

# Mindfulness and self-compassion as key processes in mediating life outcomes

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# Childhood neglect and adult relatedness: The indirect effect of being mindful

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# CHILDHOOD NEGLECT

- Many long-term relational consequences associated with childhood traumas : sexual assault, psychological violence, etc.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Few studies on long-term consequences of childhood neglect (CN)<sup>3</sup>
  - Prevalence :
    - Among survivors of childhood maltreatment from Quebec (Canada)<sup>4</sup>
      - 74% emotional neglect
      - 10% physical neglect
    - 28 to 34 % of children in a Canadian survey<sup>5</sup>
    - 17 % of American adults<sup>6</sup>
    - - self-awareness, self-security, positive views of others, regulated affective responses

# ADULT RELATEDNESS

- Optimal interpersonal functioning: The ability to form and maintain significant relationships<sup>1</sup>
- Stems from early childhood (interactions with main caregivers)<sup>2,3</sup>
  - Developed with present, sensitive, available attachment figures<sup>4</sup>

# MINDFULNESS

- Intentional focus of attention on internal and external cues in the present moment, in a non-judgmental stance<sup>1</sup>
- Various definitions and ways to operationalize
- State, trait, or disposition rather than practice or behavior
- Complex concept, measured through various dimensions and capacities<sup>2</sup>
  - Observing, describing, non-judging, non-reacting, acting with awareness<sup>3</sup>

# CHILDHOOD NEGLECT AND ADULT RELATEDNESS

- Little data available: Childhood neglect – Adult relatedness
  - Children who experienced CN: less aware of themselves, less secure<sup>1</sup>
  - Relational consequences of CN: less aptitudes to resolve conflicts, lack of confidence in others, less capacity to feel secure, sexual difficulties, domestic violence<sup>2</sup>
  - Could alter adult relatedness (no framework of reference) <sup>3</sup>
- Even less information on explaining mechanisms
  - Mindfulness could improve our comprehension



# CHILDHOOD NEGLECT AND MINDFULNESS

- Most research on mindfulness and CN includes other types of traumas:
  - Poor, insufficient behavioral repertoire to deal with painful internal states (e.g. avoidance, dissociation)<sup>1</sup>
  - Emotional regulation acquired with foremost attachment figures<sup>2</sup>
    - Limited emotional regulation could be interpreted as a lack of mindfulness<sup>3</sup>

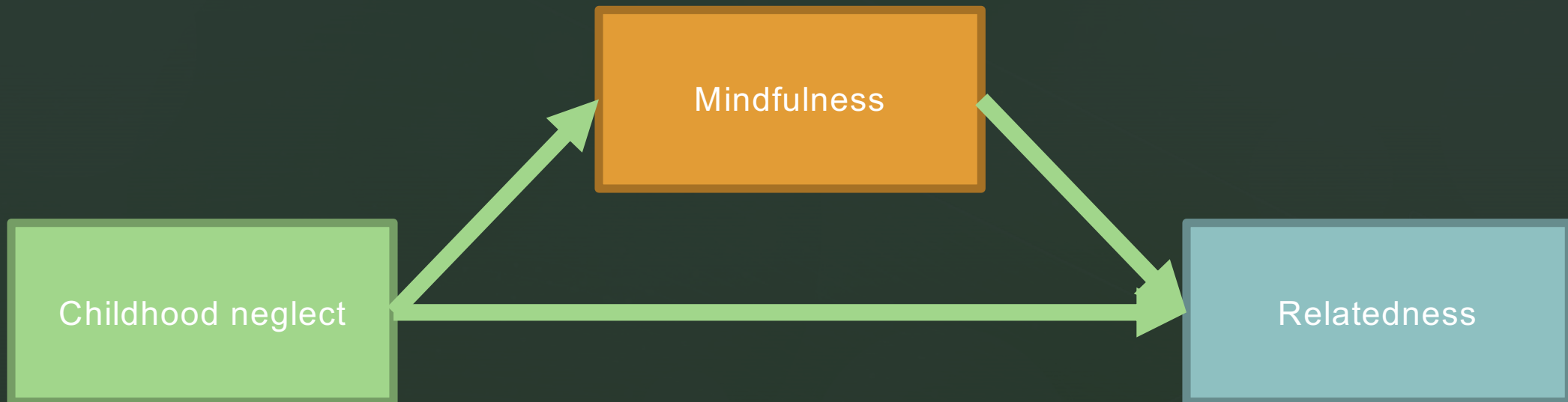
<sup>1</sup> : Briere & Runtz, 2002 ; <sup>2</sup> : Bowlby, 1973 ; <sup>3</sup> : Briere, 2002

# ▶ MINDFULNESS AND ADULT RELATEDNESS

- Mindfulness dimensions associated with self-expression in various social situations: **observation** linked to more empathy ; **description**, **acting with awareness** and **non-judging** traits related to better identification and description of one's feelings<sup>1</sup>
- Low mindfulness could be associated to poor adult relatedness<sup>2</sup>
  - E.g.: more conflicts, abandon concerns, idealization

# OBJECTIVE

*EXAMINE THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS (5 DIMENSIONS) IN THE LINK UNITING CHILDHOOD NEGLECT AND ADULT RELATEDNESS*



# RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPANTS

## 480 ADULTS – GENERAL POPULATION, RECRUITED ONLINE

- 69% WOMEN, 31% MEN
- AGE: FROM 18 TO 75 YEARS OLD (M = 29,4 ; *ET* = 10,84)
- MOSTLY FRENCH CANADIAN (96%)
- MOSTLY HETEROSEXUAL (91%)
- FULL-TIME WORKERS (37%)
  - Mostly students (51%)
- IN A RELATIONSHIP (74%)
- HIGHER EDUCATION (95 %)
- ≤ 40 000 \$CDN INCOME (33%)

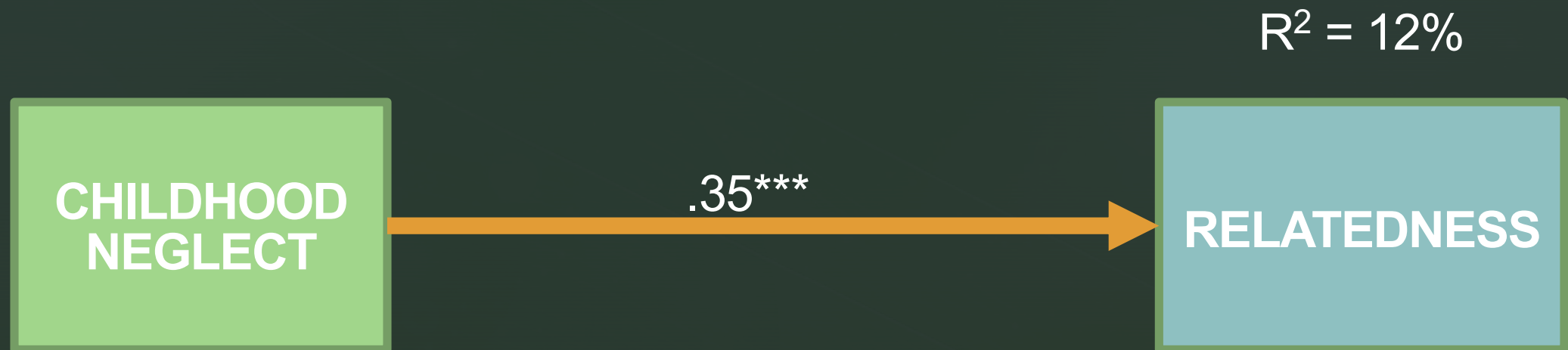
# MEASURES

- **CHILDHOOD NEGLECT:** Comprehensive Child Maltreatment Scale (Higgins & McCabe, 2001) & Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein et al., 2003), 5 items ( $a = .74$ ).
  - Total score including physical and emotional neglect
- **ADULT RELATEDNESS:** 1 dimension from the Inventory of Altered Self-Capacities (Briere, 2000 ; Bigras & Godbout, validated) ; 3 scales: interpersonal conflicts, idealization-disillusionment, abandonment concerns, 27 items ( $a = .95$ ).
  - Based on a normative sample, clinical cut-offs are available, T-score of 70 or higher
- **MINDFULNESS:** Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMIND short version, Baer et al., 2009), 12 items ( $a = .78$ ).

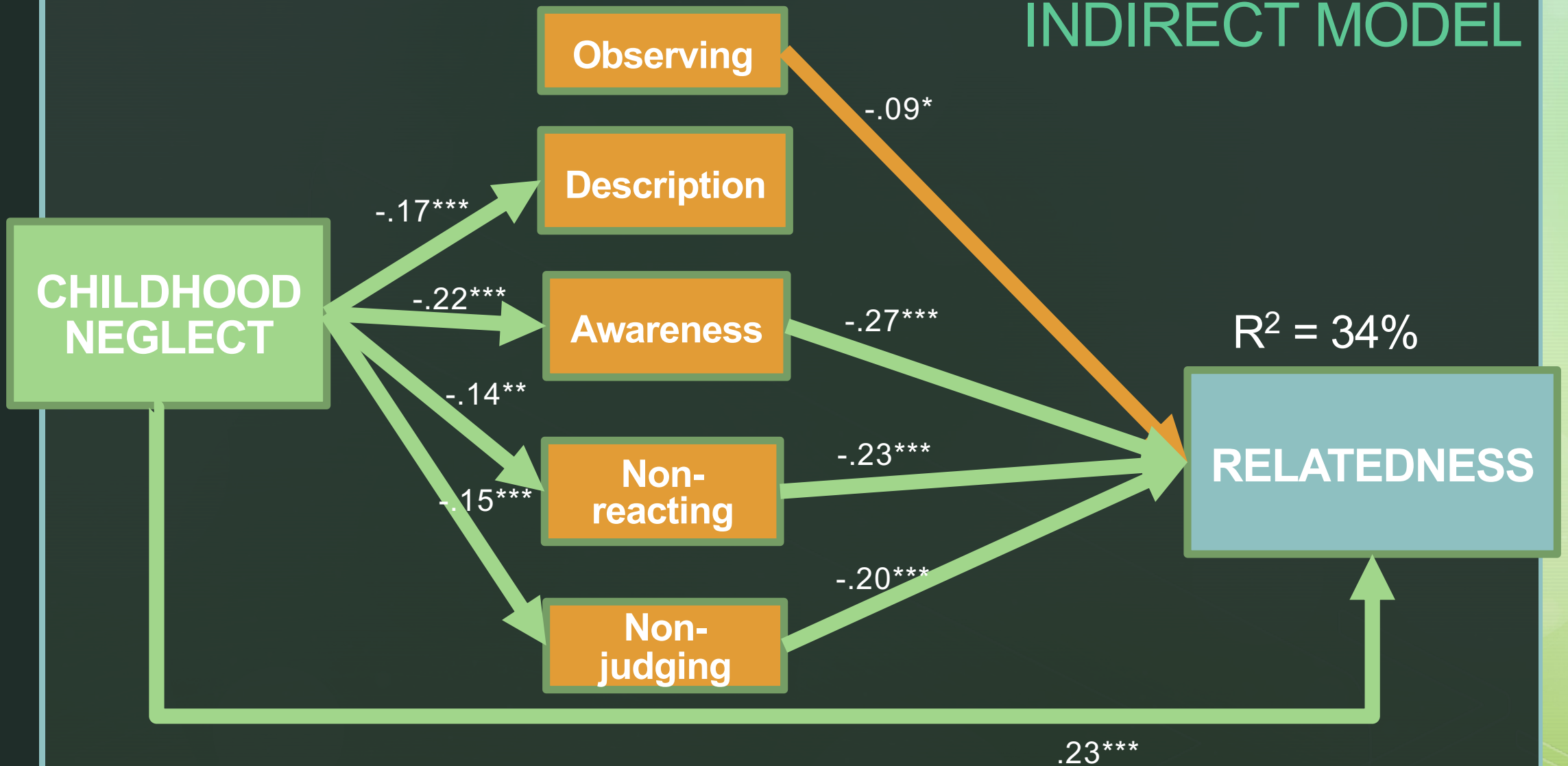
# RESULTS

<b>CHILDHOOD NEGLECT</b> (SCORE FROM 0 TO 24)	$M = 4,06$ ; $SD = 5,20$ Experienced CN: 66% <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Emotional: 64,2% (7,4% at least once a month)</li><li>- Physical: 10,8% (1,4% at least once a month)</li></ul>
<b>ADULT RELATEDNESS</b> (SCORE FROM 27 TO 111 )	$M = 48,44$ ; $SD = 17,38$ Clinically significant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interpersonal conflict: 28%</li><li>- Idealization/disillusionment: 19%</li><li>- Abandonment concerns: 25%</li></ul>
<b>MINDFULNESS</b> (SCORE FROM 42 TO 112)	$M = 81,93$ ; $SD = 11,86$

# RESULTS DIRECT MODEL



# RESULTS INDIRECT MODEL



Model fit :  $X^2 = 3.003$  ( $df = 3$ ),  $p = .39$ , Ratio  $X^2/df = 1.60$ ; RMSEA = .02 90% CI [.00; .08]; CFI = 1.00; TLI = 1.00



# DISCUSSION

- All dimensions of mindfulness (except observing) are linked to CN and relatedness
- 3 specific dimensions have a partial mediational effect in the link between CN-relatedness: **acting with awareness**, **non-reacting** and **non-judging**.
  - Examples (conflicts – non-reactivity, idealization/disillusionment – acting with awareness, abandonment concerns – non-reactivity and non-judgment)
- Similar results to DeKeyser et al. (2008), whose study did not measure **non-reactivity**

## LIMITS

- Cross-sectional design
- Half of sample : full-time students
- Data collected among individuals and not dyads

## FUTURE RESEARCH

- Study long-term effects of CN
- Document the role of mindfulness in interpersonal relationships
- Replicate study with longitudinal design to establish causal effects
- Replicate analyzes with each relatedness scale
- Control for other types of traumas (sexual abuse, physical violence, etc.)

# IMPLICATIONS

- CN is a form of trauma that has repercussions on adult relatedness
- Mindfulness-based interventions could help survivors of CN to form and maintain more fulfilling relationships
  - Results on couple relationships and family therapy  
(improve communication, emotional regulation, empathy, and relationship well-being) <sup>1</sup>
  - Forming significant relationships could foster psychological adjustment through more positive representations of self, others and environment<sup>2</sup>
- More research is necessary to better understand how to develop mindfulness in a relational context

THANK YOU!  
QUESTIONS?

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# ANNEX 1. RESULTS – BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

	Nég.	Obs.	Desc.	Cons.	Non-Réact.	Non-Jug.	Ffmind	CSR
Nég.	1	.039	-.154**	-.217**	-.113*	-.176**	-.204**	.346**
Obs.	.039	1	.09**	.126**	.320**	-.130**	.558**	-.168**
Desc.	-.154**	.309**	1	.432**	.283**	.218**	.764**	-.337**
Cons.	-.217**	.126**	.432**	1	.030	.442**	.684**	-.423**
Non-Réact.	-.113*	.320**	.283**	.030	1	-.102*	.495**	-.283**
Non-Jug.	-.176**	-.130**	.218**	.442**	-.102*	1	.473**	-.322**
Ffmind	-.204**	.558**	.764**	.684**	.495**	.473**	1	-.509**
CSR	.346**	-.168**	-.337**	-.423**	-.283**	-.322**	-.509**	1