

Symposium

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies 28th Annual Meeting

Complex Effects of Cumulative Interpersonal Trauma: Pathways and Integrative Models

1- Cumulative Trauma, Internalized Symptoms, Externalized Symptoms, and Intimate Relationships: Is Attachment a Moderator?
(Godbout, Lussier, Vaillancourt-Morel)

2- Attachment as a Mediator Between Cumulative Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms
(Runtz, Godbout, Mirotchnick)

3- The Role of Self-Disturbance in the Link Between Interpersonal Trauma and Physical Health Outcomes
(Eadie, Runtz, Rosen)

4- Complex Trauma and Recent Suicide Attempts: Results From the TSI-2 Standardization Study
(Briere, Eadie)



Cumulative Trauma, Internalized Symptoms, Externalized Symptoms, and Intimate Relationships: Is Attachment a Moderator?

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UQÀM



International Society
for Traumatic Stress Studies

**ISTSS 28th
Annual Meeting**

Beyond Boundaries:
Innovations to Expand Services and
Tailor Traumatic Stress Treatments

November 1 – 3, 2012

Pre-Meeting Institutes, October 31, 2012

JW Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. Live • Los Angeles, CA USA



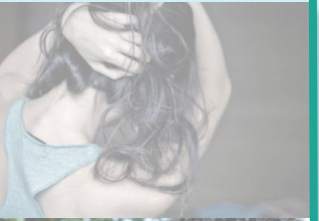
Continuing Medical Education Commercial Disclosure Requirement

I, Natacha Godbout, have no commercial relationships to disclose.

Introduction:

interpersonal childhood trauma and intimate relationships

- Childhood interpersonal trauma and long lasting impacts on dyadic adjustment in intimate relationships
- Cumulative trauma (CT), internalized and externalized symptoms
 - Depression, anxiety, PTSD, dissociation (Briere & Elliot, 2003)
 - IPV, Rage, Anger, Tension Reduction behaviors (Briere et al., 2010; Godbout et al, 2006, 2007, 2009)
- But many survivors also form seemingly stable and satisfying couple relationships as adults (Colman & Spatz Widom, 2004).
- We need an integrative framework for gaining a better understanding of the association between CT and couple adjustment
 - Role of attachment (Alexander, 1992; Godbout et al., 2006, 2009; Roche, Runtz & Hunter, 1999)



Goal

This study examines whether survivors of cumulative interpersonal trauma who report negative models of self and others (insecure attachment) are at higher risk of acute symptoms, in a model where trauma-related symptoms predict dyadic adjustment.



Method

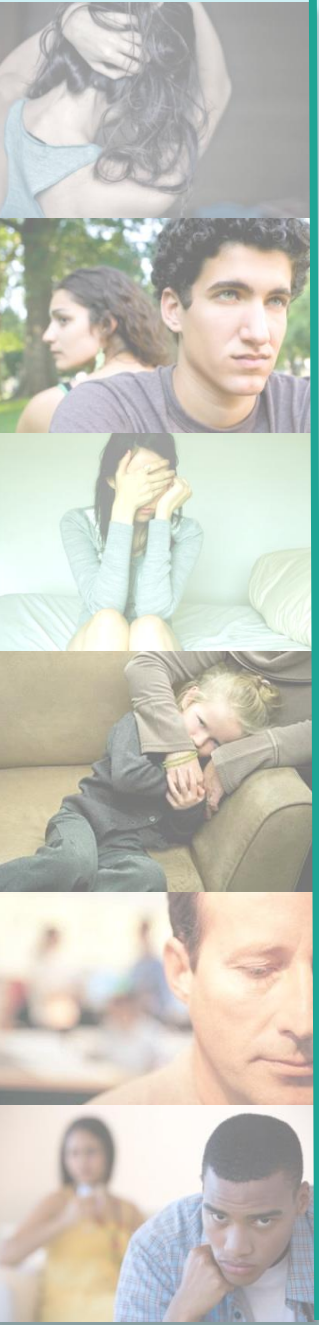
Participants

- 1345 French-Canadians in a dating relationship
- 72% girls
- Aged 13-26 (M = 18.08, SD = 1.45)

Measures of interpersonal trauma

6 questions : childhood sexual abuse, physical or psychological parental violence, witnessing physical or psychological parental violence, death of a parent

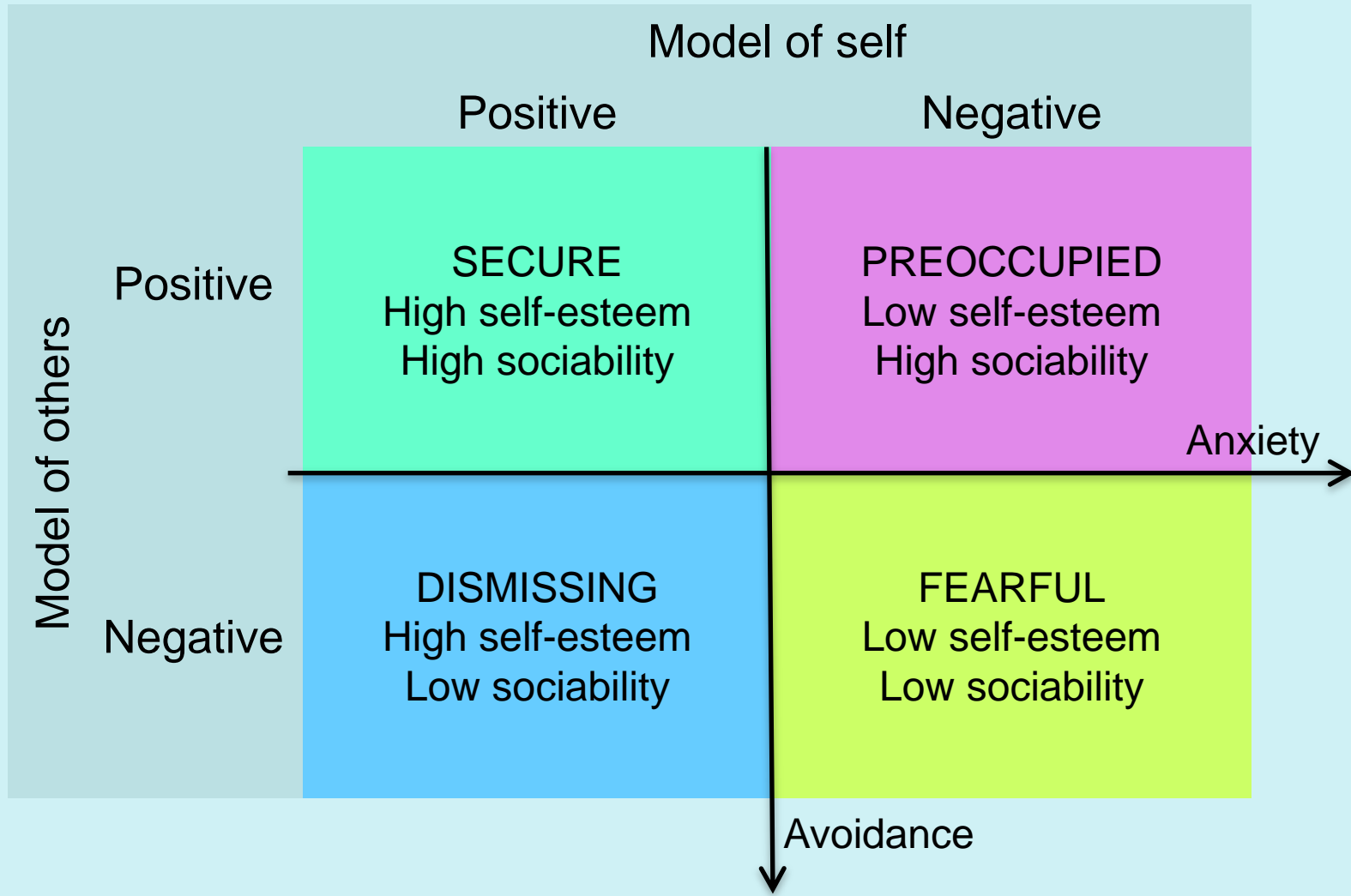




Measure of attachment:

Experiences in Close Relationships

(ECR; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Lafontaine & Lussier, 2003)



Method

- Internalized symptoms
 1. Psychological distress : Psychiatric Symptom Index (PSI; Ilfeld, 1978; Santé Québec, 1995)
 2. Neuroticism : NEO-FFI (NEO; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Sabourin & Lussier, 1992)
- Externalized symptoms
 1. Dating violence : Conflict Tactics Scales 2 (CTS; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996; Lussier, 1997)
 2. Anger : State-trait anger expression inventory (STAXI; Spielberger, 1988; Laughrea et al., 1996)
- Dyadic adjustment
The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976; Sabourin, Valois, & Lussier, 2005)



Results: Prevalences

Interpersonal Trauma

	n	%
0	482	35.8
1	363	27.0
2	300	22.3
3	143	10.6
4	49	3.6
5	8	0.6
Total	1345	100
M = 1.21		

Death of a parent

- 4%(36; 24 had lost 1 parent, 12 had lost both parents)

Psychological violence

- 35% sometimes, 13% often

Physical violence

- 5% sometimes, 2% often

Witnessing psychological violence

- 29% sometimes, 10% often

Witnessing physical violence

- 15% sometimes, 3% often

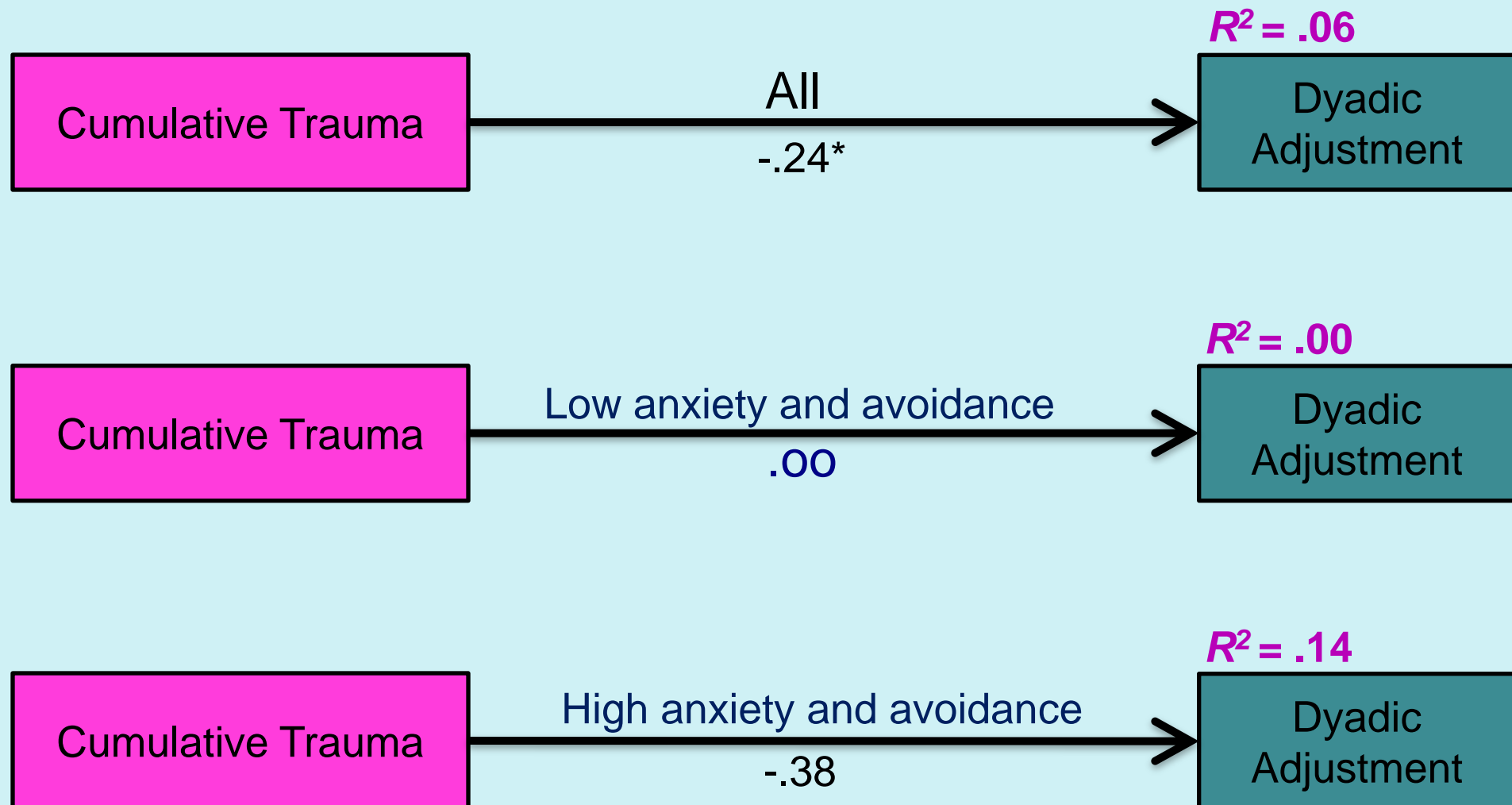
Childhood Sexual abuse

- 8% (5% contact, 2% penetration)

Results: Correlations Matrix

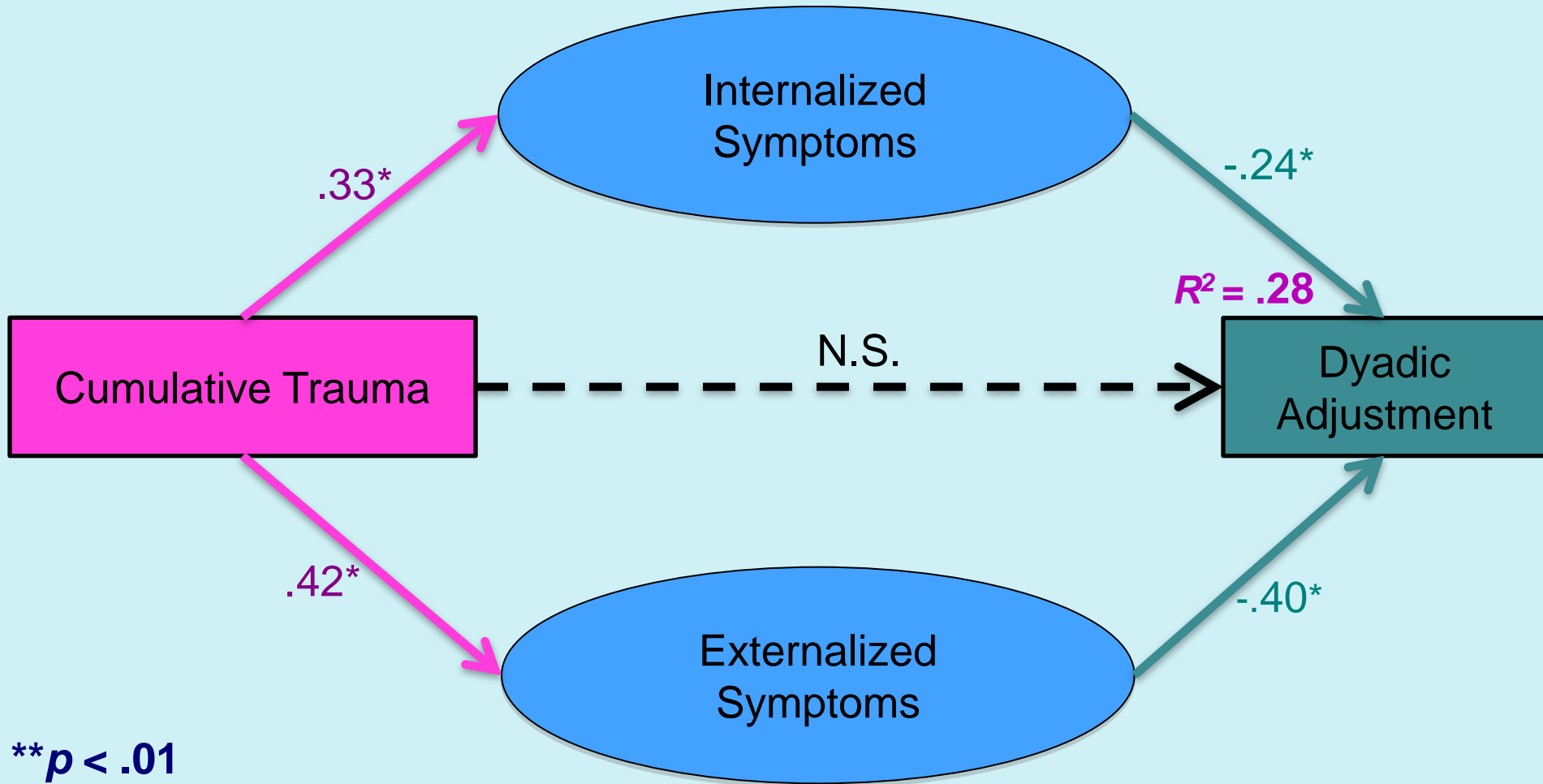
	DAS	Psy Distress	Neurot.	Avoid.	Anxiety	Anger	Psy Violence	Phy Violence
Death parent	-.04	.04	.04	.01	.07	.07*	.08*	-.01
PsyViol Parent	-.11**	.11**	.18**	.08**	.12**	.17**	.17**	.16**
PhyViol Parent	-.13**	.10**	.08**	.09**	.09**	.14**	.19**	.28**
PsyViol Child	-.16**	.14**	.21**	.13**	.14**	.17**	.17**	.23**
PhyViol Child	-.20**	.13**	.17**	.13**	.07*	.18**	.19**	.27**
CSA	-.08**	.09**	.07*	.03	.01	.04	.14**	.11**
Cumul Trauma	-.24**	.20**	.23**	.16**	.15**	.22**	.27**	.34**

Results: Direct Link (Path Analyses)



Structural Equation Model (SEM)

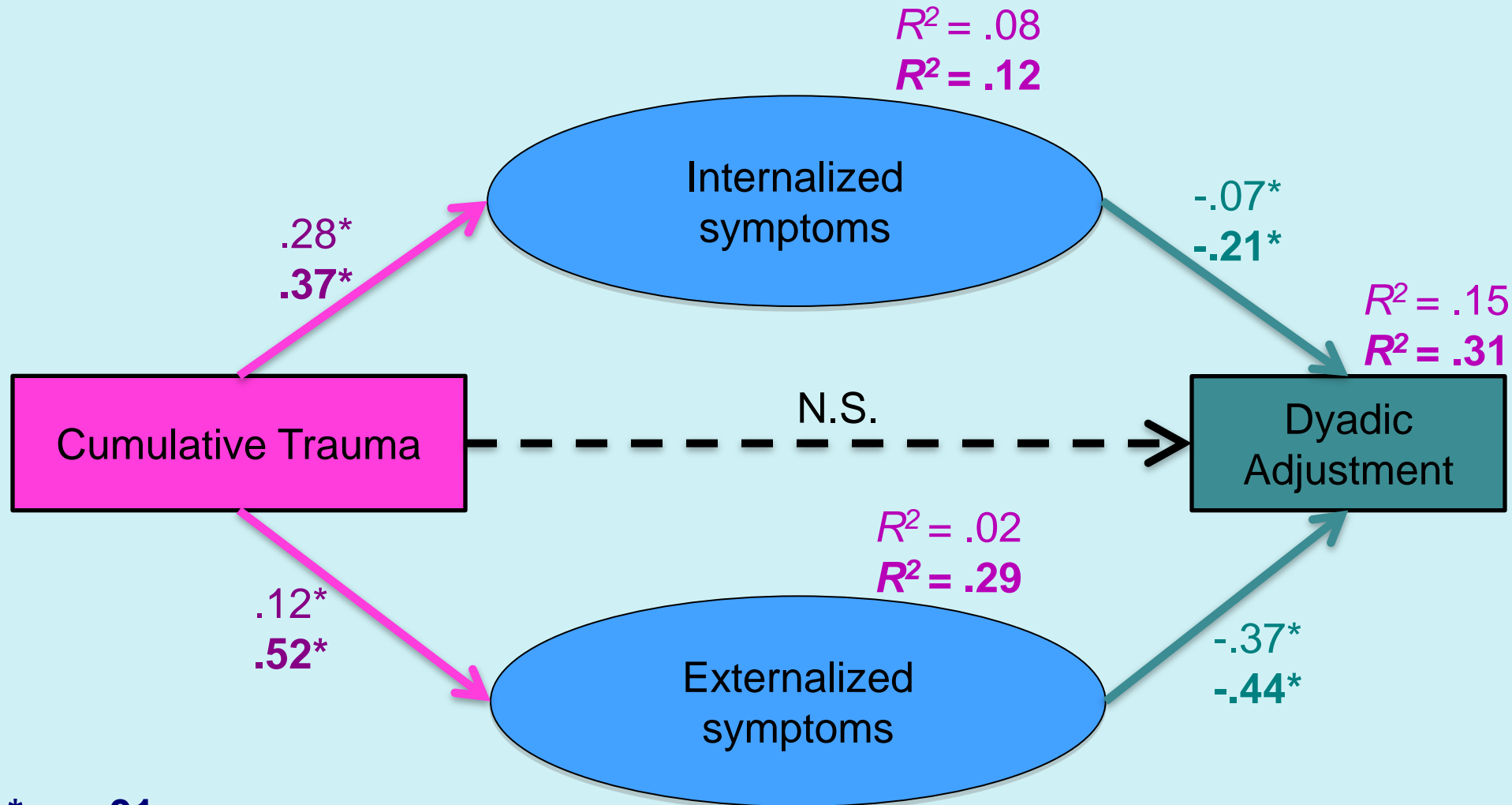
Polytrauma, Psychological Distress and Dating Relationship



**** $p < .01$**

Fit: $\chi^2/df = 10.48$; GFI = .98; RMSEA = .08

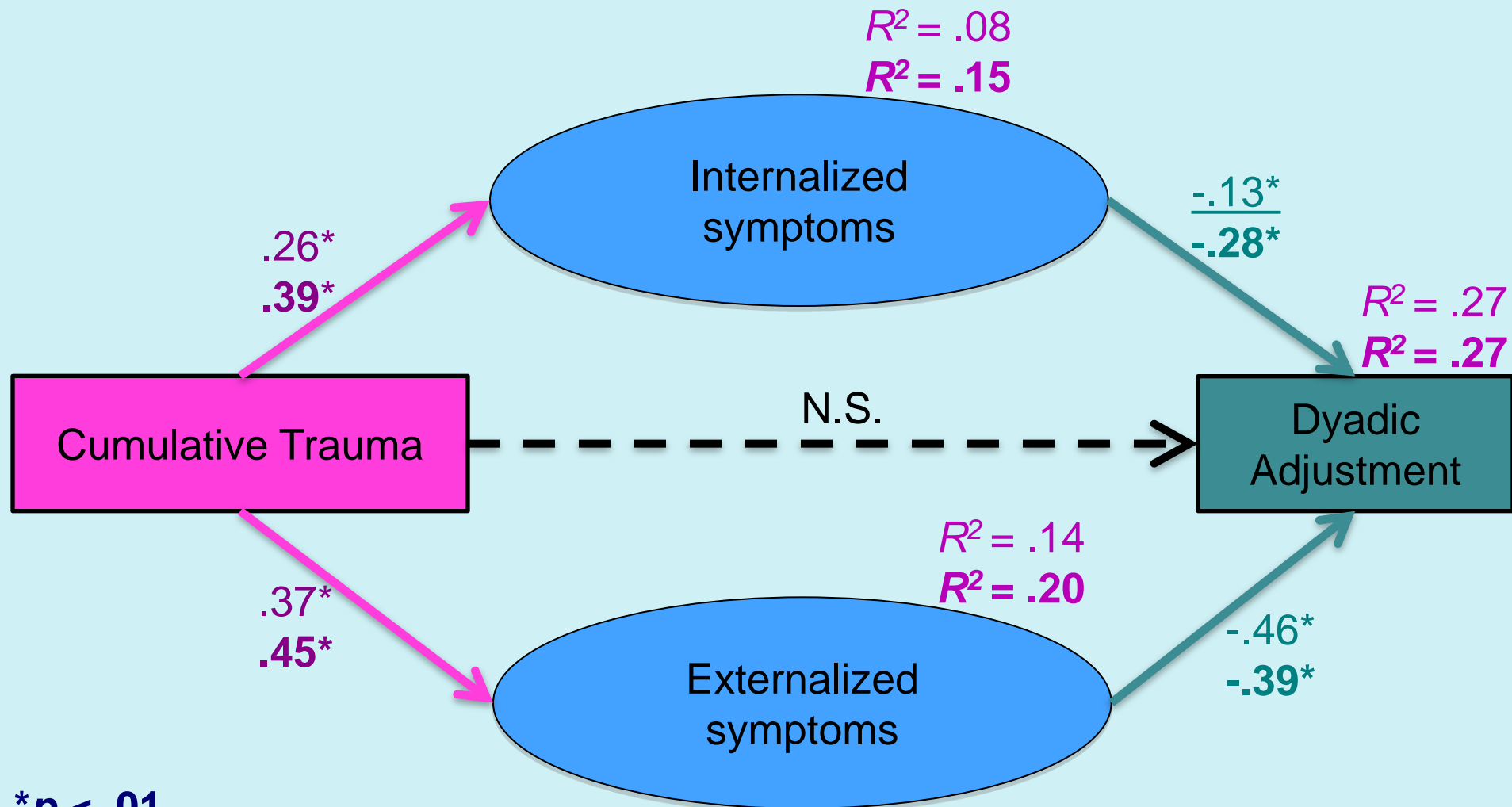
LOW Attachment Anxiety and LOW Attachment Avoidance (N=1120) VS HIGH Attachment Anxiety and HIGH Attachment Avoidance (N=216)



* $p < .01$

Fit : $\chi^2/df = 3.99$; GFI = .98; RMSEA = .06

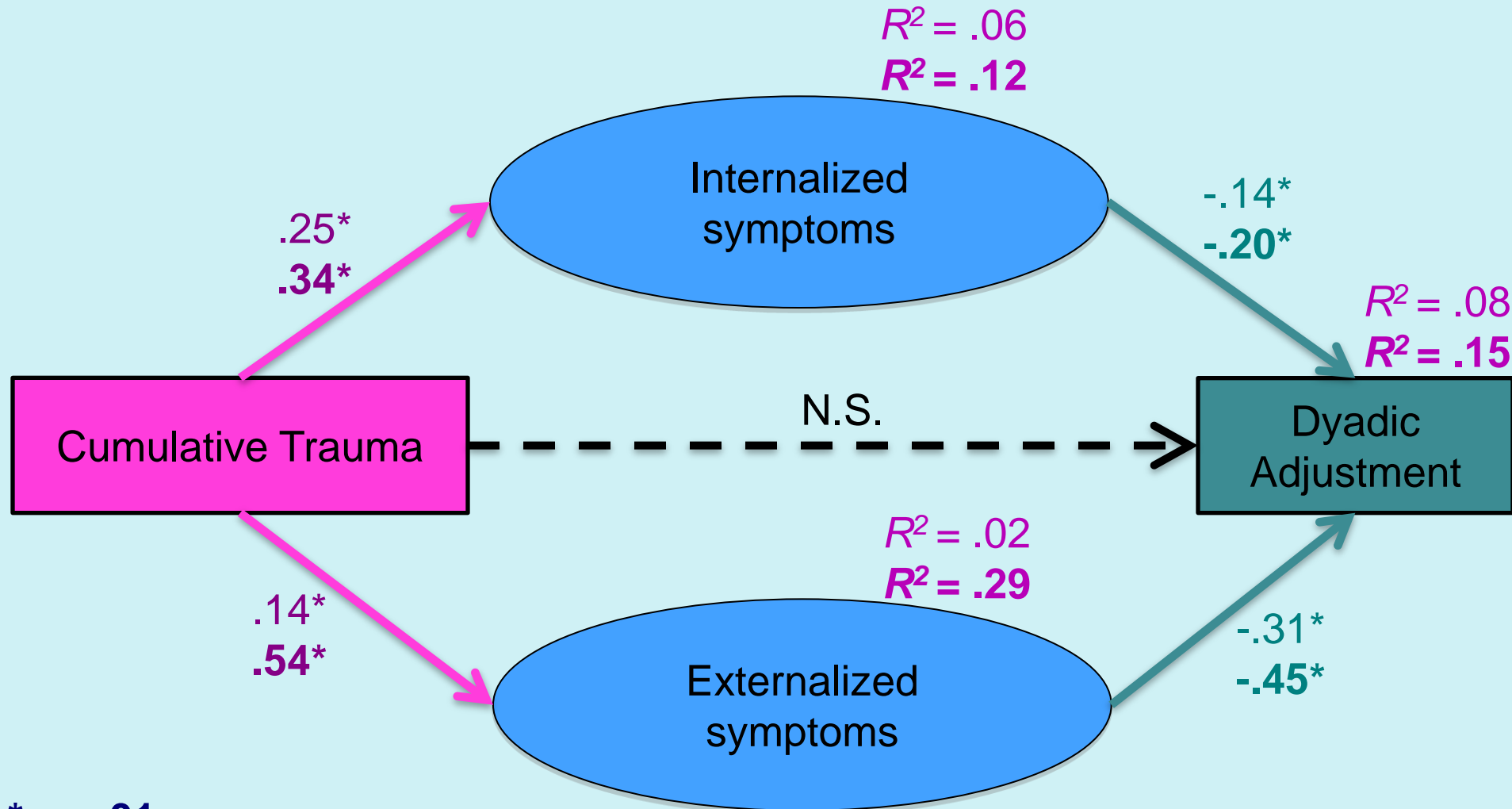
LOW Attachment Avoidance (N= 969)
VS
HIGH Attachment Avoidance (N=368)



* $p < .01$

Fit: $\chi^2/ df = 6.06$, GFI = .97; RMSEA = .06

LOW Attachment Anxiety (N=759)
VS
HIGH Attachment Anxiety (N=583)

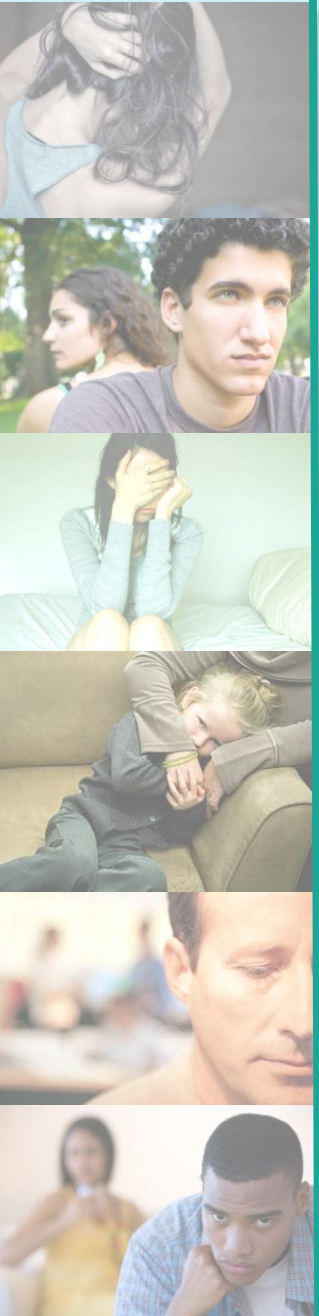


* $p < .01$

Fit: $\chi^2/df = 4.88$; GFI = .98; RMSEA = .05

Discussion

- High prevalence
- SEMs indicate a strong link between cumulative trauma and poor dyadic adjustment in individuals with insecure attachment (moderator).
 - Cumulative trauma relates to diminished dyadic adjustment through increased internalized and externalized symptoms.
 - The link between trauma and externalized symptoms was twice as strong in the group with high levels of abandonment anxiety, compared to the group with lower levels.



General Conclusion

- Results underscore the direct and indirect role of Cumulative Trauma on intimate relationships difficulties
- Need further research on the impacts of Cumulative Trauma in clinical populations
 - Need to assess trauma
 - Implanting treatments adapted to the specific needs of trauma survivors, that consider implicit memories and internalized models of self and others when designing an intervention
- Fostering secure attachment should have positive effects on dyadic adjustment
 - Offer a safe and supportive relational environment
- Early prevention and treatment are crucial (e.g., parenting skills to support the child)



Questions ?



Merci!

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