

CREATING A BETTER PLACE TO WORK

**REDUCING WORKPLACE STRESS &
AGGRESSION TO INCREASE INDIVIDUAL &
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

A COLLABORATIVE ACTION PROJECT BETWEEN



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NY AT NEW PALTZ
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

WHAT WE HOPE TO LEARN

- **HOW DOES WORKPLACE STRESS AND AGGRESSION AFFECT EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION?**
- **HOW DOES WORKPLACE STRESS AND AGGRESSION AFFECT THE QUALITY, COSTS OF SERVICES IN VA?**
- **HOW DOES WORKPLACE STRESS AND AGGRESSION AFFECT THE SATISFACTION VETERANS HOLD ABOUT THE SERVICES THEY RECEIVE?**
- **HOW CAN ACTION INQUIRY PROMOTE A LEARNING CULTURE IN VA?**

TO CREATE A BETTER PLACE TO WORK, WE HOPE TO ...

- **DESIGN & IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES TO REDUCE STRESS & AGGRESSION**
- **IMPROVE INDIVIDUAL SATISFACTION & PERFORMANCE**
- **LEARN WHAT WORKS & SHARE THAT KNOWLEDGE**
- **TEACH NEW METHODS FOR FUTURE USE**

WHY IS THIS DIFFERENT THAN OTHER PROJECTS?

- **JOINT VA, ACADEMIC, UNION & EMPLOYEE PARTNERSHIP**
- **DIFFERENT MINDSET**
 - **ASK, QUESTION, & INQUIRE vs. TELL, IMPOSE, & MANDATE**
- **PILOT PROJECT**
 - **START SMALL, LEARN & EXPAND**
- **LOCAL ACTION**
- **HIGH LEVEL INTEREST & COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES**

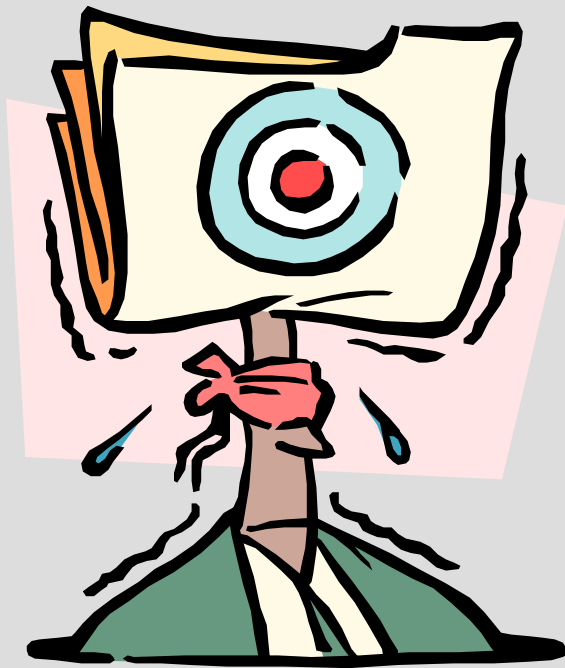
PILOT SITES

OVER 7000 EMPLOYEES

- **BLACK HILLS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**
- **CHICAGO REGIONAL OFFICE**
- **DES MOINES VAMC**
- **FARGO VAMROC**
- **HOUSTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**
- **MILWAUKEE REGIONAL OFFICE**
- **MINNEAPOLIS VAMC**
- **PHOENIX REGIONAL OFFICE**
- **ST. CLOUD VAMC**
- **ST. PAUL REGIONAL OFFICE**
- **SIoux FALLS VAMROC**

STRESS & LOW LEVEL AGGRESSION

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED - SO FAR



CATEGORIES OF AGGRESSION

**QUESTIONNAIRE - 60 AGGRESSION
ITEMS IN THE FOLLOWING
DIMENSIONS:**

- **PHYSICAL - VERBAL**
- **ACTIVE - PASSIVE**
- **DIRECT - INDIRECT**

VERBAL

- **YELL/SHOUT**
- **HARSH CRITICISM**
- **RUDENESS/DISRESPECT**
- **NEGATIVE COMMENTS**
- **FALSE ACCUSATIONS**
- **TEMPER TANTRUMS**
- **SEXIST REMARKS**
- **TOLD HOW TO SPEND TIME**
- **THREATS**

PHYSICAL

- **PUSH/SHOVE**
- **HIT/KICK**
- **UNWANTED TOUCHING**
- **ASSAULT**
- **GLARING**
- **OBSCENE GESTURES**
- **PROPERTY DEFACED**
- **THEFT**
- **LATE FOR MEETINGS**

ACTIVE

- **SUBJECTED TO MEAN PRANKS**
- **LIED TO**
- **BLAMED FOR OTHERS MISTAKES**
- **PUNCHED**
- **YELLED AT**
- **SUBJECTED TO RACIAL/ETHNIC SLUR**

PASSIVE

- **EXCLUDED FROM SOCIAL GATHERINGS**
- **GIVEN SILENT TREATMENT**
- **OTHERS REFUSE YOUR REQUESTS FOR HELP**
- **OTHERS FAIL TO GIVE YOU NEED INFORMATION**
- **SHOWN LITTLE SYMPATHY WHEN HAVING TROUBLE.**

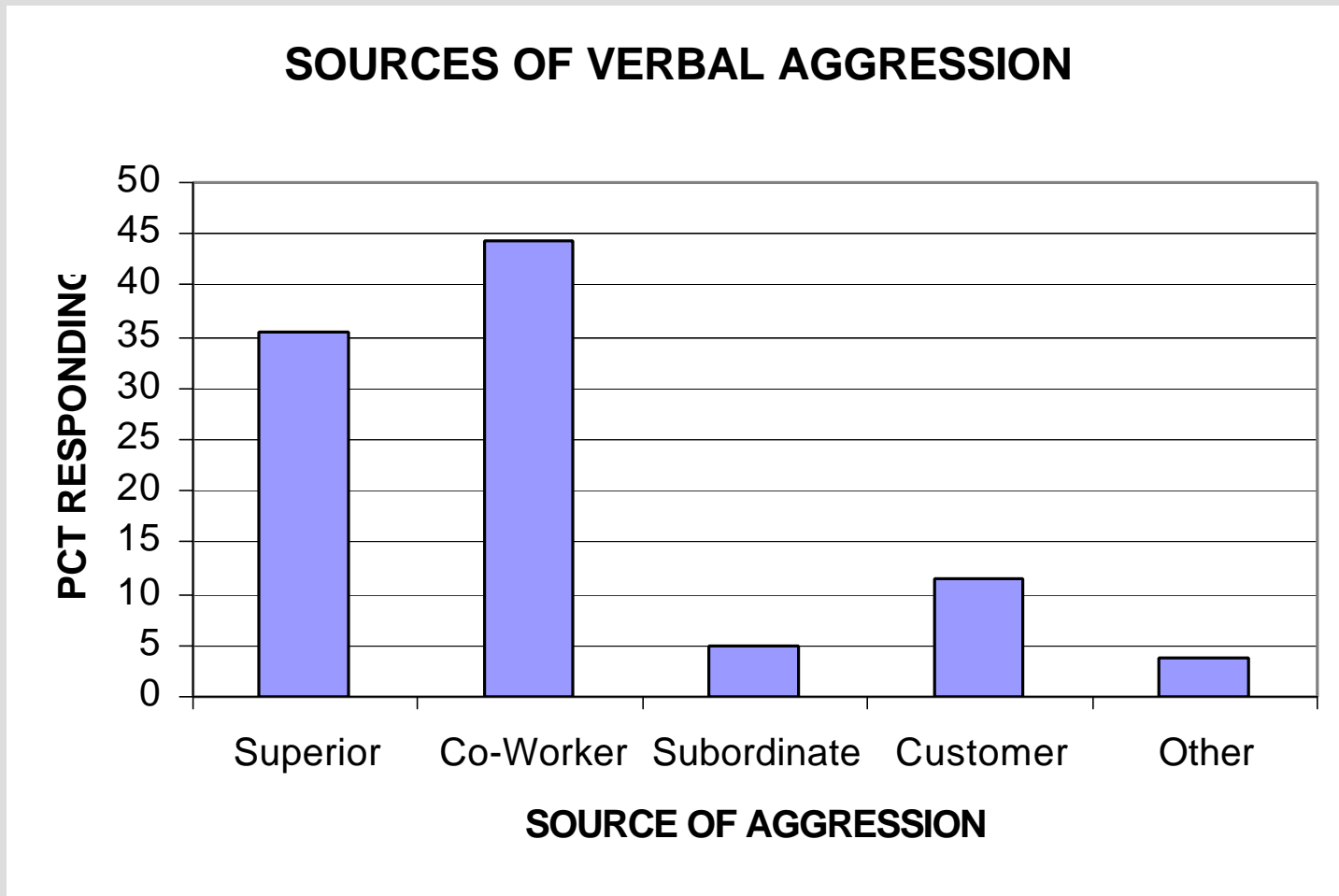
DIRECT

- **NOT GIVEN CREDIT**
- **THREATENED**
- **PREVENTED FROM EXPRESSING YOURSELF**
- **“PUT-DOWN” IN FRONT OF OTHERS**
- **ASSAULTED**
- **NOTES LEFT TO EMBARRASS YOU**

INDIRECT

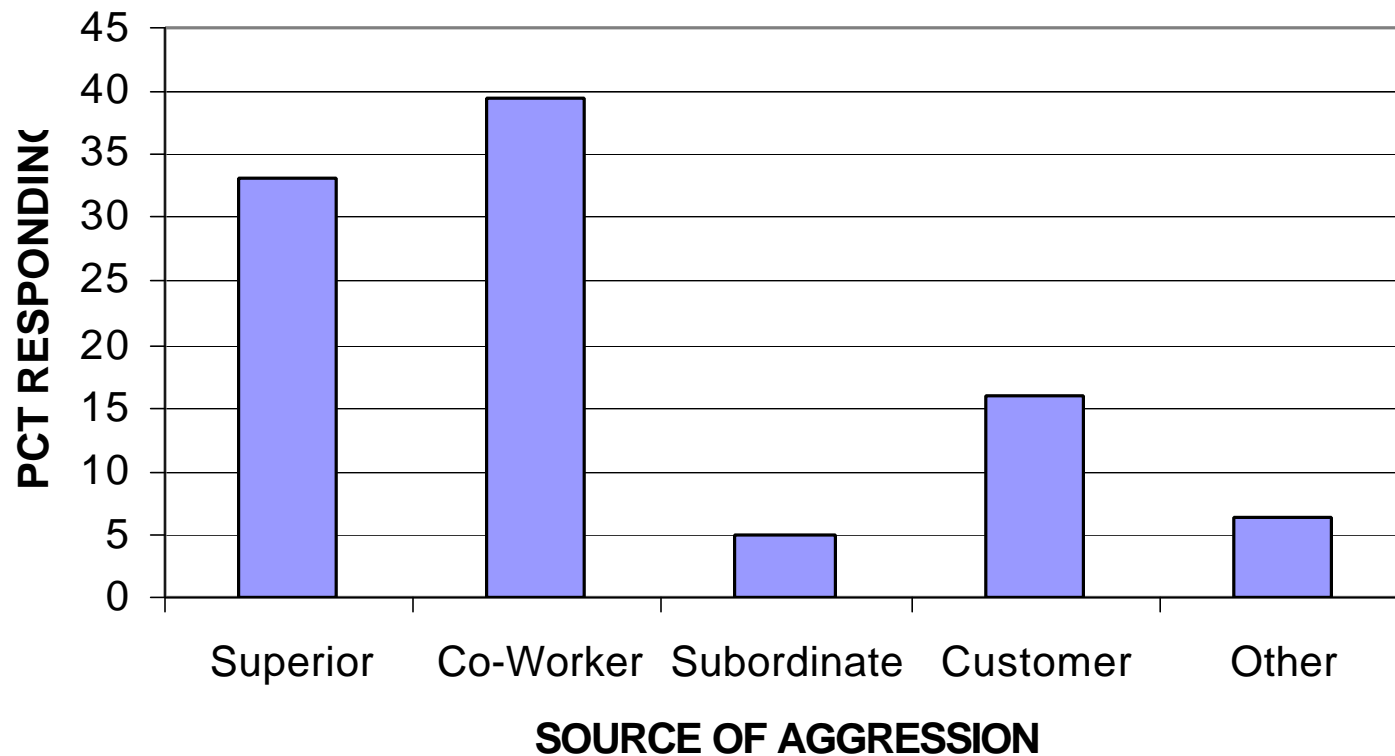
- **YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY DEFACED**
- **TARGET OF RUMORS**
- **OTHERS FAIL TO TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOU FROM HARM**
- **CO-WORKERS FAIL TO DEFEND YOUR PLANS**
- **OTHERS TURNED AGAINST YOU**

FOR THOSE RESPONDENTS REPORTING VERBAL AGGRESSION, THESE ARE THE REPORTED SOURCES...



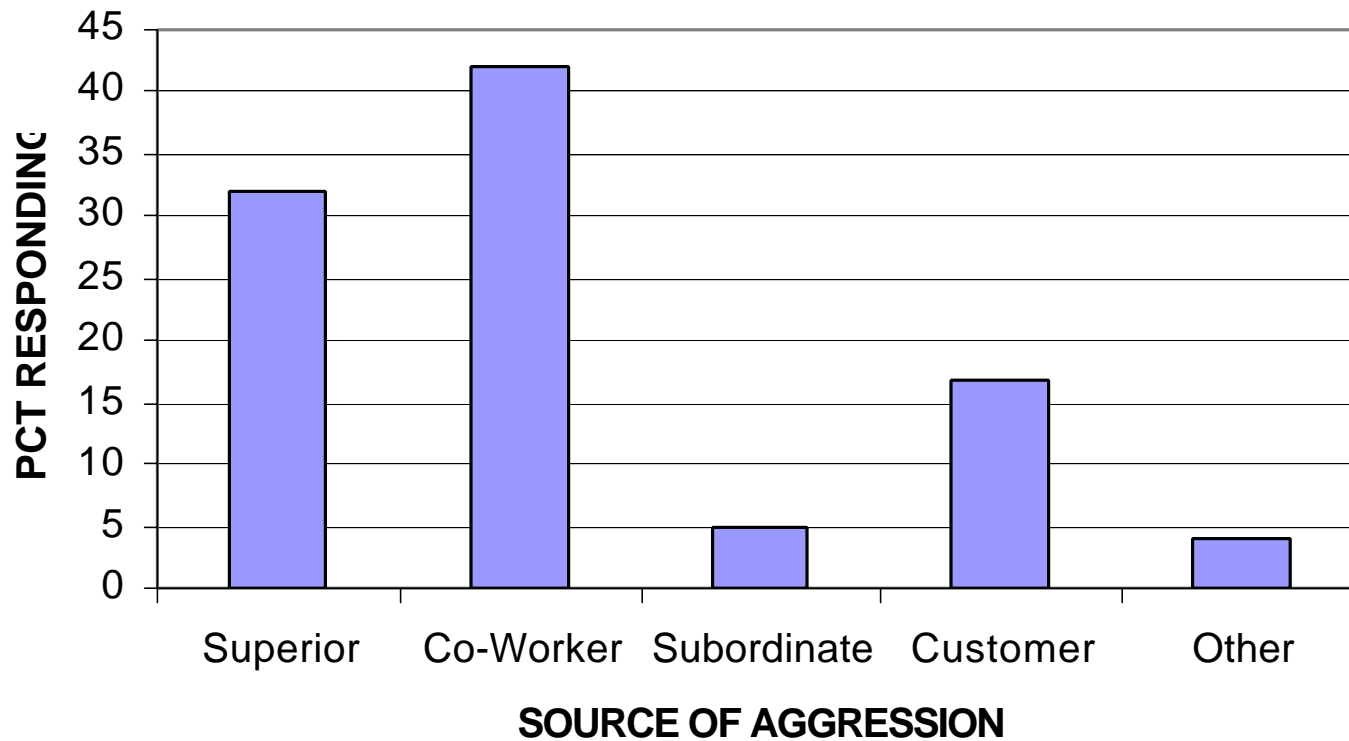
FOR THOSE RESPONDENTS REPORTING PHYSICAL AGGRESSION, THESE ARE THE REPORTED SOURCES...

SOURCES OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

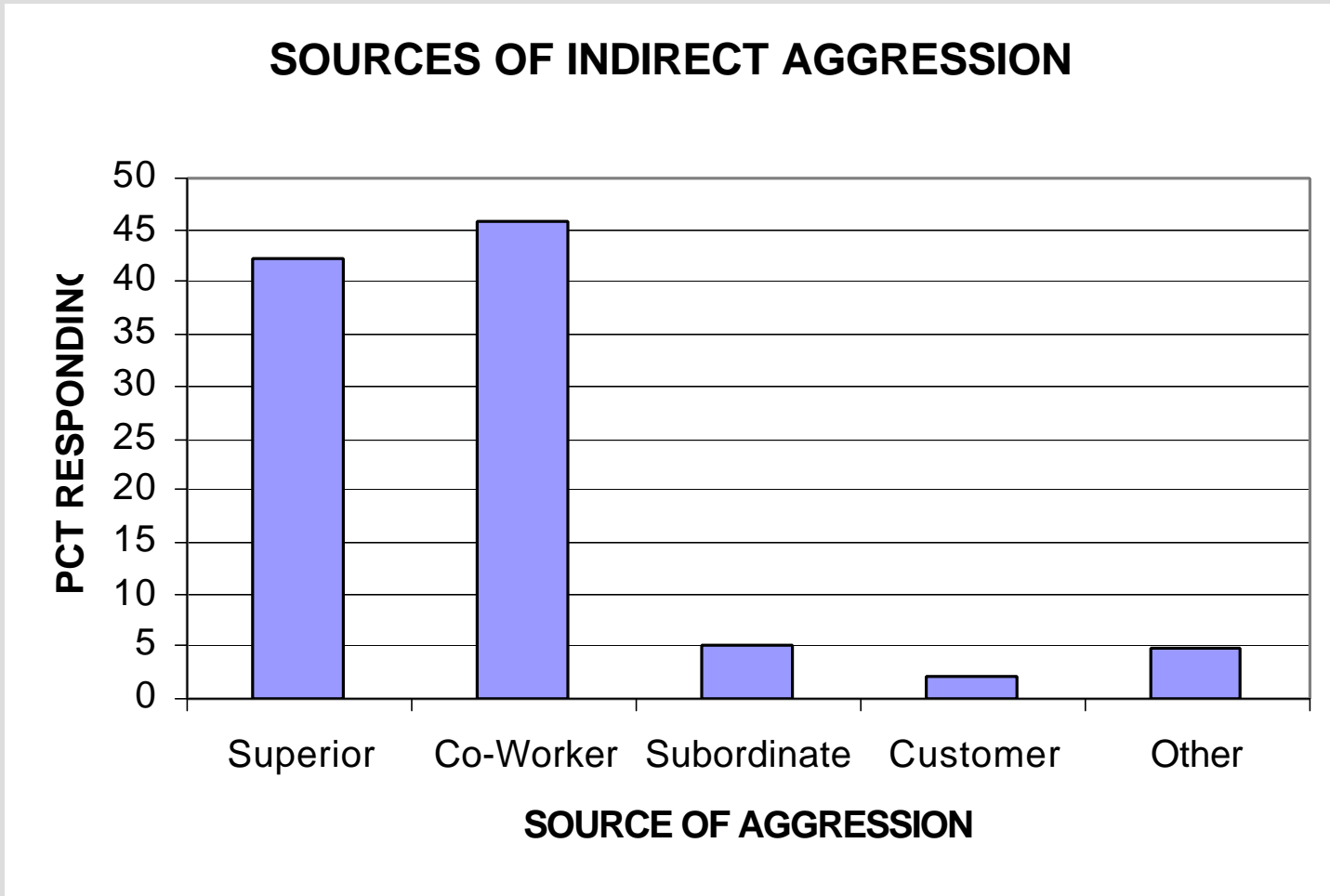


FOR THOSE RESPONDENTS REPORTING DIRECT AGGRESSION, THESE ARE THE REPORTED SOURCES...

SOURCES OF DIRECT AGGRESSION

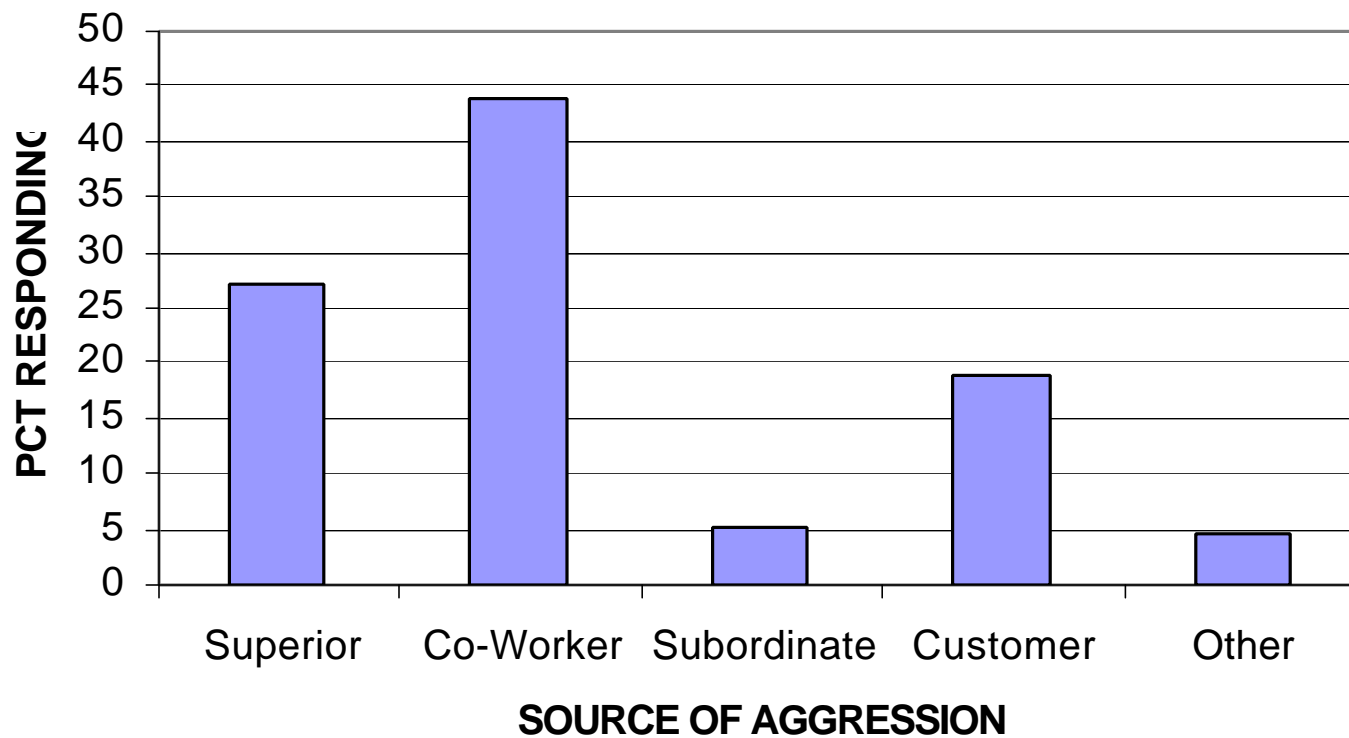


FOR THOSE RESPONDENTS REPORTING INDIRECT AGGRESSION, THESE ARE THE REPORTED SOURCES...



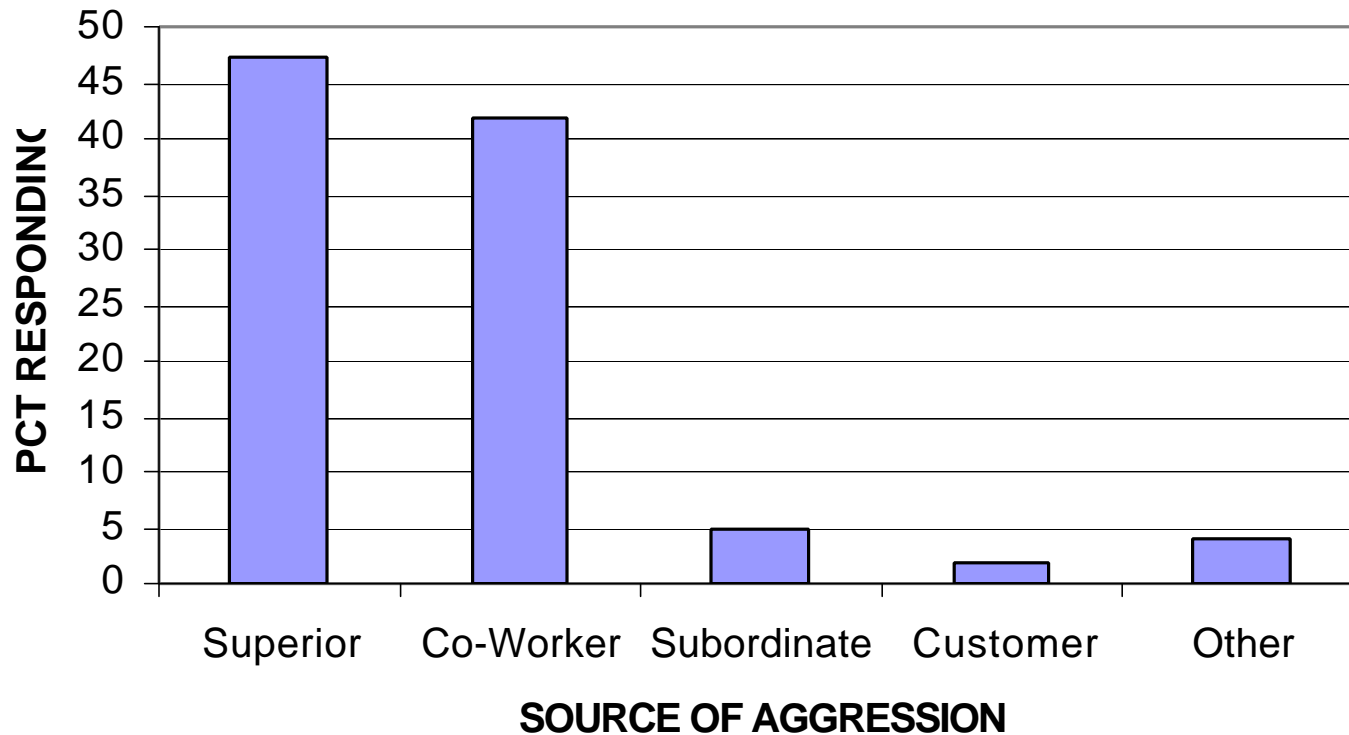
FOR THOSE RESPONDENTS REPORTING ACTIVE AGGRESSION, THESE ARE THE REPORTED SOURCES...

SOURCES OF ACTIVE AGGRESSION

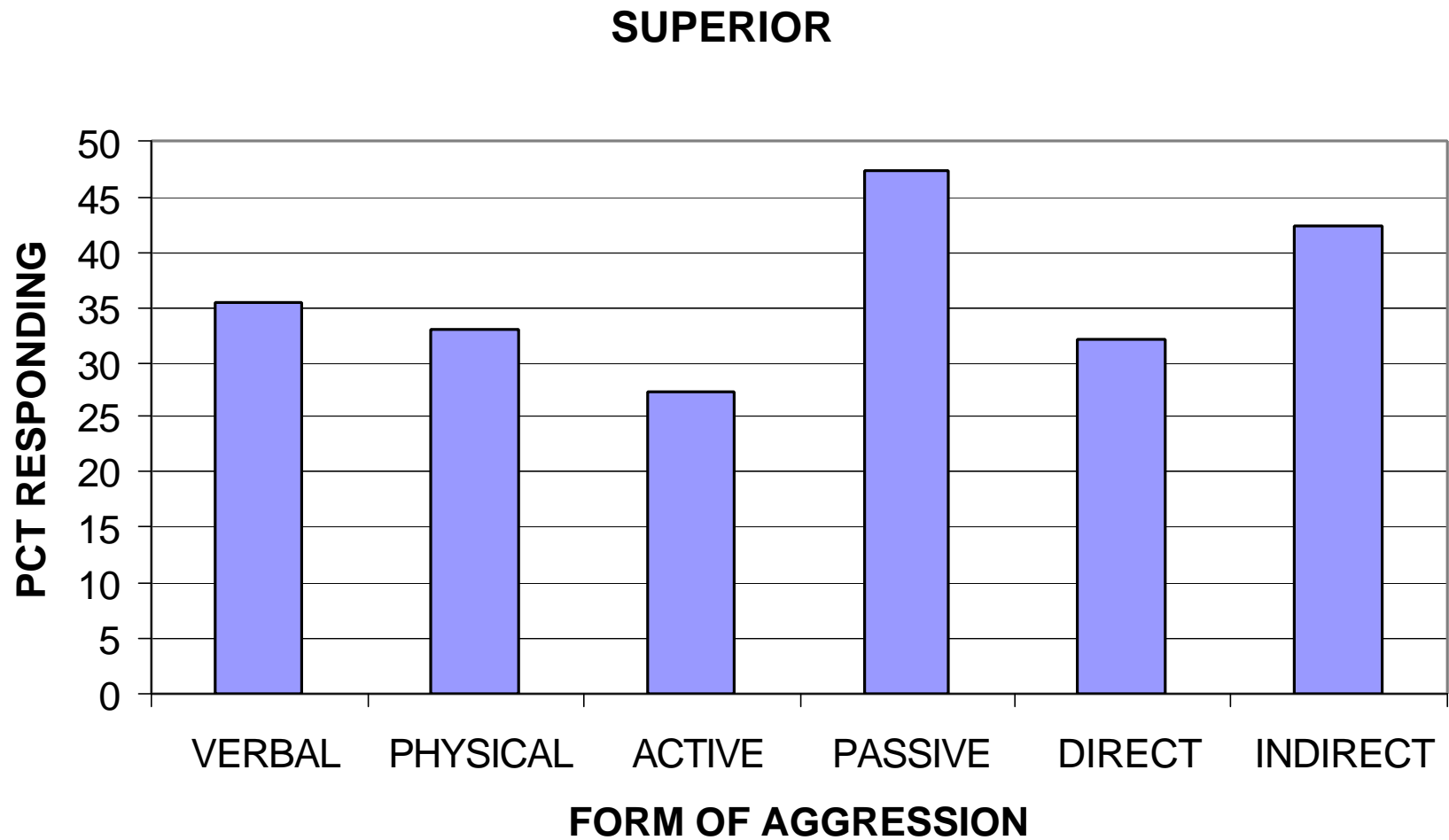


FOR THOSE RESPONDENTS REPORTING PASSIVE AGGRESSION, THESE ARE THE REPORTED SOURCES...

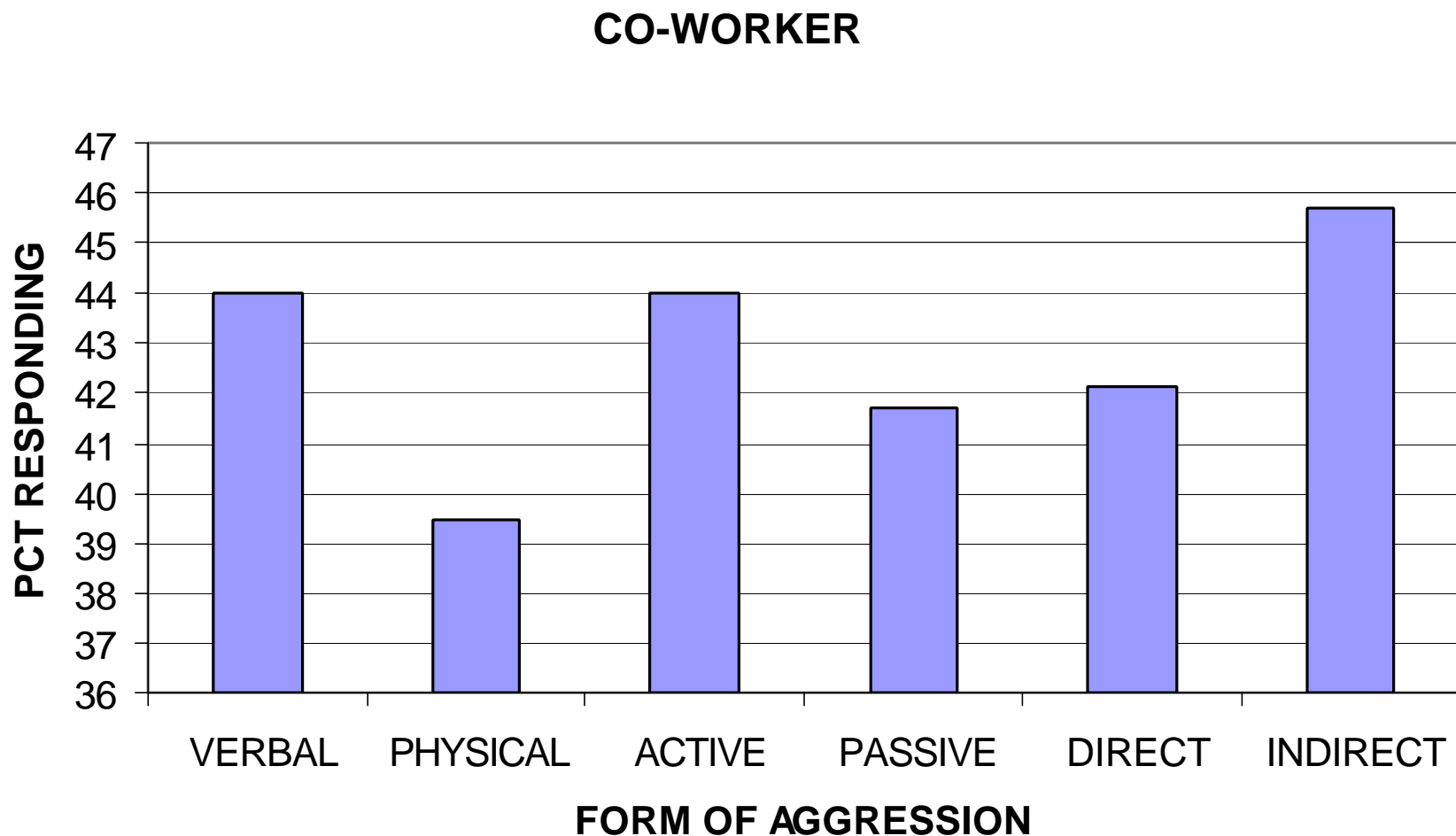
SOURCES OF PASSIVE AGGRESSION



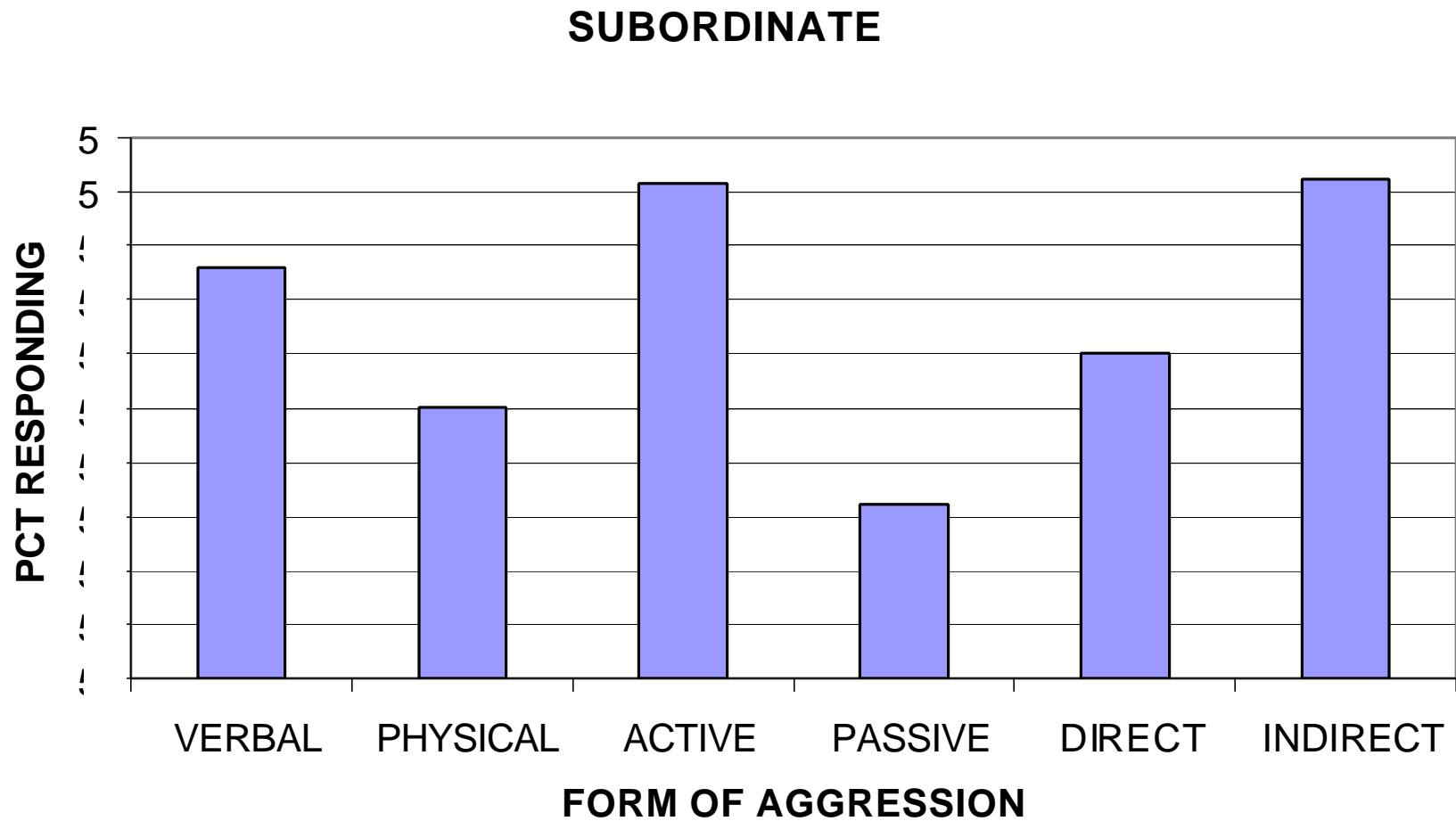
SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON FOR EACH FORM OF AGGRESSION FOR SUPERIORS



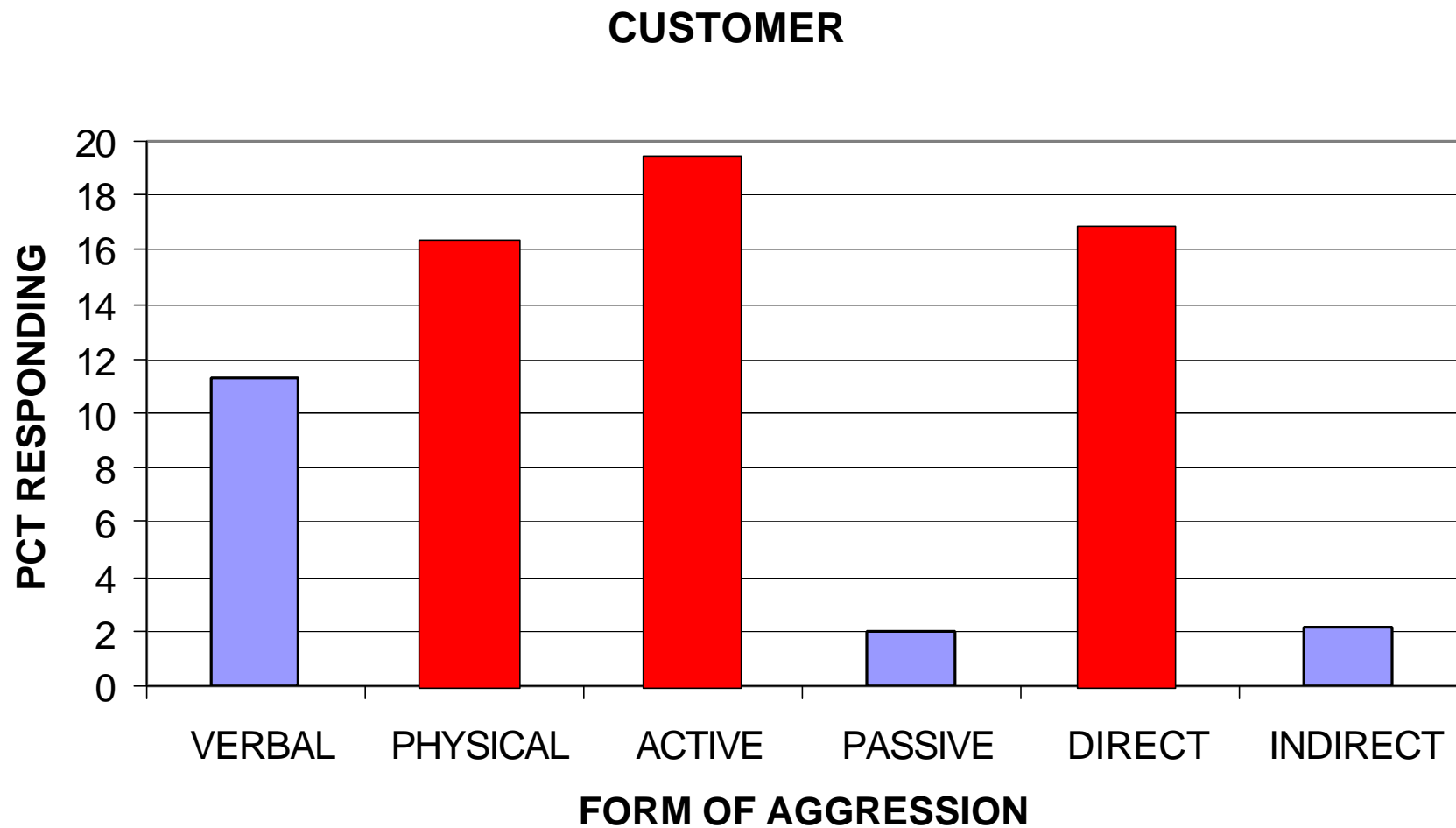
SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON FOR EACH FORM OF AGGRESSION FOR CO-WORKERS



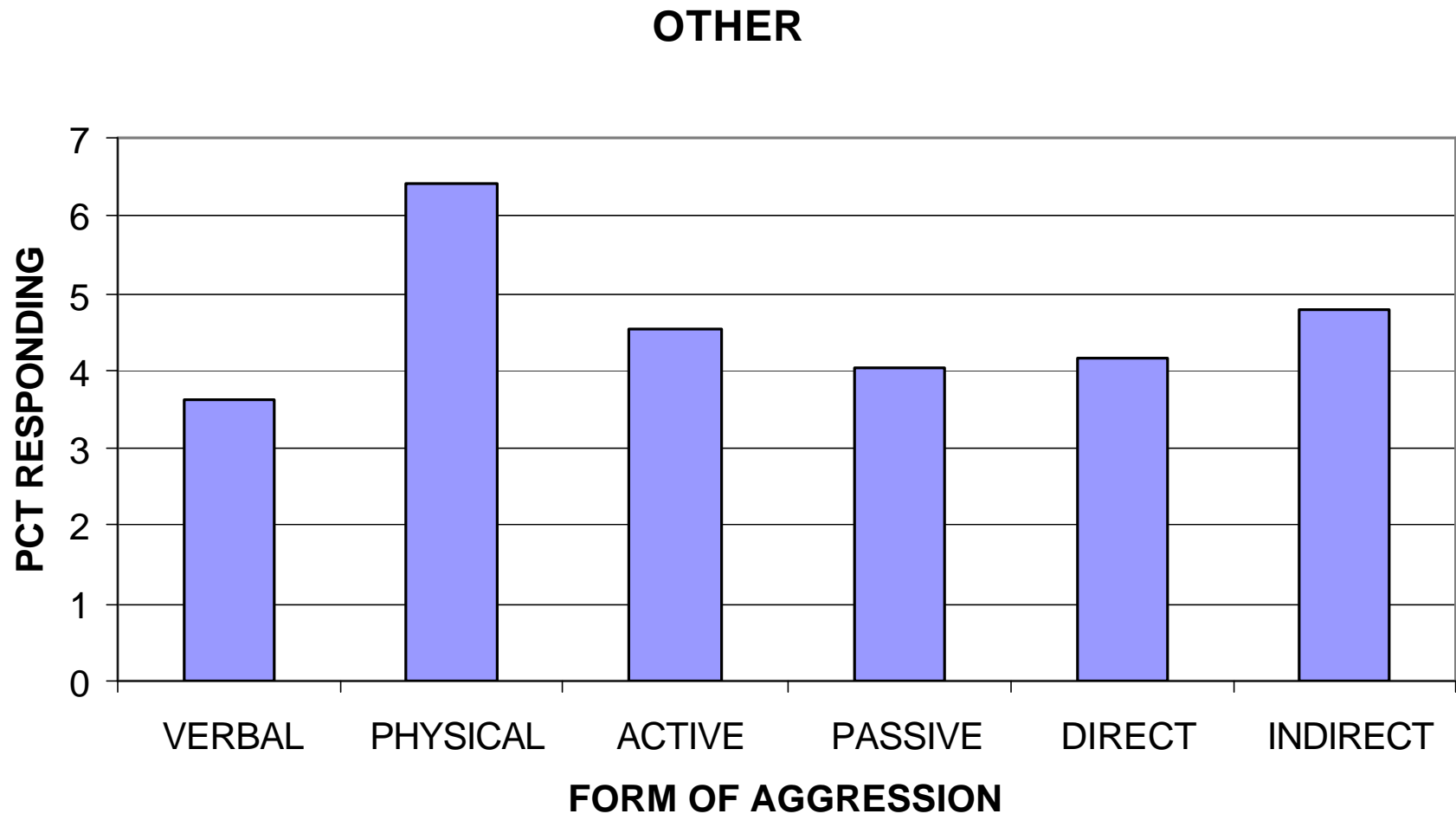
SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON FOR EACH FORM OF AGGRESSION FOR SUBORDINATES



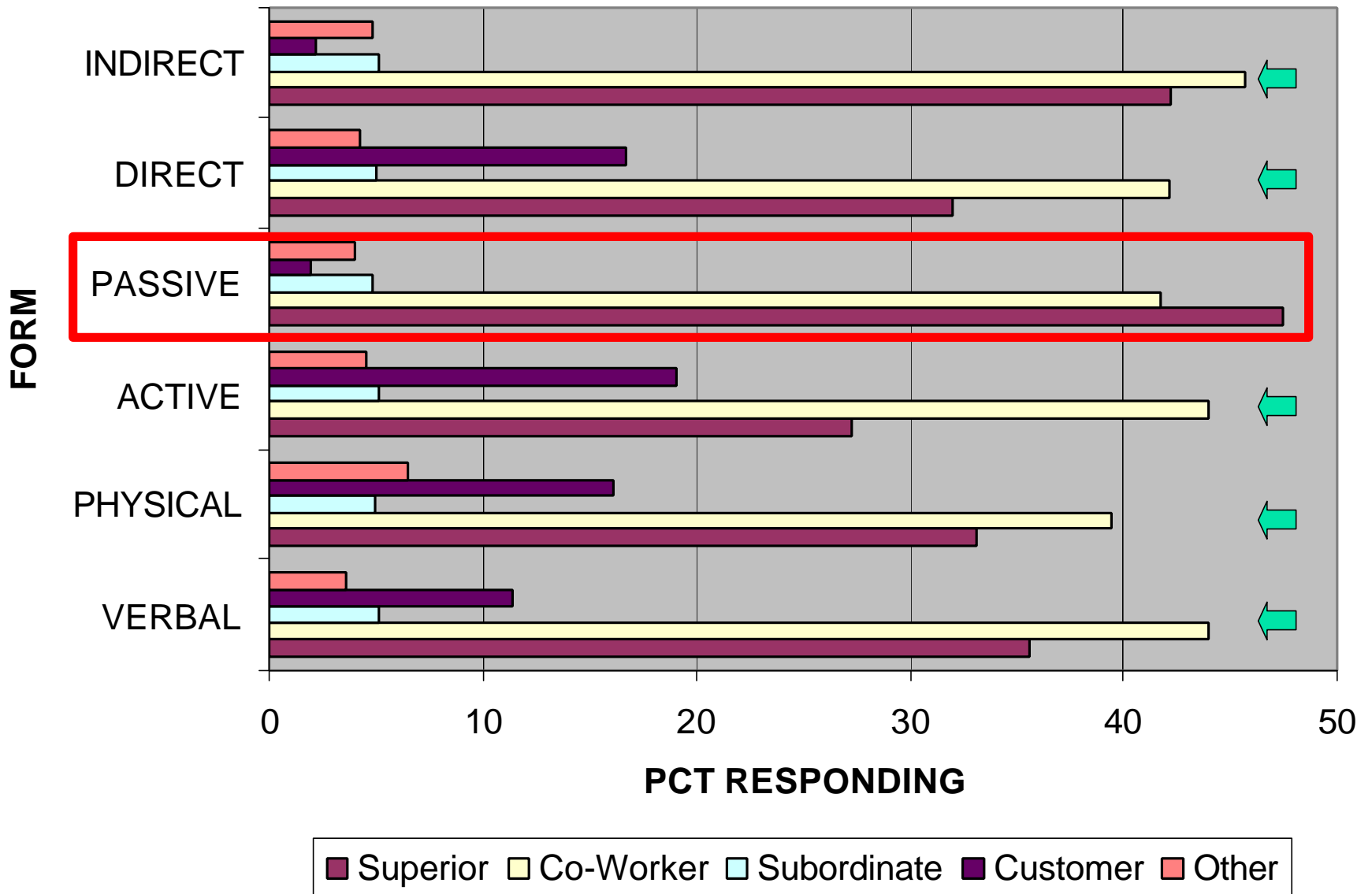
SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON FOR EACH FORM OF AGGRESSION FOR CUSTOMERS



SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON FOR EACH FORM OF AGGRESSION FOR OTHERS



Side-by-side Comparison for Sources of Aggression by Form of Aggression



MOST FREQUENT BEHAVIORS

- **TREATED IN A RUDE AND/OR DISRESPECTFUL MANNER**
- **NOT GIVEN THE PRAISE FOR WHICH YOU FELT ENTITLED**
- **GLARED AT IN A HOSTILE MANNER**
- **GIVEN LITTLE OR NO FEEDBACK ABOUT YOUR PERFORMANCE**
- **OTHERS DELAY ACTION ON MATTERS THAT WERE IMPORTANT TO YOU**
- **OTHERS FAIL TO GIVE YOU INFORMATION THAT YOU REALLY NEEDED**
- **GIVEN THE "SILENT TREATMENT"**
- **LIED TO**
- **SOMEONE INTERFERE WITH YOUR WORK ACTIVITIES**
- **PREVENTED FROM EXPRESSING YOURSELF**
- **YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IGNORED BY OTHERS**

EMPLOYEE RESPONSES TO BEHAVIOR

DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, DID YOU REPORT ANY OF THESE EXPERIENCES TO A SUPERVISOR OR UNION OFFICIAL?

63%=NO 37%=YES

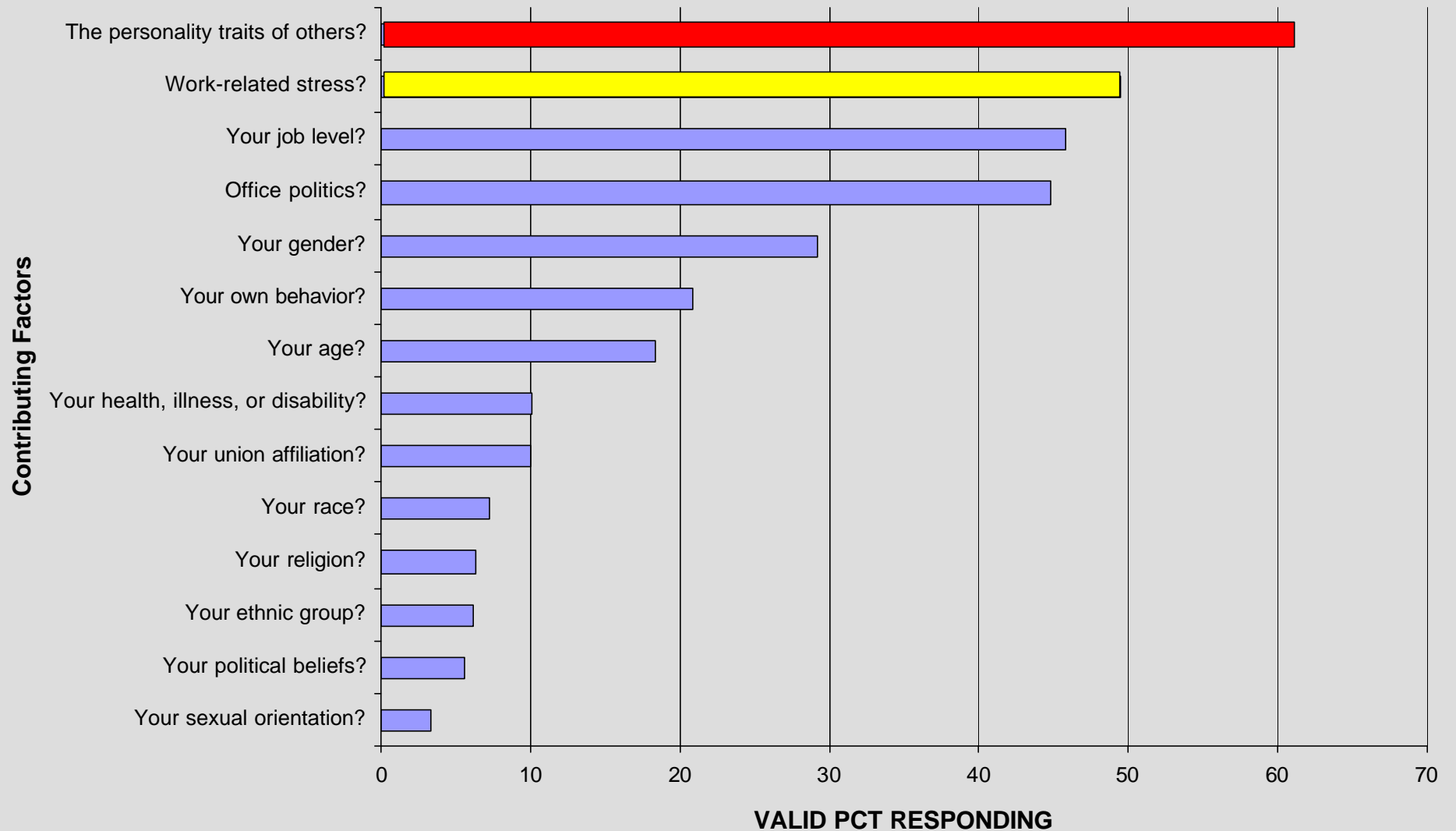
DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, DID YOU CONFRONT THE PERSON(S) INVOLVED?

49%=NO 51%=YES

DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, DID YOU FILE A FORMAL COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE ABOUT ANY OF THESE BEHAVIORS?

91%=NO 9%=YES

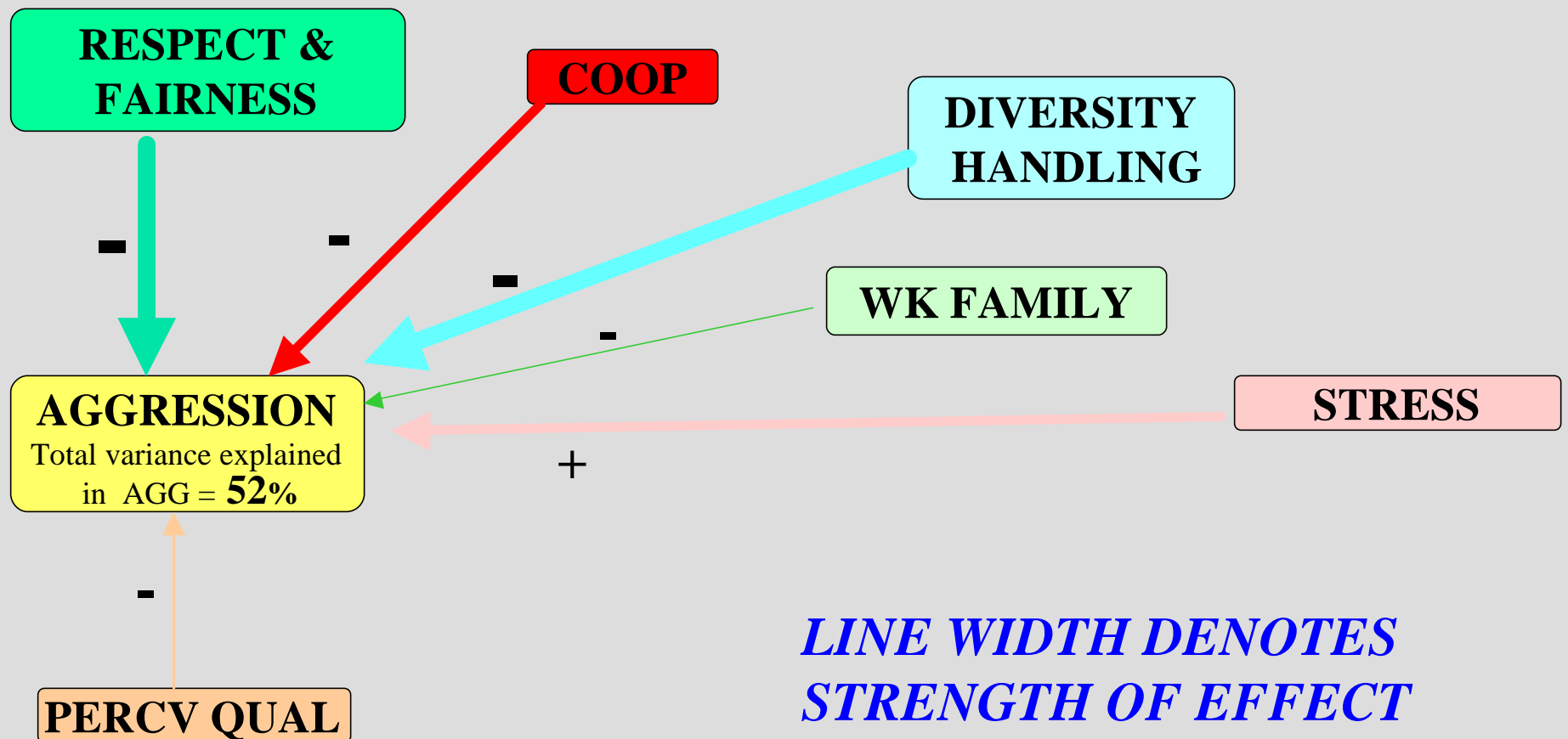
Q161-175: Which of the following factors do you think may have contributed to any or all of the experiences you reported above?



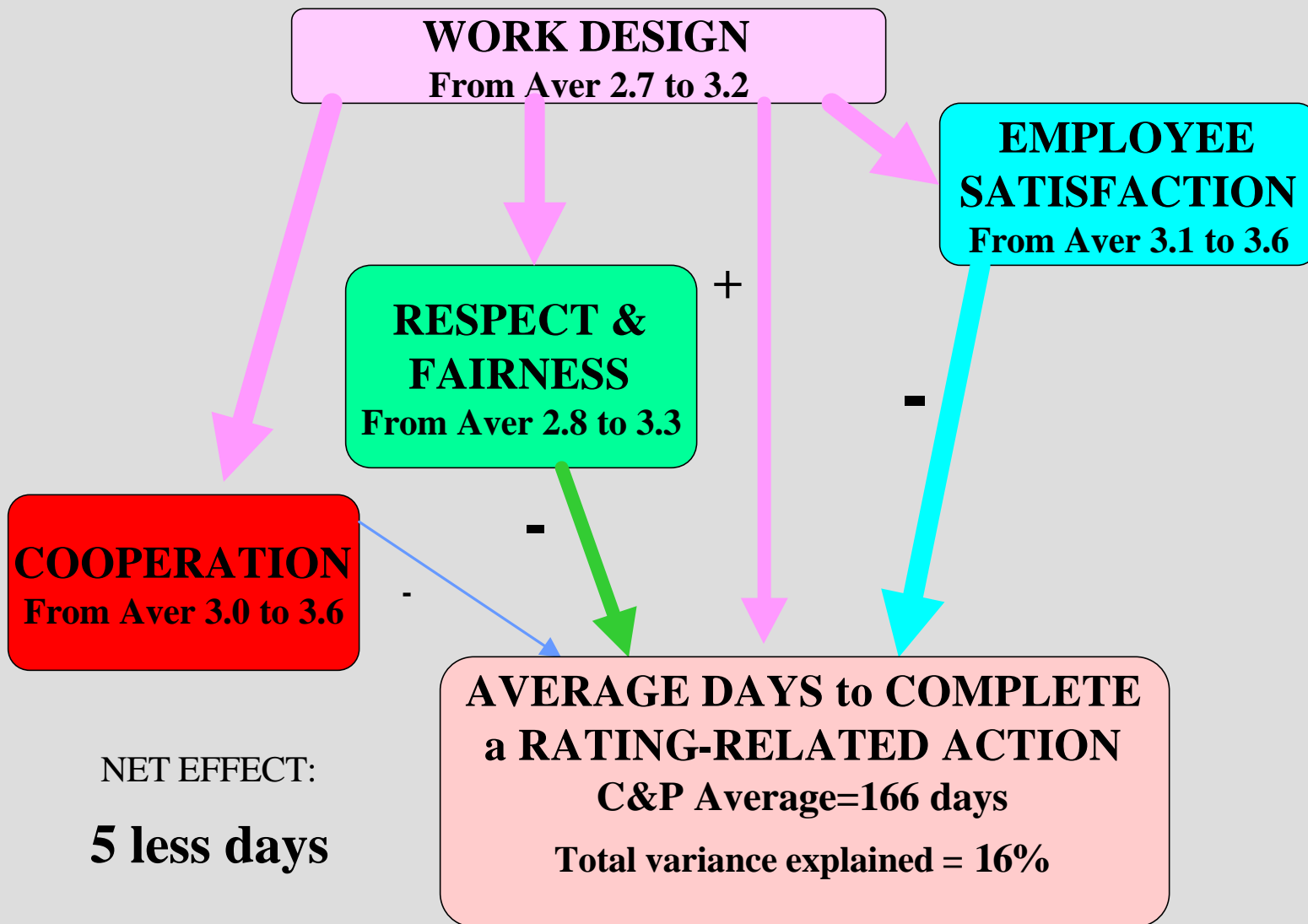
BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE

- **FROM ANALYZING SURVEY DATA AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES, WE THINK WE KNOW THAT IMPROVING THE FACTORS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH LOWERING STRESS & AGGRESSION WILL DIRECTLY IMPROVE BUSINESS RESULTS**

A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH AGGRESSION IN VA PROJECT SITES 2000



HOW THE KEY DRIVERS OF LOWERING STRESS & AGGRESSION AFFECT 1999 VBA CLAIM-PROCESSING SPEED

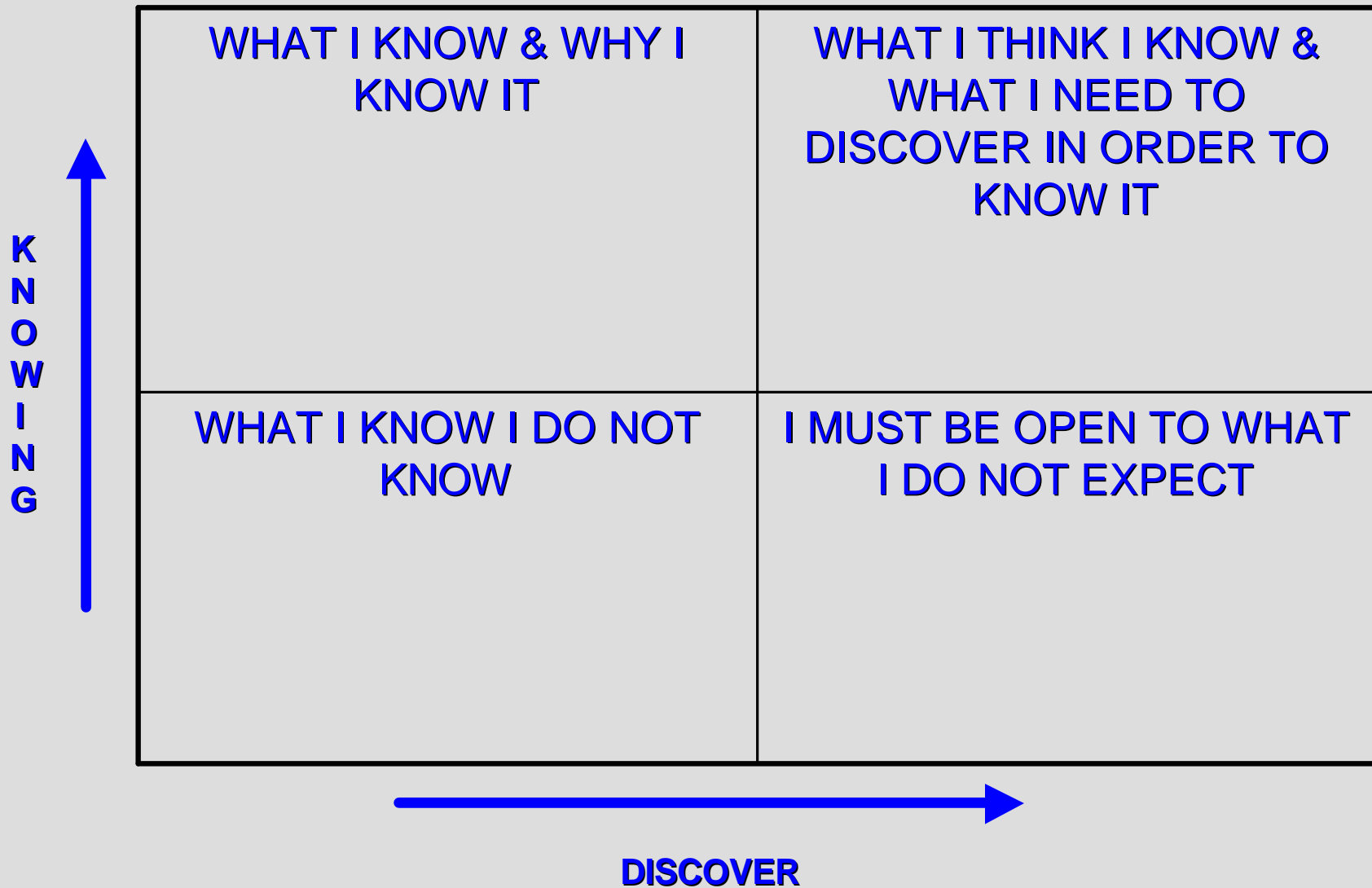


THE ACTION INQUIRY PROCESS

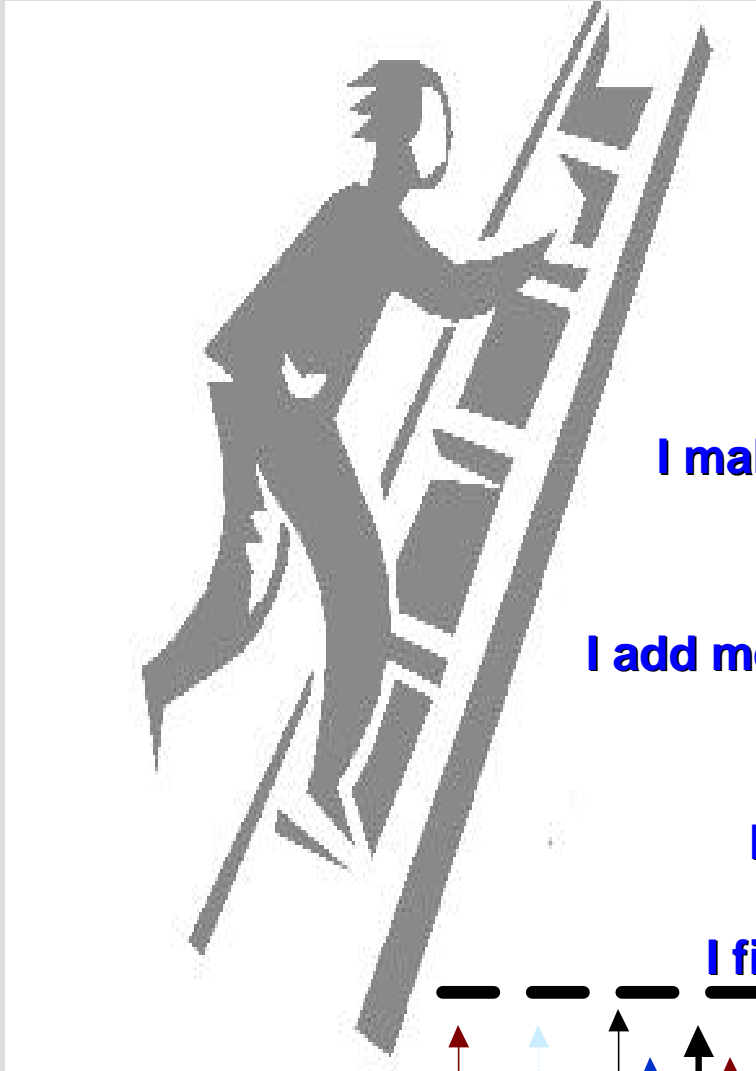


**LEARNING
NEW TOOLS**

LEARNING WINDOW



LADDER OF INFERENCE



I act on my beliefs.

I adopt beliefs.

I draw conclusions.

I make assumptions based on the meanings I add.

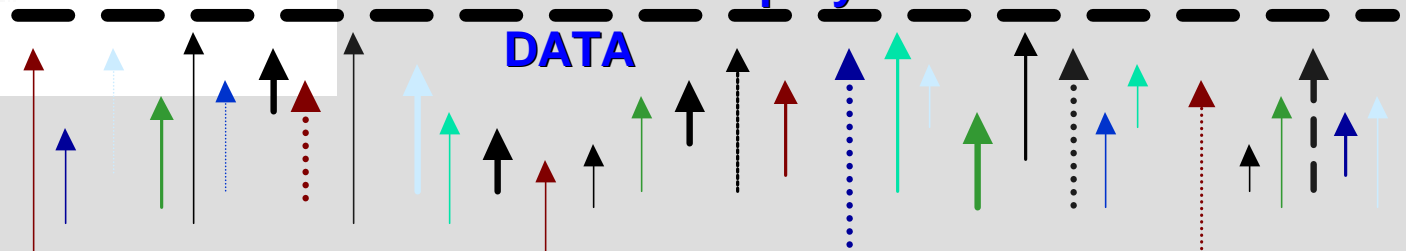
I add meanings based on my personal history and experience.

I select data to "see."

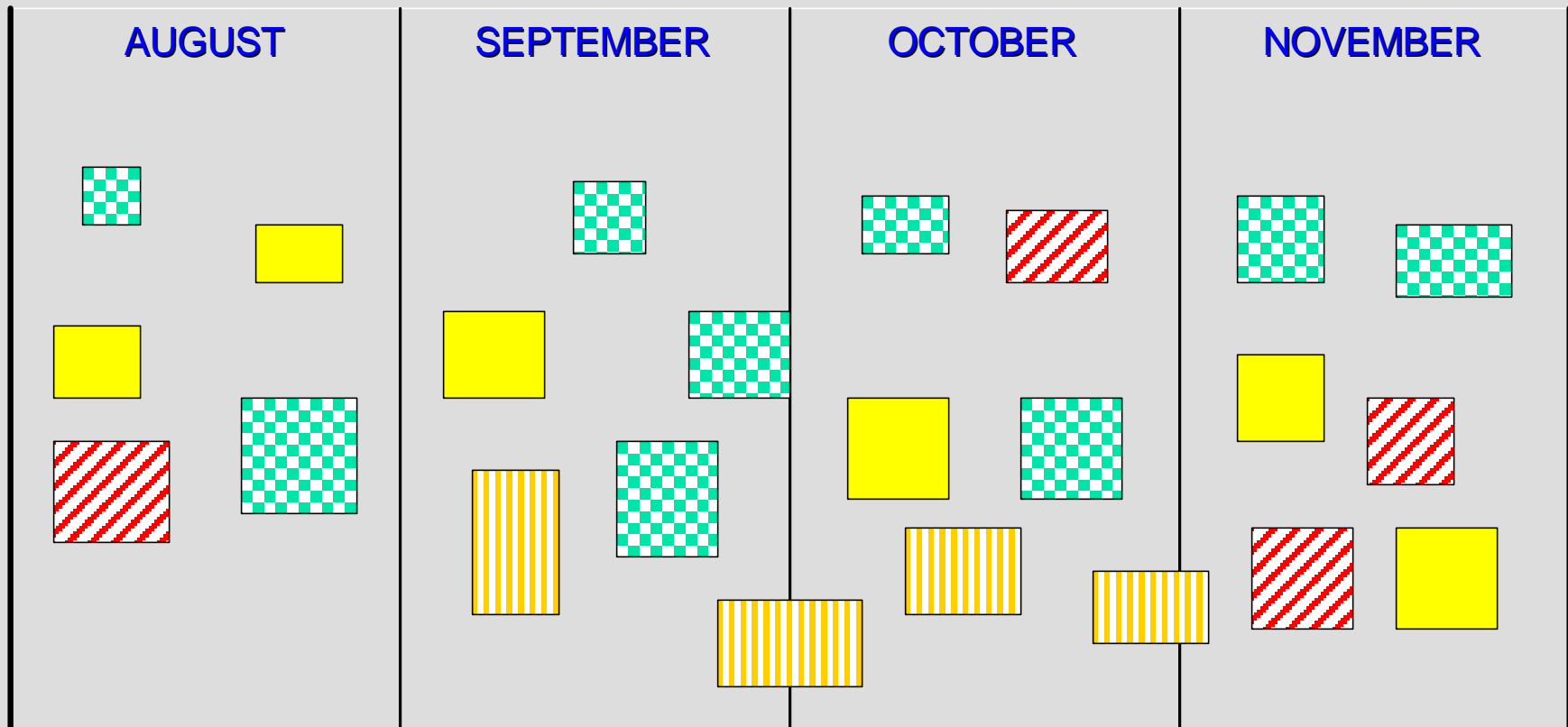
WE TEND TO
LOOK BACK
ONLY AT THE
DATA WE
CHOSE TO
SEE AND NOT
THE DATA
WE FILTER
OUT

I filter in order to simplify

(Personal Filter)



HARVESTING LEARNING



**EACH PARTICIPANT USES A DIFFERENT COLOR POST IT &
DESCRIBES THE INCIDENTS THAT THEY PERCEIVE AS
CRITICAL IN THE PROJECT**