

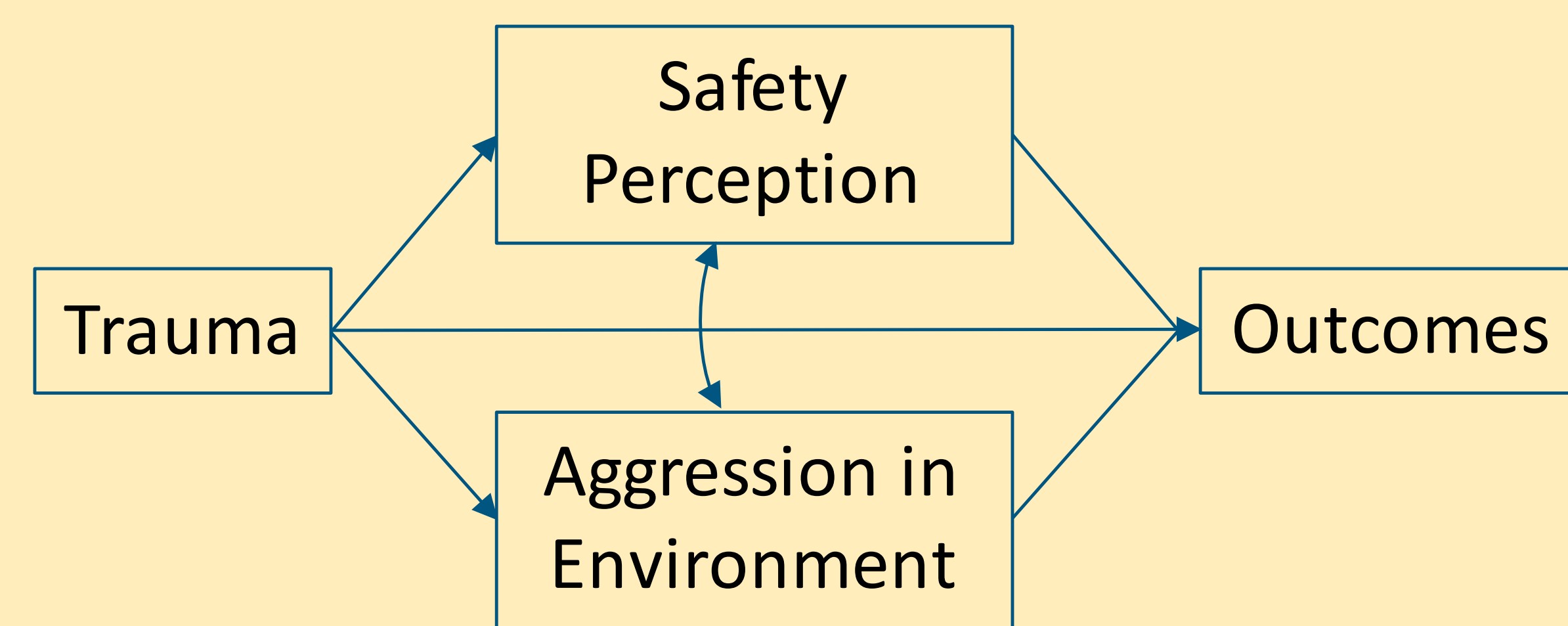
# Trauma, Perception of Safety, and Outcomes

Jonathan C. Huefner<sup>1</sup>

## Background

Safety is a core dimension of quality in group homes, and should include a youth's own assessment of the setting's safety. Attending to youths' perspective allows them an active role in their treatment and is related to improved outcomes. Feeling safe in residential care is associated with the level peer aggression in the environment, and can itself lead to youth responding aggressively in turn. A history of trauma also impacts youths' perception of environmental threat and their response to perceived threats. This study examines the relationship between youth perception of safety, history of trauma, level of aggression, and outcomes in a residential care setting.

## Conceptual Model



## Method

- Home-level data from 2016 through 2018 were used in analysis.
- Family Teacher certifications formed the basis for all measures (133 instances).
- Measures aggregated by teaching-family home:
  - Trauma from admissions data
  - Exposure – count of ACES
  - Symptoms – yes/no for 3 or more
- Safety perception from certification process (3 sources: youth, parent/guardian, program consultant)
- Aggression from daily incident reports during month of Family Teacher certification
- Outcomes for those departing from home within six months of certification (placement at departure, program completion, percentage of goal met at departure)
- Data analyses used Structural Equation Modeling

## Take-Aways

1. Trauma exposure was predictive of meeting a higher percentage of treatment goals and successfully completing the program. This provides support for the Teaching-Family model as an effective program for youth with histories of trauma.
2. Parent and consultant perception of safety was related to better treatment goal and program completion outcomes. Youth perception of safety was related to less likelihood of program completion at departure.



## Supporting Numbers

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Trauma				
Exposure	3.6	1.1	1.2	7
Symptoms	2.5	1.5	0	8
Perception of Safety				
Youth	4.8	.28	3.5	5.0
Parent/guardian	4.4	.47	2.5	5.0
Consultant	3.8	.64	2.0	5.0
Aggression in environment	1.7	2.3	0	17
Outcomes				
Departure setting (ROLES)	4.4	.8	2	6
Completed program	64%	36%	0%	100%
Goals met at departure	81%	22%	15%	100%

Table 2. Standardized path coefficients for mediator variables.

Predictors	Mediators			
	Youth	Parent	Consultant	Aggression
Trauma Exposure	-.028	-.129	-.082**	.233**
Trauma Symptoms	.175***	-.084*	-.052	-.154

Table 3. Standardized path coefficients for outcome variables.

Predictors	Outcomes		
	ROLES	Goals	Completion
Trauma			
Exposure	-.180**	.239***	.177**
Symptoms	-.103	.053	-.042
Perception of Safety			
Youth	-.007	-.074	-.110**
Parent/guardian	-.013	.080‡	.104**
Consultant	.049	.144**	.078
Aggression in environment	-.374***	-.209***	-.365***

Table 4. Correlations for residuals in path analysis.

Trauma exposure	Trauma symptoms		
	.360***		
Youth PS	Parent PS	Consultant PS	Aggression
Parent PS	.098	.243***	-.031
Consultant PS		.289***	-.026
			-.116
ROLES	Goals	Completion	
Goals	.400***	.397***	
		.639***	

Key: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , ‡  $p < .10$ .

<sup>1</sup>Child and Family Translational Research Center  
Boys Town, Nebraska, USA  
Jonathan.Huefner@boystown.org