

Resolution of Childhood Maltreatment Trauma: Development of a Novel Narrative Coding Scheme and Intergenerational Implications

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of Mental Health

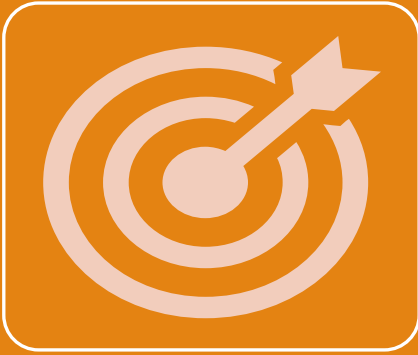


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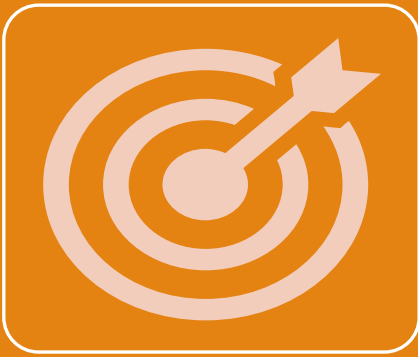
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Study Aims



1. Evaluate Reliability and Validity of Novel Resolution Measure




2. Test Resolution as a Moderator of Associations between Neglect and Sensitive Parenting

Background

Intergenerational Transmission



**MALTREATMENT
HISTORY**



• **Lower parenting sensitivity** (Dixon et al., 2005; Pereira et al., 2014)

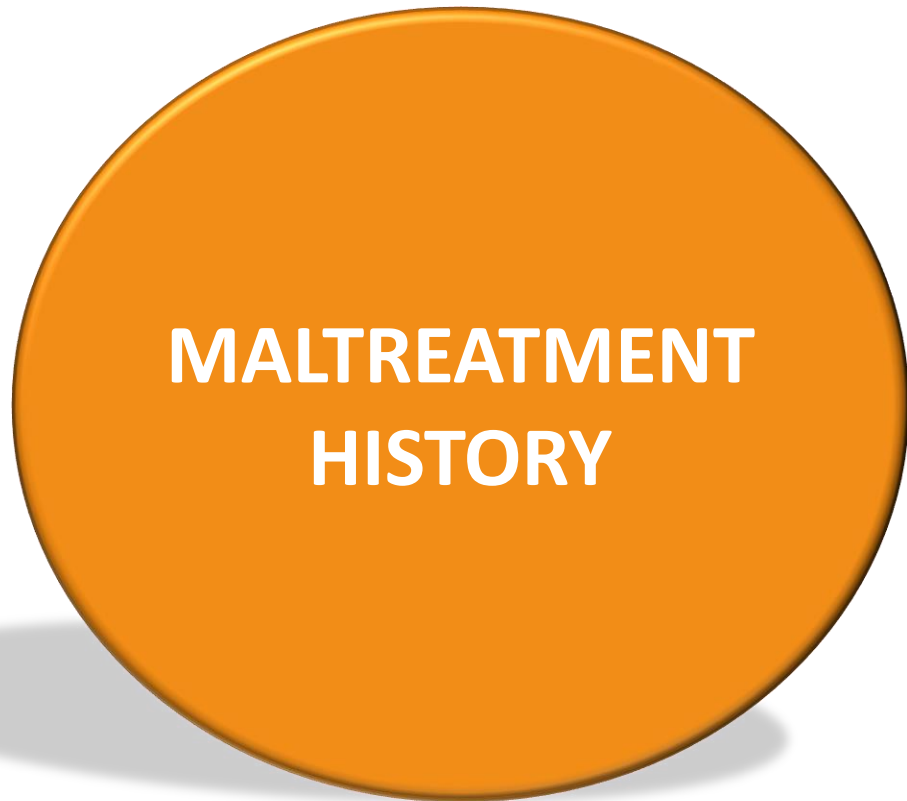


• **Higher intrusiveness** (Fuchs et al., 2015)



• **Insecure attachment** (Lyons-Ruth & Block, 1996; Stacks et al., 2014)

Meta-Analytic Insights



OR = 2.99



- Maltreatment continuity
(Assink et al, 2018)

r = -.13



- Maltreatment Hx &
parenting (Savage et al., 2019)

***modest effect size**

Heterogeneity Matters

Task: *explain* individual differences that may foster *intergenerational resilience*



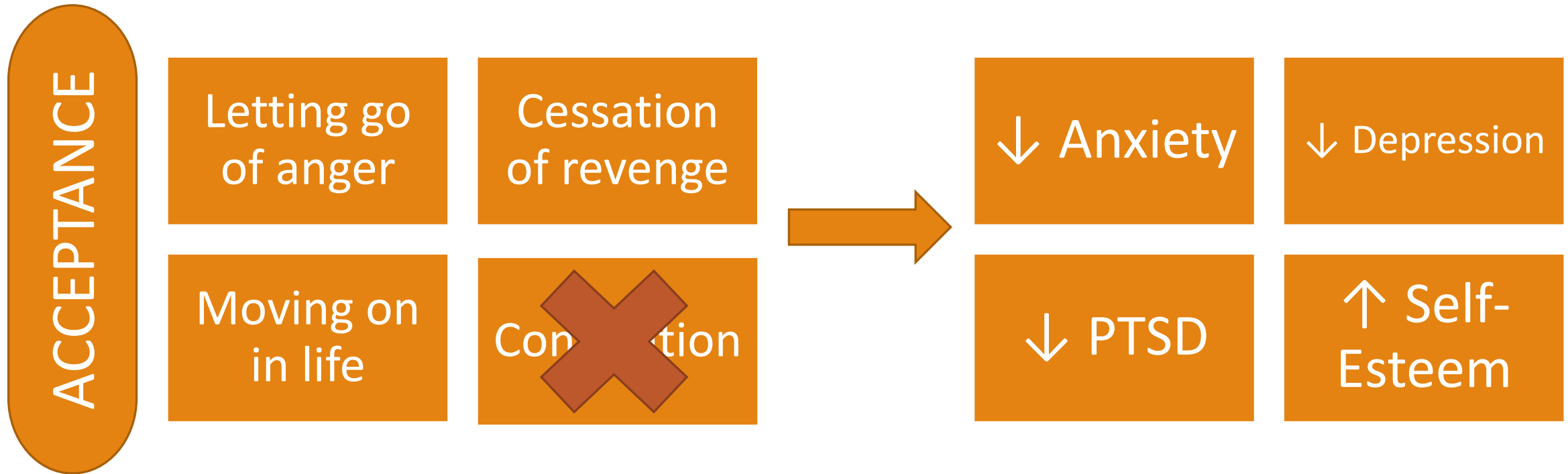
Resolution Definition

“the degree of acceptance and forgiveness presently held by the mother [towards her caregiver] regarding the experiences and circumstances of her childhood upbringing.”

Resolution: Theoretical Background


- Determinants of Parenting Process Model (Belsky 1984)
- Psychodynamic Perspectives
- Adult Attachment Interview: **Coherence**
 - Internally consistent and congruent account of childhood
- Overlap of earned security and resolution
 - Earned secures may “remember with *perspective* and even with *forgiveness* parents who were cold, unloving, and rejecting” (Pearson et al., 1994)
 - But, may artificially dichotomize dimensional construct (Roisman 2002, 2014)

Resolution: Operationalization



Resolution Coding Sample

“I don’t have to agree with [my mother’s] choices, I don’t have to support it, **but at least listen to it and try to understand at least where the other person’s coming from.** So, in that respect I think I’m different than my mom and wanna continue to be that way. **She’s learned over the years though”** – participant



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all characteristic		Minimally characteristic		Somewhat characteristic		Moderately characteristic		Mainly Characteristic

Preview: Aims



1. Evaluate Reliability and Validity of Novel Resolution Measure



2. *Test Resolution as a Moderator of Associations between Neglect and Sensitive Parenting*

Why focus on neglect?

Prevalence

- Most common subtype
- Affects 15% of children

Developmental Timing

- More prevalent during infancy
- Stressful period for parents

Lack of Research

- “Neglect of neglect”
- Intergenerational effects not well studied

Methods

Participants & Design

- 210 mothers & their 13-month-old infants (52.9% female)
- Sample demographics
 - Maternal age ranged from 18-41 years (M = 26.9 years)
 - Low SES: $M_{\text{income}} = \$10,330$ when including public assistance
 - **72.2%** of families had documented involvement with CPS
- Larger study design: RCT
 - T1: 13 months
 - T3: 26 months
 - → N = 132

Racial/Ethnic Demographics		Maternal Education	
Black	53.8%	Less than HS	41.8%
White	25.5%	HS or GED	38.5%
Hispanic	9.6%	Some college	18.8%
Biracial/Multiracial	5.8%	Bachelor's	1%
Native American	0.5%	Degree	
Other	4.8%		

Purpose	Construct(s)	Measure(s)
Novel Measure;	Resolution	Infant and Intergenerational

Balancing-Forgiving:

- 8. Neither my mother nor myself are perfect but somehow we made it through my childhood.
- 17. Even though I went through rough times with my mother during my childhood, somewhere along the line I managed to let go of the majority of those angry, hurt feelings.
- 25. Even with all our past difficulties, I realize my mother did the best for me that she could.
- 31. My mother and I are more accepting of each other's differences than we have been in the past.
- 44. If my mother was not fair to me as a child I realize now it was because she was dealing with her own problems.
- 54. For all our past problems my mother and I can still enjoy a good laugh together.
- 60. When I think back to my early childhood experiences I discover things about myself and my parents that I've never consider before.

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Aim 2 Measures

Purpose	Construct(s)	Measure(s)
Moderator	Resolution	Infant and Intergenerational Relationships Coding System for the <i>Parent Development Interview</i>
Independent Variable	Neglect	<i>Childhood Trauma Questionnaire</i>
Dependent Variable	Maternal Sensitivity	<i>Maternal Behavior Q-Set</i>
Covariates	Maternal Age Verbal Ability	Demographic Questionnaire <i>WAIS-III</i>

Results

Maternal Trauma Resolution: **Reliability**

- A random subsample (n = 44, 21.4%) of Parent Development Interviews were coded by the first author and two trained research assistants
- Resulting interrater reliability was **excellent (ICC = .937)**.

Resolution: Generalizability

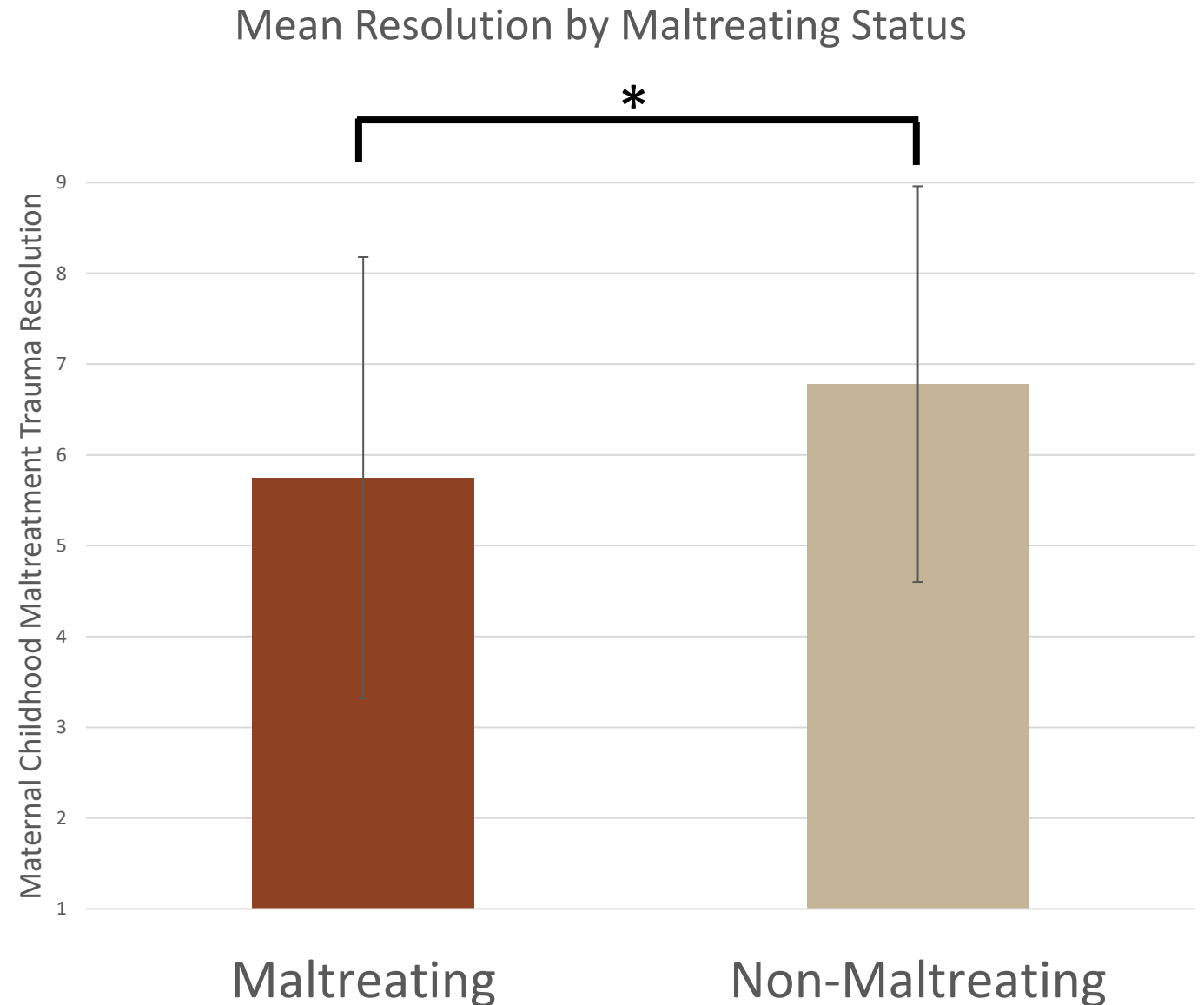
- There **were no significant differences** in resolution scores by:
 - Race, $F(3, 194) = .635, p = .593$
 - Ethnicity (Latinx vs non-Latinx), $t(196) = .080, p = .936$
 - or by Marital Status, $F(2, 195) = 1.453, p = .236$

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Resolution	-						
2. Maternal Age	.084	-					
3. Total Income	.010	.087	-				
4. Public Assistance	-.044	.135	.222**	-			
5. Highest Education Level	.120	.190**	.134	-.148*	-		
6. Occupational Prestige Score	.080	-.062	.334**	-.280**	.287**	-	
7. Vocabulary (WAIS-III)	.178*	-.017	.038	-.124	.427**	.134	-
8. Comprehension (WAIS-III)	.220**	-.086	.025	-.080	.432**	.137	.673**

Table 1. Bivariate correlations are presented above. Total Income and Amount Public Assistance Received are presented in thousands of dollars USD. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Resolution: Criterion Validity

Maltreating mothers
($M = 5.75$, $SD = 2.43$)
had significantly lower
resolution scores than
non-maltreating
mothers ($M = 6.78$, SD
 $= 2.18$), $t(176) =$
 2.576 , $p = .011$





Resolution: Convergent Validity

Maternal childhood maltreatment trauma resolution scores and Balancing-Forgiving subscale scores were *not* correlated
($r = .126, p = .108$)

Partial correlations controlling for verbal ability were also weak
($r = .108, p = .183$)

What does lack of convergence mean?

Criteria	Criteria met?
Reliability	
Generalizability	
Criterion Validity	
Convergent Validity	
Concurrent Validity	
Predictive Validity	

Concurrent Validity: Parenting Stress

	B (SE)	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>sr</i> ²
Model 1 (Parenting Stress)					
<i>Model 1 Step 3</i>					
Maternal Age	-.991 (.506)	-.147	-1.956	.052†	.020
Maternal Education	-3.732 (3.711)	-.083	-1.006	.316	.005
Vocabulary (WAIS-III)	-1.162 (1.493)	-.078	-.778	.437	.003
Verbal Comprehension (WAIS-III)	-.935 (1.405)	-.067	-.665	.507	.002
Balancing-Forgiving (PAAS)	.000 (.001)	-.017	-.181	.857	<.001
Resolution	-2.565 (1.266)	-.150	-2.026	.044*	.021

- **Balancing-Forgiving** explained less than 1% of variance in parenting stress ($sr^2 < .001$, $p = .857$).
- In contrast, **resolution** scores uniquely explained 2.1% of the variance in parenting stress ($sr^2 = .039$, $p = .007$), such that higher resolution was associated with lower parenting stress ($B = -2.565$, $\beta = -.150$).

Concurrent Validity: Parenting Competence

	B (SE)	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	sr ²
Model 2 (Parenting Competence)					
<i>Model 2 Step 3</i>					
Maternal Age	.076 (.079)	.073	.968	.334	.005
Maternal Education	.991 (.579)	.141	1.713	.088†	.028
Vocabulary (WAIS-III)	-.403 (.233)	-.174	-1.732	.085†	.031
Verbal Comprehension (WAIS-III)	.167 (.219)	.078	.762	.447	.003
Balancing-Forgiving (PAAS)	.000 (.000)	.061	.827	.409	.002
Resolution	.542 (.197)	.204	2.744	.007**	.039

- **Balancing-Forgiving** scores explained less than 1% of variance in parenting competence ($sr^2 = .004$, $p = .409$).
- In contrast, **resolution** scores uniquely explained **3.9% of the variance in parenting competence** ($sr^2 = .039$, $p = .007$), such that **higher resolution was associated with higher parenting competence** ($B = .542$, $\beta = .204$).

Predictive Validity: Maternal Depression

	B (SE)	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	sr ²
Model 3 (Depression)					
<i>Model 3 Step 3</i>					
Maternal age	.131 (.214)	.068	.616	.540	.004
Maternal Education	-.040 (1.46)	-.004	-.027	.978	<.001
Vocabulary (WAIS-III)	-.287 (.524)	-.079	-.548	.585	.003
Verbal Comprehension (WAIS-III)	.293 (.507)	.086	.578	.565	.004
Balancing-Forgiving (PAAS)	.566 (1.843)	.033	.307	.760	.001
Resolution	-1.417 (.483)	-.335	-2.934	.004*	.099

- **Balancing-Forgiving** explained less than 1% of variance in depression ($sr^2 < .01$, $p = .760$).
- In contrast, **resolution** scores uniquely explained **9.9% of the variance in maternal depression** ($sr^2 = .099$, $p = .004$), such that **higher resolution was associated with lower depression symptoms** ($B = -1.42$, $\beta = -.335$).

Predictive Validity: Maternal Anxiety

	B (SE)	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	sr ²
Model 4 (Anxiety)					
<i>Model 4 Step 3</i>					
Maternal age	-.033 (.244)	-.015	-.134	.894	<.001
Maternal Education	.526 (1.670)	.040	.315	.754	.001
Vocabulary (WAIS-III)	-.374 (.600)	-.089	-.624	.535	.004
Verbal Comprehension (WAIS-III)	.508 (.580)	.128	.876	.384	.008
Balancing-Forgiving (PAAS)	.194 (.109)	.010	.092	.927	<.001
Resolution	-1.845 (.552)	-.375	-3.340	.001*	.124

- **Balancing-Forgiving** explained less than 1% of variance in anxiety ($sr^2 < .001$, $p = .927$).
- In contrast, **resolution** was a robust predictor of maternal anxiety, **accounting for 12.4% of the variance in maternal anxiety symptoms** ($sr^2 = .124$, $p = .001$). These effects were again **protective**, such that **higher resolution predicted lower maternal anxiety** ($B = -1.85$, $\beta = -.375$).

Aim 1 Results Summary

Criteria	Criteria met?
Reliability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Generalizability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criterion Validity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Convergent Validity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concurrent Validity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Predictive Validity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Aim 1 Results Interpretation

Low convergence → Balancing-Forgiving and Resolution scores *do not* measure the same thing

- **We argue:** Balancing-Forgiving scores may not adequately assess this construct
- **Support:**
 - Low internal consistency of Balancing-Forgiving subscale (our sample: $\alpha = .57$; Other samples $\alpha = .57-.70$) & poor utilization
 - Self-report measures vulnerable to poor insight, avoidance/suppression, or demand characteristics
 - Interview measure yields more nuanced information
 - Anecdotal: many mothers in this sample initially provided positive, surface-level descriptions, but either were unable to elaborate or even later undermined these initial positive descriptions

Results Part 2 (Aim 2)



Test Resolution as a Moderator of Associations between Neglect and Sensitive Parenting

2a

- Cross-sectional, maltreating mothers only

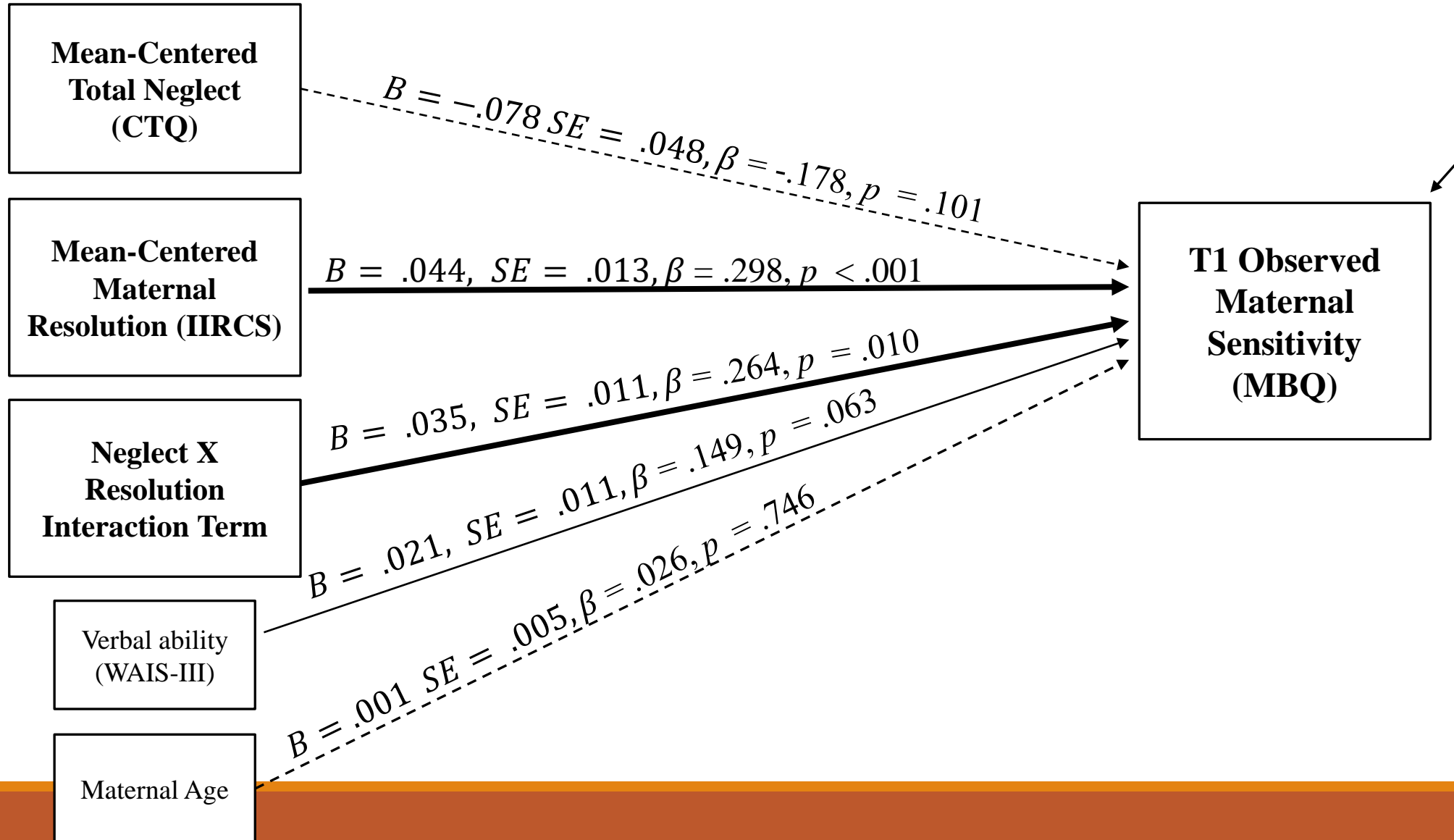
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- Cross-sectional, *non*-maltreating mothers only

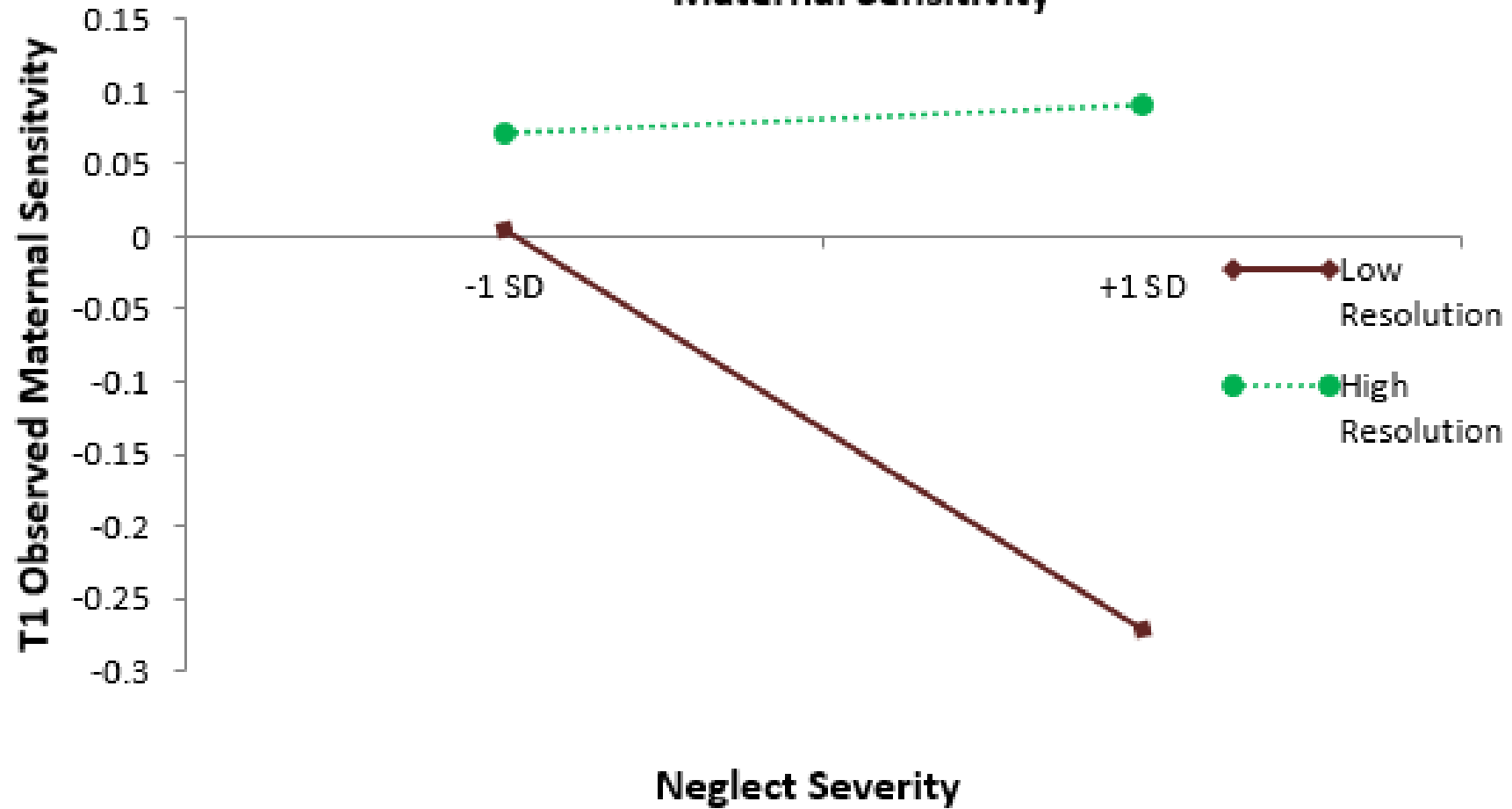
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- Longitudinal, maltreating and non-maltreating mothers

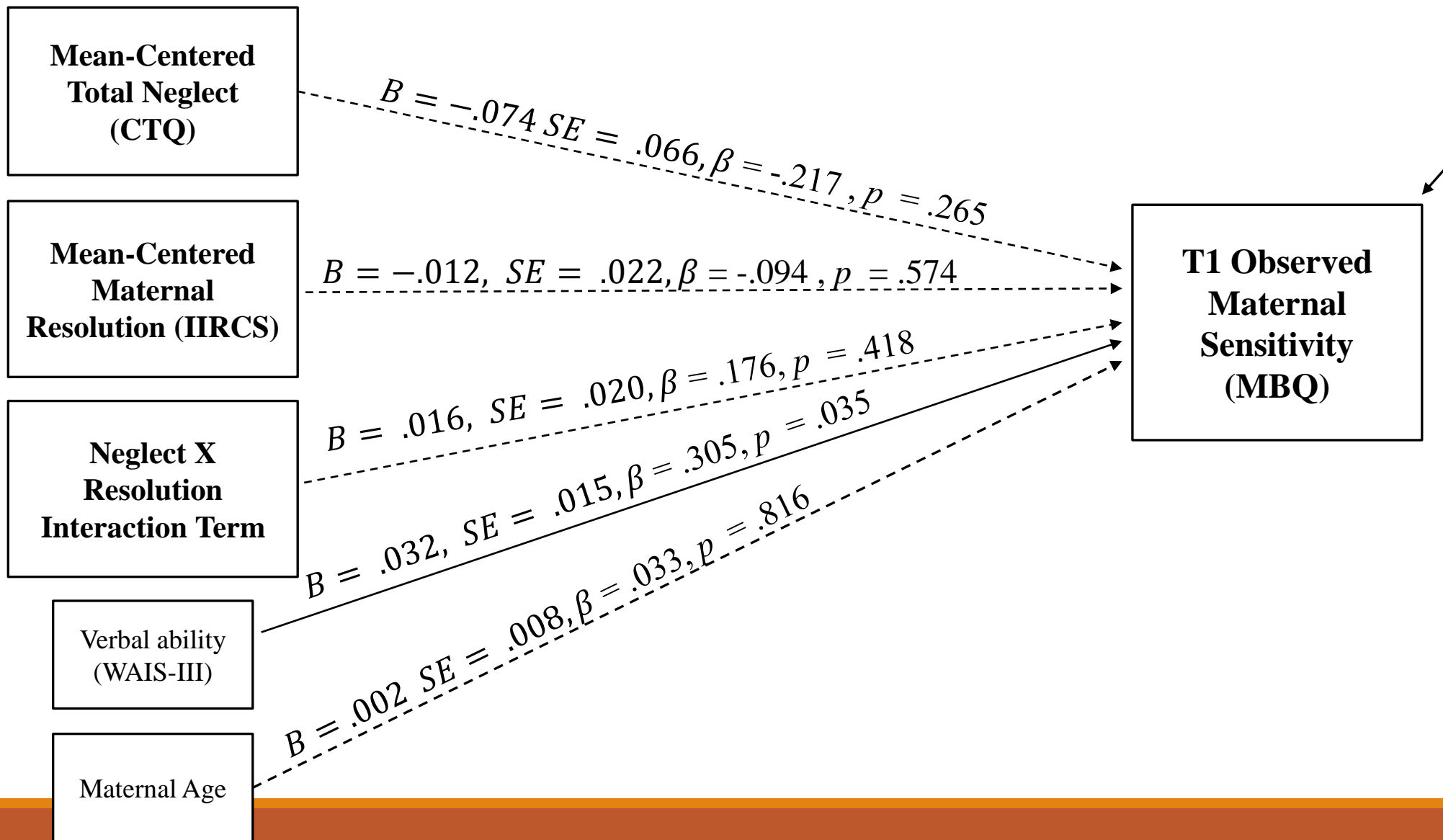
Cross-sectional, maltreating mothers only (n = 137)



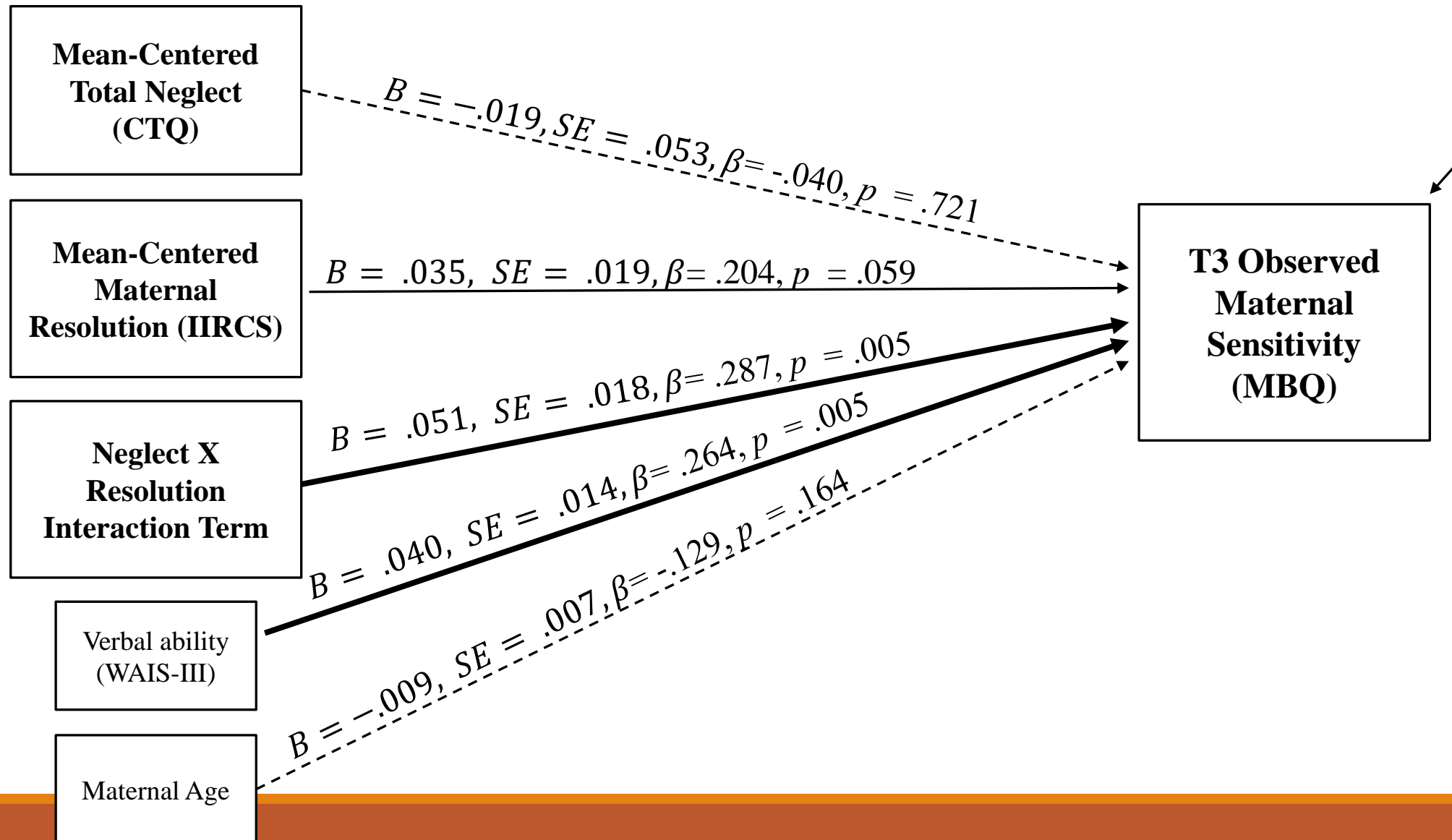
Model 8 (Maltreating Mothers): Neglect x Resolution on T1 Maternal Sensitivity



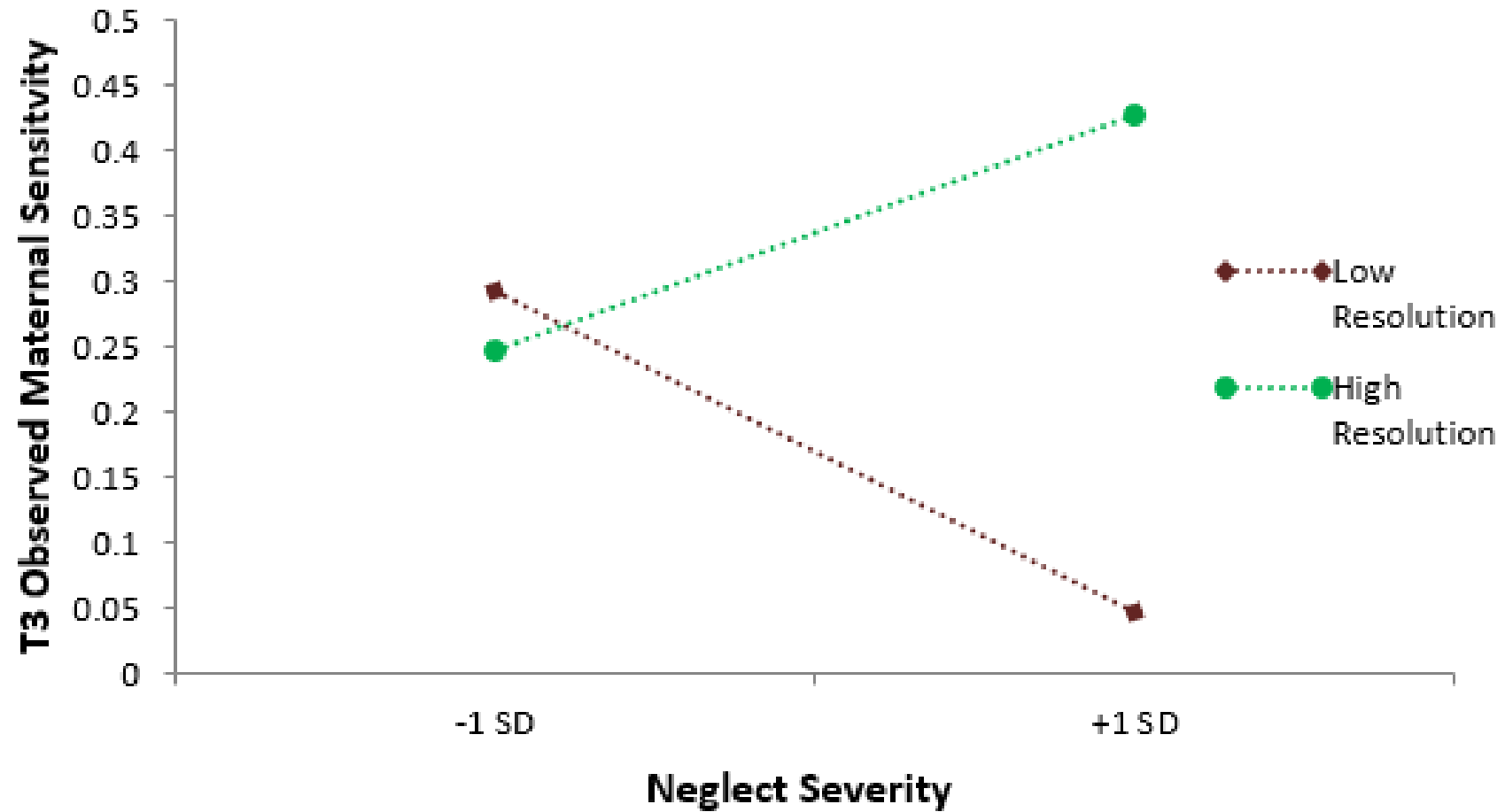
Cross-sectional, *non*-maltreating mothers only (n = 52)



Longitudinal, all non-treatment groups (n = 132)



Model 10: Neglect x Resolution on T3 Maternal Sensitivity



Aim 2 Results Summary

Model	Significant moderation?	Pattern of Moderation
Cross-Sectional Maltreating	Yes	Protective-Stabilizing
Cross-Sectional Non-Maltreating	No	N/A
Longitudinal (Maltreating and Non-Maltreating)	Yes	Protective=Enhancing

Overall: Maternal resolution of childhood maltreatment trauma is protective, especially for higher risk mothers

Discussion, Implications, & Future Directions

Key Contributions of this Study



Adds to methodological toolbox

Evaluates protective effects of understudied process

Theoretical and translational implications for families

Future Directions

- Replication studies
 - Broader SES range, non-distressed samples, other types of caregivers
 - Clarify protective stabilizing or enhancing
- Use in treatment studies as potential treatment mechanism

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Questions?
