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**EMOTION REGULATION IN RESPONSE TO NEGATIVE INTERPERSONAL
EVENTS AT WORK**

A Dissertation in

Psychology

by

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ABSTRACT

To better understand how employees manage their emotions during and following negative interpersonal events (NIEs), I propose that employees flexibly regulate themselves using multiple strategies. I also propose that the choice of strategy combinations is driven by characteristics of the situation (emotional intensity, typicality, controllability, responsibility), and that strategy combinations differ in terms of their influence on employee performance and well-being. Using multilevel latent profile analysis at the event level with faculty and staff in a high-stress work context, results indicate six profiles of emotion regulation that are distinguished by a primary use of engagement or disengagement strategies, or a mix of both. Higher negative emotional intensity, controllability, and responsibility were associated with using disengagement regulation profiles, while lower typicality was associated with engagement profiles. Employees had higher supervisor-rated job performance when using multiple engagement strategies compared to using single engagement or disengagement strategies, but lower job performance self-efficacy when they did not regulate. Employees retaliated the most during times they used multiple strategies or did not regulate. The six profiles differed in terms of experienced physical symptoms but not beyond event negative emotional intensity. These results are discussed in terms of their implications for theory and practice.

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Emotion Regulation in Response to Negative Interpersonal Events at Work

Chapter 1: Introduction

In response to stressful negative interpersonal events (NIEs), emotions are evolved response tendencies that function to alert individuals of threats and direct their attention to, and mobilize their effort toward, preserving their goals or self-concept (James, 1894; Tooby & Cosmides, 1990). To the extent that emotions have evolved to aid us in response to specific problems or situations, they are most adaptive when they are expressed under the circumstances for which they evolved (Coifman & Bonanno, 2009). Interpersonally, for example, feeling anger can signal that a socially acceptable standard of behavior was violated and motivate corrective action to rectify the situation, such as expressing anger to signal dissatisfaction and attain larger concessions from others (van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004).

Yet for employees who must continually deal with these events or while also performing other work tasks, negative emotions are not always functional, advantageous, or appropriate to feel or express in the workplace. In caring work, where employees are expected to be professional, courteous, and positive, showing negative emotions is a violation of role expectations and could reciprocally elicit negative reactions from others. Negative emotions can also derail our attention or narrow it, resulting in a focus on immediate consequences over long-term implications of behavior (Clore & Huntsinger, 2007). In order to reduce the inopportune experience of negative emotions as they occur, employees attempt to regulate their emotions. Emotion regulation helps employees exert control over their emotional experience to effectively cope with the event and to perform their jobs well.

To regulate emotions and reduce stress, research most commonly distinguishes between the use of engagement and disengagement types of emotion regulation strategies (e.g., Geisler,

Kubiak, Siewert, & Weber, 2013; Sheppes, Scheibe, Suri, & Gross, 2011). Engagement strategies involve attempts to modify one's situation or one's emotional reactions before they are fully elicited, while disengagement strategies involve attempts to avoid an emotional response. Evidence broadly shows that reappraisal (the most commonly studied engagement strategy) and suppression (the most commonly studied disengagement strategy) generally result in positive and negative consequences, respectively (Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012). However, the overwhelming majority of this research has been conducted in laboratory settings where participants are directed to regulate using a single strategy. This is problematic because we know that individuals implement emotion regulation differently when they have the freedom to choose how they regulate (e.g., Gabriel, Daniels, Diefendorff, & Greguras 2015; Sheppes et al., 2011), and in organizational settings employees freely use multiple strategies to regulate their emotional reactions to NIEs (Diefendorff, Richard, & Yang, 2008). Therefore, solely considering emotion regulation one strategy at a time may actually be limiting our understanding of how employees regulate themselves at work, as well as the generalizability of laboratory findings to the field. In addition, situation characteristics of work events are known to instigate different emotion responses that require regulation (e.g., Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004; Diefendorff et al., 2008; Rupp & Spencer, 2006), but organizational research has not yet considered that employees' stress appraisals of NIE characteristics can influence their choice of emotion regulation strategies. This is especially noteworthy because according to stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the ways in which one chooses to regulate are in part determined by his or her appraisal of such characteristics.

In testing these laboratory-based ideas in the field, organizational researchers have focused on two main types of emotion regulation that generally match with engagement and

disengagement regulatory approaches. Deep acting is a type of engagement strategy similar to reappraisal that involves trying to feel the emotions one needs to show to customers. Surface acting is a type of disengagement strategy similar to suppression that involves just trying to show an appropriate expression. Generally, engaging by deep acting is found to be beneficial and disengaging by surface acting is not (Grandey & Melloy, in press). However, these field results are not always consistent (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011), in that the engagement strategy commonly studied (i.e., deep acting) is not always beneficial and the disengagement strategy (i.e., surface acting) is not always problematic (e.g., Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006; Grandey & Melloy, in press; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009). Suppression works better than reappraisal in terms of emotional expression (Webb et al., 2012), and deep acting is linked to worse mood and physical symptoms in a work context, possibly because it is required (Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000).

One potential explanation for these inconsistent findings is the freedom to choose which emotion regulation strategy to use. In other words, even if a certain display is required in the laboratory or the workplace, the strategies themselves would be chosen (Sheppes et al., 2011), which could be helpful or harmful in a given situation (Fisher, Manstead, Evers, Timmers, & Valk, 2004; Troy, Shallcross, & Mauss, 2013). Another explanation is that people are using multiple strategies, which is not captured in laboratory manipulations. In fact, Gabriel et al. (2015) found that if we only look at the average tendency to rely on one strategy over another, the inconsistent findings may be due to a failure to consider that employees' emotion regulation could be effective or ineffective because of other strategies they are also using. They demonstrated the value of using a person-centered profile approach to capture the sets of strategies people use and how they work (or don't) in combination (Gabriel et al., 2015).

However, their cross-sectional study focused on the association between person-level tendencies to deep act (i.e., reappraise) or surface act (i.e., suppress) with employee well-being.

I extend this work to argue for an event-level profile approach, which provides a more nuanced view of how employees regulate their emotions in response to different types of negative events at work, recognizes that employees may use multiple strategies to manage their emotions, and tests whether certain combinations of strategies may more or less effective than others. I propose that examining employee emotion regulation in terms of multiple strategy use can account for prior mixed findings by considering that using strategies in combination may be more beneficial than using strategies in isolation, and certain strategies may supplement or complement one another when used together, ultimately resulting in more beneficial outcomes.

In the present paper, I aim to offer a number of contributions to the existing literature. First, I develop conceptual reasoning theorizing emotion regulation as a dynamic, event-based process such that employees situationally use multiple strategies to cope with negative interpersonal events. I propose that this approach helps to explain inconsistent prior findings of emotion regulation, which involved focusing primarily on two emotion regulation strategies, and studying them separately (person level). I propose that although individuals may tend to use certain strategies on average, perceptions of certain (highly stressful) event characteristics (event level) can override a person tendency and result in using engagement and disengagement strategies in combination. This new way of thinking contributes to both the psychology (Gross, 1998, 2015; Bonnano & Burton, 2013) and management literatures (e.g., Cote, 2005) by drawing from Gross' established (1998, 2015) five-strategy model of emotion regulation, and extending the use of multi-level latent profile analysis (MLPA; Muthen & Muthen, 2010) from the person-level to the event-level (Gabriel et al., 2015). In doing so, I expand our understanding of emotion

regulation at work beyond reappraisal and suppression to include the wider range of strategies that are known to be used by employees (e.g., situation modification, situation selection, distraction) and how they occur in combination with each other (Diefendorff et al., 2008).

Second, I develop event-level explanations for why certain sets of strategies are more likely to be used than others in a work context and these at the event level in a field setting. The study of emotion regulation at work has given very limited attention to what predicts the use of certain emotion regulation strategies and not others. Instead, research focuses primarily on Big Five personality traits, felt mood, and display rules (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Grandey & Melloy, in press). While these predictors speak to trait or perceptual individual differences, stressful events (i.e., NIEs) are the most common cause for employees to have to regulate their emotions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and some strategies are more often reportedly used over others depending on the type of event (Diefendorff et al., 2008). I integrate theories of stress appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985) to show how appraisal dimensions of stressful NIEs (typicality, controllability, responsibility) shape emotion regulation strategy use and make the use of certain combinations of strategies more or less likely at work. Consistent with my arguments, an experimental study showed that intensity of events predicted strategy selection in the laboratory (e.g., Sheppes et al., 2011), and a field survey showed that some strategies were more likely to be used than others when thinking about certain types of work events (interpersonal conflict, overload; Diefendorff et al., 2008). My study extends this limited body of work as one of the first field studies to recognize that specific event appraisals (i.e., typicality, controllability, responsibility) determine the combinations of emotion regulation strategies. The idea development and empirical evidence permits us to understand more effectively when employees are more likely to use certain strategies over others.

Third, I examine the effectiveness of using certain strategies over others, while considering a wider range of what would indicate “effective” than traditionally studied in this literature. Much research on workplace emotion regulation focuses on how differences in strategy usage affects employee work mood, work attitudes, and job burnout (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011; Webb et al., 2012), with less attention to relational/performance outcomes (i.e., did the strategy help the employee to perform well?) and, more broadly, how the employee sees him/herself (i.e., did the strategy come with a cost to the self?). The present study not only provides a more nuanced look at the emotion regulation strategies used, but also expands the criteria tested as outcomes of those strategies. Specifically, I test how event-based emotion regulation strategy profiles are linked to post-event well-being (i.e., physical symptoms), self-concept (i.e., job performance self-efficacy) relationships (i.e., desire for retaliation or forgiveness), and behavioral effectiveness. As such, this study contributes to know more about the effectiveness of the strategies, not just their likelihood. By knowing which combinations of strategies are both evoked by certain events and more effective, training around managing workplace stressors can be developed.

Overall, I am interested in answering three primary research questions. I begin with the first:

1. To regulate emotions for NIEs at work, do employees rely upon multiple regulation strategies in combination with one another, or do they rely upon single strategies; what determines the likelihood of employees using certain strategy combinations over others?

Theoretical Background: Emotion Regulation at Work

Emotions have motivational and adaptive social functions that are fairly automatic (Barrett, Oschner, & Gross, 2007), but emotions can be controlled such that emotional

experience (internally) and expression (externally) can be modulated during negative interpersonal events (NIEs). This on-going process is termed emotion regulation, defined as, “the process by which individuals influence the emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them” (Gross, 1998, p. 275).

Emotion Regulation Model

According to the dominant model of emotion regulation, recently updated (Gross, 1998; 2015), emotions can be regulated through the use of five different strategies, which have been grouped as two main types: engagement and disengagement emotion regulation. Historically, the terms “engagement” and “disengagement” emotion regulation strategies have been called “antecedent-focused” and “response-focused”, respectively. In Gross’ (1998) original process-oriented framework, antecedent-focused emotion regulation was thought to be performed ahead of an emotional response to mitigate it before full evocation. Conversely, response-focused emotion regulation was performed reactively to suppress an emotional response that has already occurred. However, Gross’ (2015) updated model of emotion regulation now acknowledges that individuals can choose strategies over the course of an emotional response, and recent research in support of this has come to favor the terms engagement and disengagement regulation so as not to presume temporal ordering (Geisler et al., 2013; Pliskin, Halperin, Bar-Tal, & Sheppes, in press; Sheppes et al., 2011).

Engagement strategies attempt to alter a stimulus or one’s perceptions of a stimulus, thereby changing one’s emotional reaction and reducing the need for further emotion regulation (Gross, 2015). The most commonly studied type of engagement emotion regulation is *reappraisal*, which involves reinterpreting how one thinks about a stressful stimulus or event, which can be achieved by reframing it positively or through perspective-taking. Yet, beyond

reappraisal, engagement emotion regulation may also include *situation modification*, whereby individuals take direct action on external, physical environments in order to change their emotional impact (Gross, 2015). Examples of situation modification may include a teacher reprimanding a bullying student, or a female employee explaining to a male client that sexist jokes are not appropriate.

In contrast, disengagement strategies are used to minimize one's emotional response in reaction to a stressful stimulus. *Suppression* is the most typically studied type of disengagement emotion regulation, which involves avoiding feeling or expressing an emotion. However, disengagement emotion regulation strategies also include distraction and situation selection. *Distraction* refers to diverting one's attentional focus on aspects other than the emotionally evocative stimulus. If an employee does encounter a NIE, he or she might use distraction to avoid thinking or ruminating about the event and thus attempt to avoid an emotional reaction altogether. *Situation selection* refers to seeking or avoiding certain situations that one knows will elicit certain emotions. Using situation selection regulates emotions by ensuring certain emotions are likely to be avoided. This can be done by both selecting situations for oneself and managing the situations others are put into if it would result in an experience that emotionally affects the regulator. In terms of NIEs at work, using situation selection might entail avoiding interacting with certain clients or coworkers, as well as ensuring two subordinates are not placed into situations that are likely to result in interpersonal conflict.

Meta-analyses have shown that, when used in response to stressful emotional stimuli, the strategies differ in terms of their effectiveness for emotional outcomes (Webb et al., 2012). In terms of self-reported emotional experience, engaging by reappraisal is reliably shown to be more beneficial than using disengagement strategies like suppression and distraction. However,

disengaging with suppression is more beneficial than reappraisal and distraction in terms of behaviors (e.g., emotional expressions), but worse in terms of physiological response (e.g., skin conductance, heart rate). Reappraisal and distraction did not differ from one another in reducing physiological response, but both were better than suppression. Situation modification and situation selection were not examined by Webb et al. due to fact that they are rarely tested in the laboratory. However, correlational studies suggest that these can be effective strategies for coping during periods of emotional distress (e.g., Belzer, D’Zurilla, & Maydeu-Olivares, 2002; Tepper, Duffy, & Shaw, 2001; Zapf & Gross, 2001).

These findings are limited, however, because they refer to discrete strategy use (one strategy vs. another; emotion regulation vs. not), rather than multiple strategy use. Furthermore, the participants across all studies were instructed to regulate in specific ways, and Webb et al. (2012) acknowledge “that further research is needed to understand...the spontaneous selection of particular [emotion regulation] strategies” (p. 799). While it is important to be able to understand and compare the effectiveness of each strategy relative to one another, perhaps the best insights into natural strategy selection can be gleaned from field research on emotion regulation, commonly studied in the workplace as emotional labor.

Emotion Regulation at Work: Emotional Labor

In examining emotion regulation at work, emotional labor (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983) is a parallel research stream to the model originally proposed by Gross (1998). Grandey (2016) linked Hochschild’s idea of deep acting (i.e., trying to feel the emotions one needs to show to customers) as an engagement strategy where one uses cognitions to change mood, similar to reappraisal, and surface acting (i.e., just changing the expressions shown to others) as a disengagement strategy, similar to suppression. Grandey (2016) recently reviewed how these

concepts are not a perfect fit, but these terms and measures of emotional labor tend to be used in organizational research so are relevant to this inquiry (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2015). I will draw on both the field and lab-based evidence, but I will focus on the emotion regulation terms.

Generally, research shows that the tendency to use reappraisal (i.e., deep acting) is an effective strategy in response to negative emotional events at work in terms of work attitudes and job strain, while suppression (i.e., surface acting) tends to be associated with maladaptive outcomes (e.g., Hulschegeer & Schewe, 2011). Yet recent organizational research offers more nuanced insight suggesting this good-bad dichotomy is not appropriate; reappraisal is not always beneficial, and suppression is not always detrimental for work attitudes, service performance, and employee well-being (e.g., Beal et al., 2006; Chi, Grandey, & Diamond, 2011; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009).

The Limitations of Examining Person-level Tendencies for Emotion Regulation at Work

The evidence above focuses on the person-level usage of emotion regulation strategies – either the manipulation of a specific strategy by instructions, or the extent of reporting using a specific strategy at work. The researchers then assess the relationship of the variable with an outcome. Such an approach can be considered variable-centered research. Variable-centered research uses approaches and theories that most often emphasize relating separate variables to linearly and independently predict outcome variables (Wang & Hanges, 2011). These relationships are analyzed across people, such that data is assumed to be homogenous (i.e., people scoring similarly on a construct are assumed to be the same). By contrast, there has been a call for more person-centered approaches (e.g., latent profile analysis) (Weiss & Rupp, 2011). Person-centered analyses are inductive approaches that account for heterogeneity within how people respond to the environment, calling for the importance of examining how a person may

use multiple strategies (variables) in combination and to varying degrees to jointly understand the effect on outcomes.

I propose that these mixed findings are due to a limitation of variable-centered research. Variable-centered approaches do not account for the fact that several strategies can be used in unique combinations with one another (Wang & Hanges, 2011), especially as one considers more than one strategy (though 2 way interactions can be examined, 3-way, 4-way, or more interactions often become exceedingly difficult to detect and interpret). In addressing this issue, Gabriel et al. (2015) used a person-centered approach to examine latent profiles of emotional labor actors and found that a high tendency to use deep acting (i.e., reappraisal) was only beneficial in terms of employee well-being when accompanied by a low, but not high, tendency to use surface acting (i.e., suppression). As such an approach can determine the nuanced relationships between combinations of two regulation strategies, using a person-centered approach has a high potential value for examining combinations of more specific strategies. However, this approach is also limited because it focuses on person level profiles at one point in time, assuming that they are constant and stable; it does not recognize that people use different strategies in response to different events.

Situational Emotion Regulation Strategies at Work

Researchers are beginning to recognize that choice of emotion regulation strategy is not necessarily a between-person phenomenon, where individuals simply differ by the choice of strategy they tend to use and experience ill- or well-being depending on that strategy. Instead, there is an increasing recognition of choosing strategies depending on situational circumstances, and that individuals may employ different strategies depending on how they appraise their current situation (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). Gross (2015) himself acknowledges this, stating,

“...people may be maximally successful in pursuing their own idiosyncratic goals if they dynamically adjust the emotion regulation strategies they employ across situations” (Gross, 2015, p. 17). In this vein, Gross’ (2015) process model is also updated to suggest that individuals use emotion regulation strategies in combination and in response to the appraisal of events.

In terms of emotion regulation at work, studies indicate that employees can regulate themselves in more than one way, and during the same negative event. Using a cross-sectional, person-centered approach, Gabriel et al. (2015) examined latent profiles of emotional labor actors among service employees. The results showed that employees reported concurrent-but-variable levels of tendency to use both reappraisal and suppression in their jobs (i.e., high and low levels of both reappraisal and suppression). Moreover, taking a within-person methodological approach, Gabriel and Diefendorff (2015) conducted a call-center experiment whereby student participants either experienced interpersonal mistreatment only at the beginning of a call (service recovery condition), or in increasing intensity throughout a call (service failure condition). Participants then heard a playback of their call and rated their use of reappraisal and suppression. Results showed that regardless if the call was recovered (i.e., less stressful) or a failure (i.e., more stressful), student participants reported using both reappraisal and suppression when talking to the hostile customer confederates.

Together, these studies are notable because their findings support the prediction that employees use multiple strategies to regulate their emotions, and they use them in combination at the same time. However, these studies examined workplace emotion regulation in terms of deep and surface acting, which are similar to but distinct from the predominate model of emotion regulation (Grandey, 2015). Specifically, deep acting is viewed as an engagement strategy to change one’s emotions; but according to Gross (2015) there are multiple ways to change

emotions, such as through reappraisal *or* situation modification. Thus, while deep acting is often considered reappraisal, employees who report changing their emotions may actually be using other engagement strategies as well. Similarly, surface acting is a disengagement strategy to suppress or fake emotional experience, but there are other disengagement ways to regulate emotions, such as by avoiding them through distraction or situation selection. To the extent that individuals use strategies in combination, they may complement or even undermine the effectiveness of the others. Gabriel et al. (2015) found that reappraisal, for example, was only beneficial in terms of employee well-being when it is used with low (vs. high) suppression.

While Gabriel et al. (2015) found profiles of employees who primarily used reappraisal and suppression, respectively, they also found profiles of low emotional labor (low reappraisal and low suppression). Curiously, low emotional labor actors were not any less likely than reappraisers or suppressors to perceive requirements for regulation. Rather than simply not needing to regulate their emotions, these employees may be regulating by other means than reappraising or suppressing, such as by disengagement with distraction and/or situational selection. This suggests that more clarity can be gained by considering reappraisal and suppression with other in terms of Gross' (2015) more specific taxonomy of strategies.

Supporting that employees do use each of the strategies in Gross' taxonomy, Diefendorff et al. (2008) surveyed active employees for how often they used each of Gross' five emotion regulation strategies at work in the past 30 days. All five strategies were reportedly used by employees at work, with many employees reporting the use of multiple strategies to handle the same events. Additionally, Diefendorff et al. (2008) found that different strategies were used together depending on the event. For example, using more than one strategy, including situation selection, situation modification, and reappraisal, was commonly reported for regulating during

and after interpersonal events. Thus, examining emotion regulation with Gross' strategies can add a level of specificity with which to explicate how, despite one's average tendencies (Gabriel et al., 2015), event-level characteristics can determine the likelihood of employees using these strategy combinations.

To summarize, I draw upon the findings of Gabriel et al. (2015) and integrate Gross' (2015) taxonomy to guide my prediction that employees will exhibit different emotion regulation profiles, including combinations of disengaging suppression (primarily high suppression), disengaging avoidance (combinations of high distraction and situational selection), and engaging regulation (combinations of high reappraisal and situation modification). Therefore, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: In response to NIEs at work, employees will report combinations of engagement and disengagement emotion regulation strategy use.

Work Event Characteristics and Situational Emotion Regulation

Compared to other types of workplace events (e.g., positive events), negative interpersonal events are the most proximal pressures for employees to regulate workplace emotional reactions (Diefendorff et al., 2008; Grandey & Brauburger, 2002) due to their stressful nature. Here, NIEs are considered to be instances of interpersonal mistreatment ranging from incivility and hostility, to harassment and abuse. These events can be both personally experienced, as well as vicariously witnessed, and still elicit an emotional response requiring regulation (Glomb et al., 1997). And as exposure to NIEs increases the need for emotion regulation, individuals may respond either automatically (defaulting to regulatory tendencies) or deliberately (choosing strategies), both guided by situational cues (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007).

Negative interpersonal events provide cues that influence the extent and manner in which they are appraised as stressful (e.g., Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004), and individuals are sensitive to these appraisals that ultimately influence how they vary their behavior to cope (Cheng, 2001; Cheng & Cheung, 2005). Intensely stressful event appraisals even have the potential to override an individual's chronic tendencies, such that individuals regulate according to how they appraise an intensely stressful event in the moment rather than how they might normally. In support of this, Shafir, Schwartz, Blechert, and Scheppes (2015) found in an experiment using behavioral and neural indicators that adult participants' regulatory preferences changed when anticipating high- versus low-intensity stimuli. Specifically, participants who preferred to use reappraisal for low-intensity stimuli increased in their preference for distraction as the stimuli's emotional intensity increased. This suggests that although individuals may report a tendency to use one strategy to a greater extent, their profile of strategies used can change from event to event.

Cognitive-appraisal theories (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985) argue that in response to negative events, individuals consider four important characteristics of the events in order to determine the extent to which the event is stressful and threatening: event emotional intensity, typicality, controllability, and responsibility to address the event. To the extent that events are emotionally intense, uncertain, uncontrollable, or for which an employee has more responsibility, events tend to be appraised as more stressful, likely resulting in the use of different emotion regulation to cope (e.g., Shafir et al., 2015). Given the variation in reported sources and causes of negative emotional arousal at work (Diefendorff et al., 2008), these four characteristics are especially relevant to the work context. I draw from cognitive-appraisal theories to explain how NIEs can be appraised differently, and how these different appraisals result in the use of certain combinations of emotion regulation strategies to cope.

Negative Emotional Intensity.

The negative emotional intensity of an event is one primary driver of emotion regulation strategy choice, both in terms of the type and number of strategies used. Here, event intensity is considered to be the cognitive and physiological activation of negative emotional response.

When events and situations are less emotionally intense, they consume fewer cognitive resources and allow for more information processing that is useful for enabling strategies like reappraisal and situation modification to reinterpret and resolve, respectively (Sheppes & Gross, 2013). As events and situations become more emotionally intense, they can preoccupy thoughts and resources, making it more difficult to effectively interpret the emotional information and constraining the meta-cognitive awareness required to engage.

In fact, neurological evidence of emotion processing by Shafir, Thiruchselvam, Suri, and Gross (2016) suggests that emotional intensity uniquely predicts subjective choice in regulation strategies, such that higher objectively experienced emotional intensity predicts disengagement strategy use (e.g., distraction) over engagement strategies (e.g., reappraisal). Furthermore, across three experiments, Sheppes et al. (2015) show that individuals tend to choose engagement regulation to manage their feelings when the emotional intensity of situations is low, but they choose disengagement regulatory strategies when the emotional intensity is high. Finally, research findings at both the person level (e.g, Dixon-Gordon, Aldao, & de los Reyes, 2015) and event-level (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015) indicate that individuals report using multiple emotion regulation strategies to a greater extent when experienced emotional intensity is high (vs. low).

Hypothesis 2: As NIEs are appraised as more emotionally intense, a) more strategies are used together and b) disengagement strategies are more likely used.

Typicality.

Typicality refers to the degree to which information is known and events are predictable and familiar. To individuals experiencing negative, more certain events, the impetus or reason for the event is more clearly defined. As the event becomes less certain, stress tends to increase because the intentions or implications of the event become more difficult to interpret. In fact, the literature on incivility has shown that the ambiguous to harm nature of incivility is part of what makes it stressful, in that targets trying to understand why the behavior occurred tend to lose focus on the task at hand (Porath, Foulk, & Erez, 2015). As acute events become more uncertain, they tend to be appraised as more emotionally stressful, jarring, or shocking than more certain or predictable ones (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). When events are more uncertain they are more emotionally evocative and intensely stressful because schemas or mental models for dealing with them have not yet been developed. As such, atypicality often elicits feelings of insecurity and fear (Lazarus, 1994), as well as anxiety (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989) that leads to avoidance behavior and risk aversion (Moon, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, & Maue, 2003). When confronted with more uncertain emotionally stressful situations (vs. certain ones), individuals tend to default to the regulation strategies that offer the quickest action toward their emotion response: suppression (Sheppes & Gross, 2011). Moreover, in the absence of clarity, stress associated with atypicality can override cognition and problem-solving capacity, such that it can lead individuals to succumb to immediate impulses to avoid negative emotional experiences, including distraction and situational avoidance (i.e., situation selection) (Tice, Bratslavsky, & Baumeister, 2001). The inherent nature of uncertain events as unfamiliar and unpredictable should make it harder for employees to understand what is going on and to act toward the event, hindering their ability to use engagement forms of emotion regulation. In sum,

employees facing more uncertain NIEs are expected to use disengagement, rather than engagement, emotion regulation strategies to cope.

Hypothesis 3: As NIEs are appraised as less typical/predictable, disengagement strategies are more likely used.

Controllability.

Controllability refers to the extent to which individuals believe they are able to change a negative interpersonal event. Individuals' subjective feeling is typically less intense when they believe they can exert agency over negative events because it means they have the capability to modify the event outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). In these situations, individuals are likely to exhibit corrective behavior to regulate their emotions, and this demonstrated throughout organizational research. For instance, employees are more likely to perform better following instances of negative performance feedback when they believe they can improve (e.g., Heslin & Latham, 2004).

Yet when employees encounter events they appraise as less controllable, they no longer believe they can exert agency over a negative event to change it and their subjective feeling is typically more intense and their emotional response exacerbated (Johnson & Spector, 2007; Grandey et al., 2004). Lazarus and Folkman (1987) argued that since these events cannot be controlled, individuals are forced to instead focus on how they react to them emotionally, rather than what they can do about them. In organizations, this frequently manifests in terms of role withdrawal and avoidance of transgressors. For example, on days when employees perceive themselves to have low job autonomy (i.e., low perceived controllability) they report more disengagement from work in the form of seeking fewer challenges and performance resources (Petrrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012), and employees with low autonomy

report more intentions to turn over (Chung-Yan, 2010; Kim & Stoner, 2008). In terms of workplace mistreatment, some research suggests that trying to physically avoid negative interpersonal events is the preferred option for on-going victims and one that is consistently helpful for relieving negative emotions (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

Across numerous studies, regulation focused on reframing negative emotional experience – rather than problem-solving – is also observed among people experiencing uncontrollable events (e.g., Chan & Hui, 1995; Christensen, Aldao, Sheridan, & McLaughlin, 2017; Troy et al., 2013). For example, Bowman and Stern (1995) conducted a survey study of medical center nurses and found that participants more often reported using reappraisal to regulate their emotions during stressful, uncontrollable work events as compared to highly controllable ones.

Hypothesis 4: As NIEs are appraised as less controllable, disengagement strategies and reappraisal are more likely used.

Responsibility.

Negative interpersonal events may also differ in the extent to which they are an employee's primary responsibility for dealing with them, and accordingly, in their expectations for how employees are to regulate their emotions. An appraisal of responsibility differs from an appraisal of controllability in that it refers to whether employees believe others expect them to act during a negative interpersonal event, rather than their belief that they can control the event. In laboratory studies of emotion regulation, the participant instructed to regulate emotions is generally not responsible for the situation or task as part of the role, they are simply asked to hide or reappraise their emotion with little motives for doing so. In contrast, the nature of employment is such that it is the responsibility of certain employees to resolve or diffuse NIEs (e.g., teachers, managers,

police officers, customer service representatives), thereby acting as a natural constraint on employee emotion regulation, but one that varies by employee and event.

When events are appraised as less responsible, NIEs should permit more flexibility and allow employees the discretion to choose how they regulate their emotions (Meyer, Dalal, & Hermida, 2010). During or following NIEs for which they perceive less responsibility, employees may or may not necessarily be required or expected to fix the situation themselves (e.g., Meares, Oetzel, Torres, Derkacs, & Ginossar, 2001), but they likely have greater regulatory freedom to employ multiple strategies. However, for many employees, it is a requirement of their job to deal with negative events while maintaining professional, courteous demeanors. When responsible for handling NIEs, these employees are required to suppress their negative emotions and emotional expressions (Diefendorff, Richard, & Croyle, 2006). Additionally, even if there are no formal requirements to suppress emotions, evidence suggests employees' personal motives influence the regulation strategies they use. Von Gilsa, Zapf, Ohly, Trumpold, and Machowski (2013) reported data from hundreds of daily service interactions and found that not only do employees fluctuate with respect to their sense of professional responsibility for event to another, they tended to use suppression to regulate their emotions during events for which they felt more responsibility.

There are also more explicit expectations for how employees should behave when they have more responsibility over a negative interpersonal event. When events are appraised as more responsible, employees likely must use situation modification to attempt to solve it, or else risk consequences like disciplinary action or termination if they use other disengagement strategies.

Hypothesis 5: In response to NIEs appraised as more responsible, the likelihood of using both suppression and situation modification strategies will increase.

Situational Emotion Regulation and Employee Outcomes

To this point, I have argued for the existence of event-based latent profiles that are comprised of a general blend of both engagement and disengagement strategies that are likely to “hang together” in response to events. Further, I have explicated how NIE appraisals can predict the likelihood of using certain profiles over others. Yet while I draw from prior research to hypothesize these profiles, the determination of profiles is inductive and the full range of profiles that may emerge among five strategies cannot be fully assumed in advance. As such, I theorize how strategies’ may differ in effectiveness depending on the outcome, but only make general predictions about the effectiveness of the profiles of situational strategies.

I seek to answer two remaining questions:

2. When multiple strategies are used, is it better or worse – in terms of employee well-being, relational, and performance outcomes – to use strategies of the same nature (engagement, disengagement) or a blend?
3. Does the effectiveness of strategy profiles depend on the outcome, whereby event profiles may be better for certain outcomes but worse for others?

I now turn my attention to the consequences of strategy use, as the strategy combinations an employee chooses can hold important implications for his or her ability to regulate emotions and for professional success. In doing so, I draw from research on known outcomes associated with groups of emotion regulation strategies to guide more general research questions of how profiles will be associated with four important but seldom discussed consequences of emotion regulation at work, organized in terms of: job performance and work self-efficacy, retaliation, and physical symptoms. In the emotional labor literature, these three outcomes are discussed as the primary consequences of emotion regulation at work (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000),

though are seldom studied simultaneously (Grandey & Melloy, in press). Given that strategies may be good for some outcomes (i.e., job performance, relational outcomes) but detrimental for other outcomes (i.e., feeling good about the self), it is important to assess all of these in the same study.

Employee Performance, Behavioral and Perceived.

Job performance and self-efficacy.

Effective emotion regulation is necessary for job performance by helping employees meet the emotional requirements of their job and reducing problematic work stress that can interfere with functioning (Wallace, Edwards, Shull, & Finch, 2009). Yet, emotion regulation requires cognitive self-control resources (Richards & Gross, 2000), which are limited and may also compete with the resource demands of completing one's work tasks, ultimately causing both to suffer (Wallace et al., 2009). Thus, emotion regulation aimed at investing cognitive resources wisely to overcome undesired emotional states can help employees maintain their performance.

Engagement forms of regulation, such as situation modification and reappraisal, attempt to act upon or reframe a stressor in order to mitigate negative emotional experiences. As mentioned prior, engagement forms of regulation are beneficial to maintaining positive moods for the self when experiencing stressful emotional events (Webb et al., 2012), and have been shown to be helpful to deescalate interpersonal conflict with others (Finkel, Slotter, Luchies, Walton, & Gross, 2013; Tepper et al., 2001). Thus, when acting upon a NIE, engagement forms of regulation should help change the NIE to improve mood and preserve resources to expend on performance. In addition, such initiative taken in attempting to resolve NIEs is often viewed favorably by supervisors, which could improve employee performance ratings (Frese & Fey, 2001).

In contrast, disengagement forms of regulation tend to involve averting stressors, and in the case of disengagement strategies like situation selection, could provide physical relief from negative emotional experience. Sometimes walking away from an angry outburst is the best way to deal with it in the moment, provided the person returns to manage the conflict. Yet, employees only disengaging during NIEs may feel or be perceived as ineffective, inattentive, and/or abandoning their duties. Thus, on their own we may not expect disengagement strategies to be conducive for performance.

However, when coupled with engagement strategies, certain forms of disengagement such as suppression *could* be helpful for job performance. Suppressing truly felt negative emotions during NIEs with others could help employee job performance (Beal et al., 2006) by maintaining composure and avoiding escalating the event (Aquino & Thau, 2009). In fact, suppressing negative emotions to remain neutral may be better than actually faking positive emotions if they would otherwise come across as patronizing or insincere (Grandey, Fiske, Matila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005; Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010). Thus, it seems that while engagement may be most effective and disengagement least effective, disengagement strategies (e.g., suppression) may be more effective for performing during a NIE when paired with engagement (e.g., situation modification) during an NIE.

Hypothesis 6: Profiles of high engagement are best for (a) job performance and (b) self-efficacy perceptions, followed by a mix of engagement and disengagement strategies. Profiles of full disengagement will exhibit the lowest rated (a) job performance and (b) self-efficacy perceptions.

Retaliation.

In discussing employee emotion regulation, Hochschild (1983) notes in her seminal book, *The Managed Heart*, “Like many others, [employees want] a human response so that [they] can be friendly [themselves]” (p. 108). Unfortunately, employees in “people work” must often put up with interpersonal treatment that is undeserved, unpleasant, or disrespectful when their customers or clients treat them unfairly and without the privilege of conveying their true feelings back (Dormann & Zapf, 2002; Grandey, Kern & Frone, 2007). The experience of daily NIEs at work are such instances of unfair treatment, which can evoke an array of negative employee emotional reactions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, and even posttraumatic stress (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997) that become directed toward the client.

In response to mistreatment, such negative emotions elicited by and directed toward the client have the potential to deteriorate the employee-client relationship. Individuals use these emotional experiences as information to guide their evaluation and liking of others (Clore, Gasper, & Garvin, 2001), so when individuals experience negative emotions that are caused by mistreatment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006), they associate them with making them feel badly and subsequently come to dislike them. Evidenced in the workplace, the experience of NIEs has been found to affect how employees behave toward others. A common response to interpersonal mistreatment at work is retaliation to get even (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2002), which has been shown to occur toward abusive customers in the forms of lower service quality as rated by observers (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, and McInnerney, 2010) and service sabotage (e.g., Chi, Tsai, & Tseng, 2011; Wang et al., 2011), toward abusive supervisors in the form of withholding of extra-role behaviors (Zellars, Tepper, & Duffy, 2002) and aggression (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2012), and toward coworkers in the form of undermining (Lee & Brotheridge, 2006).

Therefore, emotion regulation aimed at mitigating the negative emotions that underlie these retributive reactions (Bowling & Beehr, 2006) should help to maintain employee-client relationships.

Engagement strategies would be useful for changing the NIE and for helping employees to temper their reactions to mistreatment. Employees could reframe the situation such that they do not perceive themselves as having experienced mistreatment¹ (Hochschild, 1983), as well as alter their referent standards for behavior to reduce their sense of disrespect (“You using this language doesn’t bother me, I’ve been called worse before.”) (Folger, 1993). In support of this, research by Walker, van Jaarsveld, and Skarlicki (2014) demonstrates that customer incivility elicits retaliatory behavior only in contexts where interpersonal mistreatment is relatively unexpected and the referent standards for civility are high, whereas employees for whom such events were routine seemed desensitized to such treatment. In the emotional labor literature researchers have examined the effects of emotion regulation strategies during customer service interactions, finding that the use of engagement strategies (i.e., reappraisal) can result in more positive interactions with customers (Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2016) and even in greater proactive helping behavior toward customers (Totterdell & Holman, 2003).

In addition to engagement strategies, some disengagement strategies may be expected to be helpful for client relationships. Disengagement strategies may be helpful by their ability to

¹ In her book, Arlie Hochschild (1983) describes how Delta Airlines flight attendants would recommend reframing the situation so as to avoid a sense of personal victimization. Hochschild (1983) quotes the advice given from one employee to another: “If a passenger snaps at you and you didn’t do anything wrong, just remember it’s not you he’s snapping at. It’s your uniform, it’s your role as a Delta flight attendant” (p. 110).

limit exposure to NIEs in the moment, potentially reducing exposure to mistreatment (Sheppes, Catran, & Meiran, 2009). However, disengagement may only be beneficial to the extent that limiting exposure helps avert a full negative emotional response or allows one the distance to enact other engagement forms of regulation, such as reappraisal. Disengagement via suppression, for example, does nothing to reduce or resolve one's sense of mistreatment, it only attempts to minimize reactions and expressions for as long as the individual maintains it. Once suppression ends, the felt emotional response could still elicit a desire for more retaliation.

Hypothesis 7: Profiles of full disengagement will exhibit the highest retaliatory behavior, followed by mixed profiles. Full engagement strategy profiles are likely to result in the lowest counterproductive or retaliatory behavior.

Employee Well-being.

Physical symptoms.

One of the more sinister consequences of regulating emotions at work is the personal strain incurred to maintain performance and professionalism. As Hochschild (1983) notes, “there is a general source of stress woven through the whole work experience: the task of managing an estrangement between self and feeling and between self and display” (p. 131). This notion – that emotional labor performed at work is physically demanding just as it is emotionally demanding – is important to understand because it suggests that emotion regulation could be detrimental for employee and organizational well-being. However, the purpose of emotion regulation is to ultimately reduce the experience of stressful physiological states caused by emotions, so it is perhaps unsurprising that evidence is mixed. While laboratory evidence suggests that some strategies, like suppression, are more physically activating than others, the effects of other strategies, like reappraisal and distraction, are inconsistent (Webb et al., 2012). When looked at

more broadly in the field, meta-analytic evidence suggests that although disengaging to hide one's feelings is positively related to physical complaints, so too is engaging to change them (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011).

I believe this inconsistency is again due to having traditionally examined strategies as independent behaviors, rather than in combination with one another. The isolated effects we see in the lab may not necessarily generalize to the combinations of regulatory behaviors employees reportedly deploy at work (Diefendorff et al., 2008). A subject required to suppress may show significantly greater physical activation in the lab compared to reappraisal, but reappraisal at work may be combined with other forms of regulation that are also activating to impact physical symptoms. In support of this idea, Gabriel et al., (2015) observed differences in reported work-related emotional exhaustion – an indicator of physical ill-being – between employees who tended to use engagement strategies (i.e., deep acting) alone and who used a mix of engagement and disengagement (i.e., surface acting) strategies. They found that engagement strategy profiles were associated with lower emotional exhaustion, whereas the observed benefit was attenuated among employees who used a mix of engagement and disengagement. Therefore, it stands to reason that regulatory strategies are not created equal and have the potential to influence one another when deployed together.

Yet, the ways in which they operate together to influence physical symptoms are less clear. The use of disengagement regulatory strategies like distraction and situation selection may actually be beneficial for reducing physical symptoms by minimizing exposure to NIEs and can help to improve stressful moods that manifest into physical symptoms. In a similar way, engagement strategies such as situation modification may reduce physical symptoms because it

is a way for employees to change NIEs to lessen the stressor or shorten its duration of impact, but modification itself may in some professions might be physically taxing.

However, in accordance with the findings by Gabriel et al. (2015), emotion regulation would only be expected to remain beneficial for physical well-being when not also using suppression. This is because a high use of suppression only serves to minimize or hide reactions, rather than the emotional experience itself, and as such does nothing to minimize the stressful mismatch between felt and wanted emotions (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Other strategies, though they may improve moods (e.g., reappraisal), may *in the moment* be beneficial only in combination with other strategies. For example, reappraisal acts to improve mood by bringing felt emotions in line with desired states; but as Hochschild said, the employee is deceiving not only other people but also herself with “deep acting”. This is because reappraisal is taxing on cognitive resources and energy when done during (Sheppes & Gross, 2011; Vater & Schroeder-Abe, 2015) stressful events, suggesting that reappraisal on its own may not reduce physical symptoms as the effort required may actually contribute to them (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Reappraisal may be best when combined with other engagement or disengagement strategies that also reduce exposure.

Hypothesis 8: Disengagement profiles are better than all-engagement or mixed profiles in terms of physical symptoms, but all profiles without high suppress are better than those that include high suppression.

Chapter 2: Method

Data Collection Procedure and Sample

Participants are full-time staff recruited from a small private school in the Mid-Atlantic United States. Job functions range from personal aids and teacher aids, to teachers, security, and auxiliary staff (counselors, bus drivers, secretaries). The study was conducted in after the school's winter break, taking place across 6 weeks from mid-January through February. The data collection consisted of an initial survey and event-level surveys (employee and supervisor) occurring throughout each workday. Snacks, food, and beverages were provided as incentive and gratitude for participation.

Due to the intensive nature of the data collection and the potential sensitivity of the responses it was necessary for the researcher to maintain high visibility and involvement to ensure good process. As such, the study was advertised in person to the employees, who were assured that all of their information would remain strictly confidential. They were told that the researcher would be there in person every day to personally collect all surveys and answer any questions. In addition, a copy of the study protocol was given to each classroom and employee lounge.

Initial Survey.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher gave a brief recruitment presentation in person at the data collection site to all employees. The recruitment presentation consisted of personal background information, the purpose of the study, any foreseen risks associated with voluntary participation, and the ways in which data would be kept confidential. All information was created and approved according to the IRB guidelines for ethical treatment of human subjects (IRB approval #00007697). Employees consenting to participate were asked to complete

a brief online survey of individual differences – including demographics and job data, personality traits, and job attitudes. Employees were given electronic tablets in order to allow them to complete the survey in a private space to ensure confidentiality, and they were given free time throughout the school day to complete the survey.

Event-level Surveys.

To collect employee event-level appraisals and reports of emotion regulation strategy use, the researcher attached a brief survey with a unique identification number to blank behavioral incident write-ups used for documenting student-to-student and student-to-staff NIEs. These write-ups are a school-required practice to document inappropriate student behavior, ranging in intensity from routine misconduct (e.g., use of inappropriate language or innuendo) to physical acts of harassment or violence against other students or staff. In generating these write-ups, staff members who may or may not have been personally involved in the events, but who observed it occur, are required to recollect, record, and elaborate upon the details of the events. Participants were told by the administration that each event needed to be documented only once by one individual (the target or observer), and to include within each write-up a description of the event, who was involved, and any actions taken by staff.

After completing write-ups to document NIEs, staff members are required to submit them to the administration, who review the incidents and assign consequences to the offending student based on the severity of the offense. Consequences are in the form of a reduction in points (as part of a token economy behavioral modification program). To ensure student and employee confidentiality, the employees were instructed to remove their completed surveys from the completed write-ups and hand the surveys to the researcher. The researcher then hand-copied the unique survey identification numbers from the write-up onto a second blank survey which was

re-attached to the write-ups. This was done to ensure that the employee surveys could be matched to the administrator ratings of the same event. The write-ups were then handed to the administration, who completed their own surveys appraising the event characteristics and rating the performance of the employee.

To ensure the study had sufficient power to detect latent profiles with complex (i.e., nested) data structures, data were collected with regard for recent recommendations for sample size. Specifically, Park and Yu (2017) recommend that researchers collect between 200 and 600 Level 1 units nested within a minimum of 20 Level 2 units in order to ensure model specification accuracy, low parameter estimate bias, low standard error bias, and adequate coverage rates (i.e., the proportion of 95% confidence intervals for parameter estimates that contains the true population value in simulated replications). Tein, Coxe, and Cham (2014) compared sample sizes of $n = 250$, 500, and 1000 and find that classification accuracy for most fit statistics is good above $n = 250$ and is not significantly better for larger samples ($n = 1000$). Taken together, data collection was to proceed until at least 400-500 event surveys were collected, which took 6 weeks between January and February.

Employee Event-Level Measures (Behavioral Incident Write-Ups)

Workplace emotion regulation strategies.

The use of workplace emotion regulation strategies in response to negative events was assessed using single items developed by Diefendorff et al. (2008) representing each emotion regulation strategy. The use of single-item scales is to avoid participant fatigue as they fill out one or more behavioral incident reports per day. However, in line with recommendations by Fisher and To (2012), items were chosen that best balance representing the construct while allowing for the likely use in this context. As such, items were chosen based on their face validity as assessing the

focal construct, as well as the frequency with which these employees stated that they used the strategy at work in initial interviews. Pilot testing and qualitative responses from the initial survey encouraged the addition of one more strategy beyond Gross' five strategies. Seeking social support – asking for help from others as a way to regulate their emotions – was added to the event survey, and is an example of another engagement strategy. In total, six items were used with three engagement and 3 disengagement forms of emotion regulation.

Participants were asked to report on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = “not at all” to 6 = “very much”) the extent to which they used each strategy to regulate their emotions during or following each event. The three engagement strategy items read “To manage how you felt during or after this incident, how much did you...”: “try to change how you thought about the student or incident?” (*reappraisal*; $ICC(1) = .26$); “try to solve the issue or correct the student’s behavior?” (*situation modification*; $ICC(1) = .36$), “seek out others to help you?” (*social support*; $ICC(1) = .46$). The three disengagement items read “To manage how you felt during or after this incident, how much did you...”: “try not to think about the student or the incident?” (*distraction*; $ICC(1) = .45$); “avoid the student and/or remove yourself from the situation?” (*situation selection*; $ICC(1) = .42$); “ignore or try to hold back what you truly felt about the student or the incident?” (*suppression*; $ICC(1) = .56$).

Employee Event-level Performance.

Performance Self-Efficacy.

As an indicator of performance, employees were asked to rate how they perceived their own job performance during the event. Participants were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “very poor”; 5 = average; 10 = “superior”) to the question, “How confident are you that you resolved this incident effectively?”

Retaliation.

To determine the extent of an employee's retaliation, a retaliation score was computed based upon the school's token economy behavioral modification system. At the end of each day, students earn points for good behavior, and are deducted points for bad behavior. These points can be redeemed by the student at any time for purchasing items at the school store. If a student is involved in a behavioral incident and is written up, the administration may decide to deduct points objectively commensurate with the severity of the incident. The administration routinely evaluates student punishments based on the write-ups; however, it is novel to the study to have the employees provide their own evaluations, which provide a good test of retaliation because they are more emotionally connected to the event.

Participants were asked to write the number of behavioral points *they believe* should be deducted from the student, ranging from 0 – 500. This number is based on the minimum and maximum number of points a student is able to lose per day. A retaliation score was calculated by subtracting the administration's punishment from the staff's punishment. Possible retribution scores range from -500 to +500, where higher positive scores indicate higher retaliation.

Employee Event-level Well-being.

Physical Symptoms.

To determine whether employee felt physical symptoms after each event, participants were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "very poor"; 5 = average; 10 = "superior") to the question, "Did you have any physical symptoms from this incident (for example, headache, fast heartrate, nausea)?"

Supervisor Event-Level Measures (Behavioral Incident Reports)

Supervisors were directed and trained to rate the incidents in accordance with the duties and responsibilities associated with the job function of the staff member filing the behavioral incident report. To ensure agreement between the four administrators rating events, the researcher designed an online exercise using 10 real write-ups representative of the NIEs commonly experienced at this workplace from the previous school year. All potentially identifying information was redacted by a school staff member. The write-ups were transcribed into an online survey, as well as definitions and behavioral examples for each event characteristic. The administrators were asked to rate the same 10 events, and the researcher calculated rwg(j) to determine their agreement. Across administrator ratings, rwg(j)s ranged from .80-.96, indicating high levels of administrator agreement.

Event characteristics.

For each event characteristic, supervisors were asked to indicate on 7-point Likert scales (0 = “not at all”; 6 = “very much”) the degree to which each characteristic was reflective of the behavioral event. Specifically, supervisors were asked, “To what extent do you believe this incident/behavior was...”: “typical of this student”, “within the reporting employee’s control to manage”, primarily the reporting employee’s responsibility to manage (not someone else’s)?” Supervisors were directed and trained to rate the incidents in accordance with the duties and responsibilities associated with the job function of the staff member filing the behavioral incident report.

Employee job performance.

To determine staff member performance for each event, supervisors were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = “very poor”; 6 = “superior”) to the question: “Based on the

report, please rate the reporting employee's effectiveness in handling this incident (choose "NA" if not enough information available)." Supervisors chose "NA" for approximately 5% ($n = 22$) of events.

Retaliation.

Supervisors were asked to indicate the number of points (0-500) that they were deducting from the student as consequence for their behavior during the incident. The number of points was used with the employee-reported number of points to compute the retaliation score.

In total, 77 employees participated (90% participation) in the between-person surveys, but 57 participated in the event-level portion of the study and these employees reported 511 events across the 6 weeks (approximately 85 surveys per week and 17 per day). These reporting rates are similar to those observed in other studies examining experienced incivility/aggression at the event-level (e.g., Matta, Erol-Korkmaz, Johnson, & Bicalsz, 2014). Fifty-four percent (54%) of the participants were female, and the average age was 38.24 years. Where participants indicated their race or ethnicity (they could select multiple), the sample was 58.5% White, 32.1% Black, 5.7% Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin, 1.9% Middle Eastern, and 3.8% Other/Not Listed. Seventy percent (70%) had at least a bachelor's degree, and the average organizational tenure was 5.89 years. On average, employee participants completed 8.96 within-person observations.

Analytical Strategy

The first objective of this paper is to determine the existence of situational latent profiles of emotion regulation strategy use in response to negative interpersonal events (NIEs) at work. Because the same participants may report multiple event-level observations per day, and across multiple days, multilevel latent profile analysis (MLPA) was used in Mplus v.7.4 (Muthen &

Muthen, 2017) in order to account for the non-independence of errors. In contrast to variable-centered data analysis methods that relate separate variables to outcomes across people, latent profile analysis is a person-centered analytic approach that models unobserved heterogeneity to determine whether consistent patterns of response, or profiles, exist among people (Wang & Hanges, 2011). These profiles can be distinguished quantitatively (in level of response) or qualitatively (in shape of response), such that compared to others, individuals could use strategies at higher or lower rates, or they may use different strategy combinations.

To determine the existence of strategy profiles, I follow the recommendations of Nyland, Asparouhov, and Muthen (2007) to first model two latent profiles and compare model fit statistics while specifying an increasing number of profiles until the increase in model fit does not warrant an additional latent profile. Model fit statistics – including log likelihood, Akaike information criterion (AIC), Bayesian information criterion (BIC), Sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SSA-BIC), and entropy – are calculated and evaluated such that log likelihood, AIC, BIC, and SSA-BIC indicate better fit when they decrease with respect to each previous model specification. In addition, BLRT should be significant ($p < .05$) and entropy should be greater than .60 and higher relative to each previous model specification (Asparouhov & Muthen, 2013). Finally, I follow best practices to consider the profile solutions in terms of being “theoretically meaningful, useful, and parsimonious” (Henry & Muthen, 2010, p. 204; see also Makikangas, Tolvanen, Aunola, Feldt, Mauno, & Kinnunen, 2017).

Next, I seek to determine if three event characteristics predict the likelihood of using emotion regulation profiles. When examining the associations of profiles with other variables, latent profile analysis is the preferred analytical strategy over other cluster approaches because it accounts for the measurement error rate in assigning most likely profile membership (Henry &

Muthen, 2010). In testing these profile antecedents, I use the R3STEP procedure in MPlus v.7.4 (Asparouhov & Muthen, 2013), which performs three calculations to determine the relationships between antecedents and profile membership. In the first step, standard profile enumeration is performed using the latent profile indicators (i.e., the emotion regulation strategies). In the second step, a grouping variable is created that assigns observations to the profile with the highest probability given their indicator scores. These probabilities are obtained using the latent profile posterior distributions calculated in step one. In the third step, Mplus conducts an omnibus multinomial logistic regression with pair-wise profile comparisons to determine if an increase in a specific event characteristic would result in a higher probability that individuals would belong to one profile or another.

Last, I seek to determine whether situation profiles differ significantly on performance and well-being outcomes. In testing these outcome differences, I used Mplus' BCH procedure, which also conducts calculations in three steps. The first two steps are the same as the R3Step procedure, whereby the observed indicators are used to create profiles and observations are assigned to their most likely profiles. In the third step, Mplus estimates unequal means and variances for each profile on each outcome separately and compares them between profiles using Wald's Chi-Square Test. Both R3Step and BCH use listwise deletion in order to account for missing data. I ran each analysis controlling for employee-reported negative emotional intensity to ensure that I was identifying the effect of the regulation profile beyond the strength of emotion felt.

Chapter 3: Results

The means, standard deviations, and within-person correlations are presented in Table 1.

In order to ensure that the write-ups were describing NIEs as expected, and the type of events they involved for the employees, I sampled a subset of events to analyze their content. Upon completion of the study, 10% of the event write-ups ($N = 50$) submitted during the period of the study were sampled by a staff member who redacted all identifying information. The researcher then coded the write-ups by the type of behavior exhibited during the incidents and categorized them according to common themes to identify the general types of situations employees faced. Across these events, situations included a variety of NIEs, with 38% containing behavioral deviance (e.g., breaking school rules, failure to comply with instructions), 25% property deviance (e.g., throwing items, destroying property), and the rest was interpersonal aggression. These were 23% verbal aggression toward staff (e.g., yelling, threatening, name-calling), 21% verbal aggression toward other students, 19% physical aggression toward staff (e.g., intentional physical contact), 17% physical aggression toward other students, and 11% sexual harassment (e.g., inappropriate remarks, gestures, writings/drawings, innuendo).² These are clearly negative interpersonal events (NIE) that are likely to evoke emotions like frustration, hostility and fear, and require regulation to perform effectively on the job. Not regulating such emotions could result in aggressing toward students or withdrawing from the job.

² Note that the percentages do not add up to 100%. This is because events often contained multiple forms of NIEs. As such, the percentages indicate the proportion of the total number of events that contained each of the categories of deviance.

Profile Enumeration

Hypothesis 1 states that employees will exhibit combinations of engagement and disengagement strategies at work. To test this, multilevel latent profile analysis was performed clustering the event-level responses by employee ID and using the six emotion regulation strategies as profile indicators. Table 2 presents the profile fit statistics used to compare $k + 1$ profile solutions to a k profile solution, where k is the number of profiles. As seen in Table 2, log likelihood, AIC, and BIC decrease (i.e., improve) with each additional profile specification from 2 through 6, before decreasing less than 100 units from 6 to 7. Entropy is very high ($> .93$) for all profile solutions, indicating good classification and profile separation. In addition to a drop in BIC from the 6- to 7-profile solution, the 7-profile solution also includes two very similar profiles, one of which is redundant (two moderately profiles), and eliminates a substantive profile of interest in the 6-profile solution. In the interest of theory, utility, and parsimony, I chose the 6-profile solution.

The raw means and their confidence intervals for the emotion regulation strategy combinations of the 6-profile solution are given in Table 3. The raw means are also depicted in Figure 1. There is no clear guideline for how best to name the profiles, so I endeavored to name them in three stages. In the first stage, to avoid any personal bias I presented the profiles and the strategy means to five individuals who are knowledgeable of emotion regulation but are not experts, and I asked them to name and describe each profile independently. With these names in mind in the second stage, I followed the convention of existing organizational research using latent profiles to name profiles based on the driving indicators that best characterize the profile but which simultaneously help distinguish them in contrast to other profiles. In the third stage, I compared the chosen profile names to existing theory and prior research to remain consistent and

parsimonious. In total, the profiles here can be organized between three themes of combined strategy use: engagement strategies, disengagement strategies, and mixed (both engagement and disengagement).

The first group of profiles includes two profiles of regulation whereby employees primarily used one or more engagement strategies, and notably, these two profiles involve the least use of suppression compared to the other profiles. One engagement profile was labeled “Solve it solo”, characterized by a high mean level of situation modification and low level of all other strategies. Solve it solo represents strategy use for 22% of the incidents. Another engagement profile was labeled “Solve with Support”, primarily characterized by a high mean level of both situation modification and social support seeking, and low levels of all other strategies. Solve with Support represents strategy use for 30% of the incidents.

Turning to the disengagement forms of emotion regulation, two profiles involved the primary use of disengagement regulatory strategies. One disengagement regulatory profile was labeled “Shrug it off”, characterized by very low regulatory effort, including low mean levels of the strategies. Shrug it off represents strategy use for approximately 16% of the incidents. Another disengagement profile was labeled “Suppress it solo”, characterized by a very high level of suppression and a low level of social support seeking. Suppress it solo represents strategy use for approximately 10% of the incidents.

The third group of profiles are mixed profiles involving the use of both engagement and disengagement strategies. Whereas the above profiles differ qualitatively by their patterns of strategies used, these two mixed profiles primarily differ quantitatively, whereby they differ in extent of use but exhibit a similar relative pattern. One mixed profile was labeled “Suppress so-so”, characterized by a moderately-high mean level of suppression in tandem with moderately-

high mean levels of other strategies – distraction, situation selection, social support - with the exception of situation modification. Suppress so-so represents strategy use for approximately 14% of the incidents. Another profile was labeled “Suppress with support”, characterized by the highest mean level of suppression and social support seeking. Suppress so-so represents strategy use for 9% of the sample.

With regard to Hypothesis 1, these results suggest that employees do report the use of emotion regulation strategies in combination. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Profile Validation

To validate the profile structure, I split the data in two ways and performed MLPA on each half to determine if the profile structures were similar, if a 6-profile structure was replicated, and if it fit the data well. Because the data are measured at the event level, it was first important to ensure that there was no substantive influence on the types of strategies used due to the period of time in which the data were collected. I tested for this possibility in two ways. First, I did the calculation as a split-half replication by time, whereby the data were split at the midpoint of data collection to examine whether the profiles were stable for the duration of the study. The second calculation was a random split of the data, whereby the data were each assigned a computer-generated random number, reorganized in ascending order and separated into two halves at the middle number. In both cases, the profile structure was replicated between the halves, and the same six profile structure fit the data well. The fit statistics are available from the researcher upon request.

Event Characteristics Predicting Profile Use

With regard to antecedents that predict profile use, Hypothesis 2 states that emotional intensity is associated with a) using more strategies and b) using disengagement strategies.

Results show that event negative emotional intensity was predictive of using disengagement or mixed profiles over full engagement profiles. As the intensity of felt negative moods increased, employees were more likely to use profiles of high suppression (Suppress so-so, Suppress with support, Suppress it solo) over engagement (estimates range from .31-.84, $ps < .05$). When they did use engagement, comparisons between engagement profiles showed that employees were more likely to solve with support from others than solve it solo (estimate = .34, $SE = .13$, $OR = 1.40$, $p < .01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 states that less typical events are associated with disengagement strategy profiles. Contrary to the prediction, results from the multinomial logistic regression indicate that less typicality was associated with regulatory engagement, rather than disengagement or mixed use. Specifically, for each unit decrease in typicality, employees were approximately 1.30 times more likely to attempt to modify the situation rather than use suppression. The solve it solo (estimate = .26, $SE = .12$, $OR = 1.30$, $p < .05$) and solve with support (estimate = .27, $SE = .11$, $OR = 1.31$, $p < .05$) profiles were significantly more likely to occur than the suppress with support regulatory profile when events were rated as less typical. Typicality did not help to distinguish between the likelihood of using the other profiles. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 states that less controllable events are associated with disengagement strategy profiles and profiles with high reappraisal. Partially consistent with this prediction, results show that less controllability was associated with full disengagement profiles. When events were rated less controllable, employees were 3.03 times more likely to rely primarily upon suppression (Suppress it solo) versus a mix (Suppress with support, estimate = 1.11, $SE = .46$, $OR = 3.00$, $p < .01$) Employees were also 2.11 and 3.07 times more likely to shrug it off than

they were to modify the situation (Solve it solo, estimate = .75, $SE = .31$, $OR = 2.11$, $p < .05$) or use a mix of strategies (Suppress with support, estimate = 1.12, $SE = .38$, $OR = 3.07$, $p < .05$), respectively. Taken together, Hypothesis 4 was generally supported.

Hypothesis 5 states that greater primary responsibility for the events is associated with profiles that include high use of both suppression and situation modification. Results indicate that greater responsibility for the events was associated with profiles including *either* higher than average situation modification or higher than average suppression, but not necessarily used together. Profile comparisons indicate that employees were 2.48 times more likely to use full engagement strategies (e.g., Solve with support) when they were more responsible for the events than they were to use mixed strategies (e.g., Suppress with support) (estimate = -.91, $SE = .27$, $OR = .40$, $p < .01$). Comparing among the engagement profiles, employees were 1.82 times more likely to attempt to solve with support than they were to solve it solo (estimate = .60, $SE = .26$, $OR = 1.82$, $p < .05$), perhaps to ensure they would be successfully resolved. When employees *did* use disengagement or mixed regulation, comparing among those profiles revealed that greater responsibility predicted the use of suppressing solo (estimate = 1.04, $SE = .41$, $OR = 2.83$, $p < .01$) and suppressing so-so (estimate = .91, $SE = .28$, $OR = .40$, $p < .01$) over the suppressing with support regulation profile. Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

Profile Differences in Performance and Well-Being

Job Performance and Self-Efficacy. The outcome means for each profile are presented in Table 3. Hypothesis 6a states that profiles of full engagement (Solve it solo, Solve with support) are best, and profiles of full disengagement (Shrug it off, Suppress it solo) are worst, for job performance and self-efficacy. Therefore, mixed use profiles (Suppress so-so, Suppress with support) are expected to fall in the middle. As shown in Table 3, the omnibus Wald Chi-Square

test indicates that significant differences exist among the profiles ($\chi^2 = 11.47, p < .05$). Specifically, the highest level of supervisor-rated job performance was observed when employees primarily used engagement profiles, in that the Solving with support profile (high engagement; $M = 5.02$) was associated with significantly higher performance ratings than other profiles including suppress it solo ($M = 4.67, p < .05$), a full disengagement profile (however, suppress it solo was not significantly different from other profiles). Therefore, Hypothesis 6a is partially supported. Notably, the solving with support profile with the multiple engagement strategies was significantly greater than using one engagement strategy alone (i.e., solving it solo, $M = 4.79$), suggesting that deploying multiple forms of engagement regulation together are best for achieving better job performance.

In terms of event-specific job performance self-efficacy, the omnibus Wald Chi-Square test indicated that significant differences exist among the profiles ($\chi^2 = 46.09, p < .001$). Employees reported the lowest performance self-efficacy when they gave little regulatory effort (Shrug it off, $M = 1.47$). This disengagement profiles was significantly lower than all other profiles ($p < .05$), which did not significantly differ from each other (M s range from 3.74 – 4.27). Therefore, Hypothesis 6b was partially supported.

Retaliation. Hypothesis 7 states that solely using disengagement is associated with the highest desire for retaliation, followed by a combination of engagement/disengagement; the sole use of engagement will exhibit the lowest desire for retaliation. The omnibus Wald Chi-Square test indicates that significant differences exist among the profiles ($\chi^2 = 24.31, p < .001$) in their mean event-specific retaliation scores. In partial support of the hypothesis, high retaliation scores were observed when employees used disengagement (Shrug it off, $M = 101.53$), but also for mixed profiles (Solve with support, $M = 88.50$; Suppress with support, $M = 141.85$). These three

profiles had the highest retaliation scores, but were not significantly different from one another. The lowest retaliation scores were observed for the solve it solo ($M = 11.47$) and suppress it solo ($M = -91.49$) profiles. Suppress So-So fell in the middle ($M = 63.55$) (though the latter three profile retaliation means were not significantly different from zero).

Physical Symptoms. Finally, Hypothesis 8 states that high suppression alone is worse for well-being (i.e., physical symptoms) than suppression combined with engagement; profiles high on engagement strategies, and mixed profiles of engagement/disengagement, exhibit better well-being than profiles only high on disengagement strategies. In terms of event-specific physical symptoms, the omnibus Wald Chi-Square test indicated that any mean differences among the profiles were not significant ($\chi^2 = 7.44, p = .36$). Therefore, Hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Supplementary Analyses

In addition to the main analyses conducted to test the study hypotheses, I also conducted a series of supplementary analyses. The first analysis was conducted to test for the existence of person-level profiles at Level 2, across events, that might indicate something unique beyond the Level 1 event profiles. In order to do so, I repeated the procedure used to identify the event-level latent profiles by first specifying two profiles at Level 2 and increasing the number of profiles until the fit statistics no longer warrant an additional profile. When specifying two Level 2 profiles, the analysis did not converge upon a solution to distinguish profiles, which indicates poor fit and no Level 2 profiles were identified. This lack of convergence may be due to the fact that MPlus uses listwise deletion and there are only 57 units at Level 2.

The second analysis was conducted to see if (a) latent profiles of supervisor-rated event characteristics (typicality, controllability, responsibility) can be identified, and if so, if (b) the event characteristic latent profiles predict employee event-level regulation profiles. For Part A,

profile enumeration was performed as before. Results indicated that a 3-profile solution fit the data best (fit statistics are available from the researcher upon request). All three profiles exhibited similar levels of typicality, but varied in their level of controllability and responsibility (low, moderate, high). Part B tests whether the event characteristic profiles predicted the likelihood of regulation profile membership. I used the log-linear modeling procedure akin to latent transition analysis, which assesses whether one group of latent profiles predicts membership in another group of latent profiles. Results showed the three event characteristic profiles did not significantly predict membership in the emotion regulation profiles.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The present study uses a multilevel person-centered approach to identify profiles of emotion regulation that employees use to manage their emotions during and following negative interpersonal events at work. The results of this study demonstrate that emotion regulation is flexible and more nuanced than has been generally conceptualized. Specifically, results across employees embedded within a high-stress work context suggest that employees can and do use multiple strategies to regulate their emotions, that these strategy combinations occur consistently enough to be grouped together as profiles, and that these profiles differ in terms of their antecedents and implications for performance and well-being at the event level of analysis.

Overview of Findings

The current study aimed to answer three primary research questions. Research Question #1 asks if employees use multiple regulation strategies in combination with one another, and if so, what determines the likelihood of employees using certain strategy combinations over others? In line with prior research finding that emotional labor strategies can co-occur together at the person level (Gabriel et al., 2015) and at the event level in the laboratory (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015), I expected to find that when testing these ideas in the field, employees would use multiple forms of engagement and disengagement emotion regulation together. I used a multilevel person-centered approach to examine emotion regulation flexibility during negative interpersonal events (NIEs) among the faculty and staff of a private school. These staff members work in a highly stressful context and experience incivility ranging from behavioral and property deviance to verbal and physical aggression. In doing so, I identify six distinct profiles of emotion regulation strategy combinations used across NIEs, organized as engagement, disengagement, or mixed use. The event-level latent profiles differed both quantitatively in terms of their level of use and

qualitatively in terms of the strategies that comprised them. Employees most frequently used engagement profiles, occurring for approximately 52% of NIEs. These profiles are categorized by high levels of situation modification, but differ by the level of social support sought.

The next most common group of strategies were disengagement, occurring for approximately 25% of events, followed by mixed use for 23% of events. Thus, it appears that employees do flexibly use multiple strategies, as well as in combination with one another.

Event Characteristics Predicting Profile Use.

The current results also shed light on the situation characteristics that determine the likelihood of using certain strategy profiles over others from event to event. By examining profile membership at the event level, we are better able to understand how profile membership changes as a function of the specific work incident. In this study, examining event negative emotional intensity was helpful in distinguishing between profile usage. Consistent with prior laboratory research (e.g., Sheppes & Gross, 2011), this study found that stronger momentary negative moods made it more likely for employees to use multiple strategies together, and they were more likely to disengagement and mixed strategy profiles, i.e., suppression (Suppress it solo, suppress with support, suppress so-so), over engagement profiles.

Contrary to expectations, event typicality was associated with the use of suppression. This may indicate that suppression is the go-to strategy at work for dealing with behavior that is familiar and common, perhaps because it requires less effort than engagement strategies in the moment. This is consistent with laboratory evidence, which shows that it is not physically taxing or effortful to use suppression to regulate less emotionally intense stimuli (Gross & Levensen, 1997; Sheppes et al., 2009; Wegner & Gold, 1995). To the extent that typical events are usual, employees may deploy suppression to simply conceal their true feelings and move on, whereas

less typical events may necessitate a greater need to figure out how to solve the problem in order to move on.

As expected, event controllability was able to distinguish between the usage of profiles. Event un-controllability was associated with disengagement strategies, such that when events were uncontrollable, employees tended to barely regulate or use suppression. Consistent with theories of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), since these events cannot be controlled, individuals are forced to instead focus on how they react to them emotionally, rather than what they can do about them. I also found that employees who attempted to solve uncontrollable problems in order to manage their emotions more often did so in combination with seeking social support. Though previously unexamined in combination, organizational evidence would suggest this regulatory profile could represent a strategic response to workplace victimization as it could support the employee to exert greater agency and authority over the incident (Aquino & Thau, 2009).

Last, I found support for the hypothesis that the effect of responsibility over a NIE would pressure employees to attempt situation modification and/or suppression in order to manage how they felt. In this study, there was substantial variability among events in the degree to which supervisors deemed employees responsible, so it does appear that aspects of the employment context other than display rules may at times nudge employee emotion regulation in a certain way (Meyer et al., 2010; Gabriel et al., 2015). Greater responsibility over NIEs appears to constrain employee emotion regulation to use engagement strategies to solve the problem, or to simply grin and bear it to remain professional. It was least likely that employees would use engagement and disengagement strategies in combination, suggesting either employees most often take an “all-in” or “all-out” approach when they are primarily responsible.

Profile Differences in Performance and Well-Being.

Research Question #2 asks if multiple strategies are used, is it better, worse, or mixed for employee performance and well-being. If so, Research Question #3 asks are some event profiles better for certain outcomes but worse for others? In attempt to answer these questions, this study also provides evidence that emotion regulation profiles differ in terms of their implications for job performance and well-being.

Supervisor-Rated Job performance.

Effective emotion regulation is necessary for job performance by helping employees to meet the emotional requirements of their job and to cope with stressors that could interfere with how they handle work situations (Wallace et al., 2009). In terms of supervisor-rated job performance, employees using solve with support – a strategy profile involving the combined use of both situation modification and seeking social support – was a clear front-runner, and employees who used this strategy profile were rated highest. As mentioned before, emotion regulation can be taxing to one's personal resources (Richards & Gross, 2000), so regulating in a way that invests those resources wisely seems to help employees to maintain job performance. The high level of performance when employees used solve with support was also rated significantly higher than solving it solo, i.e., using one engagement strategy alone, indicating that using multiple forms of engagement may better for job performance. Though the solve with support profile involves the investment of resources into an additional strategy, it appears that its combined use of situation modification and social support returns on that investment (Hobfoll, 2011).

Employee-Rated Performance Self-Efficacy.

Employee's beliefs about their own capability could be influenced by the strategies they use to regulate themselves, whereby engagement strategies were expected to be most helpful to resolve NIEs and boost self-efficacy. Instead, this study finds that regulating at all in any form is beneficial to protecting self-efficacy. By comparison, shrugging it off (regulating very little) was clearly maladaptive and not psychologically protective, even when controlling for event emotional intensity. This result stands in contrast to the finding by Gabriel et al. (2015) that those who do not regulate on the job report high emotional demands-ability fit with the job – the perception that one has the ability to cope with emotional work events. In terms of performance self-efficacy in this study, however, when employees shrugged it off they did not feel as though they handled the events effectively, which is consistent with other organizational findings that employees who do not regulate report lower job satisfaction relative to employees who use engagement strategies (Cossette & Hess, 2015).

Retribution.

As noted earlier, [employees want] a human response so that [they] can be friendly [themselves]" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 108), but when they receive disrespectful treatment, employees may feel negatively toward the transgressor (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). At work, employees commonly react to these NIEs by retaliating (Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2002), which can be ameliorated by effective emotion regulation (e.g., Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2016). The results of the current study suggest that emotion regulation is not created equal in reducing reciprocal negative behavior toward the transgressor. Shrugging it off and Suppressing with support (the highest level of suppression) were the worst in terms of employee retaliation. When the employees used these strategy profiles to regulate themselves, they felt that students

causing NIEs deserved to be deducted on average 100 and 142 more points, respectively, than their supervisors deemed as fair, even after controlling for the emotional intensity of the event. Not regulating or suppressing at such a high level may therefore be especially problematic because this retaliatory behavior could create a cycle of reciprocal hostility (Aquino & Thau, 2009) that perpetuates these behaviors. Surprisingly, using multiple engagement strategies also exhibited a heightened desire to retaliate against students. When employees used solve with support, they felt students should be deducted on average 88 more points than their supervisors deemed fair. Upon deeper inspection, seeking social support is emphasized in this regulatory profile and some organizational studies have shown that although seeking social support is a common regulatory response to workplace mistreatment, there is no evidence to suggest that it contributes to feeling better (e.g., Rospenda, Richman, & Shannon, 2006).

Physical Symptoms.

Finally, the profiles in this study did not exhibit differences in physical symptoms experienced during or following the NIEs after controlling for negative mood. Without controlling for negative mood the profiles do predict differences, suggesting that the events that elicit the strongest negative moods evoke different profiles, but it is the mood and not the profiles that predicts health issues (Semmer, Messerli, & Tschan, 2016).

Theoretical Implications

The current study offers several theoretical implications. First, workplace emotion regulation should be conceptualized as a dynamic, event-based process wherein employees flexibly use multiple strategies to manage how they feel during and following negative interpersonal events. By studying emotion regulation in the field, we are able to examine the presence of a sixth (and commonly used) strategy individuals use to regulate their emotions –

seeking social support. This strategy was used to a moderate extent by employees and more so compared to other strategies most commonly examined in organizational and psychological research, such as reappraisal and suppression. While seeking social support was not originally proposed in combination with Gross' (1998, 2015) five emotion regulation strategies, it is considered in other regards to be a primary type of motivational resource that helps individual protect themselves from distress (Hobfoll, Freedy, & Lane, 1990) and including it here has helped to shed light on the effectiveness of this strategy. In some ways, like for job performance, social support was beneficial to employees. However, in other ways it undermined them, such as for retaliation when social support was paired with high suppression (Suppress with support). Thus, it appears that the benefits of seeking social support are attenuated by the other profiles with which it is combined. To this point, Gross (2002) found that using suppression is associated with a reduced quality of received social support, suggesting that not showing one's true feelings to others could compromise the help they receive. Future research would benefit by examining social support further and the underlying reasons why social support and suppression together might be ineffective.

Consistent support found between recent person-level (e.g., Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015) and event-level studies (current study) suggests that it is important to incorporate emotion regulation flexibility into theorizing the emotion regulation process, which may help to understand emotion regulation with regard to other types of events, like during the ups and downs of goal striving (e.g., the job search, Melloy, Liu, Grandey, & Shi, under review) or during periods of organizational change (e.g., Seo et al., 2016). The idea of event-level regulatory flexibility may also extrapolate to other types of dynamic work-related regulation as

well, such as regulating motivation (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989), creativity (Stobbelier, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011), and job performance (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

Second, because emotional experience is inherently dynamic and should be examined at the event level of analysis (Grandey & Melloy, 2017), I integrate theories of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) to theorize that certain characteristics of the work events themselves can be used to predict the likelihood that employees will use certain regulatory profiles. This study represents one of the first to jointly consider and explicitly incorporate the role of work event stress characteristics in affecting employees' choice of strategies. Therefore, this study is among the first to attempt to understand situational differences in emotion regulation flexibility by suggesting that some differences nudge the use of engagement strategies, while others may nudge disengagement strategies. The choice of characteristics (typicality, controllability, responsibility) that may influence regulation was guided by theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987), but do not represent the full range of characteristics that may predict strategy use.

With that said, considering other ways in which variation in emotional event characteristics could hold implications for regulation are highly worthy of future theorizing. For example, Gabriel et al. (2015) examine emotional demands – ability fit to predict regulatory profile membership at the person level, and similar research on fit perceptions (Gabriel et al., 2014) suggests this could vary from work event to work event to predict event-level profile membership too. With regard to this study, it could be that for events where there is high demands-ability fit, employees are likely to use engagement regulatory profiles and less likely not to regulate or to use disengagement profiles.

Third, by examining emotion regulation in terms of profiles, I offer preliminary insight into the ways in which strategy combinations impact outcomes differently than strategies

considered in isolation or additively. We know that using a person-centered approach allows us to observe subgroup differences that are masked by variable-centered approaches (e.g., Cossette & Hess, 2015; Foti, Bray, Thompson, & Allgood, 2012; Gabriel et al., 2015), but current research has not yet offered an understanding for how strategies used in combination relate to job performance and well-being, and how such effectiveness or ineffectiveness might differ from strategies used in isolation. Given that work event emotion regulation is important for personal and work outcomes (e.g., Goldberg & Grandey, 2007), it is important for research to understand the mechanisms of regulation. This study establishes one standard with which to evaluate regulatory effectiveness for performance, that is, using *combinations* of *engagement* strategies is best in terms of supervisor-rated job performance, which is better than using either engagement or disengagement strategies alone. Moreover, not regulating at all during NIEs is worse all around, resulting in unresolved feelings leading to displacement (i.e., retaliation) and perceptions of low self-competence (i.e., job performance self-efficacy).

Practical Implications

The results of this study offer several ways to help advise employees on how to best manage their emotions. First, employees should be made aware that there are multiple ways to regulate one's emotions, but that some ways are more effective than others. By being aware of their own emotion regulation strategy repertoires— the ability to deploy a wide range of strategies (Bonanno & Burton, 2013) – employees “might [better] accommodate divergent contextual demands and opportunities” (p. 594). This understanding offers intervention points for those who lack a varied repertoire to identify strategies to develop. For example, training employees to modify the situation in addition to identifying means for social support could help employees solve with support, a beneficial regulatory profile which would otherwise remain unavailable to

employees who could not implement those strategies. Not regulating at all is detrimental to employee self-efficacy, so training employees who lack strategies to develop any could keep them from being most at-risk. Such support trainings have been developed and tested to successfully maintain employee self-perceptions following victimization (Schat & Kelloway, 2003).

Second, it is important for employees to understand how aspects of an event could shape their choice of emotion regulation. For example, situations of low control are in this study associated with no regulation, so recognizing and enhancing situational control has the potential to increase the likelihood that employees will use engagement strategies to resolve NIEs. Supervisors could provide trainings that build on-the-job skills that enhance control to recover the situation if things turn bad (e.g., customer service skills, Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015), or where appropriate they could afford employees with greater decision latitude to afford more control over incidents. Moreover, the results suggest that when responsibility is low, employees more often disengage, but it would be important for employees to get on the same page with one another to understand when they are responsible for situations versus when they are not to ensure that NIEs are in fact resolved.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the current study possesses a number of key strengths, the findings should be considered in light of several limitations. First, several of the variables were measured via self-report, which calls into question the nature of any common-source bias that may have affected the results. To ameliorate this issue, the event characteristic antecedents, part of the retaliation scores, and job performance ratings were provided by the employees' supervisors who are subject matter experts for these types of events. Furthermore, the longitudinal nature of the data

collection with repeated measurements should mitigate both common-source and common-method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Finally, the potential for socially desirable responding exists, such that employees may have been more likely to say they modified the situation or handled it effectively to avoid poor impressions. Several steps were taken to reduce this concern, including explicitly stating in person that all responses were confidential only to the researcher and designing the study such that the researcher received all surveys, removed them in view of the employees, placed them in a concealed box, and then gave the employees back the write-ups to hand in to their supervisors themselves. Future research could further reduce common-source/common-method bias concerns by evaluating the extent to which social desirability is present and statistically controlling for its influence.

Second, due to practical constraints and to reduce the risk of participant fatigue over the course of the six-week data collection, the constructs were measured using single items for both supervisor and employee surveys. In line with best practices concerning the use of single-item measures in occupational health (Fisher, Matthews, & Gibbons, 2017), the items used were taken from previously validated scales or were previously validated on their own (see Diefendorff et al., 2008 for the emotion regulation items). Where they were not, items were adapted or created to assess the construct of interest in as straightforward a manner as possible to ensure content and face validity (Fisher & To, 2012).

Fourth, the study design limits the ability to make causal inferences regarding the relationship between emotion regulation and both performance and well-being outcomes. This concern is partly addressed by having supervisors report event characteristics and performance level, however testing strategy flexibility within a true experimental paradigm would strengthen our confidence in these relationships. In addition, emotion regulation strategy flexibility itself is

not proposed to be unique to negative interpersonal events, so this phenomenon could be tested in other contexts where employees must regulate their emotions to attempt to generalize these results.

Finally, the participants in this study are employees embedded in a particularly stressful organizational context. As such, it is possible that the negative interpersonal events experienced in this context are relatively unique to this organization and may influence regulation and outcomes in a special way. However, I specifically examine how constructs that are widely examined across organizational and psychological research vary within-person at the event level. The event characteristics themselves are theorized as universal to humanity and are general enough to be meaningful to employees for any given event. Thus, the observed within-person relationships are likely to translate to other contexts. Still, it would be fruitful for research to compare the variability of these characteristics in other contexts, as well as the frequencies with which employees choose certain profiles over others.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, emotion regulation is a dynamic and flexible process that is essential for effective workplace functioning and well-being. This longitudinal, multi-level field study was conducted with employees of a private school in the United States. Findings support that at the event-level of analysis, employees can and do choose to use combinations of engagement and disengagement emotion regulation strategies. The likelihood of choosing strategies is predicted by whether the situation is characterized as typical, controllable, or if employees have greater responsibility for it, and strategy choice holds implications for job performance well-being.

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Appendix A: Tables

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Event-Level Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	Within- Person <i>SD</i>	Between- Person <i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Emotion Intensity	1.59	1.52	1.16	-									
2. Typicality	4.66	1.40	0.51	.05	-								
3. Controllability	4.10	1.81	.30	.02	.17***	-							
4. Responsibility	4.11	1.81	.35	.03	.16***	.97**	-						
5. Reappraisal	1.61	1.53	0.95	.30***	.03	.09	.10*	-					
6. Situation Modification	4.27	1.45	1.23	.03	.02	.05	.05	.13	-				
7. Distraction	2.16	1.52	1.39	.09	.01	.03	.02	.11	.20**	-			
8. Situation Selection	1.59	1.51	1.16	.23*	-.02	.00	.00	.23***	.01	.23	-		
9. Suppression	1.67	1.34	1.48	.22*	.09	-.03	-.02	.18*	.17	.23*	.42***	-	
10. Social Support	2.95	1.80	1.65	.09	.04	.00	.00	.07	.17	.08	.13	.17	-
11. Points Difference	40.77	217.52	100.03	.07	.13*	.13	.14	.06	.06	.03	.05	.02	.15**
12. Supervisor-rated Performance	4.94	.99	.15	.04	.14	.25	.24	.00	-.04	-.04	-.01	.00	-.01
13. Performance Self-Efficacy	3.70	1.81	1.15	-.03	-.09	-.08	-.08	-.01	.23**	-.01	.03	.01	-.02
14. Physical Symptoms	0.78	1.18	1.09	.41**	.03	.05	.06	.12*	-.05	.16*	.14*	.09	.12**

Note. Maximum $N = 526$ at the within-person level and $N = 77$ at the between-person level. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 1 (*cont'd.*)
Descriptive Statistics and Event-Level Correlations for Study Variables

	Variable	11	12	13	14
11.	Points Difference	-			
12.	Supervisor-rated Performance	-.07	-		
13.	Performance Self-Efficacy	-.10	.00	-	
14.	Physical Symptoms	.07	.04	-.12**	-

Table 2
Fit Statistics for Profile Structures

No. of Profiles	LL	FP	AIC	BIC	Δ BIC	SSA-BIC	Entropy
2	-6069.406	19	12176.812	12257.041		12196.733	.952
3	-5938.805	26	11929.610	12039.397	217.644	11956.870	.965
4	-5819.672	33	11705.343	11844.688	194.709	11739.943	.934
5	-5731.483	40	11542.826	11711.729	132.959	11584.765	.962
6	-5652.618	47	11399.237	11579.698	132.031	11448.515	.948
7	-5573.243	54	11254.485	11482.504	97.194	6906.797	.960

Note. LL = Log-likelihood; FP = free parameters; AIC = Akaike information criteria; BIC = Bayesian information criteria; SSA-BIC = sample-size adjusted BIC. LL, AIC, BIC, and SSA-BIC fit statistics indicate better fitting models when they decrease relative to the previous model. Entropy should be high.

Table 3
Descriptive Information Per Latent Profile

Emotion Regulation Strategies	Engagement Profiles				Mixed Use Profiles				Disengagement Profiles			
	Solve it solo		Solve with support		Suppress with support		Suppress so-so		Shrug it off		Suppress it solo	
	<i>M</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
Reappraisal	0.94	[0.51, 1.38]	1.13	[0.61, 1.64]	2.91	[1.71, 4.11]	2.20	[1.54, 2.87]	1.59	[0.89, 2.30]	2.18	[1.58, 2.78]
Situation Modification	5.15	[4.58, 5.71]	4.54	[3.84, 5.24]	5.05	[4.66, 5.44]	4.11	[3.47, 4.74]	0.36	[0.004, 0.72]	4.22	[3.64, 4.80]
Social Support	0.30	[.02, 0.58]	5.17	[4.83, 5.51]	5.88	[5.73, 6.00]	4.46	[3.90, 5.01]	0.26	[-0.13, 0.66]	0.97	[0.72, 1.21]
Distraction	1.27	[0.53, 2.01]	1.20	[0.61, 1.80]	4.87	[4.07, 5.31]	3.06	[2.56, 3.57]	0.48	[-0.13, 1.09]	2.73	[1.53, 3.92]
Situation Selection	0.45	[0.05, 0.84]	0.73	[0.20, 1.25]	4.47	[3.66, 5.29]	2.53	[1.90, 3.17]	0.34	[-0.10, 0.77]	3.00	[1.75, 4.24]
Suppression	0.24	[.04, 0.44]	0.32	[0.12, 0.51]	5.54	[5.16, 5.92]	3.01	[2.81, 3.21]	0.10	[-0.03, 0.23]	4.49	[4.00, 4.99]
% of Sample	21.88		29.62		8.83		13.86		15.70		10.10	

Table 4 - Three Step Results for Profile Antecedents Using R3Step

		Engagement Profiles		Mixed Use Profiles		Disengagement Profiles
Antecedent	Referent Profile	Solve it solo	Solve w. support	Suppress w. support	Suppress so-so	Suppress it solo
Shrug vs.						
Emotional Intensity		-.16	.18	.68*	.49	.57†
Typical		-.25	-.26	.01	-.09	-.27
Controllable		.75*	.21	1.12**	.11	.01
Degree Responsible		-.78*	-.19	-1.09**	-.18	-.05
Solve it solo vs.						
Emotional Intensity			.34**	.84***	.65***	.74***
Typical			-.01	.26*	.16	-.02
Controllable			-.55*	.37	-.64†	-.74†
Degree Responsible			.60*	-.31	.61†	.73
Solve w. support vs.						
Emotional Intensity				.50**	.31*	.40*
Typical				.27*	.18	-.01
Controllable				.92**	-.09	-.19
Degree Responsible				-.91**	.01	.14
Suppress w. support vs.						
Emotional Intensity					-.19	-.11
Typical					-.10	-.28†
Controllable					-1.01**	-1.11*
Degree Responsible					.92**	1.04*
Suppress so-so vs.						
Emotional Intensity						-.08
Typical						.18
Controllable						.10
Degree Responsible						-.13

Note. All values are beta estimates from the R3STEP logistic regression analyses controlling for employee-rated event emotional intensity. Due to listwise deletion analyses were conducted with 484 participants. Positive values indicate that higher values on the antecedent make a person more likely to be in the column latent profile (not the referent); negative values indicate that higher values on the antecedent make a person more likely to be in the referent latent profile. Sup. = Suppress. w. = with. w.o. = without. [†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

Table 5
Three-Step Results for Distal Outcomes Using BCH

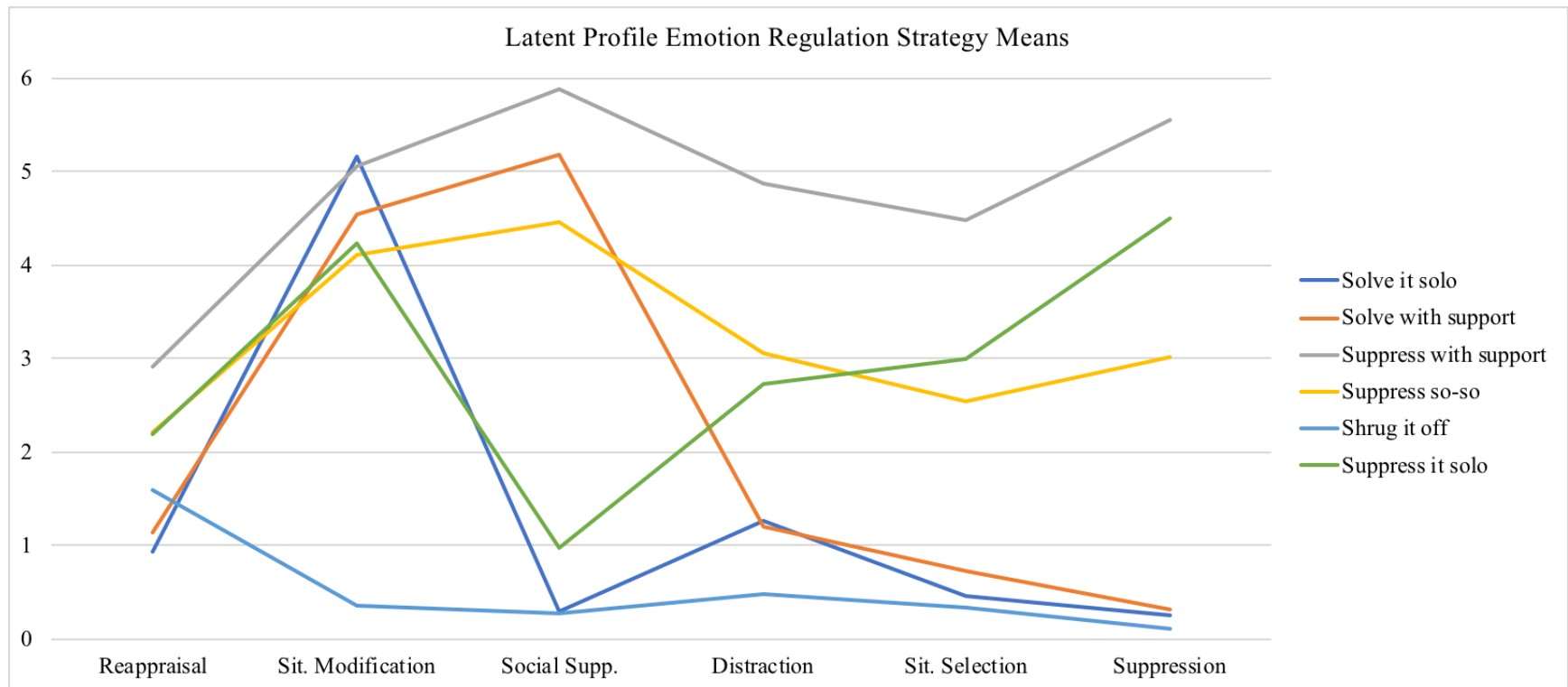
	Engagement Profiles		Mixed Use Profiles		Disengagement Profiles		
Outcome	Solve it solo	Solve with support	Suppress with support	Suppress So-So	Shrug it off	Suppress it solo	Chi Square
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	
Performance							
Performance (Supervisor-rated)	4.79*** _B	5.07*** _{A,E}	4.48***	4.98***	4.89***	4.67*** _B	11.47*
Performance Self-Efficacy	4.10*** _E	3.84** _E	4.27*** _E	3.74*** _E	1.47*** _{A,B,C,D,F}	4.11*** _E	46.09***
Retaliation	11.47 _{B,C,E}	88.50** _{A,F}	141.85* _{A,F}	63.55 _F	101.53*** _{A,F}	-91.49 _{B,C,D,E}	24.31***
Well-being							
Physical Symptoms	.17	0.00	.093	.09	.09 [†]	.29	7.44

Note. All analyses were run utilizing the manual BCH procedure in Mplus controlling for emotional intensity. The values for retribution, performance self-efficacy, and physical symptoms for each profile are means. Data were available for 482 for supervisor-rated performance, 500 for performance self-efficacy, 393 participants for retaliation, 502 for physical symptoms, and 503 for stress. Subscripts indicate profiles that are significantly different at $p < .05$. Asterisks indicate whether the mean is significantly different from zero. [†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Appendix B: Figures

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Raw means of latent profiles of emotion regulation strategy use.



Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION:

- 2013-2018 Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University, Industrial/Organizational Psychology,
Minor: Management and Organizations
- 2013-2015 M.S., The Pennsylvania State University, Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- 2008-2012 B.A., The College of New Jersey, Psychology (Honors), Minor: Statistics

PUBLICATIONS:

- Grandey, A. A., & **Melloy**, R. C. (2017). The State of the Heart: The Model of Emotional Labor as Emotion Regulation Reviewed and Revised. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.
- Thompson, M. N., Dahling, J. J., *Chin, M. Y., & ***Melloy**, R. C., (2017). Integrating job loss, unemployment, and reemployment with Social Cognitive Career Theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 25, 40-57.
- Howard, M. C., & **Melloy**, R. C. (2016). Evaluating item-sort task methods: The presentation of a new statistical significance formula and methodological best practices. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 31, 173-186.
- Zhang, X., Xing, C., Guan, Y., Song, X., **Melloy**, R., Wang, F., & Jin X. (2016). Attitudes toward older adults: A matter of cultural values or personal values? *Psychology and Aging*, 31, 89-100.
- Song, X., Zhang, X., **Melloy**, R., Wang, F., Zhan, H., & Wang, L. (2016). From self-disclosure to prosocial behaviors: Feedback as a moderator. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 19, 90-100.
- Melloy**, R., & Liu, S. (2014). Non-traditional employment history: A less obvious source of stereotype threat. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 7, 474-478.
- Dahling, J. J., **Melloy**, R., & Thompson, M. N. (2013). Financial strain and regional unemployment as barriers to job search self-efficacy: A test of social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, 210-218.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS:

- Melloy**, R. C., Grandey, A. A., Ferris, D. L., & England, K. (2017, August). Evaluating reactions to employees displaying pride in a work context. In L. McFarland (Chair), *Employee identity and image creation across work contexts*. Symposium presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Atlanta, GA.
- Melloy**, R. C., Liu, S., & Shi, S. J. (2015, August). Maintaining the job search goal against obstacles: A longitudinal study. Paper presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Philadelphia, PA.
- Melloy**, R. C., Dahling, J. J., & Thompson, M. N. (2013, April). Effects of financial strain and unemployment on job search self-efficacy. Paper presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Houston, TX. *Awarded Best Conference Paper 2013.