

A TRIAD OF PERSPECTIVES ON PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURIES IN THE WORKPLACE – THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Presented by

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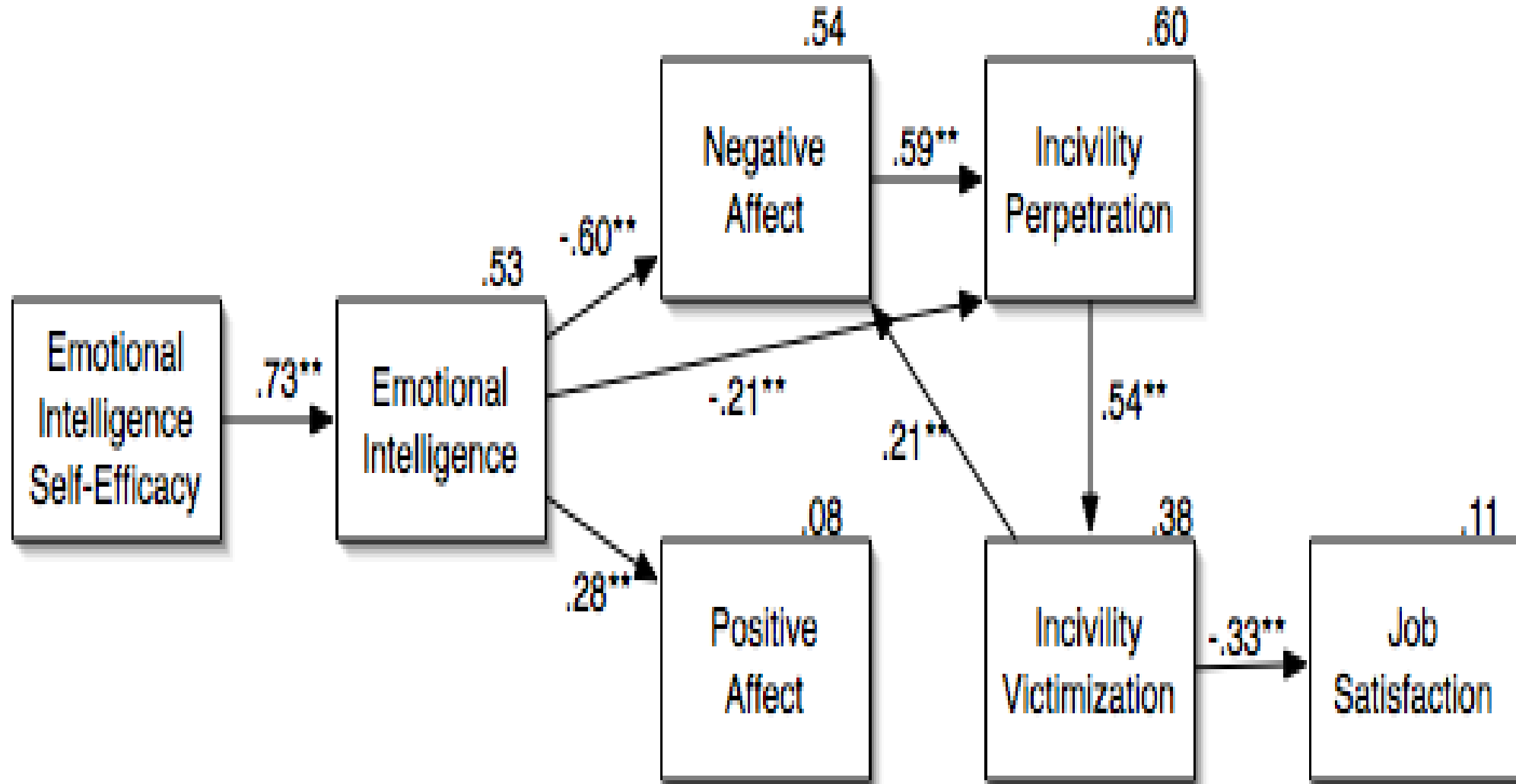
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ABSTRACT

A recent Australian survey revealed increasing levels of emotional distress and dissatisfaction in the practice of law, particularly for those who are strongly committed to their profession (Bergin, 2011). The nature of the adversary system, having to think like a lawyer, as well as the fear of losing a case, can give rise to hostility, suspicion, manipulation and cynicism leading to the negative feelings of anger, fear, irritation and impatience (Elwork, 1995). Negative emotions are signals of emotional distress. High levels of emotional distress has been linked to depression and anxiety sleep disturbances, deterioration of interpersonal relationships as well as chemical dependency and substance abuse. High levels emotional intelligence is inversely correlated with negative emotions (Kirk, Schutte & Hine, 2009). Having the emotional self-efficacy or confidence to identify, think about, understand and manage negative emotions (Kirk, Schutte & Hine, 2008) can flush out the anger and fear and give an awareness to the reasons for the emotional distress and psychological injury.

Model of Workplace Functioning

Kirk, Schutte & Hine (2009)



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Emotional self-efficacy significantly predicted dispositional emotional intelligence, which in turn was a significant predictor of respondents' negative and positive affect. Also as predicted: (1) individuals with higher levels of negative affect were more likely to be perpetrators of workplace incivility than individuals with lower levels of negative affect, (2) individuals who engaged in higher levels of incivility perpetration were more likely to be victims of incivility than individuals who never or rarely engaged in uncivil behaviour, and (3) being a victim of incivility was associated with higher levels of negative affect and lower levels of job satisfaction. Positive affect was unrelated to either incivility perpetration or victimization

EMOTIONAL SELF-EFFICACY (ESE)

Kirk, Schutte & Hine, 2008

SELF PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONING

- People who are more confident in their ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotion also consider themselves more employable
- Emotional self-efficacy is an important predictor of employability
- Dacre Pool & Qualter (2013)



Confidence is the Key

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

4 Branch Model


- To Identify an Emotion
 - Use the Emotion to Facilitate Thought
 - Understand the Emotion
 - Manage the Emotion
-
- In Both the Self and Others

Salovey and Mayer. (1990); Mayer, Salovey and Caruso .(2002)

TREATMENT INTERVENTIONS

- Psycho-Education
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Behavioural Interventions
- Relaxation Skills
- Stress Management
- Interpersonal Therapy
- Anger Management
- Problem Solving Skills Training
- Communication Skills
- Assertive Communication

Clinical Framework

- Measurable treatment effectiveness  regularly monitored
- Assess and manage psychosocial barriers
- Build self-management capabilities of injured worker
- Specific treatment goals
- Evidence-based treatments
- Effective communication with all key stakeholders

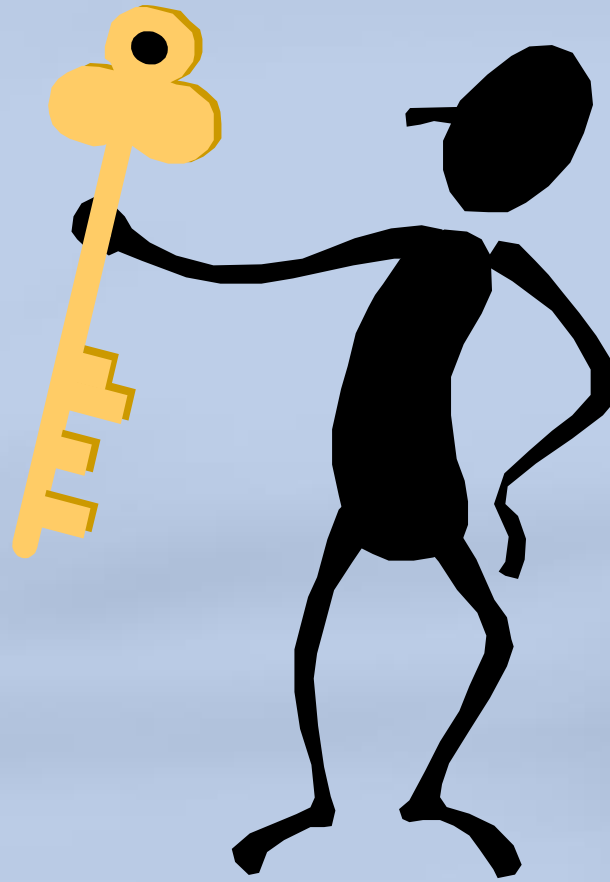
KEY FACTORS

- **Poor leadership**
- **Appropriate alternative duties not made available**
- **Delays in claims determination**
- **Perceived inequity 'I will punish them'**
- **Perceived unfair treatment;**
- **Blame cycle: I am distressed - Must be someone's fault**
- **Externalise anger - Blame employer/insurer**

KNOW THYSELF

- AN ANCIENT GREEK SAYING TRACED BACK TO THE GREEK PHILOSOPHER SOCRATES (469 - 399 B.C.)

EMOTIONS ARE THE KEY



TRIGGERS

THOUGHTS



EMOTION

- What if I fail
- I am never appreciated
- I have to win at all costs
- I just want to be accepted

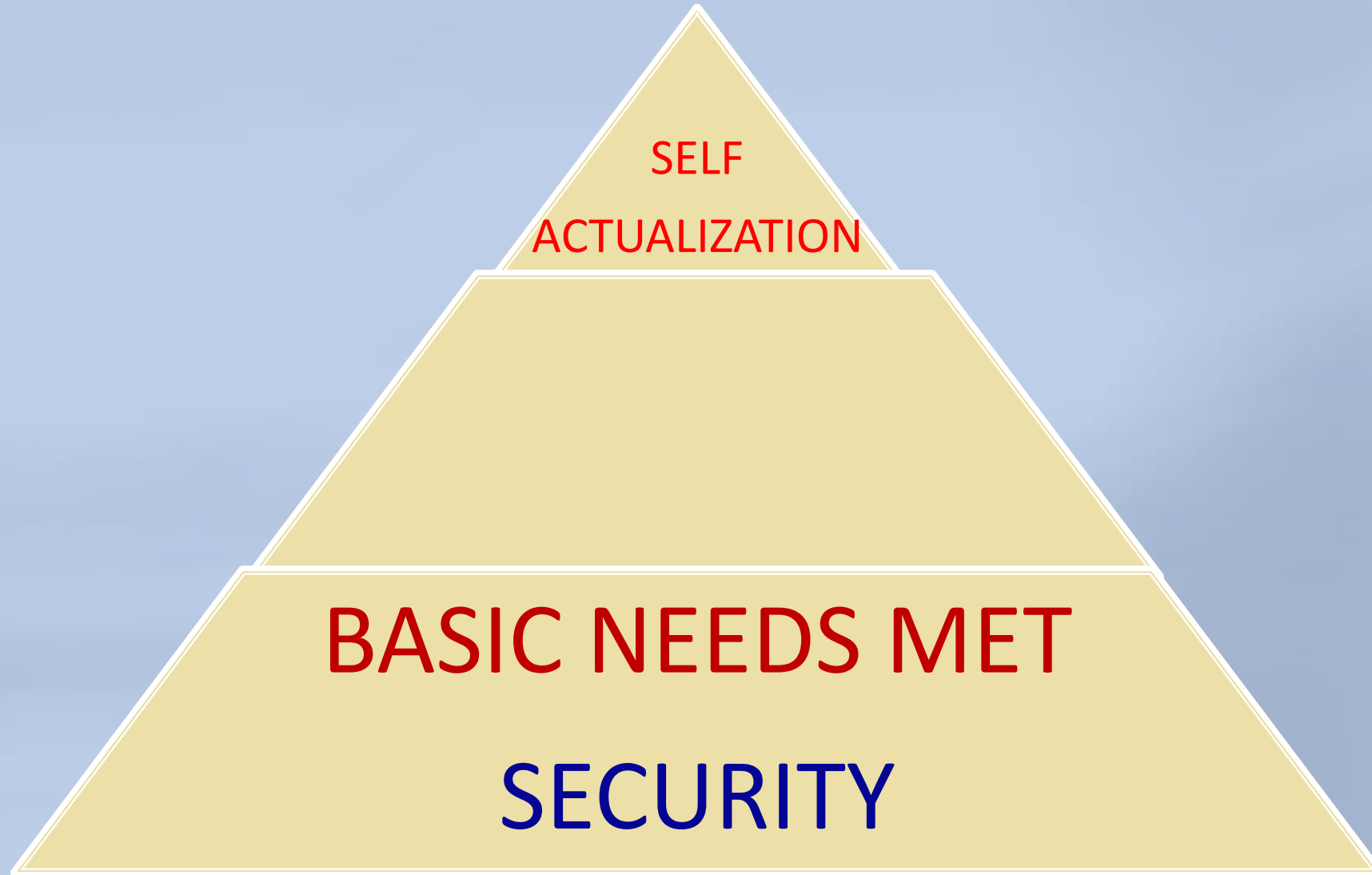
- Hurt
- Frustration
- Disappointment
- Resentment

EMOTION TO BEHAVIOUR



- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| ● Hurt | Stop Communicating |
| ● Frustration | Stomp Around |
| ● Disappointment | Brood |
| ● Resentment | Seethe Inside |

MASLOW'S HEIRARCHARY OF NEEDS



INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES





**THE LIMBIC SYSTEM AND
PREFRONTAL CORTEX
AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

- Arouses the sympathetic NS - right prefrontal cortex
- Speeds breathing – increases BP- tightens facial muscles
- Narrows momentary range of focus and attention

READY FOR FIGHT FLIGHT OR FRIGHT

EMOTION REGULATION

From Defensive Behaviour to Social Engagement

This requires two important adaptive tasks

1. Assess the risk

2. Is the environment perceived as safe

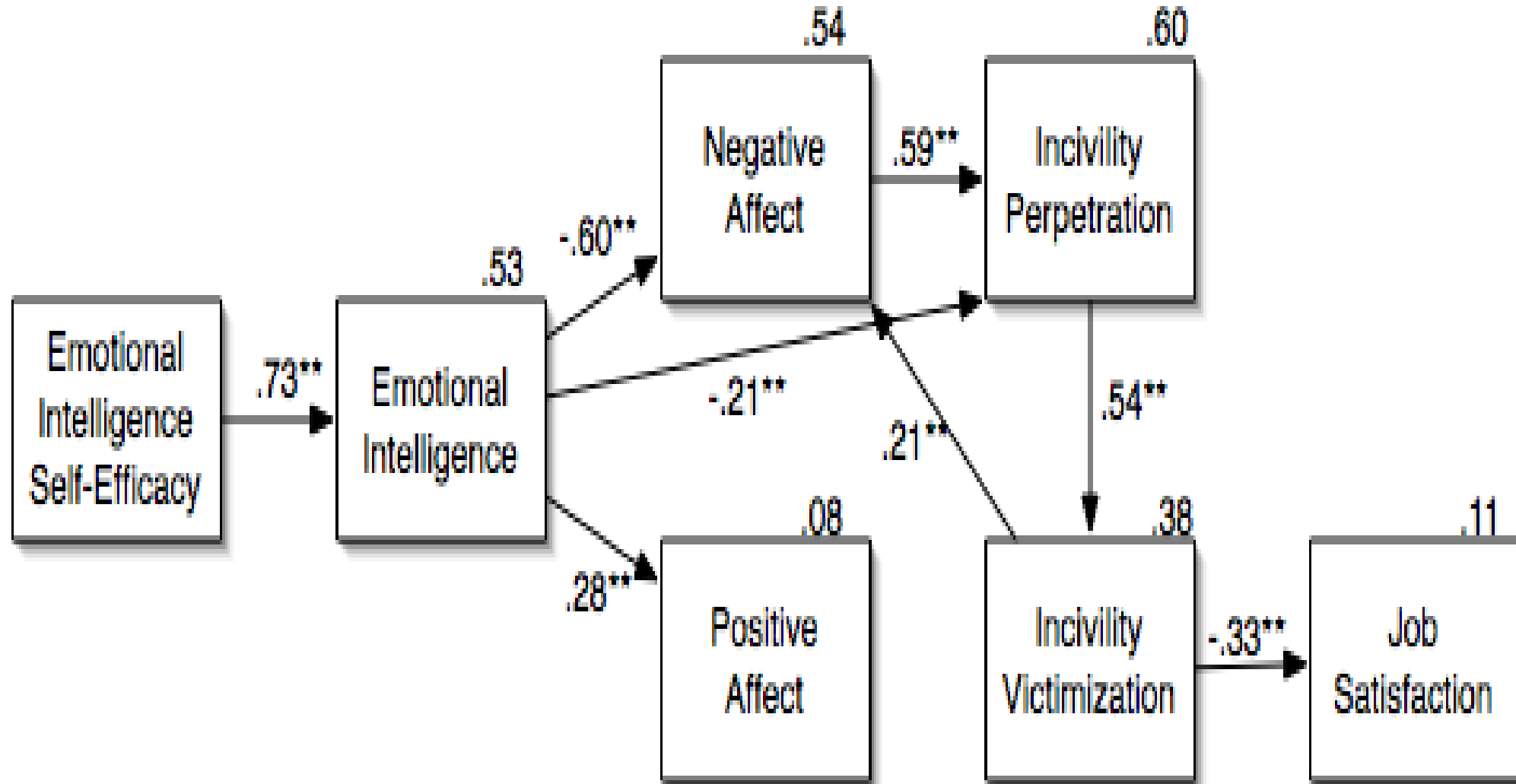
A safe environment will inhibit the more primitive limbic structures that control fight, flight, or freeze behaviours

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- **Triggers constructive cognitive and physiological responses**
- **Arouses the parasympathetic NS - left prefrontal cortex**
- **Slows breathing-drops our blood pressure**
- **Calms and expands ideas and possibilities that occur to us in the moment**

Model of Workplace Functioning

Kirk, Schutte & Hine (2009)



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