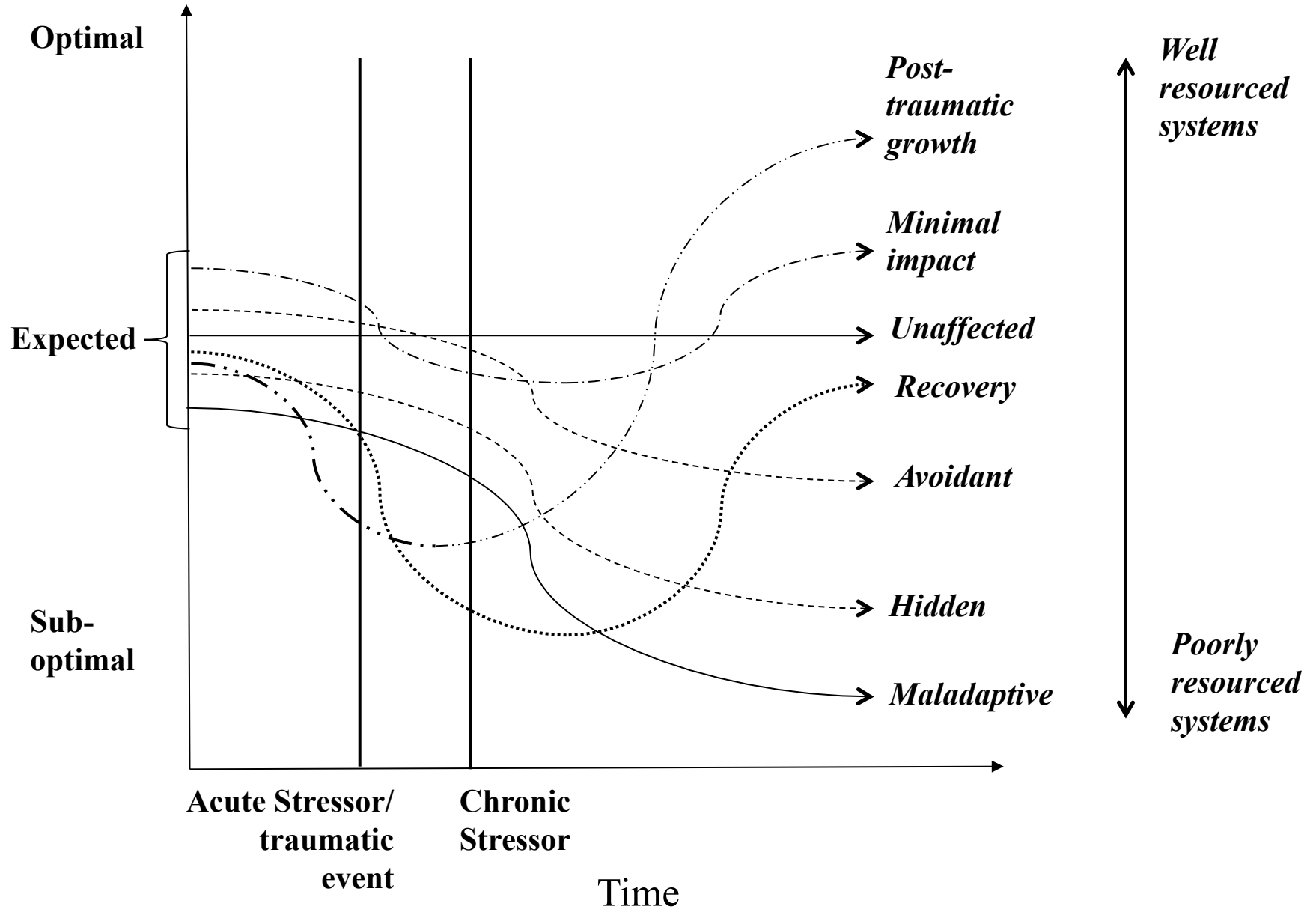


# *Nine Things All Children Need*

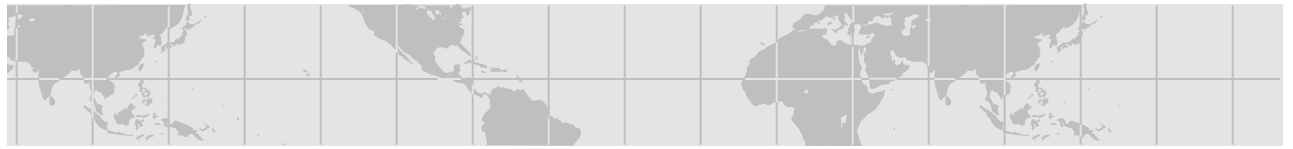
1. Structure
2. Consequences
3. Parent-child connections
4. Lots and lots of strong relationships
5. A powerful identity
6. A sense of control
7. A sense of belonging/culture/spirituality/life purpose
8. Rights and responsibilities
9. Safety and support

Level of Functioning

Resource Availability/  
Accessibility



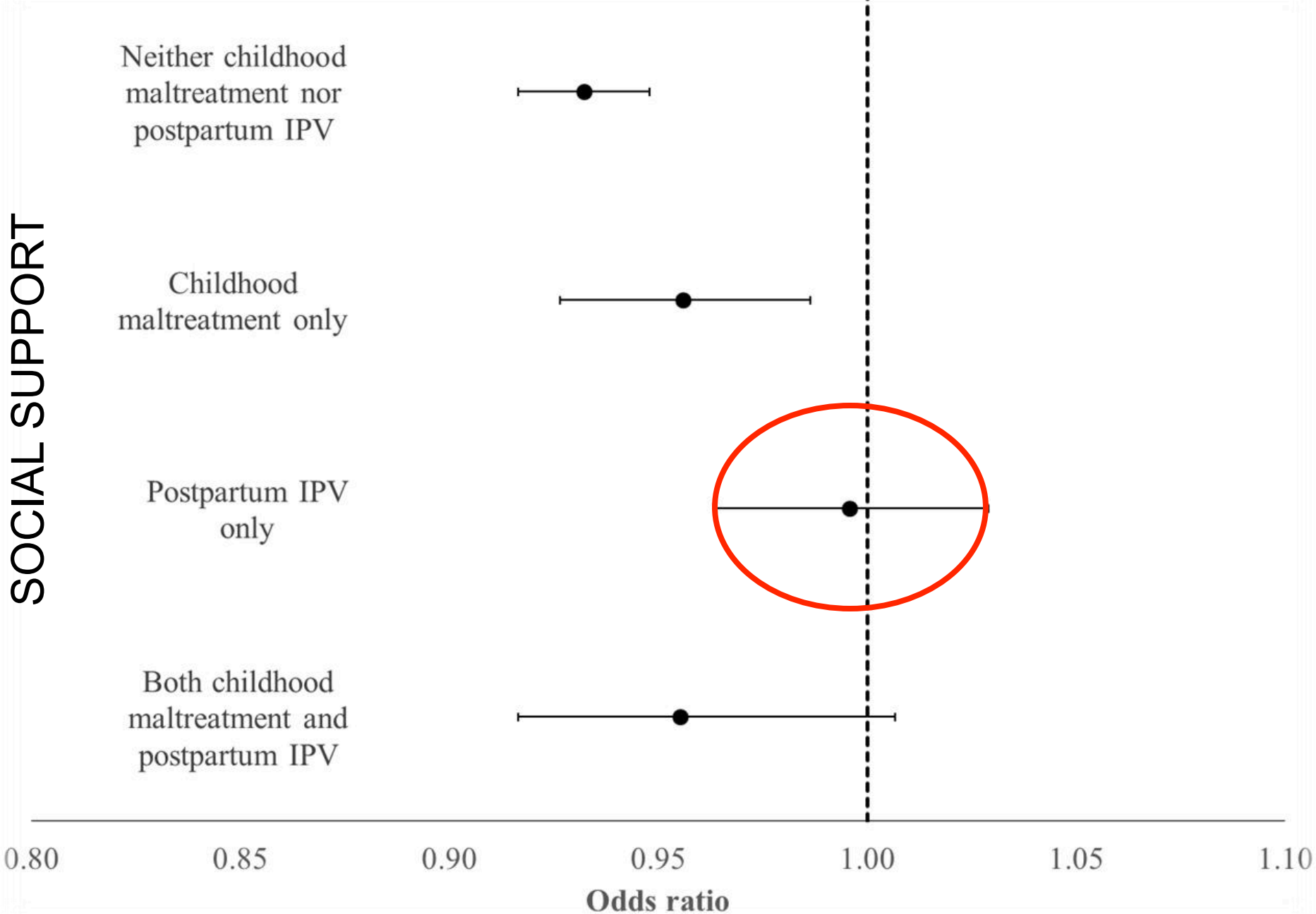




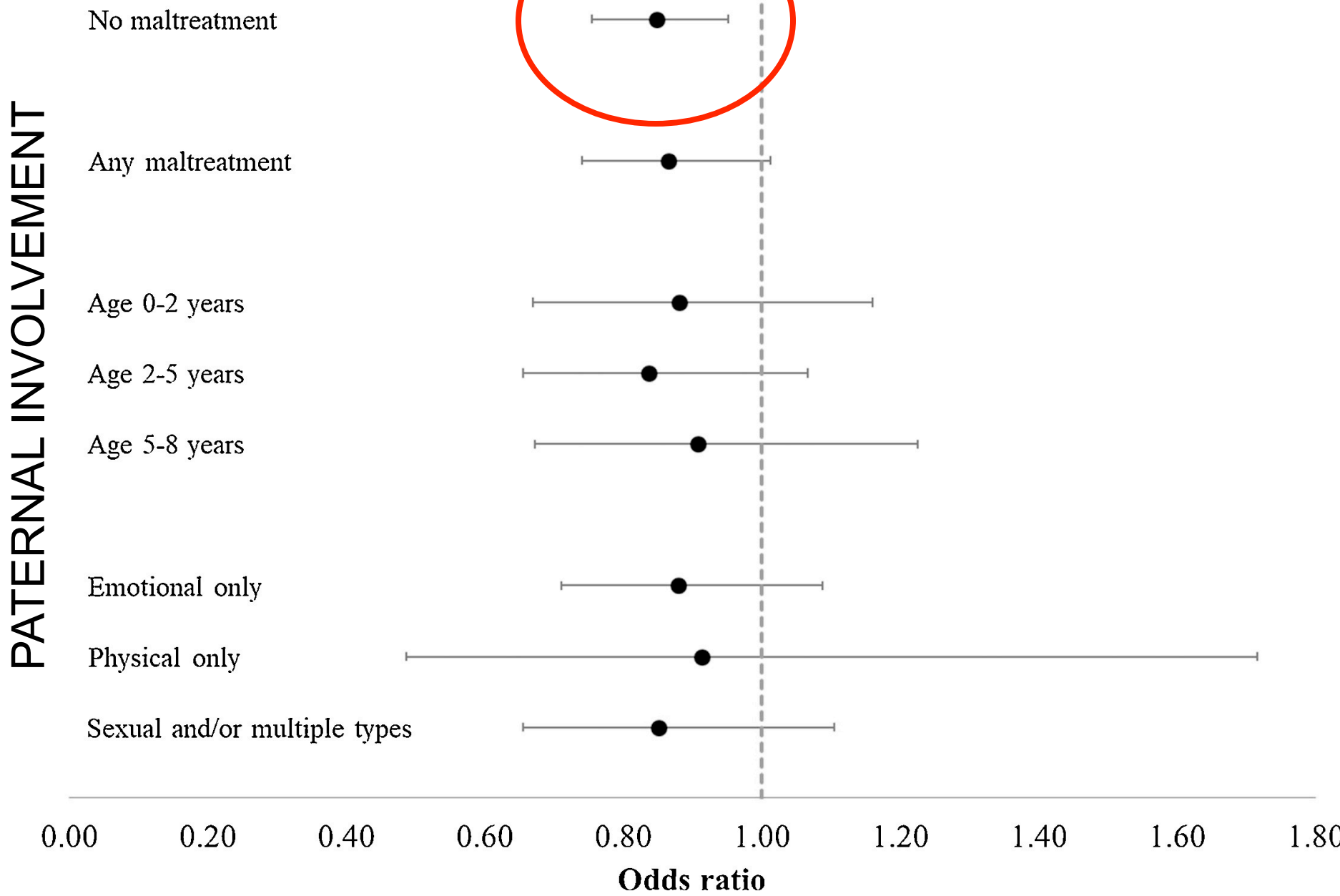
# *Differential Impact*

- ✚ The more stressful our homes, schools, and communities, the more the nine resilience resources matter

Adjusted odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals for the association between maternal social support and offspring maltreatment at ages 0-8 years, by mother's history of maltreatment and intimate partner violence (n = 11,384): Ajdukovic, M. (in press). Individual and Contextual Factors for the Child Abuse Potential among Croatian Mothers: The Role of Social Support in Times of Economic Hardship. *Child Abuse & Neglect*

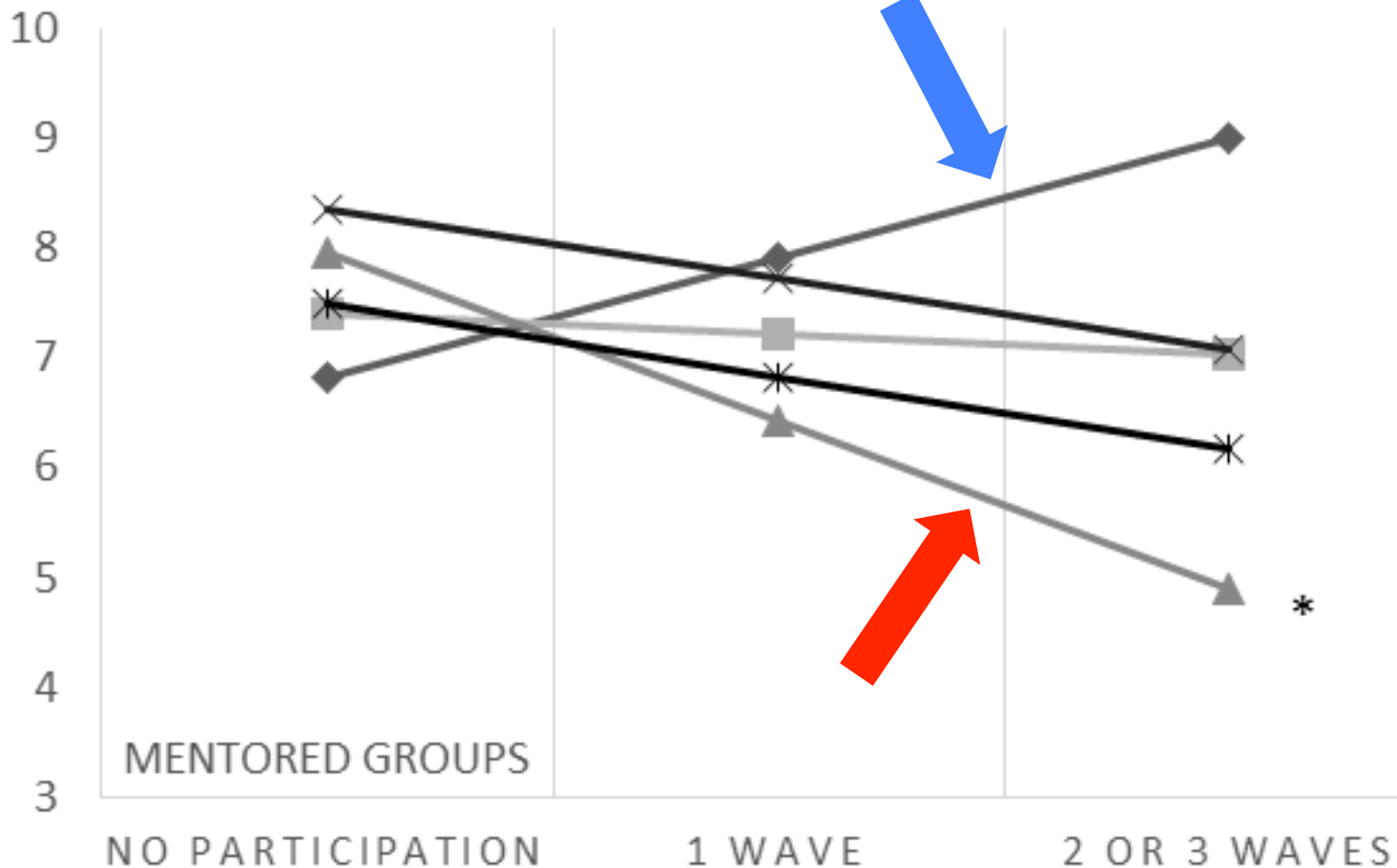


Adjusted odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals for the association between paternal involvement at age 10 years and offspring physical violence perpetration at ages 18-20 years, by offspring maltreatment at ages 0-8 years, including maltreatment timing, perpetrator, and type. Trace,y, M. et al. (in press). The mitigating effects of maternal social support and paternal involvement on the intergenerational transmission of violence, *Child Abuse & Neglect*.



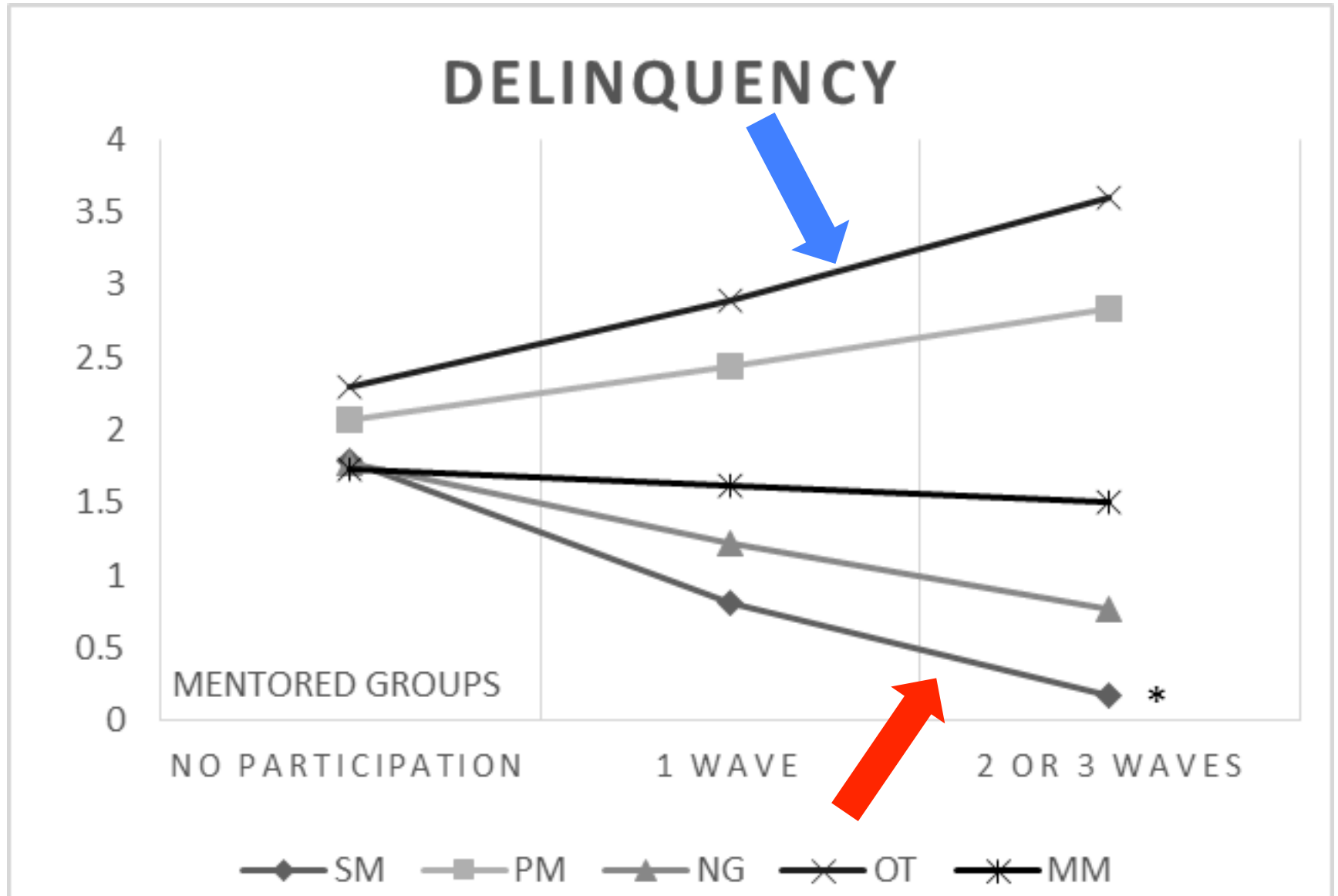
Delinquency scores, depressive symptoms, and traumatic symptoms by the number of waves of reported participation in organized activities and the CPS maltreatment record at baseline. SM: Sexual maltreatment only; PM: Physical maltreatment only; NG: Neglect only; OT: Other type of maltreatment; MM: Multiple types of maltreatment. Kwak, Y. (in press). Differential Impacts of Participation in Organized Activities and Maltreatment Types on Adolescent Academic and Socioemotional Development. *Child Abuse & Neglect*.

## DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS



—◆— SM —■— PM —▲— NG —×— OT —\*— MM

Delinquency scores, depressive symptoms, and traumatic symptoms by the number of waves of reported participation in organized activities and the CPS maltreatment record at baseline. SM: Sexual maltreatment only; PM: Physical maltreatment only; NG: Neglect only; OT: Other type of maltreatment; MM: Multiple types of maltreatment. Kwak, Y. (in press). Differential Impacts of Participation in Organized Activities and Maltreatment Types on Adolescent Academic and Socioemotional Development. *Child Abuse & Neglect*.

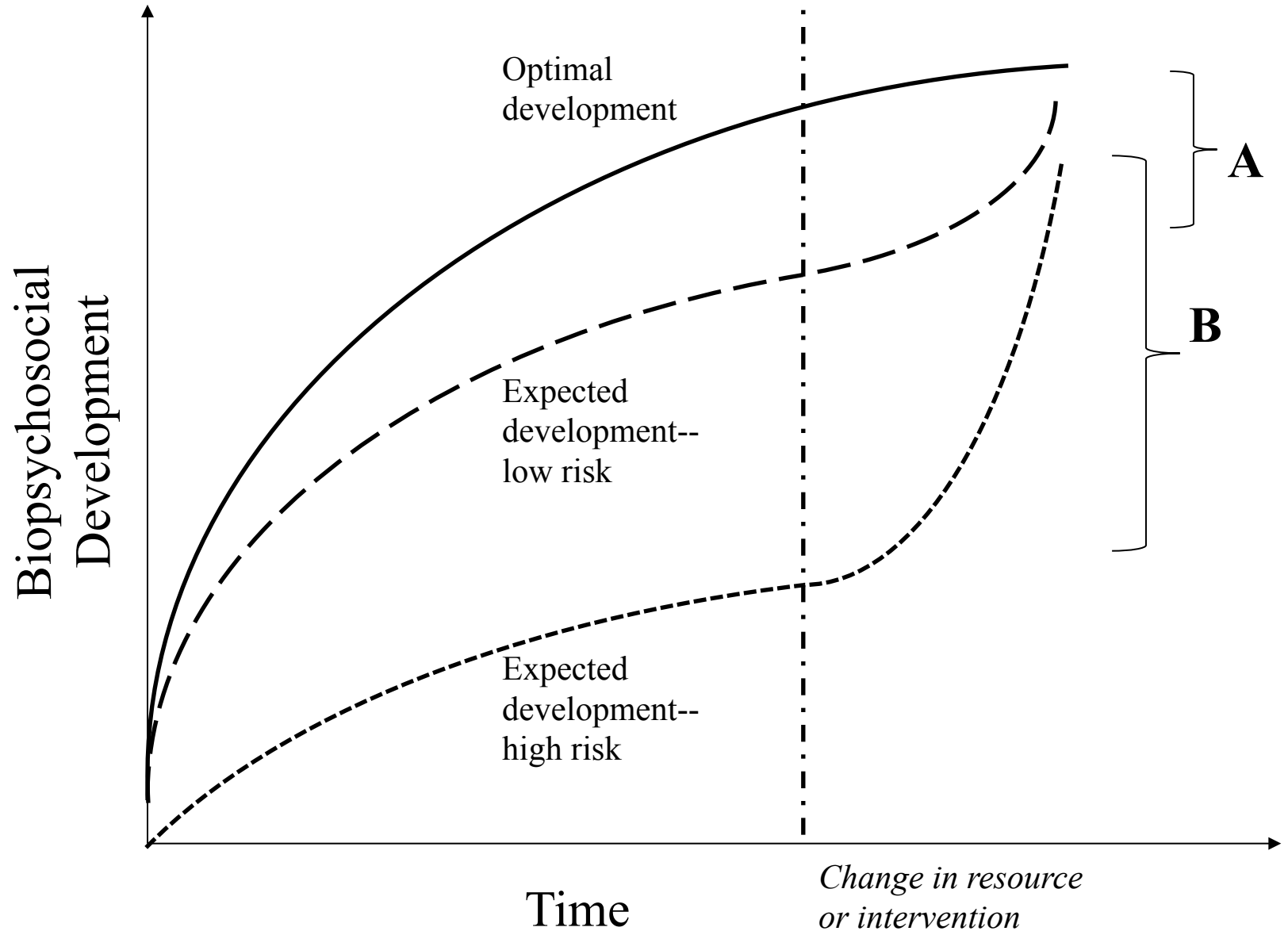


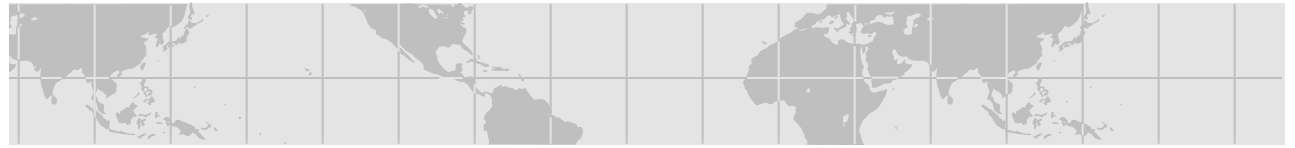


# *Which factors/processes matter the most?*

- ✚ The better question is:
  - ✚ Which protective factors/processes count most in which context?
  - ✚ At what level of risk exposure?
  - ✚ To people from which culture?

# Differential Impact of Protective and Promotive Factors and Processes (PPFP)—Model 1





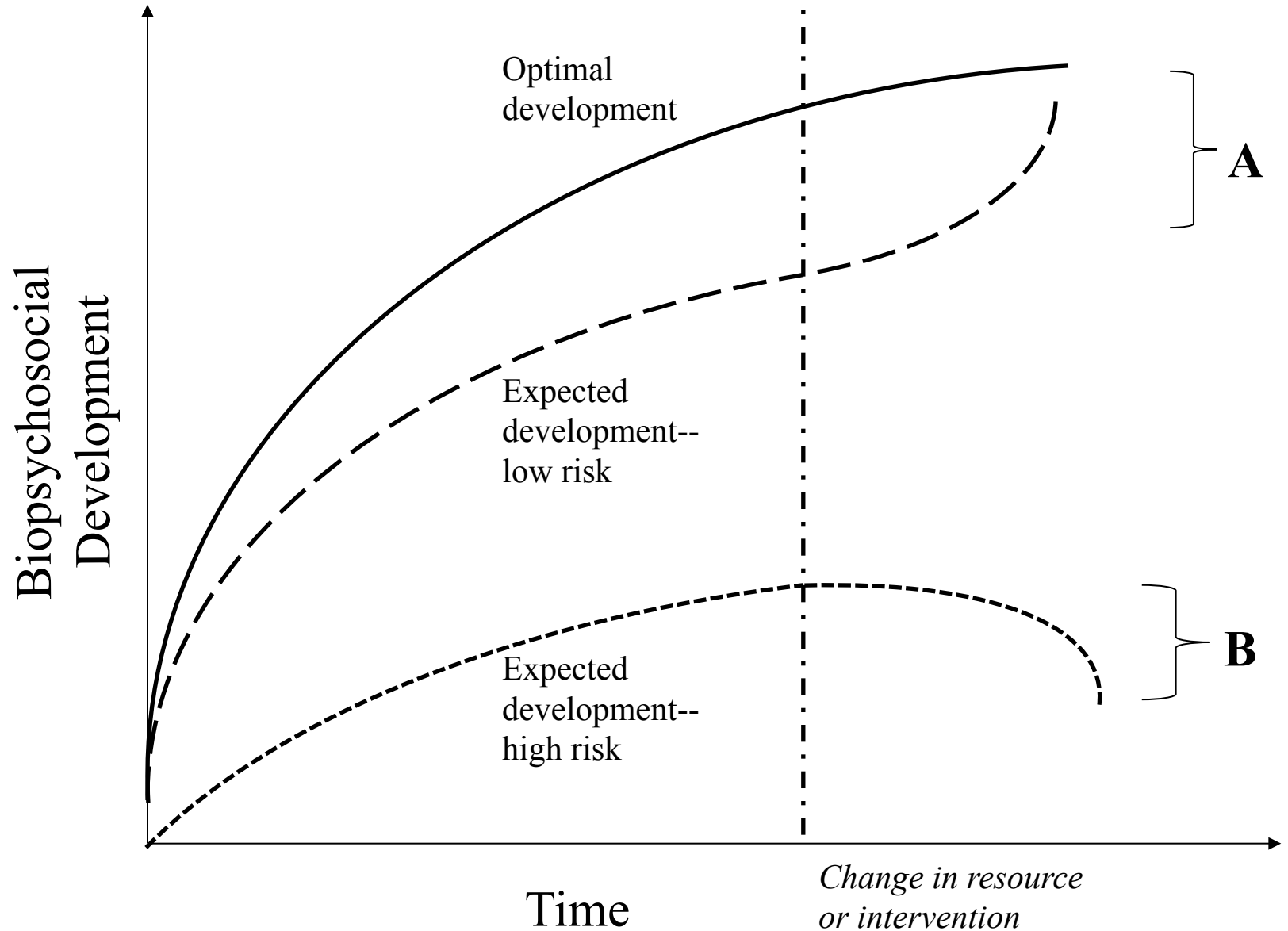
## *Model 1:*

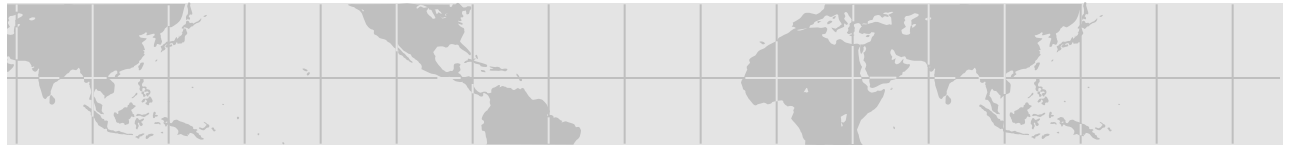
### *Pathway A vs. Pathway B*

- ✪ An intervention is likely to have the greatest impact on those young people at the greatest risk.
  - ▣ Help lines help the most vulnerable
  - ▣ In-home supports help the most isolated



# Differential Impact of Protective and Promotive Factors and Processes (PPFP)—Model 2



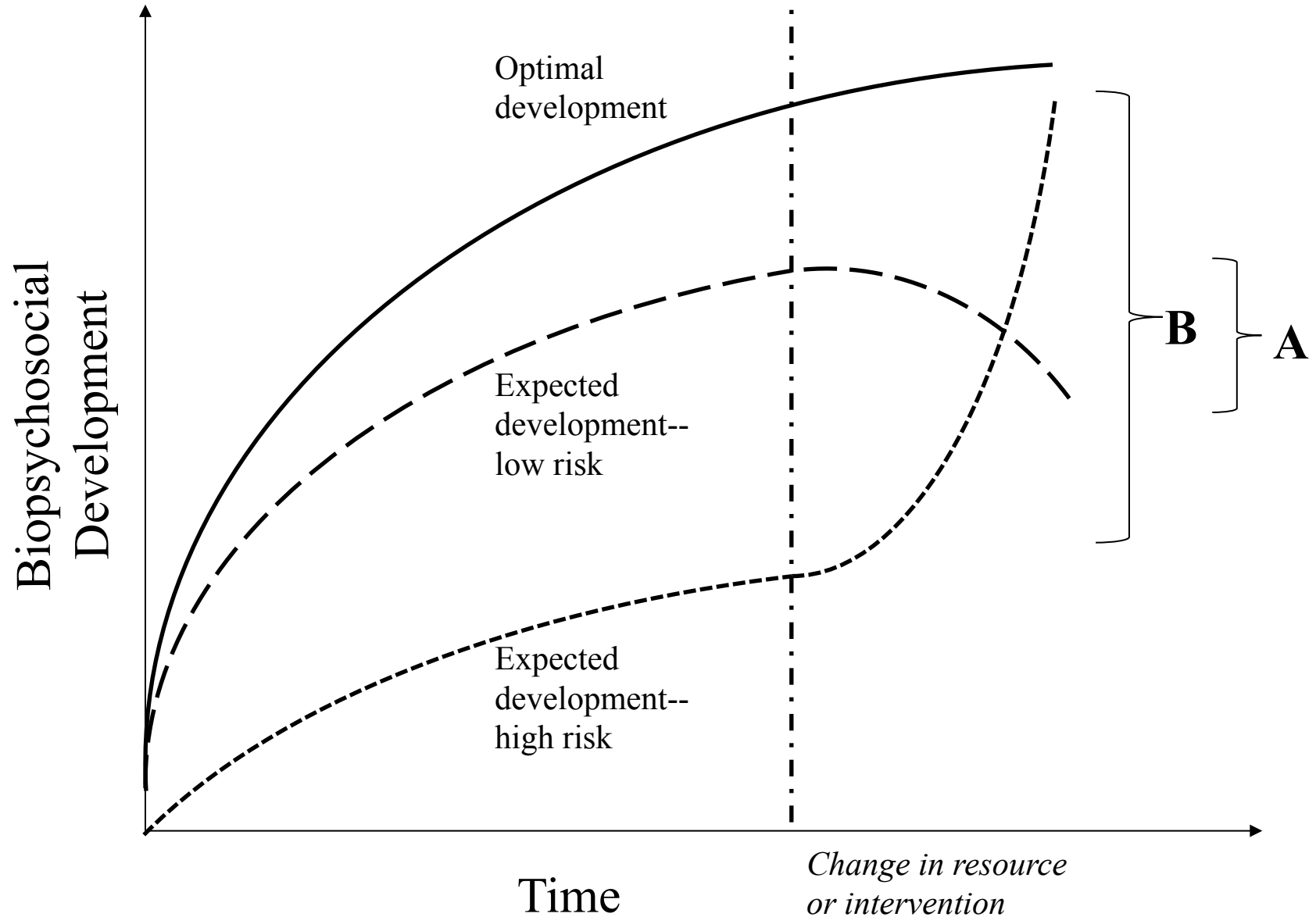


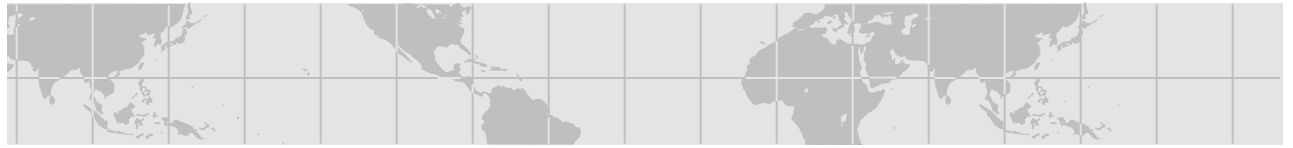
## *Model 2:*

### *Pathway A vs. Pathway B*

- ✪ An intervention may help young people at less risk, but harm those with more problems.
  - ❑ Pain killers can become addictive
  - ❑ Encouragement to return to school (if student is still experiencing anxiety, PTSD or other symptoms)

# Differential Impact of Protective and Promotive Factors and Processes (PPFP)—Model 3

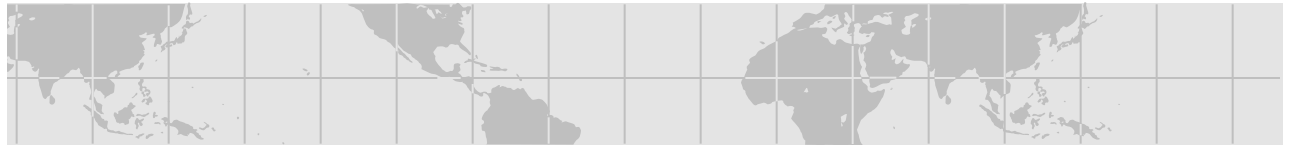




## *Model 3:*

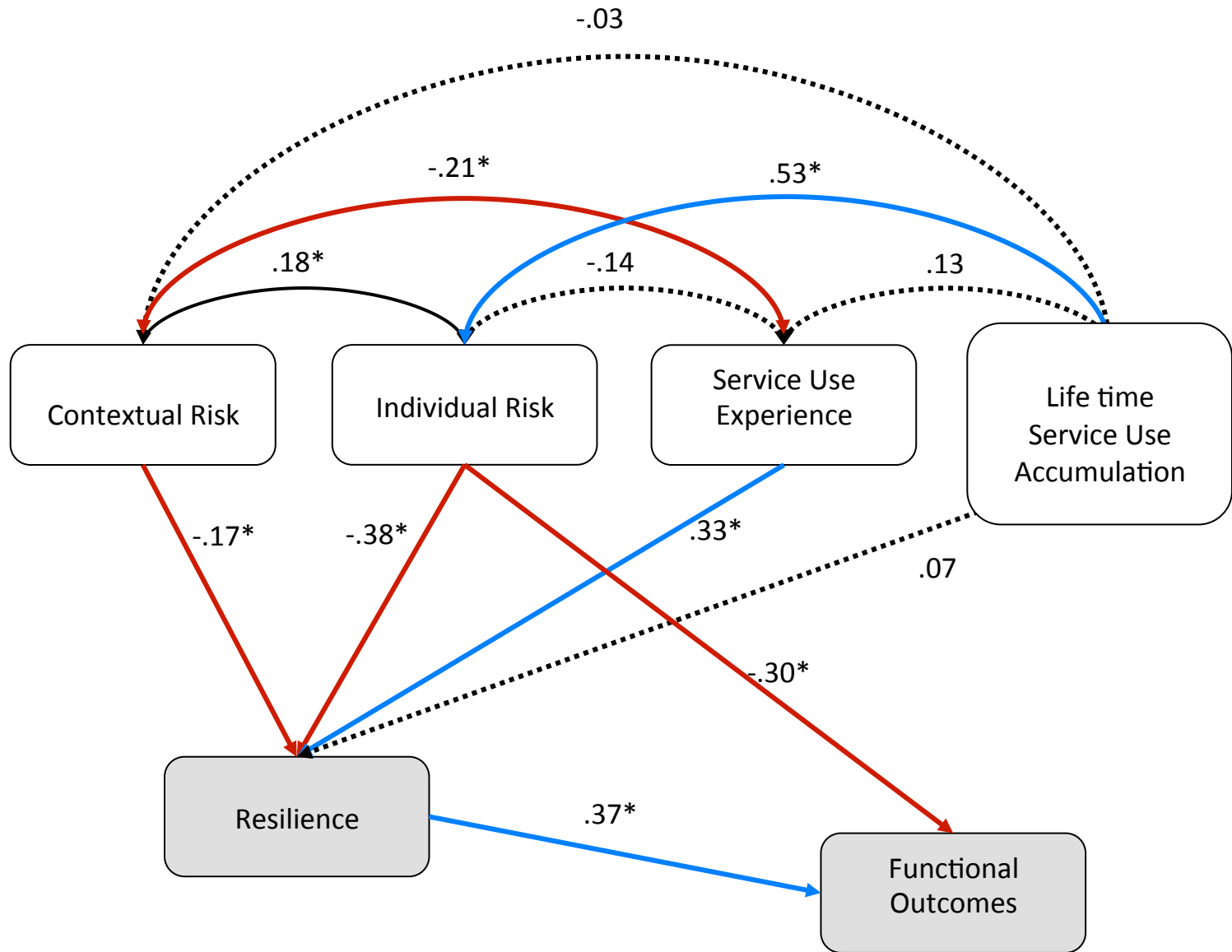
### *Pathway A vs. Pathway B*

- ✚ An intervention may benefit young people at higher levels of risk, but harm those with fewer problems.
  - ⊞ Foster placement for children who do not perceive themselves to be at risk
  - ⊞ Parentification



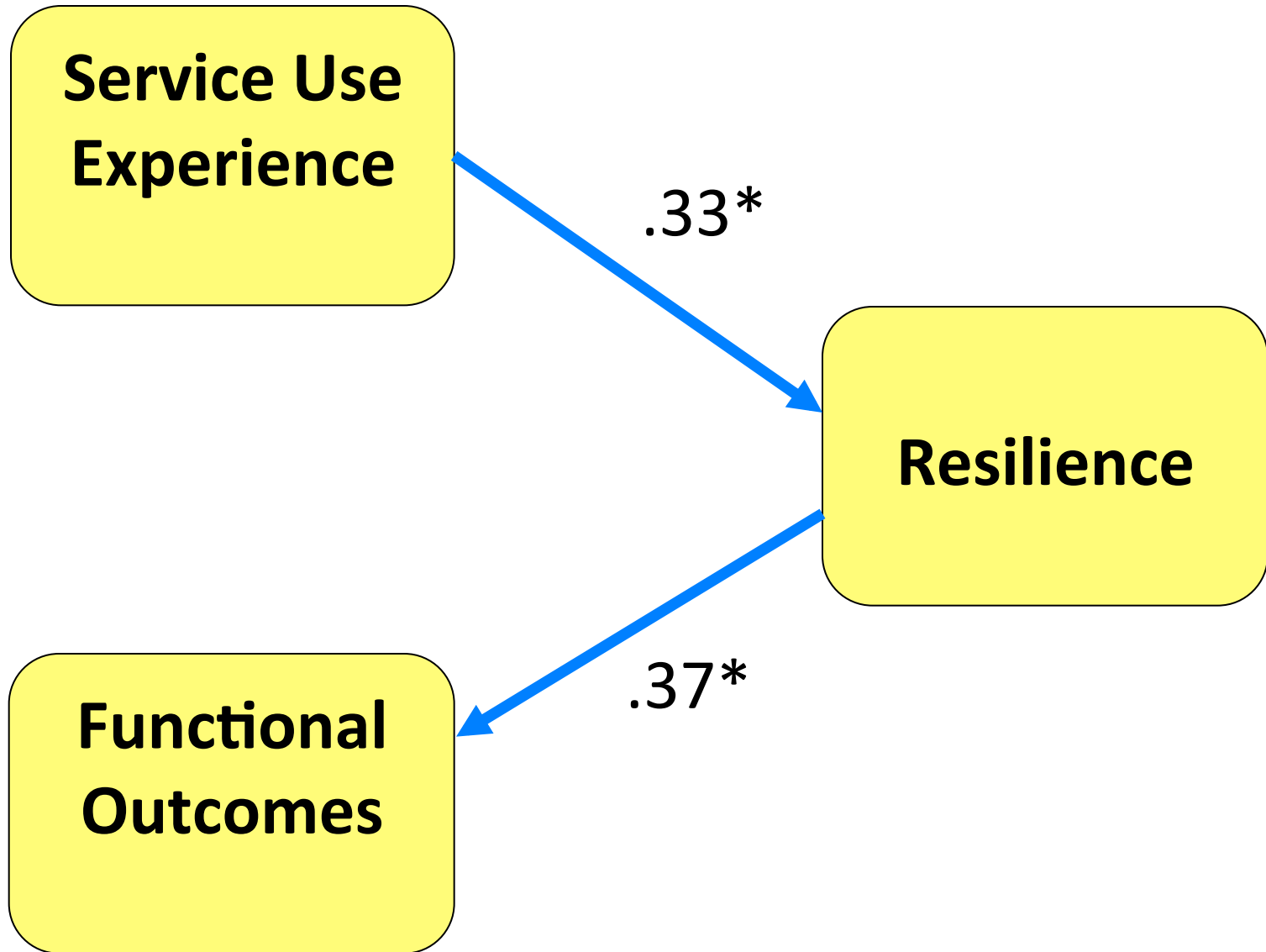
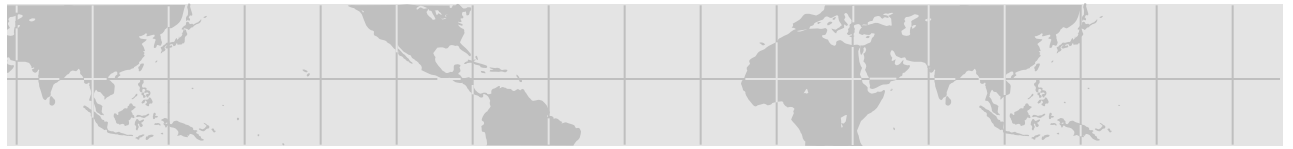
# *Services and Supports*

How can services and supports help make children resilient?



N= 497

Ungar, M., Liebenberg, L., Armstrong, M., Dudding, P., & van de Vijver, F. J. R. (2012). Patterns of service use, individual and contextual risk factors, and resilience among adolescents using multiple psychosocial services. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(2-3), 150-159

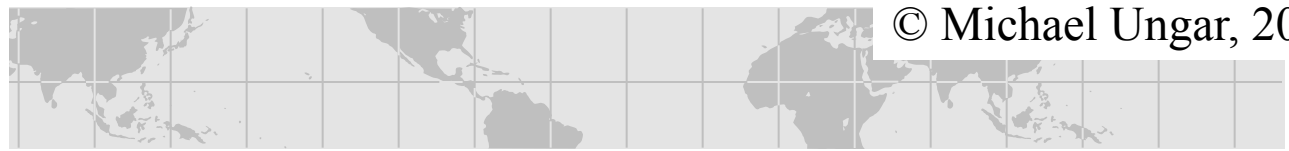




## *Caregiver Resilience*

- ✪ Adults, too, who experience high levels of adversity cope better when they are given the resources to:
  - ▣ Navigate effectively
  - ▣ Negotiate effectively
  - ▣ Access resources that are culturally and contextually meaningful





# *A Dozen Resilience Resources*

1. Structure/routines
2. Consequences/accountability
3. Intimate and sustaining love from others
4. Lots and lots of supportive relationships
5. A powerful identity
6. A sense of control
7. A sense of belonging/culture/spirituality/life purpose
8. Rights and responsibilities
9. Our basic needs are met
- 10. Positive thinking**
- 11. Physical wellbeing**
- 12. Financial wellbeing**



Resilience  
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*Thank you!*

