

# Organizational Stress and Wellbeing in Public Service Executives: The Role of Stewardship



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## Some context...

### Industrial Organizational (I/O) psychology

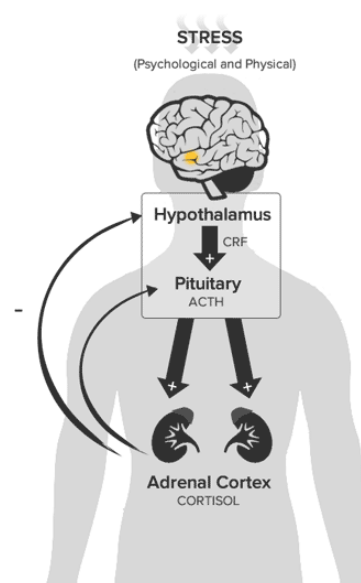
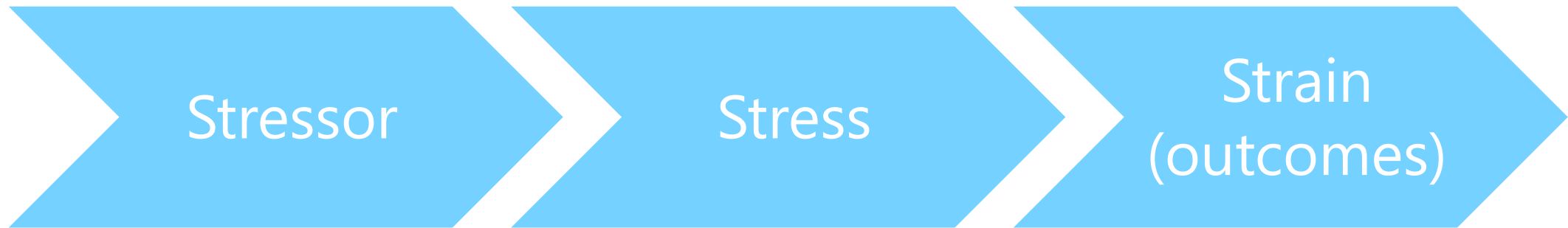
- study of how people behave at work
- Over the last 40 years the focus has been intra-individual factors (e.g., beliefs, knowledge and skills)

### Public Health

- health promotion interventions: more effective if they embrace an *ecological perspective* (Carpini, 2012)
- Programs and interventions should target interpersonal, organizational and environmental factors influencing healthy workplace behaviours (Glanz, 2010)

# INTRODUCTION

## Workplace Stress



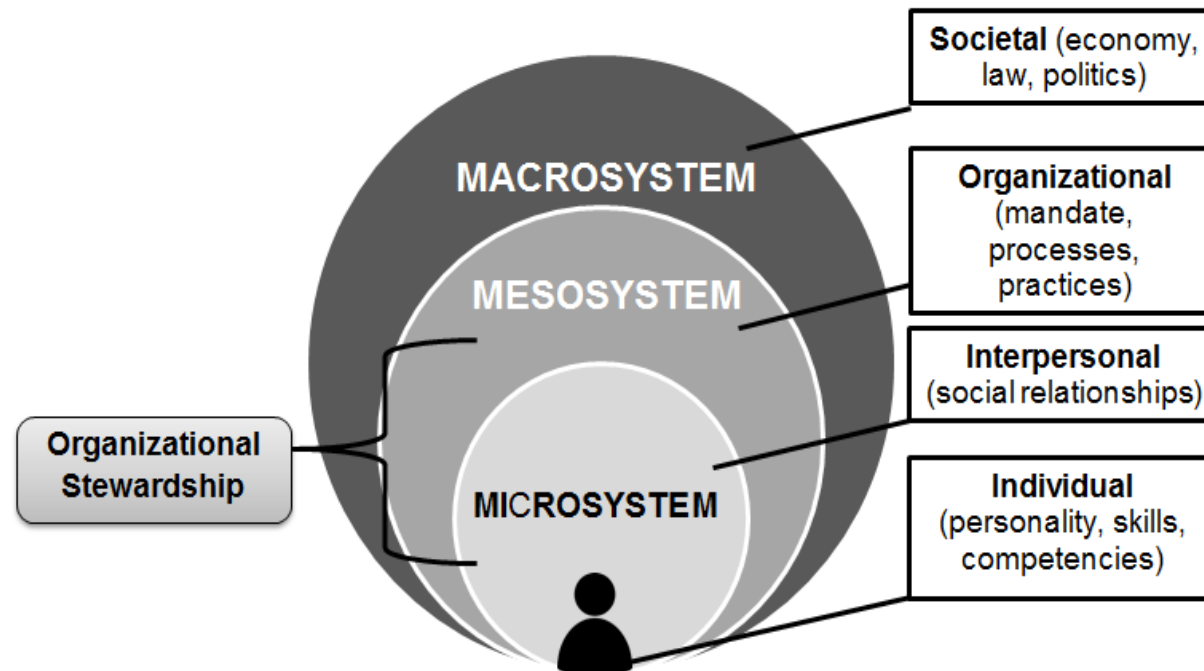
## Workplace Stress

- Major changes in the nature of work
  - Calling for the expansion of traditional organizational stress models
- The nature of work is changing. Many social issues are *complex and multifaceted*
  - Factors that help employees manage these challenges and work efficiently are important components of work stress research

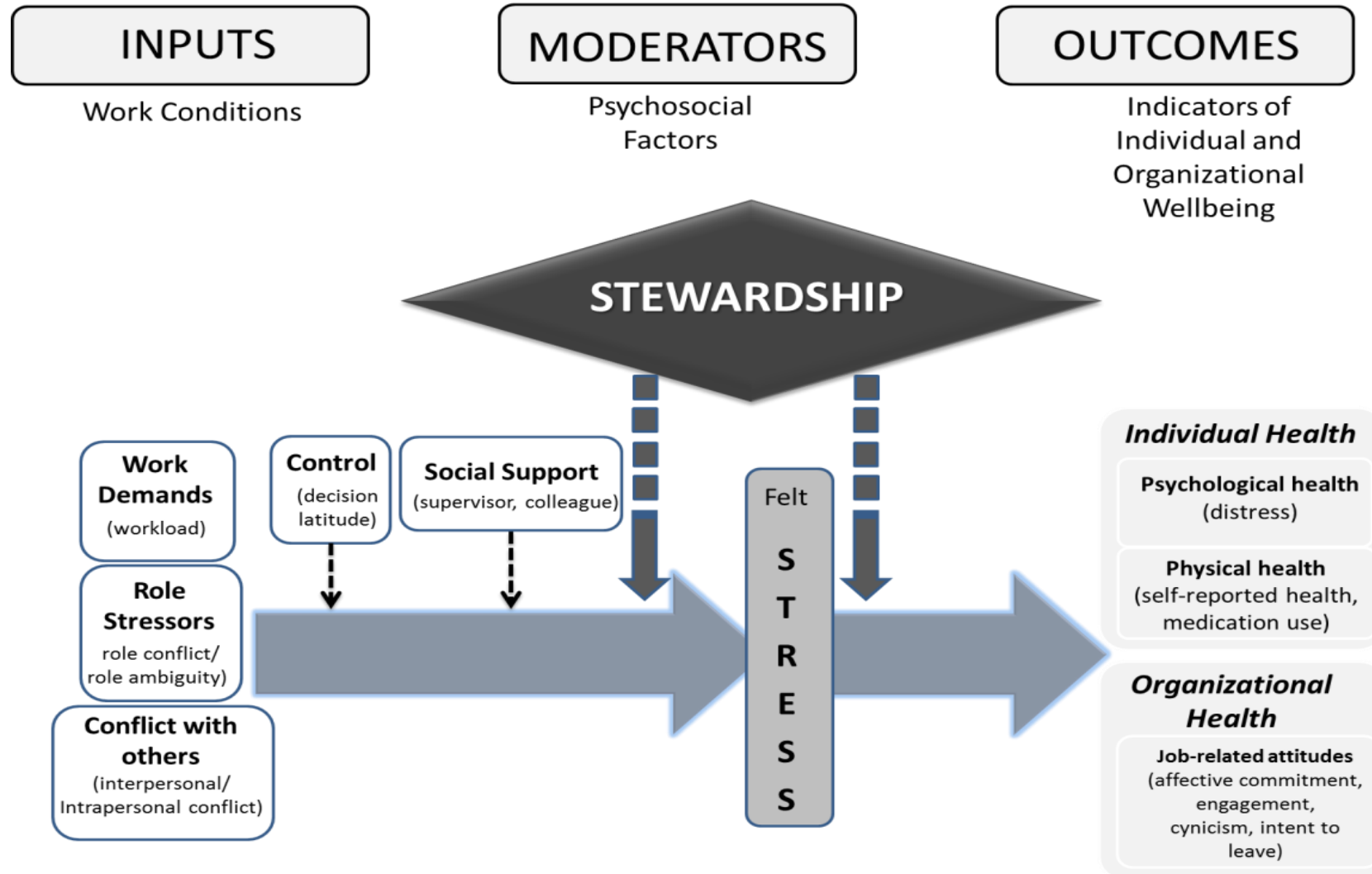


## Stewardship

- *an organizational approach that emphasizes a sense of purpose towards the common good through the sharing of power, resources and information across networks (Hubbard & Paquet, 2016; Simpkins & Lemyre, 2018).*



# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

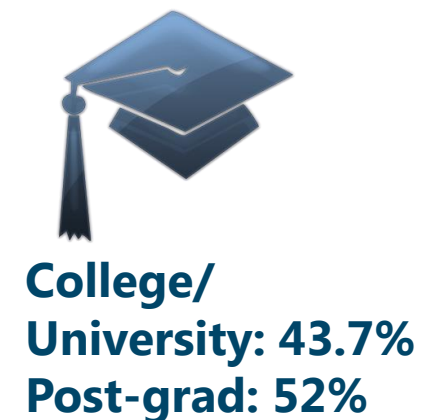
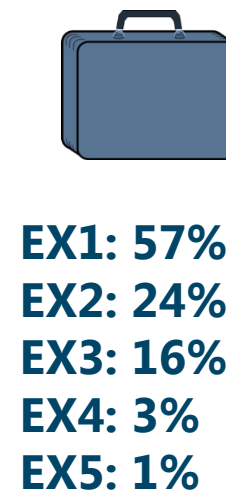
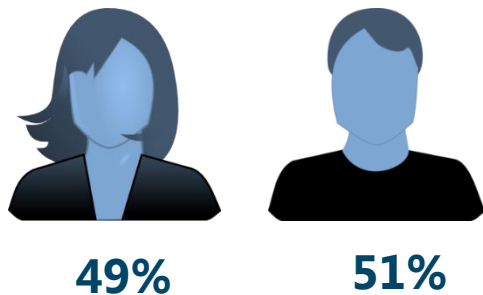


# Data Collection

## Sample

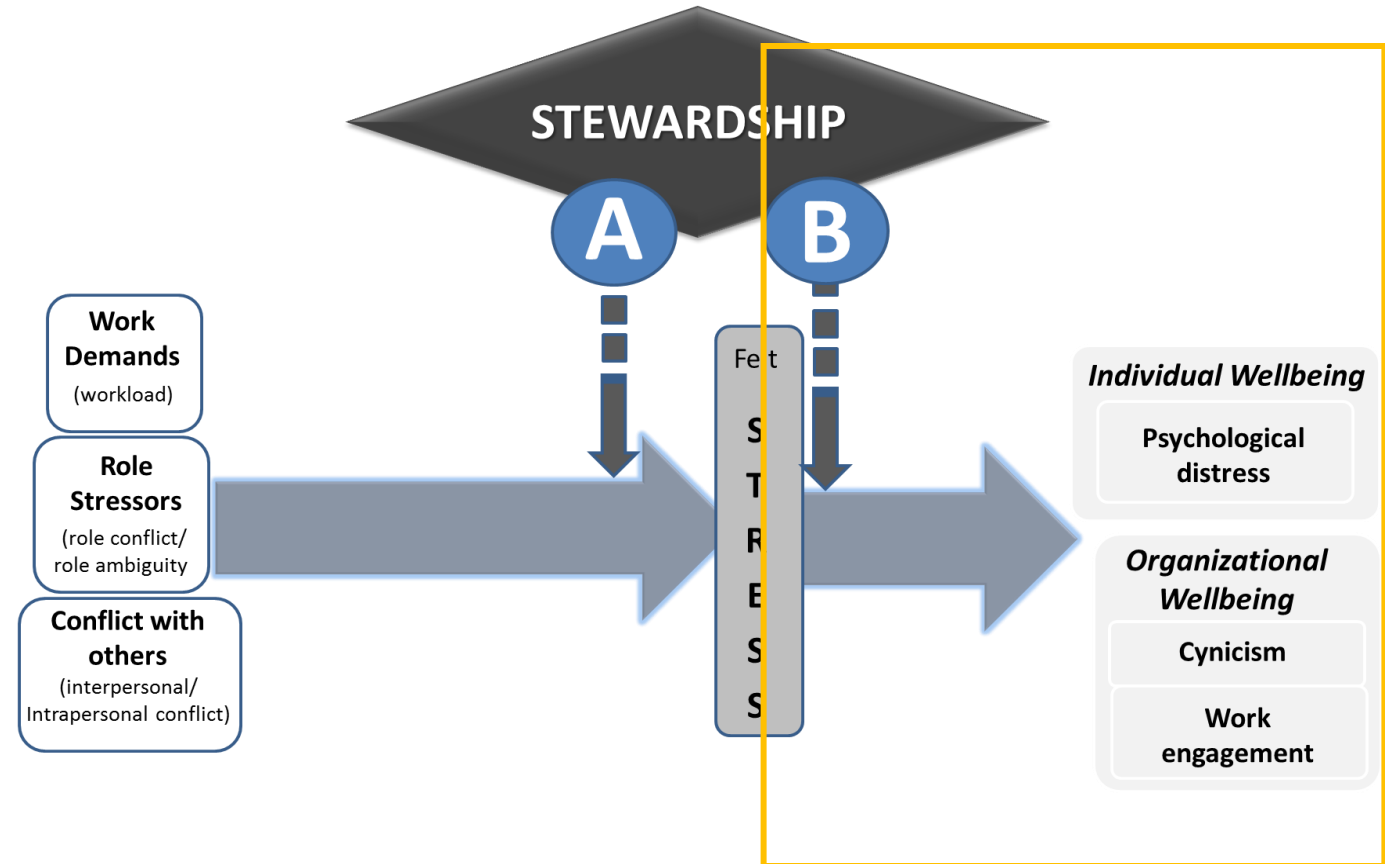
- 2012 Work and Health Survey (APEX)
  - 2314 public service executives
  - Nationally representative sample

## Demographics:



# STUDY 1

- Developed a seven-item scale of “Organizational Stewardship” using EFA and CFA
- Exploratory analyses (correlations, t-tests)
- Series of hierarchical regressions
- Stewardship explained unique variance in distress, cynicism and engagement above and beyond psychological stress





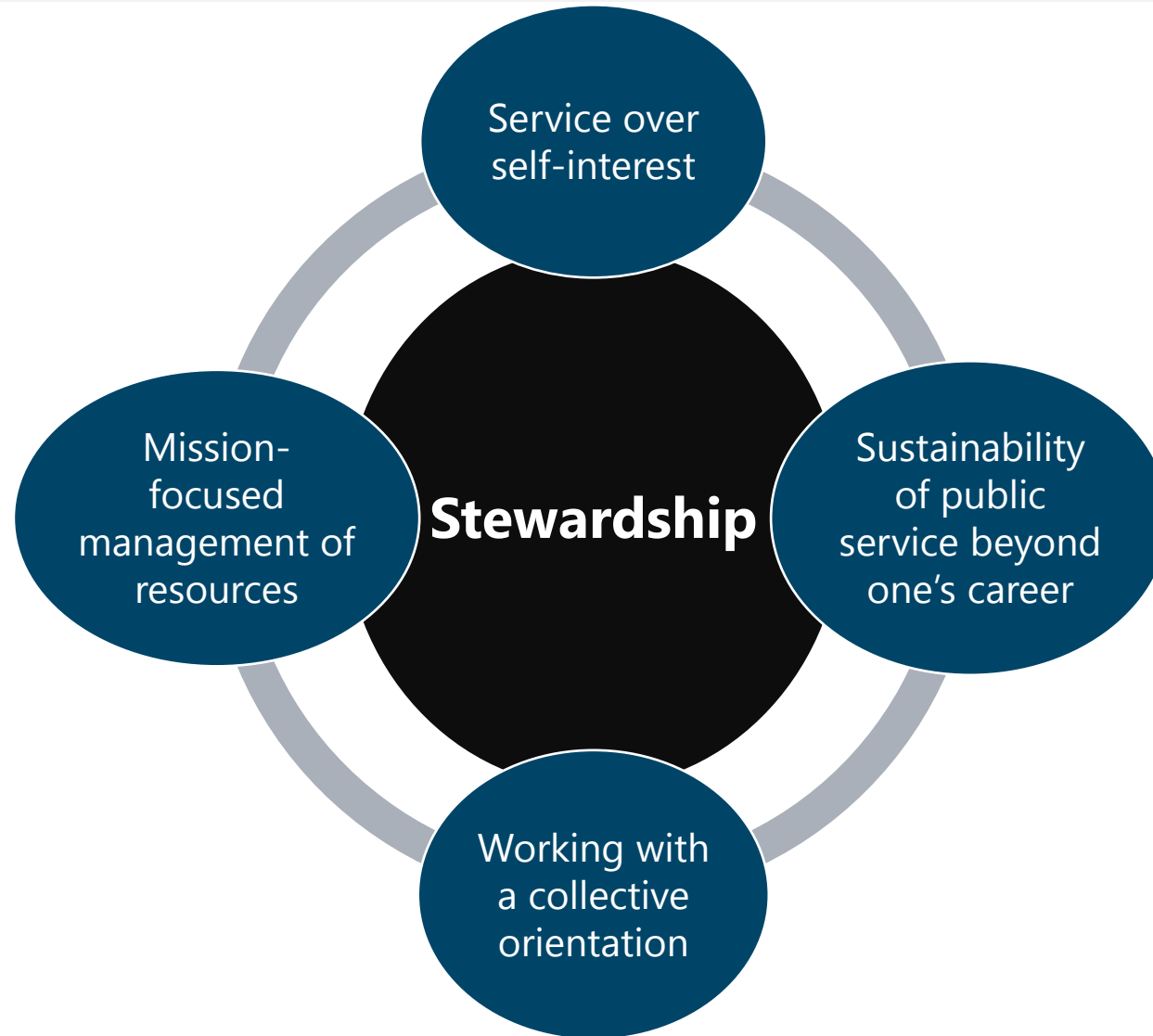
# STUDY 2 | Qualitative



## Method

- Interviews with a purposeful sample of public service executives (n = 15)
- Topics: Challenges within their work environment, experience with stewardship practices, and barriers and facilitators of organizational stewardship

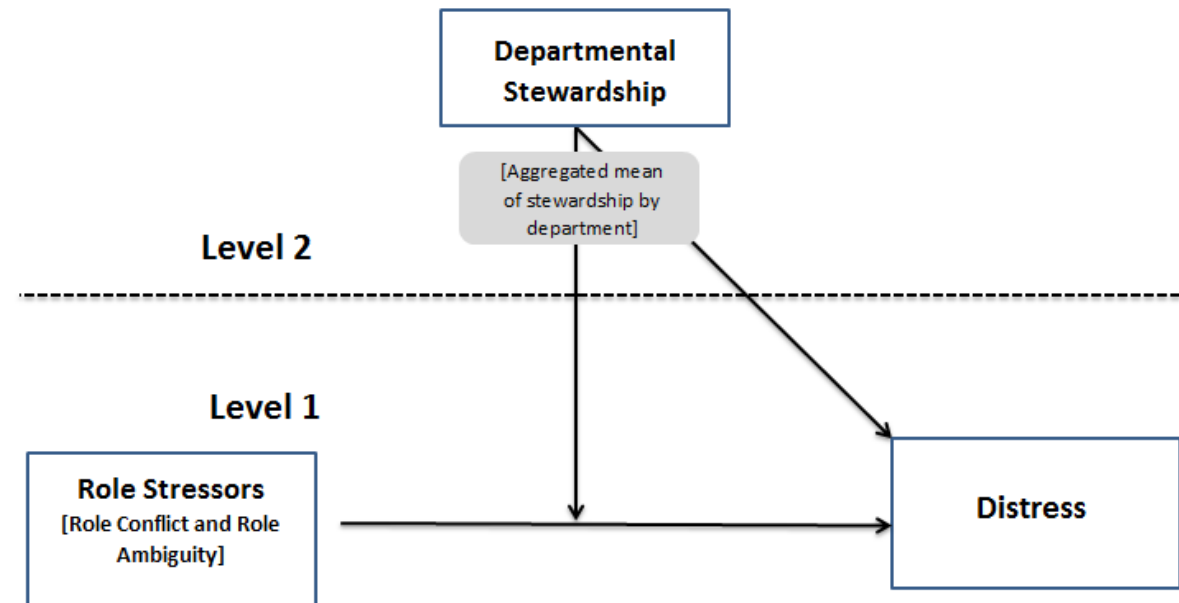
# STUDY 2 | Results



# STUDY 3 | Multi-level

## Method

- 2012 Work and Health Survey (APEX), stewardship scores aggregated by department
- N = 1996 observations within 59 departments/agencies
- Multi-level analysis examining departmental stewardship as a moderator between role stressors and psychological distress



# STUDY 3 | Results



*Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for Models Testing the Relationship between Executives' Role Stressors and Distress and the Moderating Effect of Departmental Stewardship.*

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Control variables</i>								
Gender	0.39	0.27	0.50*	0.22	0.40	0.29	0.53*	0.22
Occupational Level	-1.13***	0.31	-0.75*	0.28	-1.06**	0.32	-0.62*	0.28
% within-department variance in distress explained	2%							
<i>Individual-level independent variables</i>								
Role Conflict			2.55***	0.17			2.57***	0.17
Role Ambiguity			2.00***	0.24			1.90***	0.18
% within-department variance in distress explained			23%					
<i>Department-level independent variable</i>								
Departmental Stewardship					-2.89*	1.37	-1.44	1.14
% between-department variance in distress explained					41%			
<i>Interactions</i>								
Departmental Stewardship x Gender							0.03	
% between-department variance in gender slope explained							14%	
Departmental Stewardship x Occupational Level							2.99*	
% between-department variance in occupational level slope explained							10%	
Departmental Stewardship x Role Conflict							-0.13	0.88
% between-department variance in role conflict slope explained							<1%	
Departmental Stewardship x Role Ambiguity							-2.11*	0.98
% between-department variance in role ambiguity slope explained							33%	

Note. SE = standard error.

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001.

Results supported the value of stewardship, described as a shared responsibility for the public good, in organizational health research.

## **Limitations**

- Cross-sectional study design
- “The Healthy Worker Effect”
- Cannot generalize these results to other occupational levels (junior staff) or other organizations of interest (e.g., private sector)

## Implications for Public Health

A comprehensive understanding of the relationships between employees and the organizations for which they work is critical for an understanding of health issues and the needs of Canadians

### **This research**

- Supports the value of stewardship as an organizational level moderator of stress and well-being
- fosters discussion among employees, government leaders and policy-makers concerning best practices and the evolving capacity of public organizations
- advances knowledge on how organizational-level interventions may be best designed to address executive well-being and mental health

Researchers/practitioners can transfer the principles of our model to the organization:

- Stewardship development programs and interventions
- Stewardship scale as an evaluation tool
- Changes to organizational protocols

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **The APEX 2012 Work and Health Survey research team** which includes Wayne Corneil, Jacques Barrette, Nancy Beauregard, Martin Lauzier, Celine Pinsent and Gail Hepburn
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SSHRC  CRSH



**Thank you!**

**Questions?**

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B15: In my <u>department/agency</u> , we:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	<i>No answer</i>
a) Work and collaborate well inter-departmentally when making decisions.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Consider our immediate outcomes as well as the horizontal outcomes (across the public service) to be a shared responsibility among all departments/agencies.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Work and collaborate with agencies at the provincial and local level when making decisions.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Work and collaborate with the private or voluntary sectors when making decisions.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Are committed to the achievements of the overall federal government before the achievements of our own department/agency.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Have mutual trust and respect between our department/agency and other departments/agencies.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Share effort with other departments/agencies to achieve a better outcome.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/>