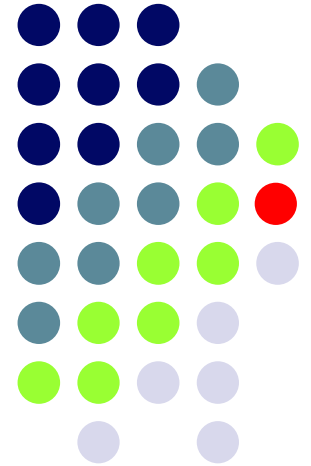
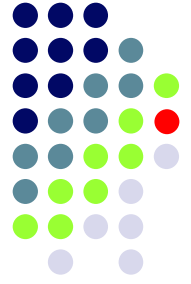


Peer Influences and Interventions



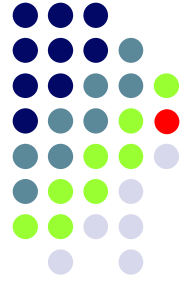
Mitch Prinstein, Ph.D., *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
National Research Council, Institute of Medicine

What do we Know about Peer Influence?

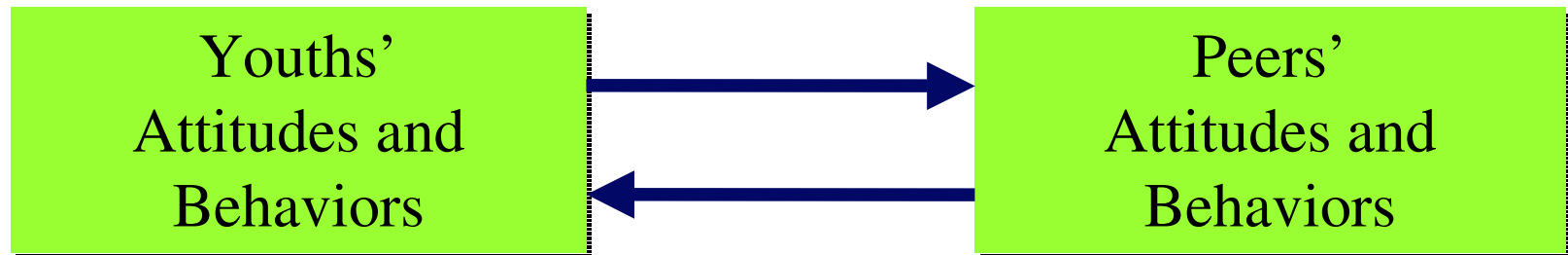


- **Why** are youths' and peers' behaviors similar?
- **What** behaviors are influenced by peers?
- **Who** are the sources of peer influence?
- **When** is peer influence likely to occur?
- **How** does peer influence work?
- **Which** youth are most/least susceptible to peer influence?

Why are youths' and peers' behaviors similar?



Homophily



Selection Effects
Socialization Effects

What behaviors are influenced by peers?

- **Externalizing Symptoms**
 - Illegal/violent behavior
 - Aggression
- **Substance Use**
 - Alcohol, nicotine use
 - Marijuana use
 - “Hard” drugs
- **Sexual risk behaviors**
- **Internalizing Symptoms**
 - Depressive symptoms
 - Suicidality
- **Other Health Risk Behaviors**
 - Weight-related behaviors
 - Nonsuicidal self injury
- **Prosocial and Health-Promotion Behaviors**

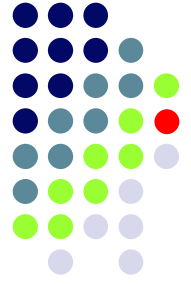


Substantial Empirical Support

Emerging Empirical Support

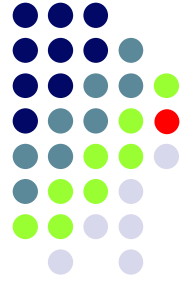
New Area for Research

Who are the sources of peer influence?



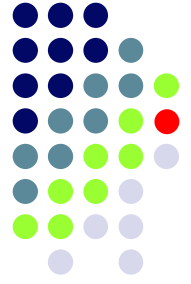
- **Very best friends**
- **Popular youth**
 - **Social Preference (“Liked Most” – “Liked Least”)**
 - **Social Reputation (“Most Popular” – “Least Popular”)**
- **Friendship Groups (Cliques)**
- **Members of Similar Peer Crowds**
- **Romantic Partners**
- **“Peers” (undefined)**
- **Aggregated Peers (e.g., within group therapy, classroom placements, prison inmates)**

Who : Future Research Needs



- **Negotiating converging/diverging messages from various sources of influence**
- **Study of “anti-conformity” effects (i.e., from enemies; negative role models)**

When is peer influence likely to occur?



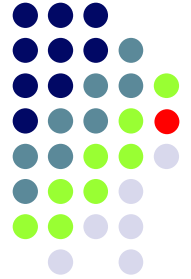
- **Developmental considerations**
 - **Adolescent transition**
 - Identity development; reliance on peer feedback
 - **School transitions**
 - Navigation of new social milieu, expansion of peer network
 - **Relationship stages**
 - Friendship initiation vs. in later stages of relationship

When : Future Research Needs



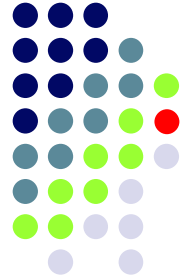
- **Longitudinal data needed to examine critical periods of:**
 - **exposure to**
 - **susceptibility/conformity to**
...peer influence

How does peer influence work?



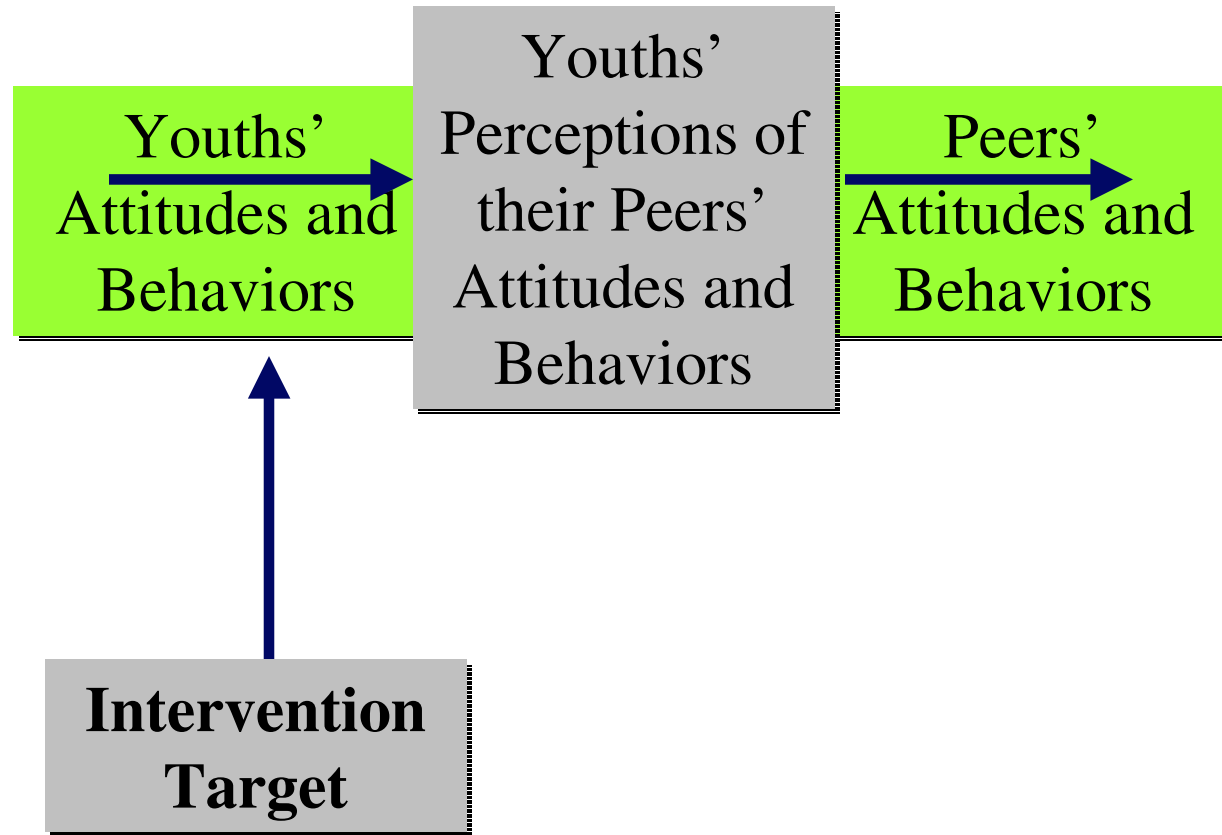
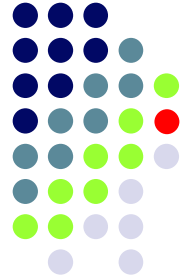
- **Overt/Explicit Peer Pressure**
- **Social mimicry/response evocation**
- **Identity-based Theories**
- **Deviancy Training**

How does peer influence work?

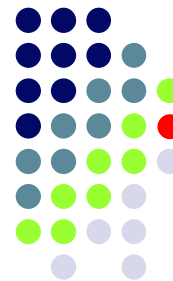


- Overt/Explicit Peer Pressure
- Social mimicry/response evocation
- **Identity-based Theories**
- Deviancy Training

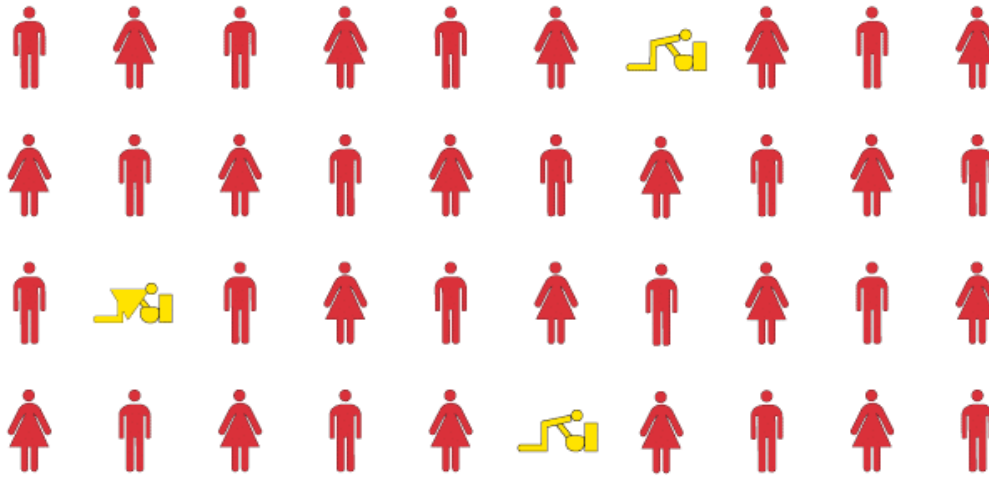
Identity-Based Theories



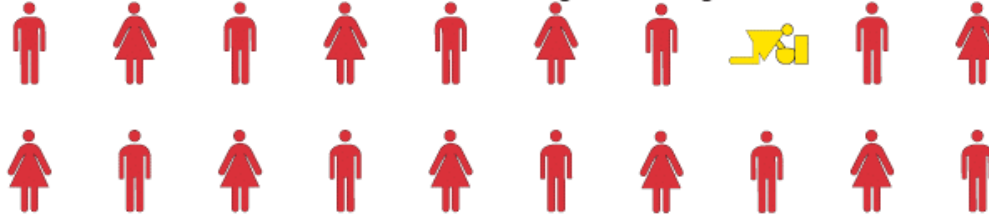
Biased Perceptions of Peers' Attitudes and Behaviors



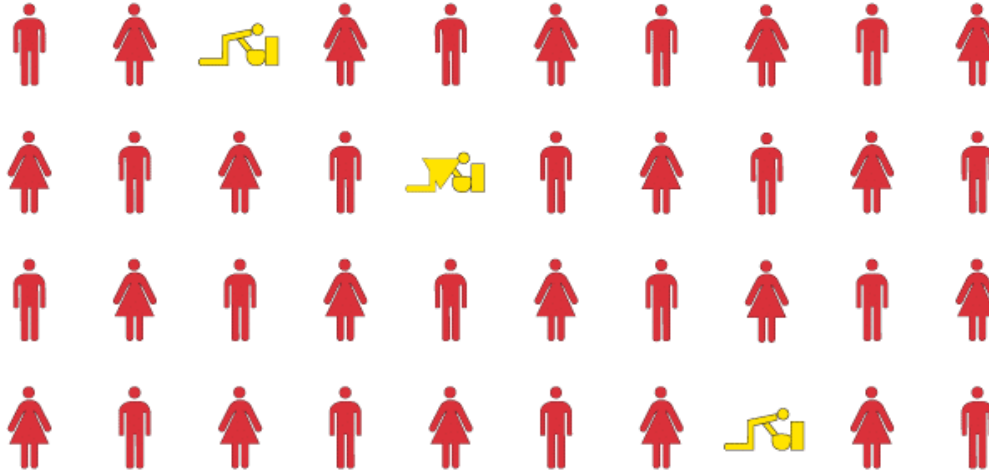
- **Erroneous estimations of social norms (descriptive norms)**
 - Aggressive-rejected youth
 - Prior engagement in the health risk behavior (i.e., false consensus effects)
 - Social norms interventions



100 SMU students will go out tonight.



93 of them will remember it tomorrow.

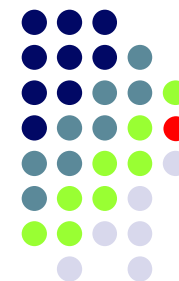


According to a recent survey, very few SMU students classify themselves as heavy drinkers. Most of us realize that having fun doesn't have to mean having your head down a toilet after partying. Drinking responsibly is actually the most popular student activity. That's worth remembering.

Congratulations. And welcome to The Majority.



Biased Perceptions of Peers' Attitudes and Behaviors



- **Erroneous estimations of social norms (descriptive norms)**
 - Aggressive-rejected youth
 - Prior engagement in the health risk behavior (i.e., false consensus effects)
 - Social norms interventions
- **Erroneous estimations of social norms (injunctive norms)**
 - Pluralistic ignorance
 - Attitudinal interventions



FIVE DRINKS IN A SINGLE NIGHT IS CRAZY.

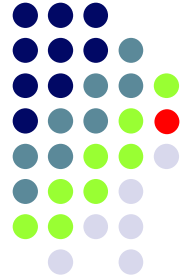
Most of us realize this and don't party insanely.

A 2002 survey of SMU students shows that 75 percent of us average five or fewer drinks when we party. This shows that we are part of a growing national trend. We enjoy partying with friends and do so responsibly. The survey shows that the vast majority of us drink once a week or less. We haven't missed a class due to drinking, haven't gotten into a fight because of

drinking, don't drink and drive and have never been in trouble with authorities due to drinking either on or off campus. The next time you're out, remember that drinking responsibly is actually the most popular student activity.

Congratulations. And welcome to The Majority.

How does peer influence work?

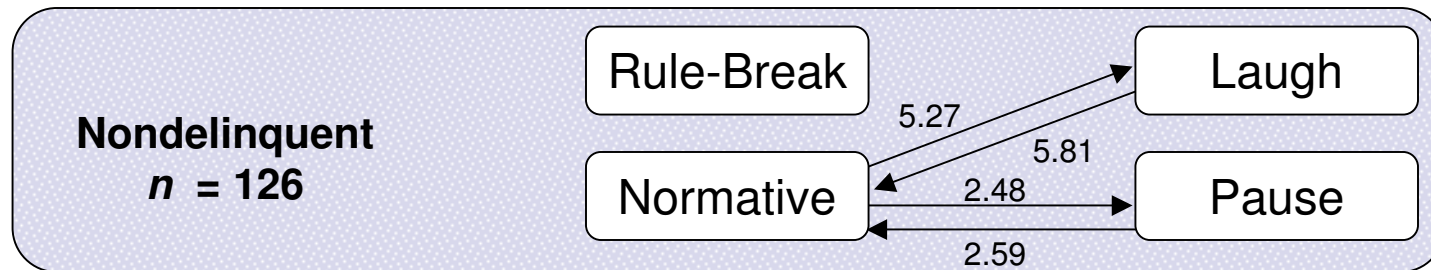


- Overt/Explicit Peer Pressure
- Social mimicry/response evocation
- Identity-based Theories
- **Deviancy Training**

Dyad Arrest Status

Dyad

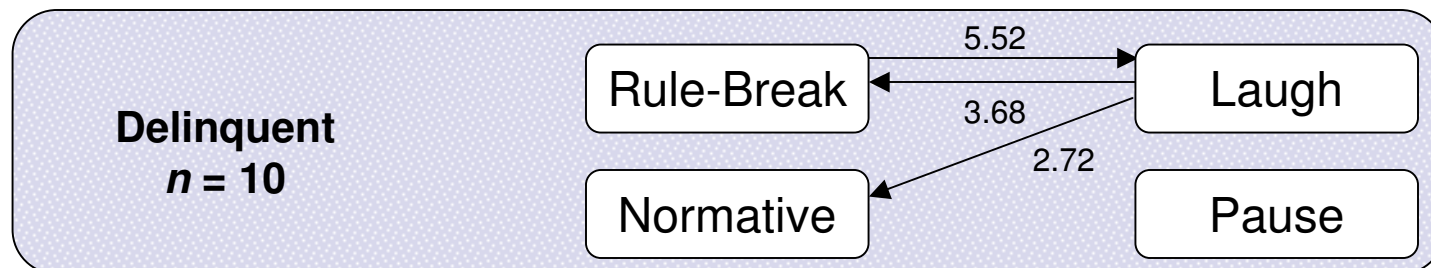
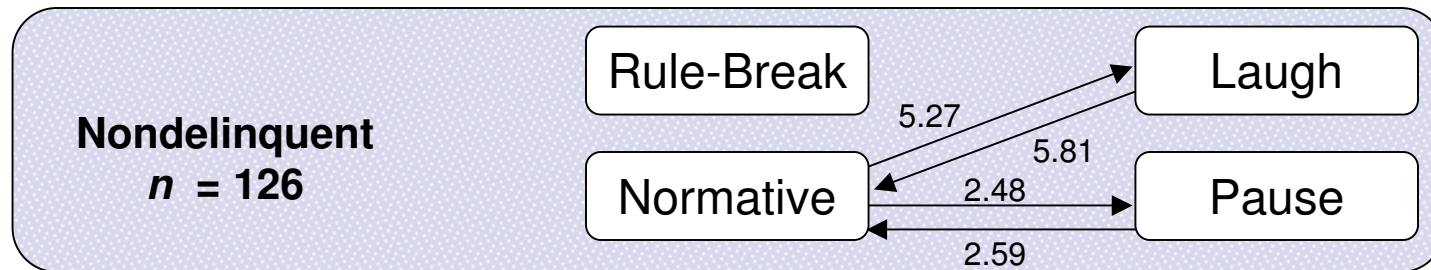
Reaction



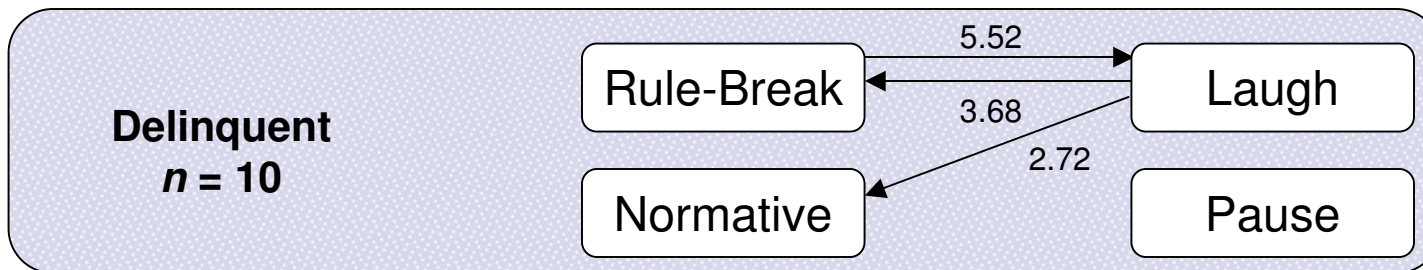
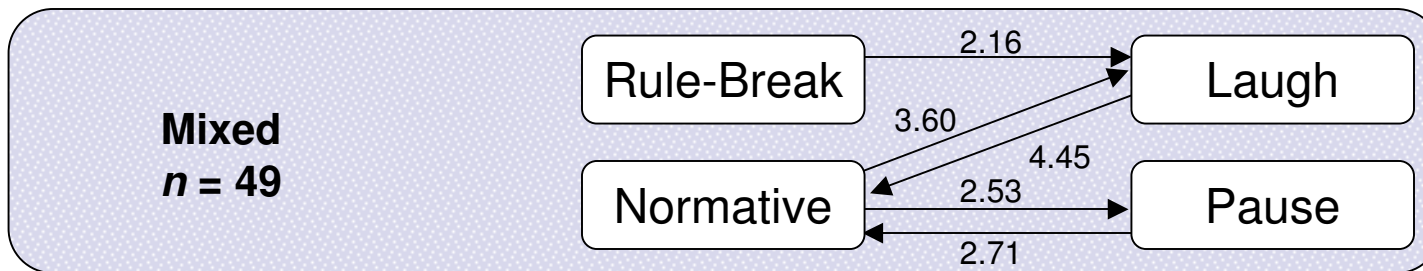
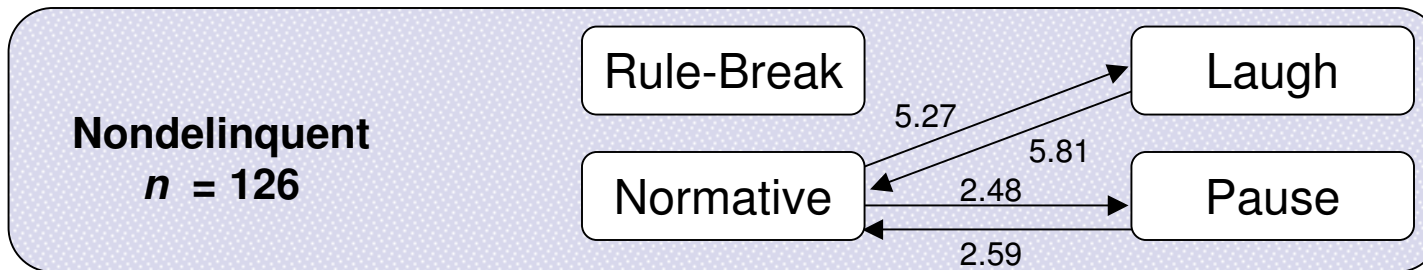
Dyad Arrest Status

Dyad

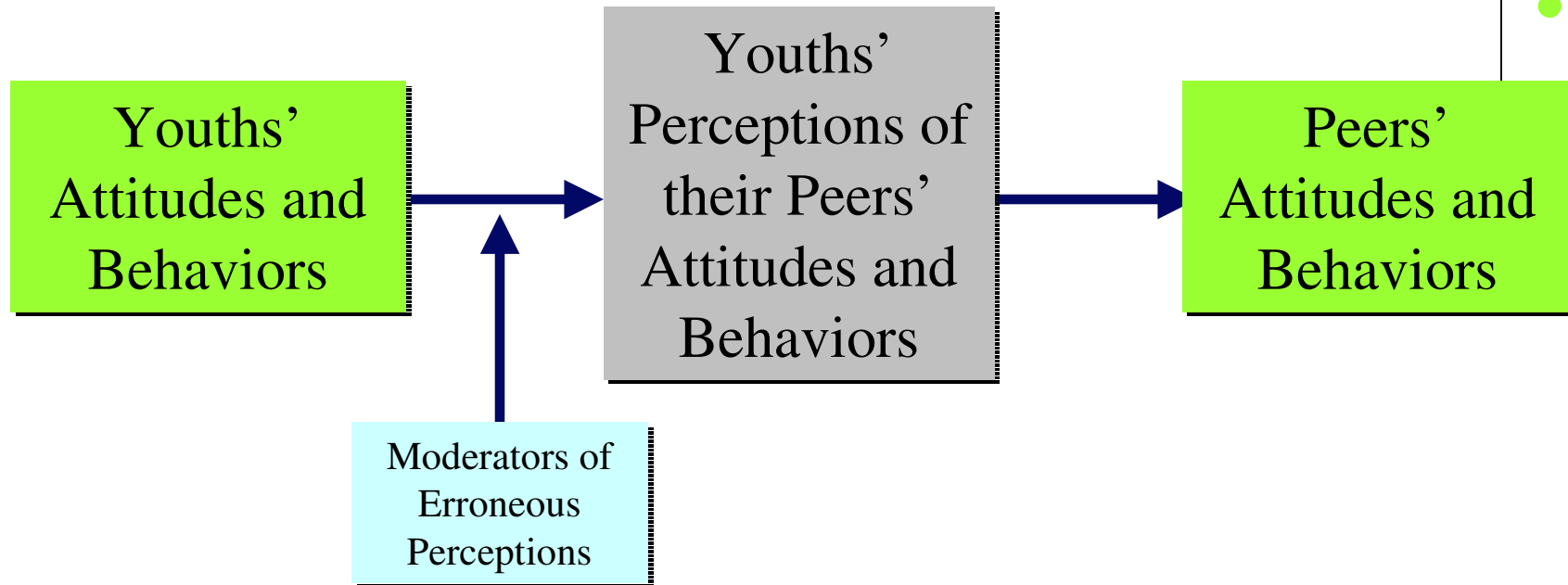
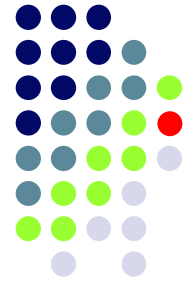
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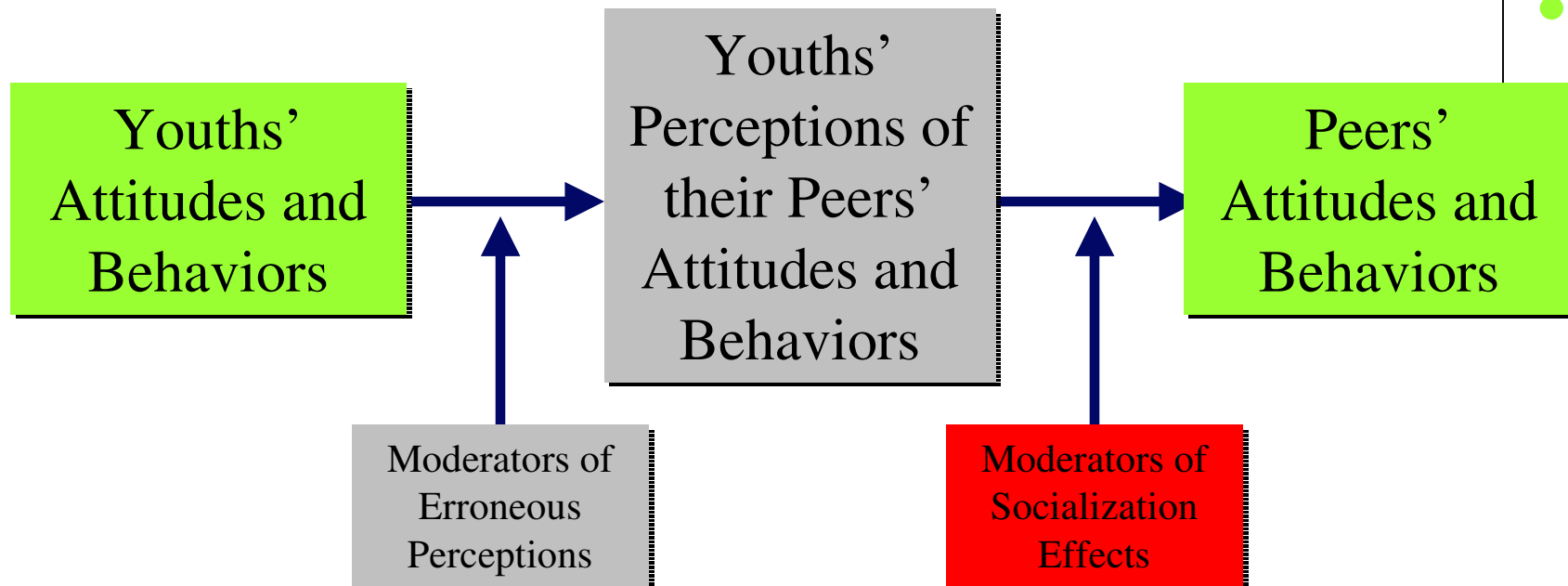
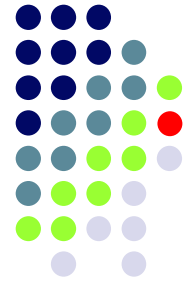
Dyad Arrest Status	Dyad	Reaction
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Which youth are most/least susceptible to peer influence?

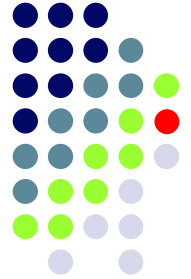


Which youth are most/least susceptible to peer influence?



- **Aspects of the influence target**
 - **Social anxiety, low self-esteem**
 - **Low peer status**
 - **Poor family relationships**

Which: Future Research Needs



Other Potential Moderators of Peer Influence Effects

- **Aspects of the influential agent**
 - High status
- **Relationship-oriented moderators**
 - Close, reciprocated friendships
- **Contextual moderators**
 - (e.g., presence of allies, size of peer group, risk/meaning of the behavior in that context).