

Fairness in accommodation for injury and disability: What is perceived as fair and why these perceptions matter

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Today

- Types of Justice/Fairness
- Why Justice/Fairness are important
- Apply to accommodation for injury & disability
 - Fairness perceptions of workers receiving accommodations
 - Coworker perceptions of accommodation fairness



Outcome fairness
(Distributive Justice)
is important

Perceptions of fairness
are not only about
outcomes



Process fairness (Procedural Justice)
is also important



Quality of the
personal interactions
(Interactional Justice)
also matter

Why does fairness matter?

- Workers feel valued (relational theories)
- Provides control (instrumental theories)
- Organization can be trusted (uncertainty management)
 - Use fairness to manage uncertainty when concerned about organizational status
 - Provides excellent rationale for why fairness matters to workers receiving accommodation

(Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005)

Successful return to work:
The role of fairness and workplace-
based strategies

Hepburn, Franche, & Francis (2010)

Successful Workplace-based RTW Intervention Strategies

- Designated RTW coordinator
- Early workplace contact
- Work accommodation offer
- Contact between employer and health care provider

(Franche et al., 2004; Krause & Lind, 2004)

Missing: Attention to HOW

- Goodwill & respect emphasized in RTW qualitative literature (*MacEachen et al., 2006*)
- Interactional justice addresses dignity, respect, and truthfulness
 - Signals to workers that they are valued by their employers and are able to their employer

Are RTW outcomes influenced by interactional justice after accounting for the impact of successful workplace-based RTW strategies?

Does HOW workers are treated matter beyond WHAT strategies they receive?

Participants

- Interviewed within 5 weeks of injury
- 166 Ontario Workers:
 - successful time-loss claim
 - back, neck, upper extremity MSK disorder
 - returning to workplace where they were injured

Measures: Workplace-based Strategies

- Designated RTW coordinator
- Early workplace contact
- Work accommodation offer
- Contact between employer and health care provider

Measures: Interactional Justice

- Interpersonal Justice
 - This person treated you in a polite manner
- Informational Justice
 - This person provided you with the information you needed

(Colquitt, 2001; Moorman, 1991)

Measures: Outcomes

- Traditional RTW Outcomes
 - Days on Compensation within 60 days of injury (WSIB Administrative Data)
 - Self-reported Days Absent
- New RTW Outcomes
 - Depressive Symptoms (CESD, *Radloff, 1977*)
 - Affective Commitment (*Meyer et al., 1993*)

Multiple Regression Analyses

	Days on Comp	Self-report Days	Depressive Symptoms	Affective Commitment
STEP 2: RTW Coord Early Contact Accom Offer HCP Contact				
STEP 3: Informational Interpersonal				

Multiple Regression Analyses

	Days on Comp ΔR^2	Self-report Days ΔR^2	Depressive Symptoms ΔR^2	Affective Commitment ΔR^2
STEP 2: RTW Coord Early Contact Accom Offer HCP Contact				
STEP 3: Informational Interpersonal				

Multiple Regression Analyses

	Days on Comp ΔR^2	Self-report Days ΔR^2	Depressive Symptoms ΔR^2	Affective Commitment ΔR^2
STEP 2: RTW Coord Early Contact Accom Offer HCP Contact	.15**	.12**		
STEP 3: Informational Interpersonal	.00	.04		

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

Multiple Regression Analyses

	Days on Comp ΔR^2	Self-report Days ΔR^2	Depressive Symptoms ΔR^2	Affective Commitment ΔR^2
STEP 2: RTW Coord Early Contact Accom Offer HCP Contact	.15**	.12**	.08*	.05
STEP 3: Informational Interpersonal	.00	.04	.07**	.18†

*p<.05, **p<.01, †p<.001

Multiple Regression Analyses

	Days on Comp ΔR^2	Self-report Days ΔR^2	Depressive Symptoms ΔR^2	Affective Commitment ΔR^2
STEP 2:	.15**	.12**	.08*	.05
RTW Coord	.05	.05		
Early Contact	.18	-.07		
Accom Offer	-.40†	-.27†		
HCP Contact	.02	-.16		
STEP 3:	.00	.04	.07**	.18†
Informational		28*		
Interpersonal		-.26*		

*p<.05, **p<.01, †p<.001

Multiple Regression Analyses

	Days on Comp ΔR^2	Self-report Days ΔR^2	Depressive Symptoms ΔR^2	Affective Commitment ΔR^2
STEP 2:	.15**	.12**	.08*	.05
RTW Coord	.05	.05	-.19*	
Early Contact	.18	-.07	.14	
Accom Offer	-.40†	-.27†	.02	
HCP Contact	.02	-.16	.19*	
STEP 3:	.00	.04	.07**	.18†
Informational		.28*	-.04	.45†
Interpersonal		-.26*	-.27*	.03

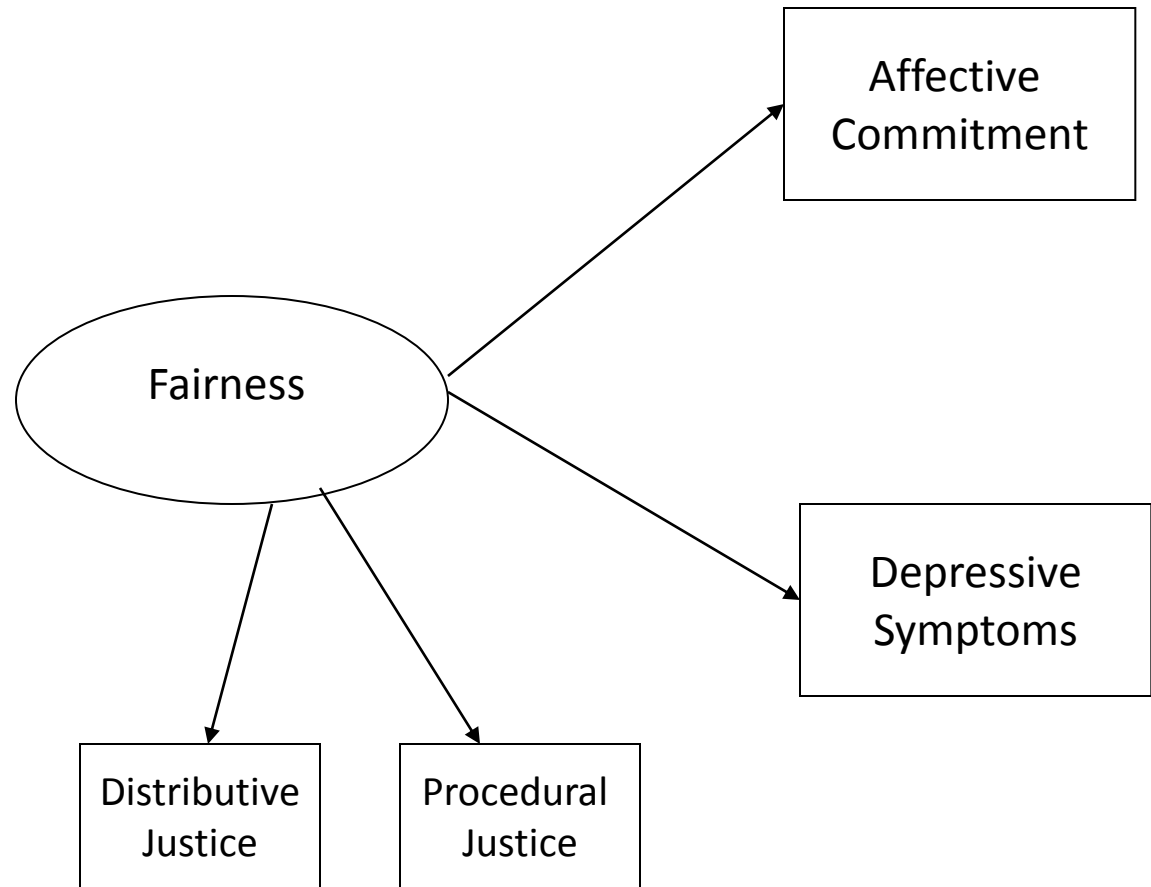
*p<.05, **p<.01, †p<.001

Summary & Implications

- Employers should attend to both WHAT they do and HOW they do it
- Interactional justice influences self-reported absence, depressive symptoms, and affective commitment
- These outcomes are related to worker performance and withdrawal behaviours

Early employer response
to workplace injury:
What injured workers perceive as fair
and why these perceptions matter

Hepburn, Kelloway, & Franche (2010)



e.g., “Accommodations appropriate given your experience”; “...given your current abilities”

e.g., “You have been able to express your views and feelings”

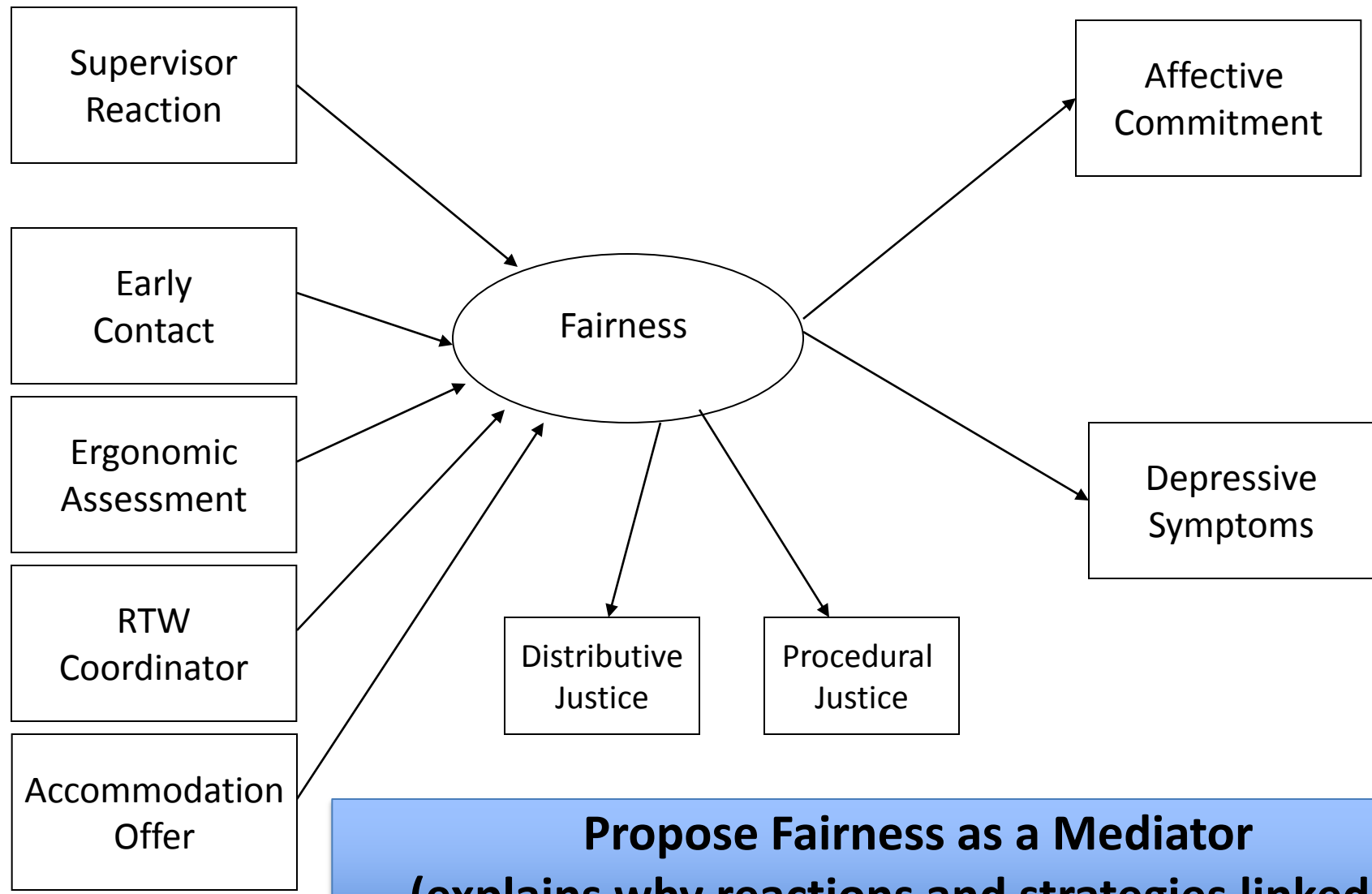
How are injured workers making fairness judgements?

Evaluate allocation of material &
immaterial resources

(Vermunt & Steensma, 2001, 2005)

One Month Post-Injury

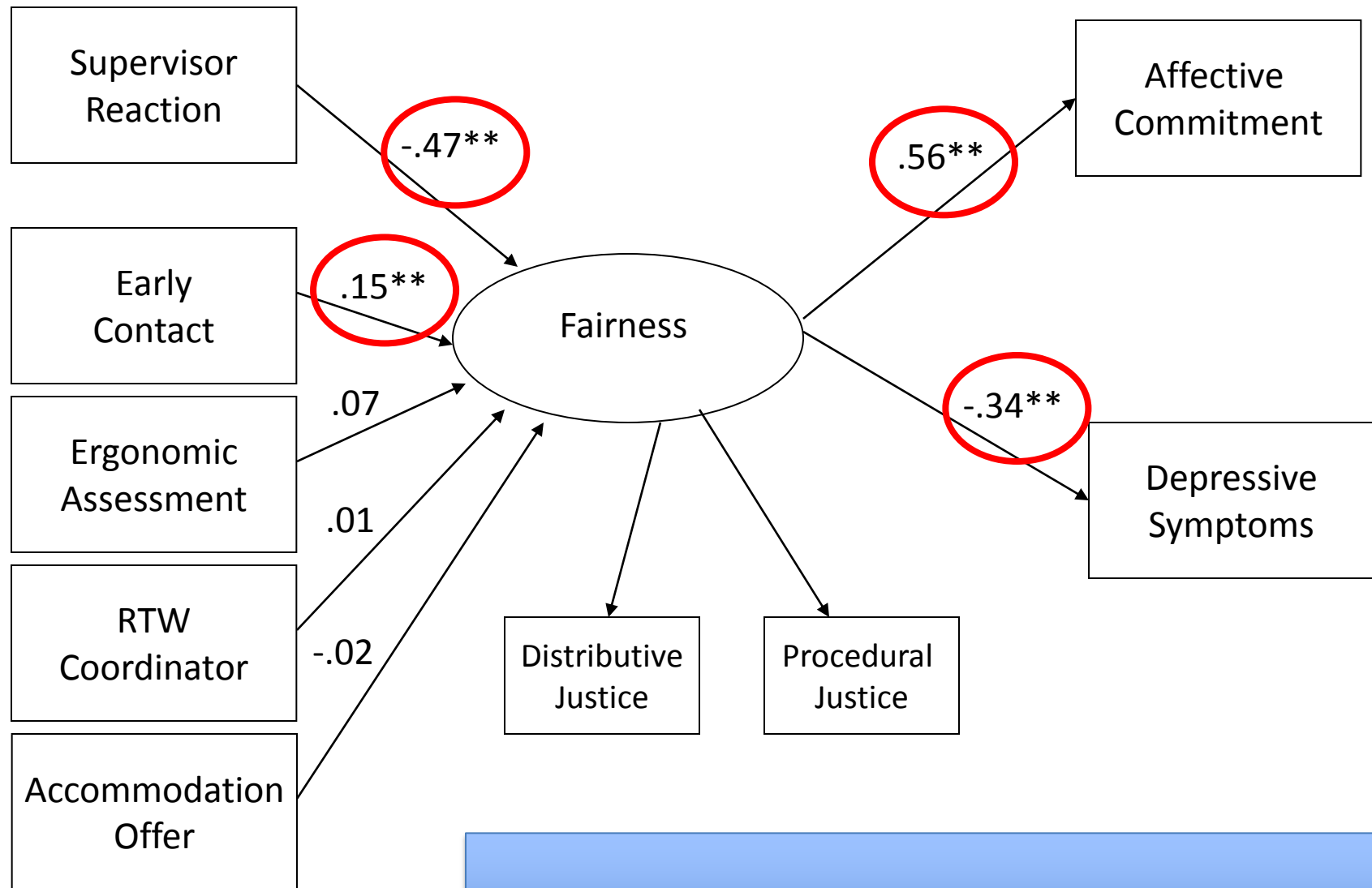
Six Months Post-Injury



**Propose Fairness as a Mediator
(explains why reactions and strategies linked to
commitment & depressive symptoms)**

One Month Post-Injury

Six Months Post-Injury



Model provided an excellent fit to the data

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Coworkers likely to evaluate the distributive fairness of accommodations

(Colella, 2001)

- Equity rule
 - Compare own inputs and outcomes to the inputs and outcomes of their colleague receiving accommodation
 - e.g., inequity occurs if see own work inputs increasing with no compensation (reward/recognition)
- Need rule
 - Deemed unfair if accommodation viewed as unneeded or unwarranted

(See recent qualitative studies by Dunstan & MacEachen, 2013; Kosny et al., 2012)

Why should we care?

Coworker fairness judgments will affect the success of workplace accommodation for injury, illness, and disability.

Coworker fairness judgments will affect:

- Coworkers themselves
 - Behave negatively toward worker with injury
 - Suffer strain
- Supervisors
 - Make accommodation decisions based on how they believe coworkers will react
- Workers with injury, illness, or disability
 - Choices about accommodation type or duration
 - **INTERACTIONS with coworkers about accommodation**

Interactions between undergraduates being accommodated for disabilities and their peers without disabilities

Undergraduate experiences with accommodation are likely to affect how they interact with future employers

Parallels with Workplace

- Same 'Duty to Accommodate'
 - Process just as tricky to navigate
- Peers make fairness judgments
 - e.g., equity rule violated because extra time for testing viewed as making exam easier
 - e.g., need rule violated because viewed as 'working the system'
- Interactions about accommodation frequent
 - 69% discussed disability or accommodation with peers during academic year
 - 80% discussed with 3 or more peers

Self-disclosure:

Verbally sharing personal information
(about a potentially stigmatized identity)
with another person

Focus of Research to Date:

Decision to Disclose (Y/N)

Impact of this Decision (positive?)

NEW: Disclosure Process Model

(Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010)

Consider that one's goals/motivations affect not only the decision to self-disclose but also how workers communicate about their identity, how they react to their coworkers, and ultimately if disclosure event is positive or negative



Approach goals
(desire to
educate, build
relationships)

Present positive
emotions, focus on
positive content

RESULT: positive
confidant reaction



Avoidance goals
(desire to avoid
social rejection or
conflict)

Present negative
emotions, focus on
negative content

RESULT: negative
confidant reaction

Disclosure Process Model suggests possible downward negative spiral

Avoidance
Goals



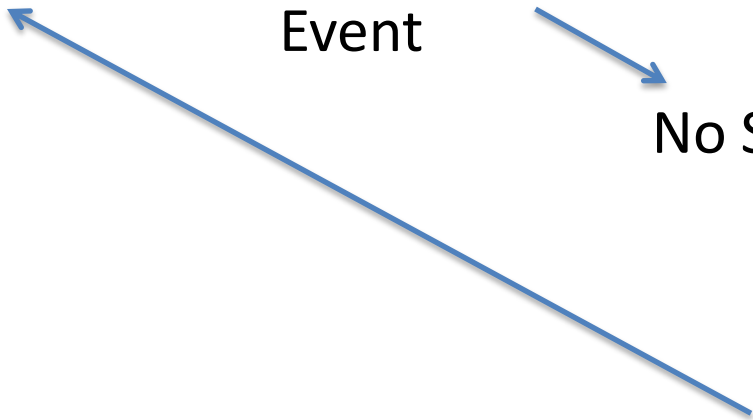
Negative Disclosure
Event



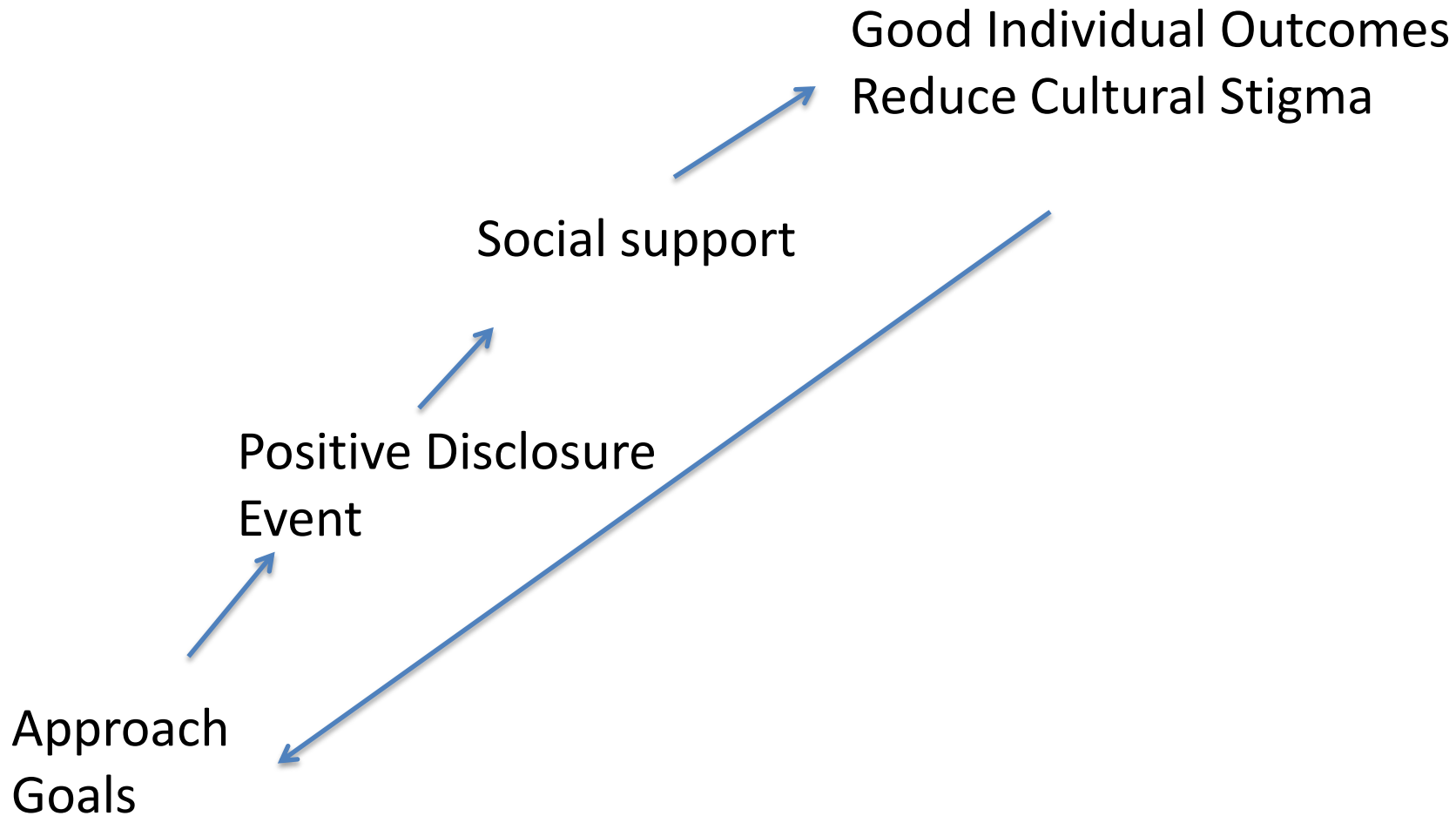
No Social support



Poor Individual Outcomes
Cultural Stigma



Why not an Upward Positive Spiral?



Work toward creating an upward spiral

- Employers can make efforts to improve culture
- Provide workers with strategies that may increase positive reactions during disclosure events
 - Make the need rule of justice salient
 - Ensure emphasize legitimacy of needs and how accommodation meets needs

(Experimental vignette study with undergraduates provides support for emphasizing need rule)

Risks for Workers

- Sharing more personal information
- Greater strain?
 - Increased effort during interactions may be required
 - Similar concern expressed in prejudice & discrimination literature with respect to compensation strategies for those possessing stigmatized identities

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Thank You!

Questions?

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