

FEAR: A POSITIVE COPING STRATEGY OR NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL STATE?

Debra K. Moser, DNSc, RN, FAAN, FAHA
Professor and Gill Endowed Chair
Co-Director, RICH Heart Program
Director, Center for Biobehavioral Research in
Self-Management
Co-Editor, *Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*
University of Kentucky, College of Nursing
dmoser@uky.edu



Presenter Disclosure Information

- ◆ *Debra K Moser*
- ◆ Fear: a positive coping strategy or negative emotional state?

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Anxiety vs Fear: Is Conceptual Clarity Possible?



Definitions

◆ Fear

- ◆ An emotional reaction to a specific, identifiable and immediate threat such as a dangerous animal or an injury
 - ◆ has a protective function associated with the fight or flight response (Rachman 1989)

◆ Anxiety

- ◆ Form of negative emotion closely related to fear, defined as 'unspecified fear with no clear focus' (Hartl and Hartlova 2004)

- ◆ Worry, fear, anxiety, panic often used interchangeably to describe increasing levels of fear

- ◆ A vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some (usually ill-defined) misfortune.
- ◆ Apprehension, tension, uneasiness or fear that stems from the anticipation of danger, whose source is largely unknown.
- ◆ Apprehension or uneasiness about an anticipated danger. Anxiety may be a normal reaction to danger or threat, or occur when no such danger exists and cause troubling symptoms.
- ◆ Mental discomfort that arises from the fear of anything, real or imagined. May have a potent effect on actions and the ability to learn from perceptions.
- ◆ Generalized feelings of fear and apprehension resulting from a real or perceived threat whose actual source is unknown or unrecognized. Anxiety is often distinguished from fear in that fear is a more appropriate word to use when there exists threat or danger in the real world

Items on BSI-Anxiety scale

- ◆ 1. Nervousness or shakiness inside
- ◆ 2. Suddenly scared for no reason
- ◆ 3. Feeling fearful
- ◆ 4. Feeling tense or keyed up
- ◆ 5. Spells of terror or panic
- ◆ 6. Feeling so restless you couldn't sit still

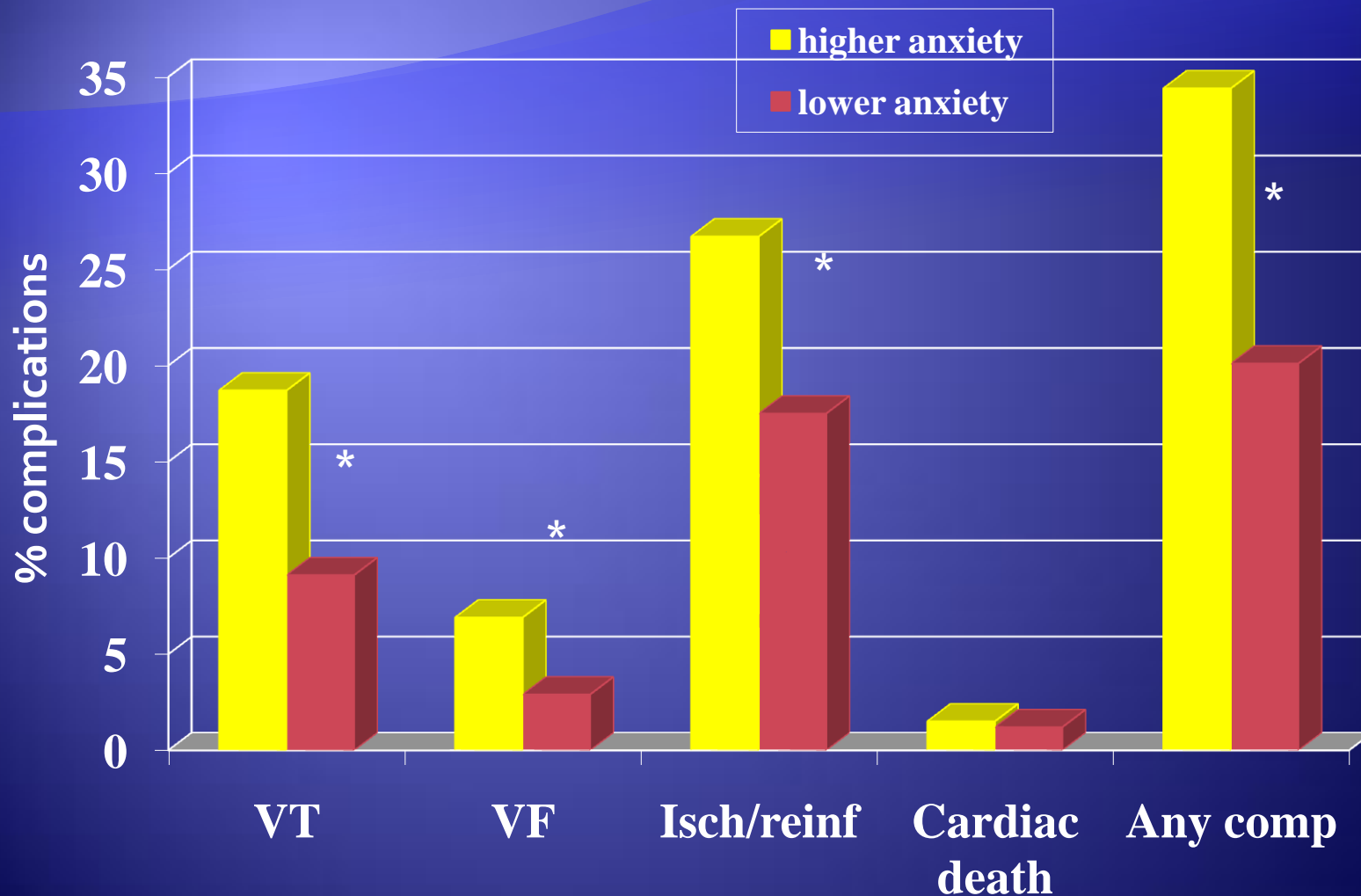
Fear: Positive or Negative?



Fear: Positive or Negative?

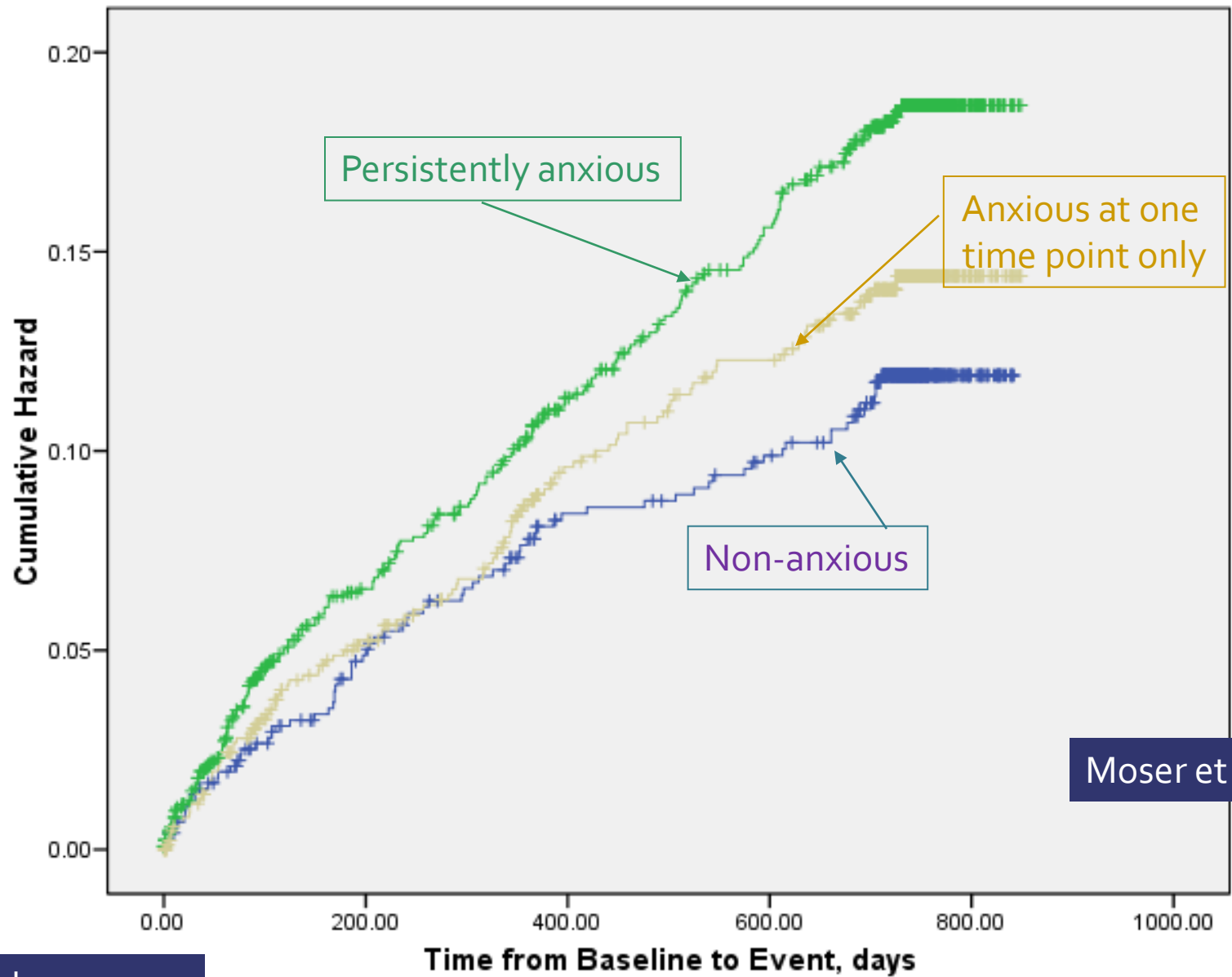


In-hospital Complications and Anxiety (n = 536 AMI patients)



* = $p < 0.05$; VT = ventricular tachycardia; VF = ventricular fibrillation; Isch/reinf = ischemia or reinfarction Moser et al., 2007

Hazard Function: Event-Free Survival Compared Among 3 Anxiety Groups in CAD Patients, N = 2400

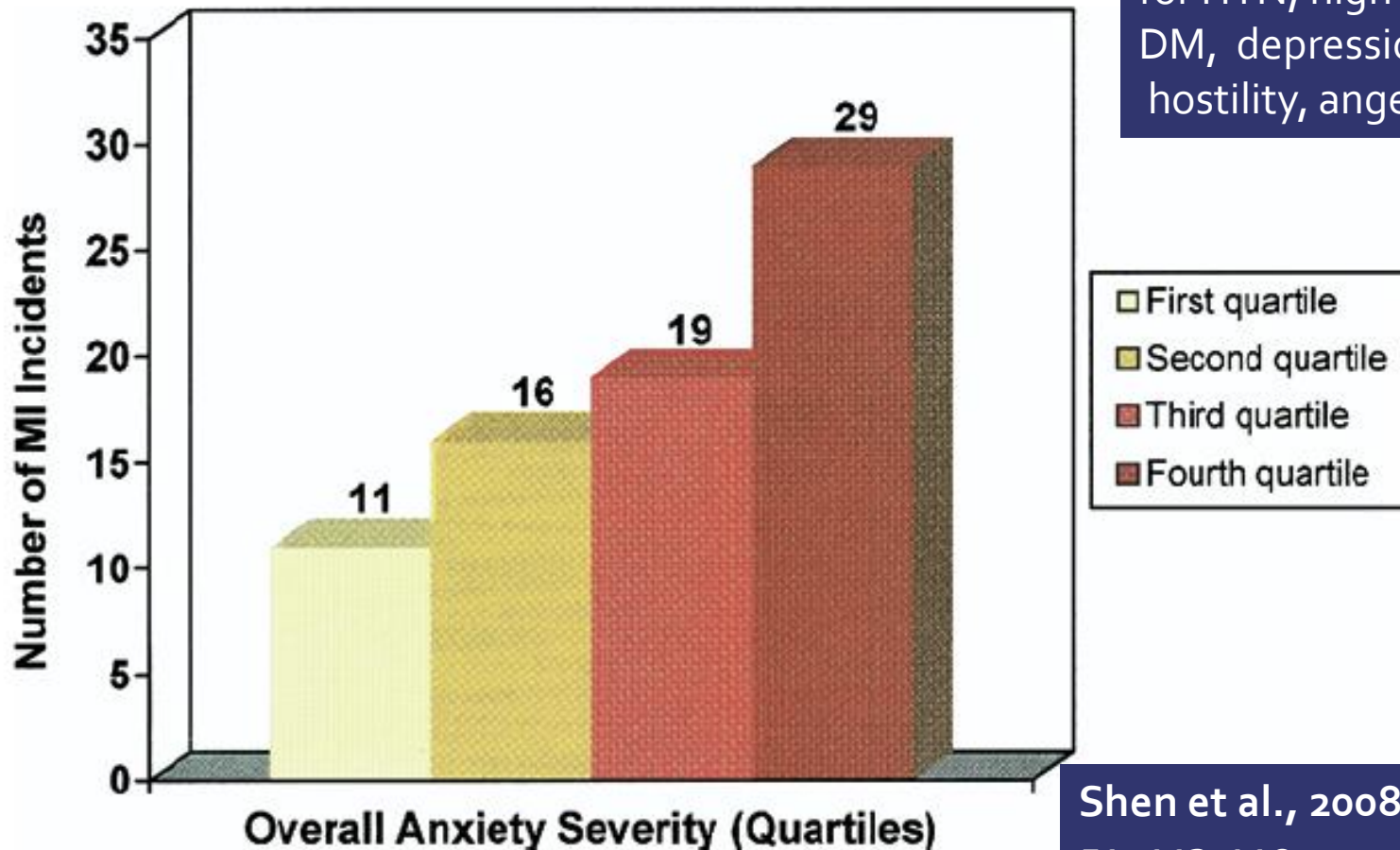


Moser et al., 2011

Log-rank $p = 0.002$

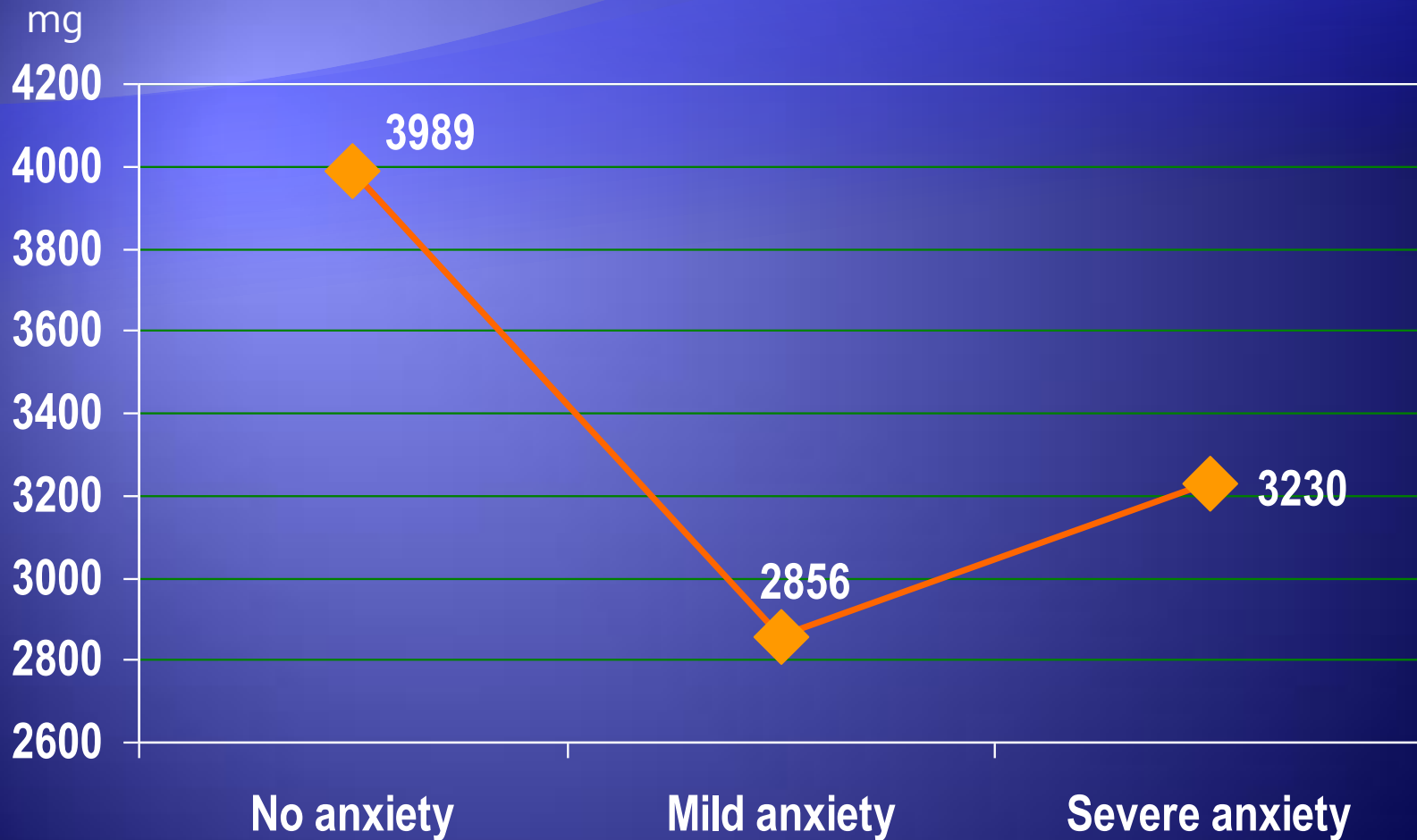
Number of MI Incidents at Different Anxiety Levels: Dose Response, n = 735

Independent of age, education, marital status, glucose, BMI, HDL, BP, health behaviors, meds for HTN, high cholesterol, and DM, depression, type A behavior, hostility, anger



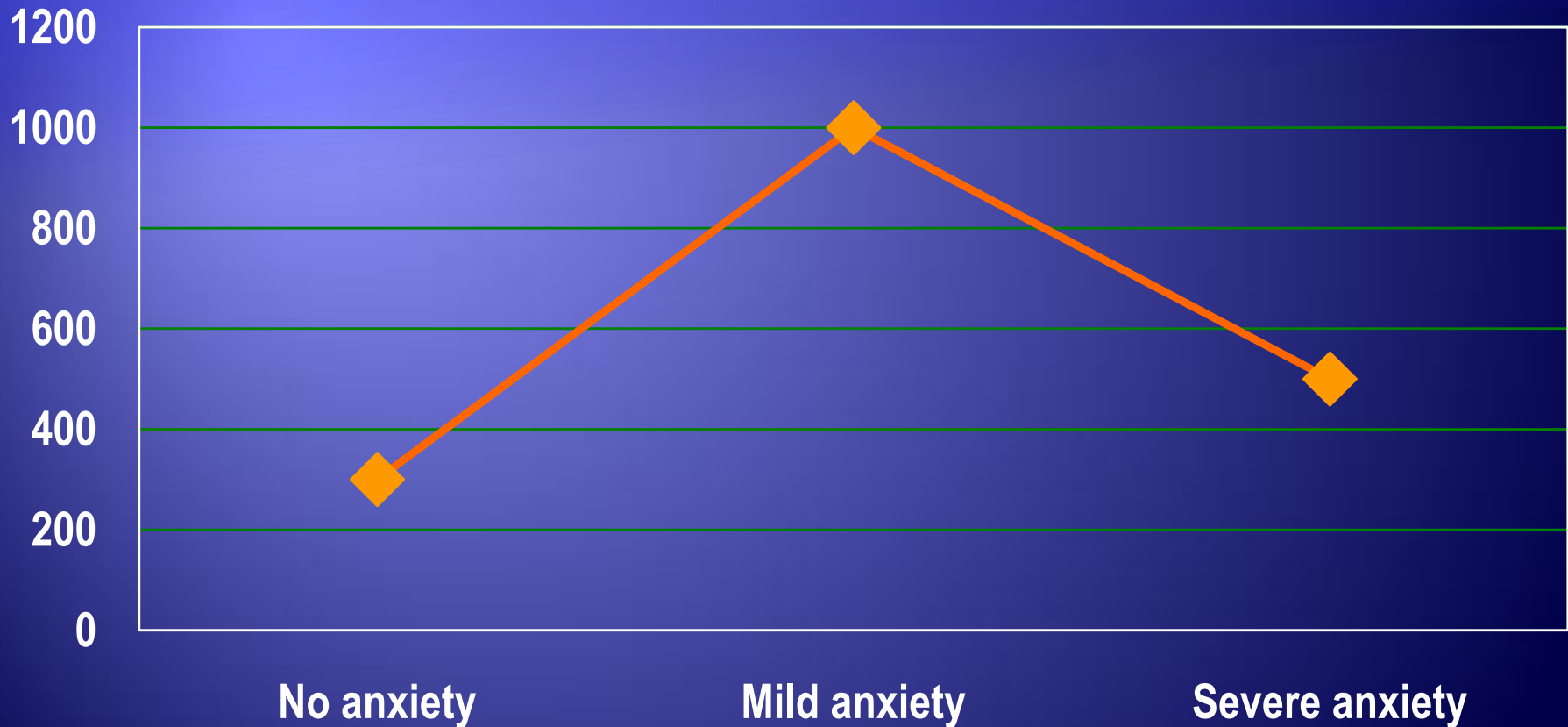
Shen et al., 2008; J Am Coll Cardiol, 51: 113-119

Heart Failure Self-Care Anxiety and 24-hour Urine Sodium



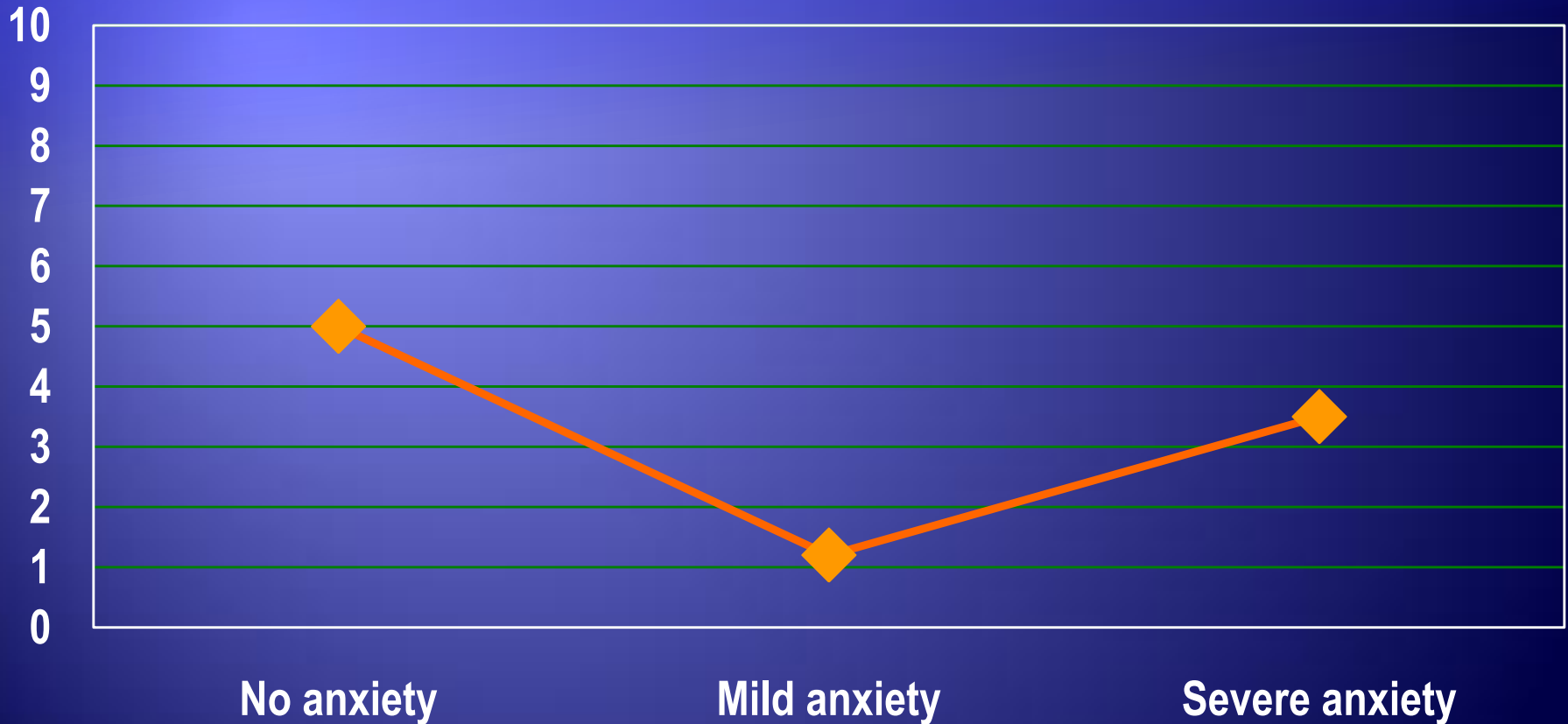
Cardiovascular Risk Reduction Anxiety and Physical Activity Levels

Time in moderate activity



Delay in Seeking Treatment for ACS Symptoms by Anxiety Levels

Median Delay Time, hrs



THREAT

Saliency → Fear/anxiety

none

some

lots

Denial, delay, no
action when action
appropriate

Lack of coping
strategies,
knowledge, skills

Coping
strategies,
knowledge,
skills

Inaction,
delay,
inappropriate
action,
neurohumoral
overactivation







Seek coping strategies,
knowledge, skills

Appropriate
action

What to do?



Approaches to Improving Patient Action (self-care) in Acute Health Crises and Chronic Illness


- ◆ Assume people will know what we know, be sensible and do what they should
- ◆ Scare  public
- ◆ Inform and benefits  public
- ◆ Inform, benefits  public, HCPs
- ◆ Inform, address reasons  public, HCPs
- ◆ Inform, cogn, emot, social  patients, families
- ◆ Scare, inform, cogn, emot, social  pts, fam


Prior Approaches Using Fear Tactics

HOW TO RECOGNISE A HEART ATTACK

- ▶ Squeezing, discomfort or pain in the centre of the chest lasting more than 10-15 minutes
- ▶ Pain spreading to the shoulders, neck or arms
- ▶ Sweating or shortness of breath
- ▶ A sick feeling in the stomach

IF YOU HAVE THESE SYMPTOMS CALL 000 FOR AN AMBULANCE
Get to hospital FAST



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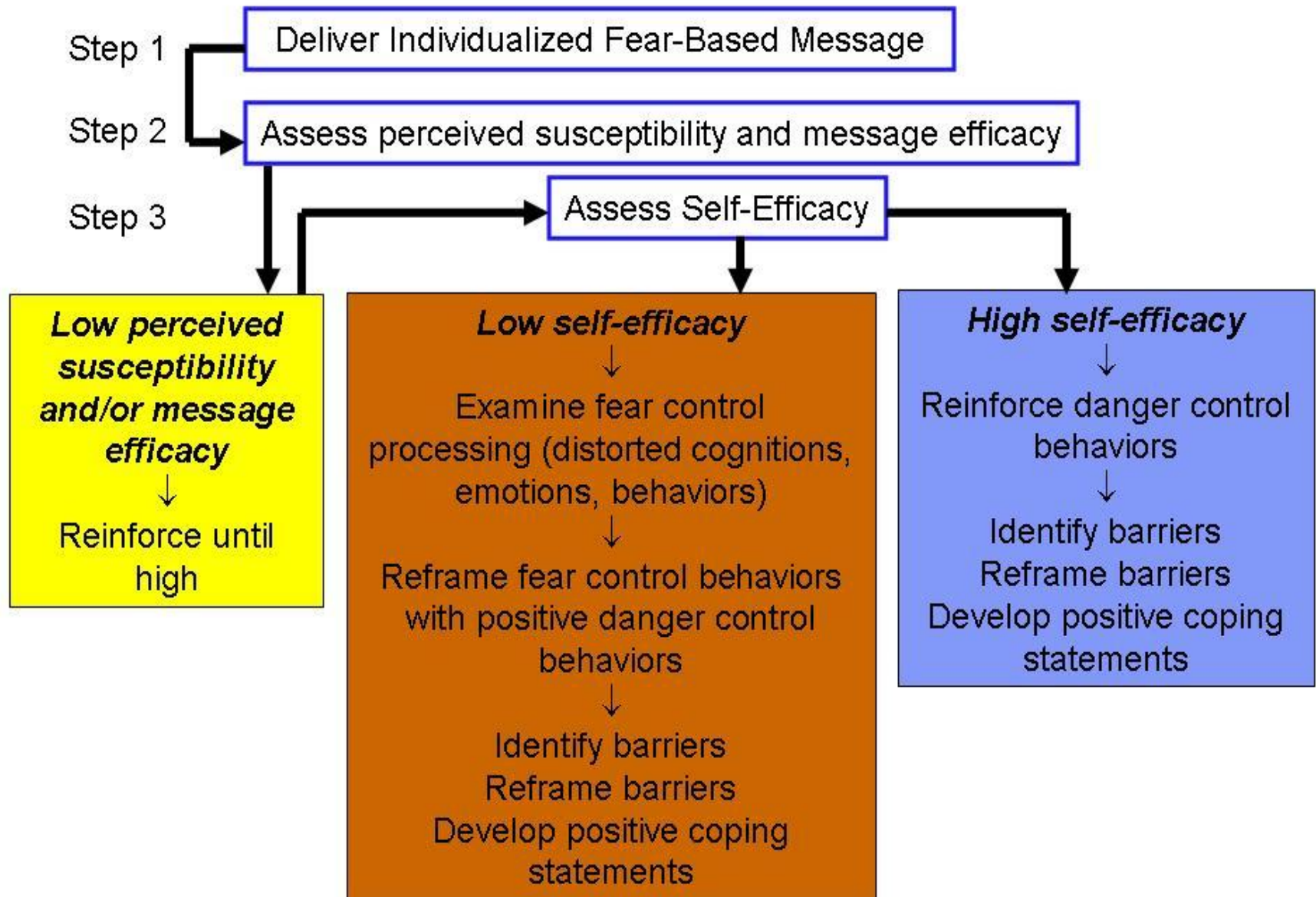
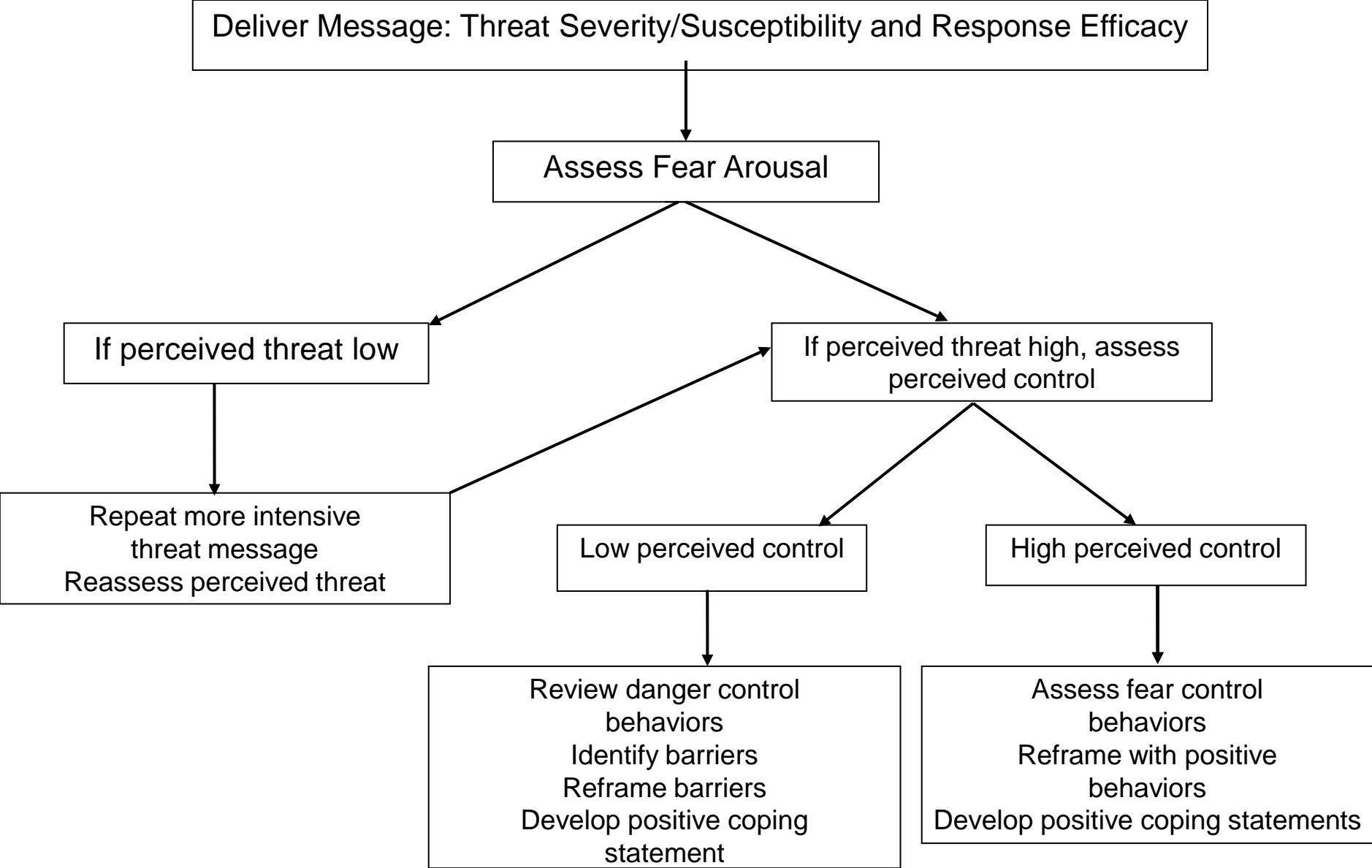
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Figure 2. Intervention Procedure





Conclusions

- ◆ Fear is a positive coping strategy
 - ◆ when it triggers appropriate action in health crises or chronic illness
 - ◆ when individual possesses coping strategies, knowledge and skills to act
- ◆ Fear is a harmful emotion
 - ◆ when it is severe, sustained and individual has no coping strategies
- ◆ Test interventions that include fear messages