

A large scale validation of the Family Law DOORS: a universal screening framework for identifying and responding to family-wide risks after parental separation.

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Issues

- Separation brings risks for families (1), with risks greater still for families using post-separation relationships and family law services (2)
- But clients using services may not tell practitioners about the risks unless they are asked; and service providers can miss two thirds of family and domestic violence unless they use validated tools (3)
- There are other risks too after separation, not just FDV – eg risk to children, parenting stress, mental health, perpetrations risks
- Can we use universal risk screening (asking all clients briefly about all these risks) to identify which families need further assessment and support?
- Is there a validated universal risk screening tool that covers all key risks after separation and is suitable for all clients?

Study Rationale

- FL-DOORS is a framework to screen, elaborate and assess risk, so it helps us ask about risks (4)
- DOORS is already validated as a universal screening tool based on an audit of n=660 (5)
- Can DOORS screening now be validated in a large scale validation with the next n=5,772?

The Study Setting

- DOORS is routinely used at Relationships Australia SA, a government-subsidised health and family relationships service in South Australia



- We audited 5,772 DOORS completed by 5,559 post-separation clients in 2014-16
- Clients were mostly in mediation (80.4%), with 50.5% separated less than two years, and included 1,685 matched pairs of parties or parents
- Screening was done by clients completing paper forms (79.5%)



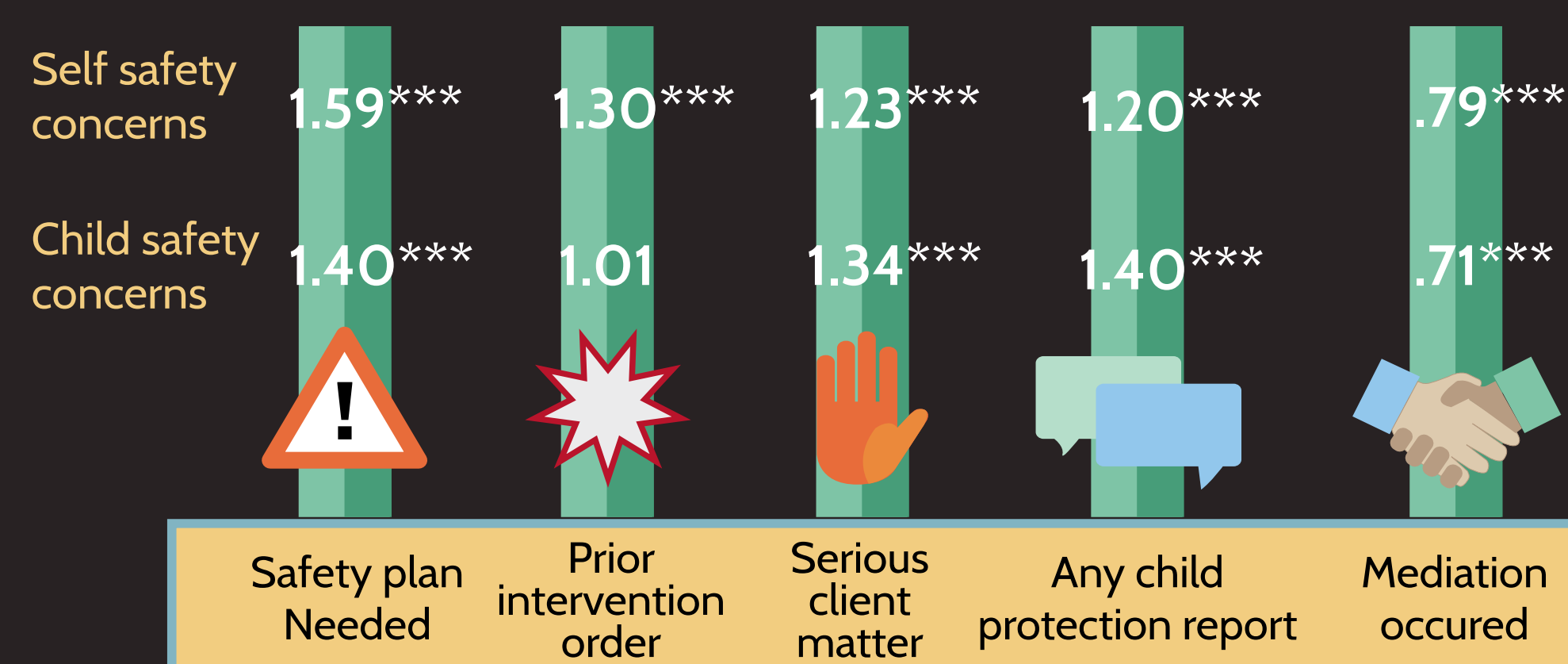
- Screening by paper form takes about 15 minutes. Clients complete it the waiting room before meeting with their practitioner for elaboration (DOOR 2)
- Clients overwhelmingly see DOORS as 'just part of paperwork' and many can see the benefits to 'being screened' (6)

Results

Meaningful risk domains

- DOORS had 11 meaningful risk domains, showing good overall internal reliability with .68-.85 (average .76)

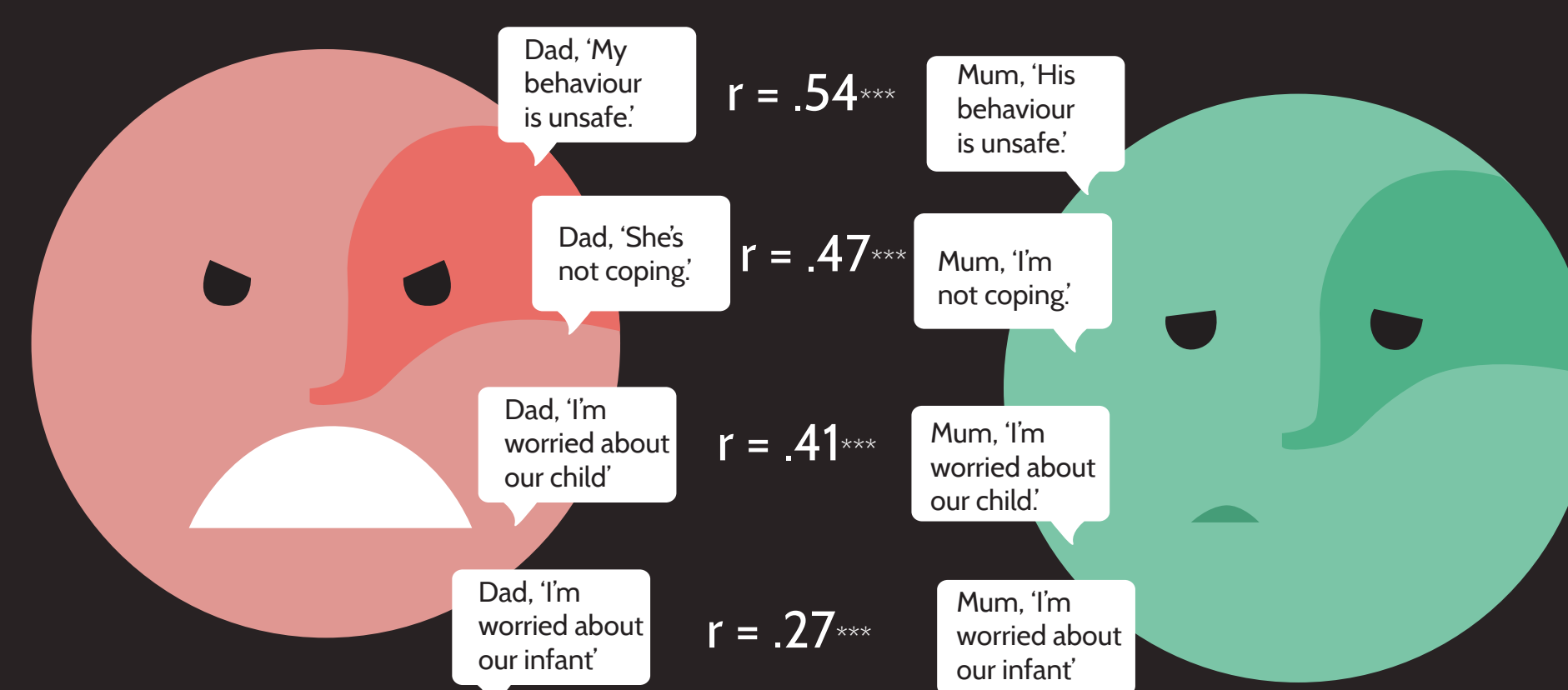
Client disclosure makes a difference



and many others

- What clients say on DOOR 1 links strongly to many important case and safety decisions, showing good external criterion validity

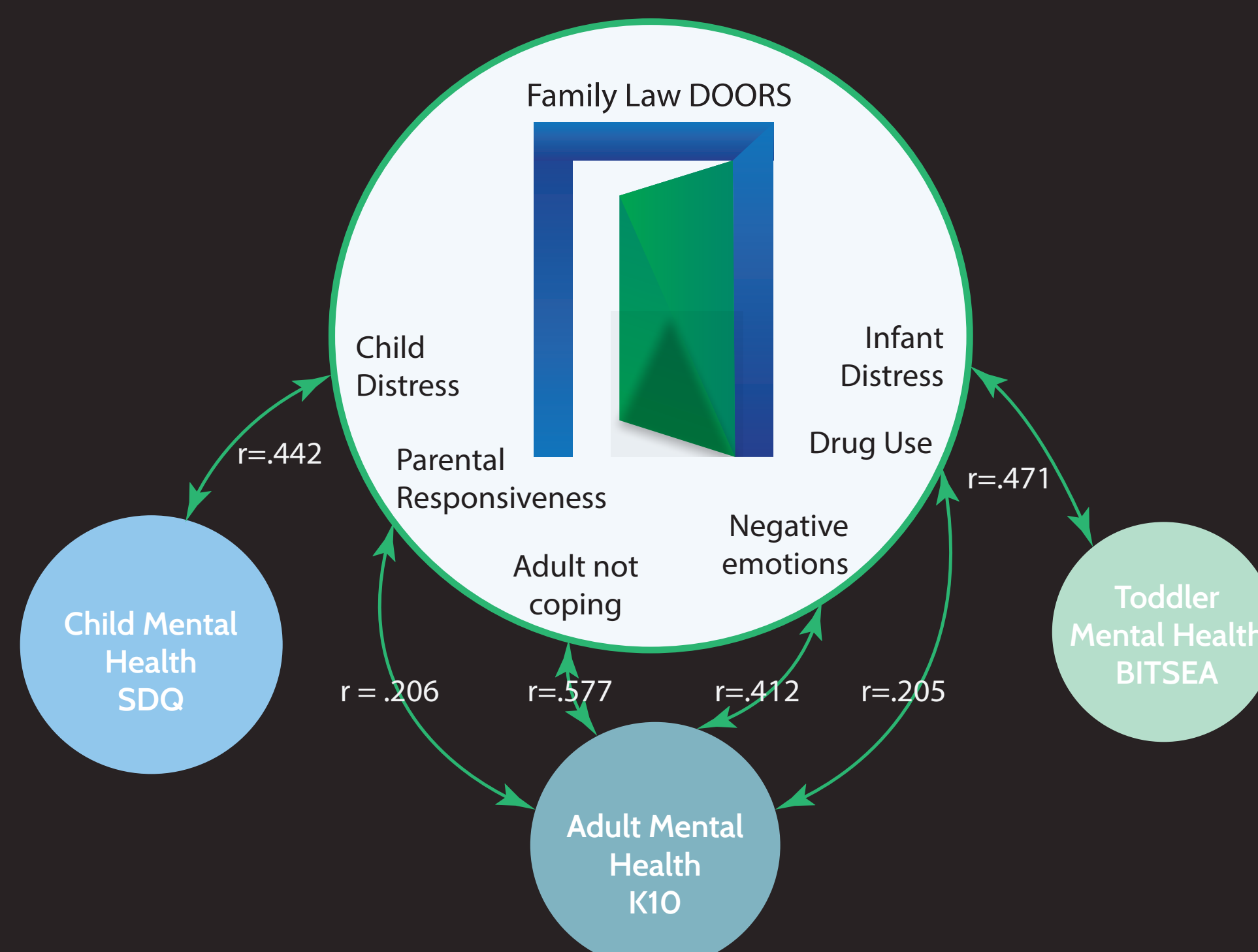
Parents corroborate their stories



and many others

- Analysing matched pairs of shows parties/parents broadly corroborate each other's story on DOORS risks domains
- Strong links found between perpetrator and victim stories of violence risks
- What 'He says' and what 'She says' are closely linked

Confirmed by other measures



- Brief DOORS risk domains link strongly to longer, detailed 'gold standard' mental health measures, showing good concurrent validity
- Other DOORS risk domains also link to adult mental health

Your take home messages

- DOORS provides a robust framework to screen, elaborate and assess for risk
- Screening is different to risk assessment
- DOOR 1 is now validated as a universal screening tool on a large scale (n=5,772)
- These findings confirm the smaller scale validation (n=660) and have been submitted for peer review and publication (7)
- Clients won't mind if you ask them screening questions with DOORS
- It's very efficient to do universal screening with paper self report
- DOORS is available at www.familylawdoors.com.au
- Collaborations are welcome to use universal risk screening with DOORS in your setting!



References

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