


## Violent Attitudes and Behaviour


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### Attitudes Toward Violence


- How positively or negatively one views violent behaviour
- Attitudes toward violence are thought to be important for the explanation, prediction, and reduction of violent/aggressive behaviour
  - (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bonta & Andrews, 2017; Douglas, 2014)



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### Violent Attitudes Correlate with Violent Behaviour


- Correlation (cross-sectional designs)
  - Attitudes more supportive of violence are associated with more current and past aggressive and violent behaviour
    - (e.g., Maimone, 2021; Mills et al., 2002; Nunes et al., 2022, 2023, 2024; Polaschek et al., 2004)
- Prediction (longitudinal designs)
  - Attitudes more supportive of violence predict more future aggressive and violent behaviour
    - (e.g., Mills et al., 2004; O'Hagan et al., 2019)



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### Correlation vs. Causation


- Research has demonstrated that attitudes toward violence **correlate with and predict** violent/aggressive behaviour
- But few experimental tests of whether violent attitudes play a **causal** role



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### Our First Test

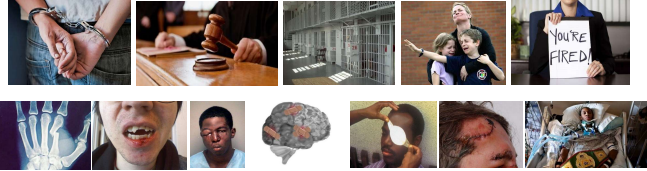
- 285 men (online panel from Canada and USA)
- Randomized experiment
  - Anti-violence message and evaluative conditioning
  - Control condition
- Violent Behavior Vignette Questionnaire (VBVQ)
- Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)
  
- Nunes et al. (2022)



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### Anti-Violence Attitude Condition


- Violence is a “lose-lose” situation, with negative consequences for everyone involved.



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You hitting a guy.

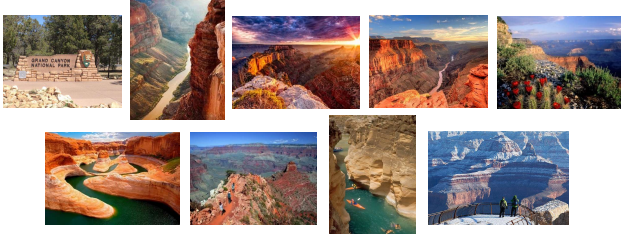
*bad*



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**Control Condition**


- The Grand Canyon is an impressive site with something for everyone to enjoy.



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You hitting a guy.

*bridge*



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**Violent Behavior Vignette Questionnaire (VBVQ)**


- You're at a bar standing beside your girlfriend/wife when a guy strolls up to her, puts his arm around her, and starts trying to pick her up. He acts like you aren't even there.
- What do you do?
  - Report it to someone
  - Hit, punch, kick, or tackle him
  - Talk it out
  - Threaten to hurt him
  - Insult him
  - Ignore it
  - Joke about it
  - Leave
  - Shove him

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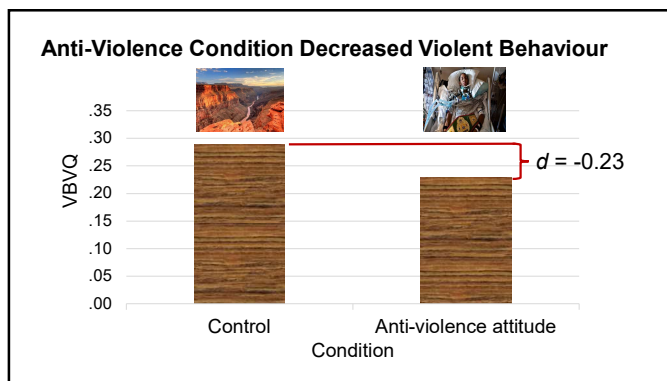
**Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)**

You hitting (for example, punching or kicking) a guy who hurts someone you care about

Very negative	A bit negative	A bit positive	Very positive
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### Our Second Test

- Replication and extension of Nunes et al. (2022) study
- Dropped evaluative conditioning
- Added pro-violence attitude message

• Nunes et al. (2024; Study 1)



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### Method

- 526 men (online panel from Canada and USA)
- Randomized experiment
  - Anti-violence attitude message
  - Control message
  - Pro-violence attitude message
- Violent Behavior Vignette Questionnaire (VBVQ)
- Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)



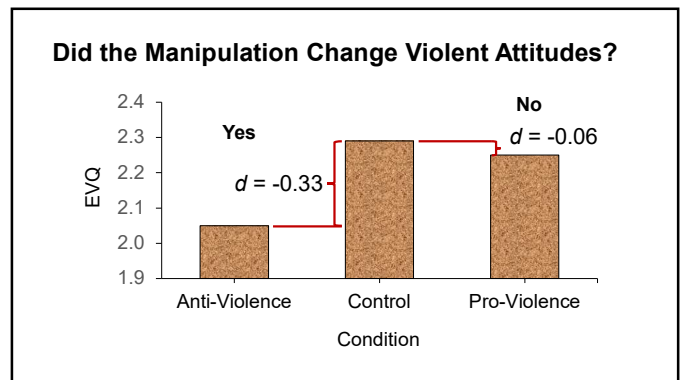
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### Pro-Violence Attitude Message

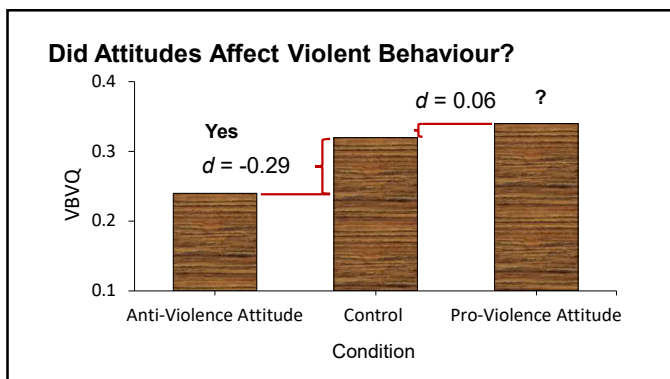
- **When in danger, using violence can keep your loved ones and you safe, make people respect and admire you, show that you respect yourself and those around you, and stop people from taking advantage of you.**



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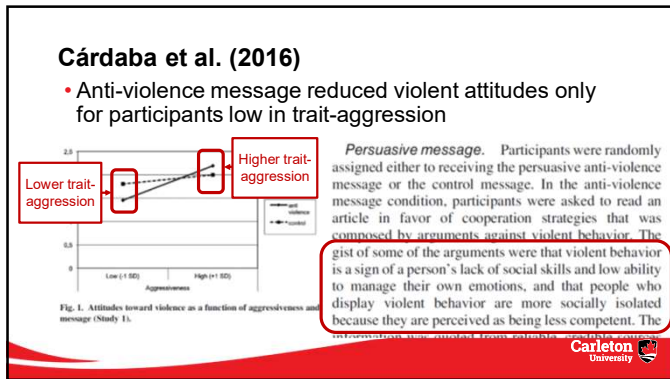
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### The anti-violence attitude message was effective, but...

- What about with aggressive men?




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**Paradoxical Thinking Approach**

- Aims to moves people away from a position by presenting exaggerated and extreme information that is *consistent with* that position (Hameiri et al., 2014, 2018)
- Does not challenge the position directly, thereby avoiding potentially activating defensiveness, hostility, or disengagement
- Designed to lead recipients to consider and question the validity of their position on their own

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**Paradoxical Manipulation of Violent Attitudes**

- Is a paradoxical approach effective at reducing violent attitudes?
  - Overall and with men high on trait-aggression?

• Nunes et al. (2024, Study 2)

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**Method**

- 228 men (university students)
- Trait-aggression: Physical Aggression scale of the Aggression Questionnaire
- Randomly assigned to either
  - Paradoxical anti-violence attitudes condition
  - Control condition
- Violent attitudes: Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)

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**Physical Aggression scale of the Aggression Questionnaire (PA-AQ)**

Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person

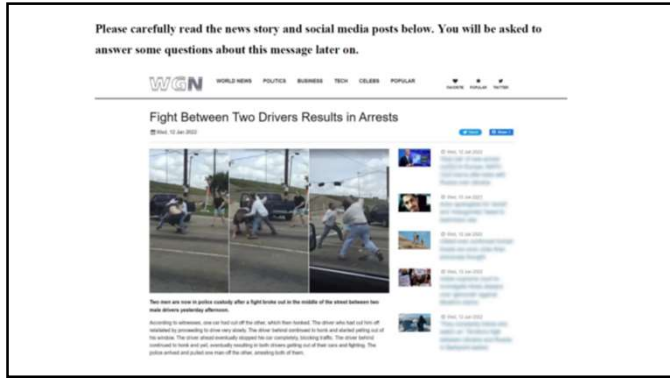
1      2      3      4      5  
 Strongly disagree      Strongly agree

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**Paradoxical Manipulation: Anti-Violence Attitude Condition**

- Online news article about a fight
- Social media posts containing extreme, exaggerated pro-violence statements
- Designed to (paradoxically) reduce violent attitudes

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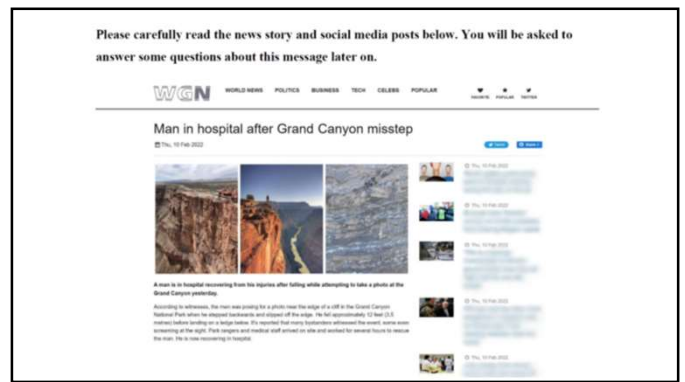


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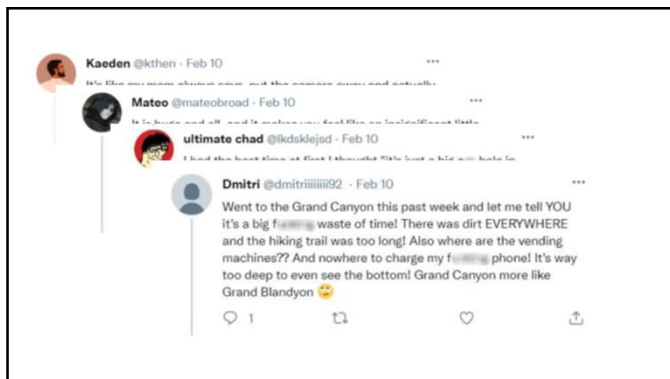
### Control Condition

- Online news article about accident at the Grand Canyon
- Social media posts about the Grand Canyon
- Designed to have no effect on violent attitudes

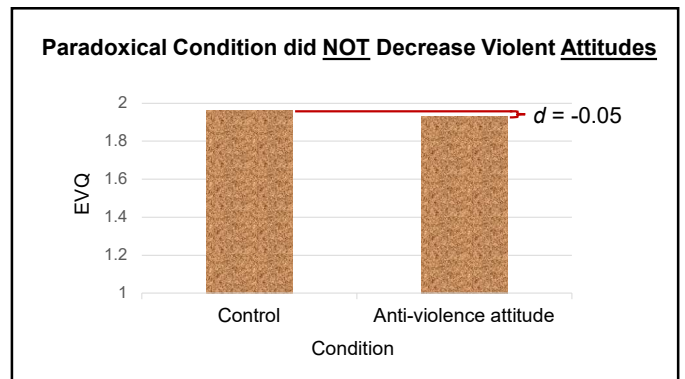
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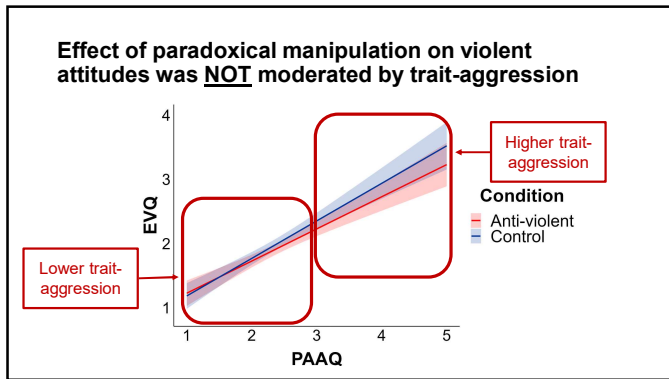
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**Back to the Intuitive Manipulation**

- Original intuitive anti-violence attitude message (Nunes et al., 2022)
  - Added questions after message designed to increase effect
- Is it effective with participants high on trait-aggression?

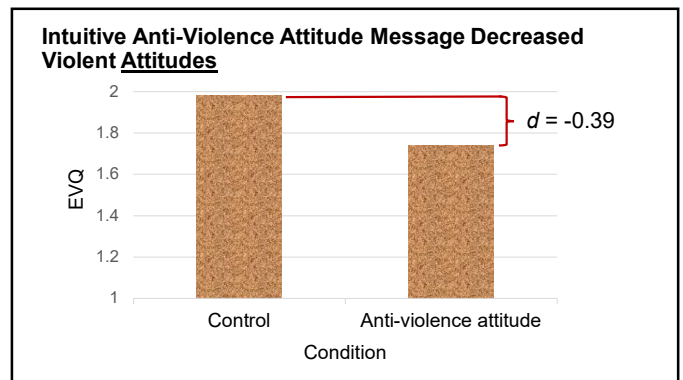
• Nunes et al. (2024, Study 3)

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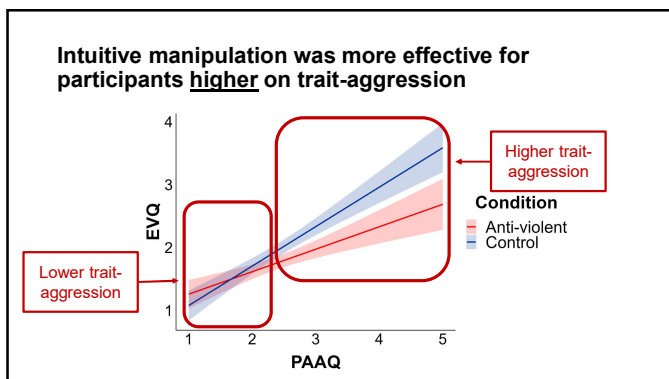
**Method**

- 159 men (university students)
- Trait-aggression: Physical Aggression scale of the Aggression Questionnaire
- Randomly assigned to either
  - Intuitive anti-violence attitudes message
  - Control message
- Violent attitudes: Evaluation of Violence Questionnaire (EVQ)

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**Further Replication and Extension**


- Anti-violence attitude message
  - Added voiceover reading message
  - Added questions before, as well as after message
- Additional aggressive behaviour measure

• Nunes et al. (2024; Study 4)

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### Method

- 705 men (online panel from Canada and USA)
- Randomized experiment
  - Anti-violence attitude message
  - Control message
- Violent Behavior Vignette Questionnaire (VBVQ)
- Doll Aggression Task (DAT)



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### Doll Aggression Task (DAT)

Here is the doll that represents **SOMEONE YOU FEEL A GREAT AMOUNT OF ANGER TOWARD** with the maximum of 51 pins stabbed into it.

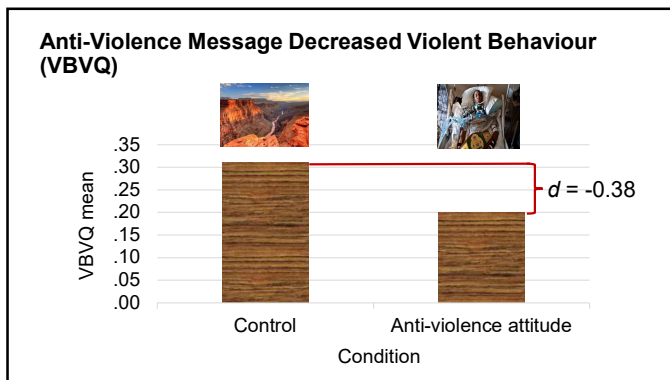


Now, indicate the number of pins you wish to stab into the doll that represents **SOMEONE YOU FEEL A GREAT AMOUNT OF ANGER TOWARD**.

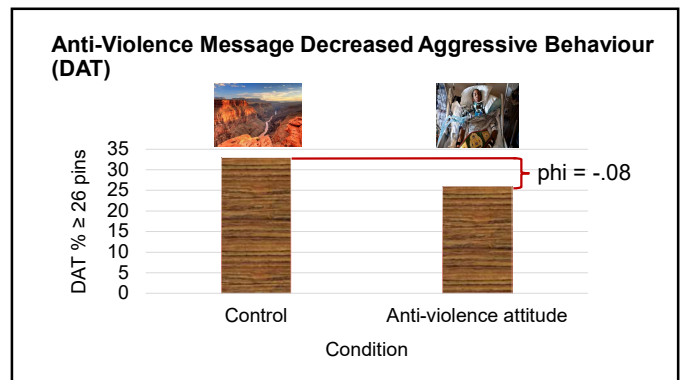


0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 51  
Number of pins to stab into the doll

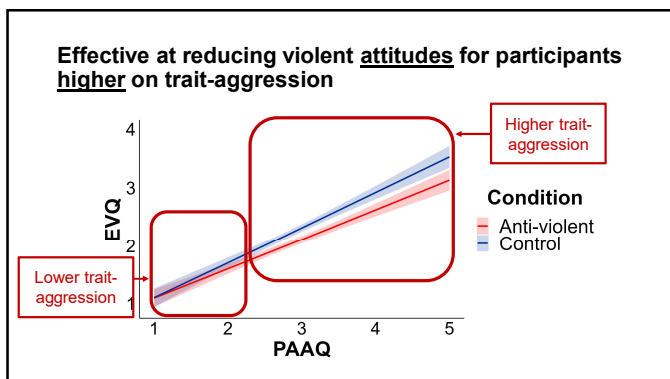
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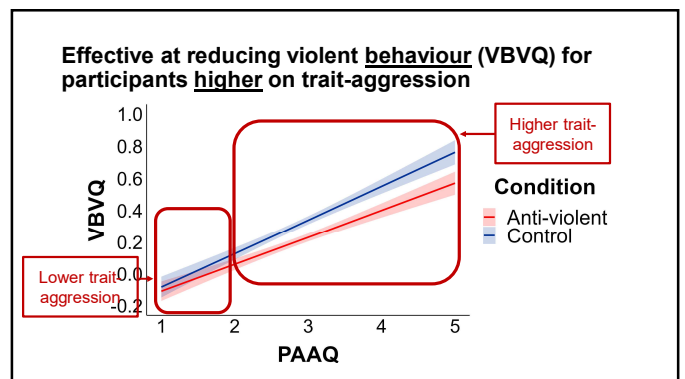
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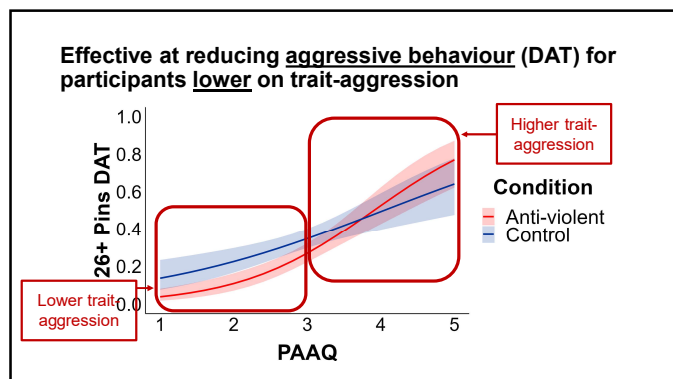
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**Conclusions**

- Anti-violence attitude message reduced violent/aggressive behaviour
- Findings go beyond correlation to support theory and clinical hypotheses that violent attitudes play a causal role in violent behaviour
- The anti-violence attitude message was effective with participants higher on trait-aggression (except for DAT)

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**Limitations and Future Directions**

- Violent/aggressive behaviour measures
- Duration of effect
- Other populations

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**Thank you!**

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