

**TOWARD A THEORY OF SHARING AND RESPONDING TO
GOOD AND BAD NEWS AT WORK**

by

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“The Reunion” by Jerry Geier

“SOMEONE TO TELL IT TO”

What good is a dream a plan or a scheme
the rainbow that you pursue?
It's everything, and it's nothing
without someone to tell it to.

How eager you are to get to that star,
but after the journey's through,
you're only a lonely dreamer
without someone to tell it to.

There'll be blue days, hard to get through days,
days when you'll just want to die.
Soon you're older, and the world's colder
when there's no shoulder to cry on.

Castles in air are empty and bare
with no one to share the view.
The moonlight is merely moonlight
There's no magic in, 'I love you'
without someone, someone to tell it to.

The moonlight is merely moonlight.
There's no magic in 'I love you'
without someone, someone to tell it to.

Songwriters: Sammy Cahn & Dolores Fuller

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To my family,
with love and gratitude.

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Graduate school, and the dissertation process in particular, has been a wild mix of good news and bad news. I am extremely fortunate and grateful to have had mentors, colleagues, friends, and family who have always been there to celebrate my good news and to guide, support, and encourage me in the midst of my bad news. Without this cheerleading and support system, successfully completing my doctorate would have been near impossible.

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ABSTRACT

In this two paper dissertation, I seek to establish news sharing as an area of inquiry in organizational studies. The quantitative paper represents the first steps toward this goal by focusing on how and why responses to good news shared at work matter in organizationally relevant ways. Specifically, I draw on and integrate multiple streams of literature, including interpersonal capitalization, the social valuing perspective, thriving, and the broaden-and-build model, to hypothesize multiple mechanisms through which active-constructive responses to shared good news contribute to the ability of individuals and potentially the collective to achieve organizational goals through thriving and prosocial behavior. Data from three surveys reveal sharing good news at work is common, especially among coworkers. Results provide general support for the hypothesized model, suggesting that active-constructive responses impact sharers' sense of thriving (i.e., vitality, learning) and prosocial behavior through their felt worth, relationship satisfaction, and positive affect.

In the second paper, I utilize a qualitative approach to build on the quantitative work in multiple ways. First, because news must be shared for individuals and organizations to benefit, I shift attention to the initial stages of the news sharing process and explore why and with whom people share or withhold their news at work. Second, I expand my focus to include both good and bad news to provide a more holistic understanding of the news sharing process. Third, through additional integration of extant literature and careful data analysis, I further define and refine the concepts of news events and news sharing. Forty-two semi-structured interviews with hospital employees in varying occupational roles reveal that news is nuanced in its temporality

and valence. In addition to self-focused motives, individuals share and withhold good and bad news out of concern for others, their relationships, and their work. Additionally, physical proximity, relationship quality, common experience, and the value one places on the other's opinion or insights factor into choices regarding particular sharing partners. Together, these papers provide evidence that the seemingly simple process of news sharing is a prevalent workplace phenomenon that is complex, consequential, and a rich area for future research.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Sort of like the event happening was inhaling, and you’re just like holding on to it, and then finally talking about it is like the exhale, and you can breathe again.”

Justin, Chapter 3 interview participant

“We share a lot when we’re working... It’s so great that we have that relationship that we’re able to bounce things back and forth; the positives and negatives.”

Grace, Chapter 3 interview participant

In “Someone to tell it to,” written by Sammy Cahn and Dolores Fuller, Nat King Cole sings about how our realized dreams are “empty” and our “blue days” are “colder” without someone to tell them to, “someone to share the view.” This song beautifully illustrates that life is composed of positive and negative events, but it is only through telling someone about them that they take on real meaning. The desire to share our life events with others can feel as natural and necessary as breathing, as Justin suggests above.

Given that so many people spend a majority of their waking hours at work (Gini, 1998), it is not surprising that Grace (see above) and others whom I interviewed explained that sharing positive and negative events with others at work is common. What is surprising, however, is that this phenomenon, which I refer to as news sharing, has received relatively scant attention in the organizational studies literature. My aim in this dissertation is to introduce the concepts of news events and news sharing as an area of inquiry for organizational scholars. Across two papers, I draw on and integrate various streams of research from social psychology, conversation analysis, and organizational studies to evidence this gap, establish the importance of addressing it, and define the concepts of news events and news sharing in relation to existing constructs. I utilize a

mixed methods design to collect descriptive information about the prevalence and nature of news sharing at work and to explore its causes and consequences.

My examination of the news sharing process begins with a quantitative paper that focuses on how and why responses to good news shared at work matter (Chapter 2). In this paper, I augment the literature on interpersonal capitalization (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004; Ilies, Keeney, & Scott, 2011; Langston, 1994) with the social valuing perspective (Dutton, Debebe, & Wrzesniewski, 2015; Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003), the broaden-and-build model (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Fredrickson, 1998), and thriving (Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson, & Garnett, 2012; Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005) to hypothesize multiple mechanisms by which others active-constructive responses to shared good news impact the sharer in ways that are organizationally beneficial. I conduct three surveys with adults working in various industries to test my hypothesized model and analyze the data with structured equation modeling.

I chose this as my starting point to establish that news sharing plays an integral role in fostering generative intrapersonal states and interpersonal actions that contribute to organizational capacity, the ability of individuals and the collective to achieve organizational goals (Feldman & Khademian, 2003). This paper is the first quantitative study to test the social valuing perspective (Dutton et al., 2015; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003), and it is also one of the first studies to test parts of Spreitzer and colleagues' (Spreitzer et al., 2005) theoretical model of thriving. Although work on interpersonal capitalization (i.e., sharing good news) focuses on positive outcomes for sharers, this work broadens the scope of the positive dynamics associated with active-constructive responses to shared good news by including an other-oriented outcome, prosocial behavior.

Given that the individually and organizationally beneficial dynamics I posit in Chapter 2 cannot unfold unless news is shared, I shift my focus in the qualitative paper (Chapter 3) to explore why and with whom people share their news. I also broaden the scope of inquiry to include both good and bad news so that I may better understand their common underlying features and processes. Detailed analysis of 42 interviews with employees in various occupational roles at two nationally renowned hospitals revealed several insights about the nature of news and news sharing, including nuances about how individuals think about news, motives people identify for sharing and withholding good and bad news, and factors and considerations involved with sharing partner selection.

It is my hope that those who read this dissertation will be struck, as I have been, by how complex, meaningful, and powerful the seemingly small, everyday act of sharing news with others can be. I see news sharing as a rich area of study for those interested in interpersonal communication and positive relationships at work, and there many exciting opportunities to build bridges between news sharing and related topics like compassion and gratitude. I look forward to exploring these avenues for future research and hope that others will, too.

CHAPTER 2:
HOW AND WHY RESPONDING TO OTHERS' GOOD NEWS MATTERS AT WORK

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the prevalence and impact of sharing and responding to good news at work. Research on this process, also known as interpersonal capitalization, reveals that certain responses have a variety of positive impacts on the sharer. Despite the fact people spend so much time around coworkers, little is known about capitalization in the workplace. Extending this work, I draw on and integrate multiple streams of research, including the social valuing perspective and the broaden-and-build model, to hypothesize the mechanisms through which active-constructive responses to shared good news impact the sharers' intrapersonal states and interpersonal behavior in ways that are personally and organizationally beneficial. Data from three surveys reveal that capitalization is a phenomenon common at work, especially with coworkers. Results provide general support for the hypothesized model, suggesting that active-constructive responses impact the capacity of the individual and collective to accomplish organizational goals through how respected sharers feel at work, how satisfied they are with their work relationships, and how positive their emotions are at work. Specifically, active-constructive responses have significant positive relationships with felt worth, relationship satisfaction, and positive affect. In turn, felt worth and positive affect are positively related to

thriving, and relationship satisfaction and positive affect are positively related to prosocial behavior.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on the power of positive phenomena to enable optimal functioning and the enhancement of strengths, capabilities, and desirable states (see Kim & Spreitzer, 2012). This shift may seem surprising in light of Baumeister and colleagues' (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001) extensive review of research that suggests that "bad is stronger than good." However, examining positive phenomena, particularly positive events and experiences, is also justified and valuable for a number of reasons. First, positive events occur more often in the everyday. Gable and Haidt (2005) conservatively estimate from daily experience studies that the ratio of positive to negative events is three to one. Second, everyday positive events have strong, positive effects on individuals' positive emotions, self-concept, and well-being which are not accounted for by the occurrence or absence of daily negative events (Gable & Reis, 2010). Furthermore, well-being is particularly enhanced when people treat positive events as non-routine by counting their blessings (Emmons & McCullough, 2003) or savoring their experiences (Bryant, 1989; Bryant, Smart, & King, 2005). By engaging in such tactics, individuals are able to maintain and increase positive emotion and build longer lasting resources (Quoidbach, Berry, Hansenne, & Mikolajczack, 2010).

An important way that individuals can treat positive events as non-routine is by sharing them with others. Research suggests that people are just as likely to share positive events and experiences with others as they would negative events or experiences (Rimé, 2007). Merely through the act of sharing positive events, sharers tend to benefit by experiencing increases in

positive emotions and life satisfaction (Gable et al., 2004). Additionally, sharing is associated with enhanced memorability (Gable et al., 2004) and perceived value of the event, especially when others respond positively and enthusiastically (Reis et al., 2010).

In the work context, little is known about the capitalization process, which includes both capitalization attempts – the act of sharing good news with another person, and actual or perceived responses to those attempts – the response of the listener (Gable & Reis, 2010). The only study to examine capitalization associated with work focused on spouses' responses to shared work-related news (Ilies et al., 2011). One reason that scholars have not focused on capitalization among coworkers may be that descriptive studies about sharing positive events and experiences with others imply that capitalization does not occur often at work. For instance, Gable et al. (2004) reported participants in a daily diary study shared their most positive event of the day with at least one other person on 80% of days, and of those shared, 59% shared with friends, 45% romantic partners, 28% parents, 24% roommates, 16% siblings, and 3% "other." It is critical to note that the sample was comprised of undergraduates, and their employment status was not reported. These findings may not generalize to adults working part- or full-time as undergraduates may not have the same opportunities to share positive news at work. Surveying individuals ranging from 17 to 41 years of age, Rimé and colleagues (Rimé, Noël, & Philippot, 1991) also concluded that partners of social sharing are "confined to the circle of intimates" (240) because the first people participants' told about positive events or experiences were predominately family members, romantic partners, or friends. This conclusion either ignores the fact the sharing can occur with multiple people or assumes that it is only the first sharing partner that is of consequence. However, Gable et al. (2004) found that individuals share their news with

multiple people, and the number of people with whom participants shared positive events was associated with higher positive affect and life satisfaction.

I contend that people are likely to engage in capitalization with their coworkers because they spend so many of their waking hours at work. According to Gini (1998: : 707), “We will not sleep as much, spend time with our families as much, eat as much or recreate and rest as much as we work.” While at work, most people are surrounded by and interact with their coworkers. About 90% of employees have coworkers (Fairlie, 2004), and a recent meta-analysis revealed that coworker actions influence their colleagues’ attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors above and beyond supervisors’ influence (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Furthermore, coworkers are becoming increasingly salient and influential as the popularity and prevalence of teamwork rises (Cascio, 1998; Gordon, 1992), and job content shifts from routine, individual tasks to more complex, collective tasks (Harrison, Johns, & Martocchio, 2000). Responding more or less positively to others’ good news may be one way coworkers influence their colleagues’ well-being and group-serving behaviors at work.

The extent to which extant capitalization research conducted in non-work contexts may inform our understanding of capitalization in the workplace is unclear because personal and professional relationships are dissimilar in ways that make them distinct and subject to different dynamics and consequent experiences. Waldron (2000) explains that work relationships differ from personal relationships because the public and private aspects of work relationships are in constant tension. Unlike in personal relationships, those in work relationships may not have the luxury to negotiate informal rules and expectations that govern their interactions in private. Violations to such relational guidelines may also occur more frequently in public, where they are especially damaging if the audience includes one’s peers. Also, given employees’ concerns with

managing their images at work (Jones & Pitman, 1982; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984), people might be more concerned that their capitalization attempts could be interpreted as bragging than they would in personal relationships in which sharing news is obligatory and withholding may be considered an affront (Sacks, 1992). Finally, coworkers' personal experience with and understanding of the organization and work might make them a more understanding audience for work-related good news than personal contacts who are less familiar with the meanings individuals might attach to such types of news. These differences between work and non-work relationships raise questions about the prevalence of capitalization at work as well as which responses matter the most, how, and why.

This paper seeks to address this limitation and extend the extant research on capitalization in a number of ways. First, I integrate multiple streams of literature to connect the capitalization process with work-related outcomes (i.e., thriving and prosocial behavior) that are directly beneficial to individuals and indirectly beneficial to the organization. By doing so, I spotlight how seemingly small, everyday coworker interactions contribute to the capacity of individuals and the collective to develop and accomplish organizational goals. While thriving, the joint experience of vitality and learning (Spreitzer et al., 2005), should be valued in and of itself, it is also significant in that it predicts individuals' mental and physical health, performance, and commitment and turnover (de Croon, Sluiter, Blonk, Broersen, & Frings-Dresen, 2004; Kivimäki et al., 2012; Porath et al., 2012; Van Dyne, Jehn, & Cummings, 2002), which are consequential for organizations' bottom lines. In fact, one of the top reasons employees stay with a particular company is whether they have opportunities for growth, learning and development (Kayne & Jordan-Evans, 2008). In addition to thriving, I also include prosocial behavior (i.e., interpersonal citizenship behavior) to understand whether responses to

one's shared good news relate to not only how one feels at work but also, how one acts in service of one's coworkers.

Second, I identify and test multiple mechanisms by which the work-related benefits of active-constructive responses, those that are enthusiastically positive (Gable et al., 2004), to shared good news are realized. I suggest that coworkers' responses to capitalization attempts impact sharers' sense of thriving and engagement in prosocial behavior at work because of how they positively affect how sharers experience themselves, their relationships, and their emotions at work. This extends Dutton and colleague's (Dutton et al., 2015; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003) social valuing perspective theoretically by connecting felt worth to work-related outcomes and empirically by providing a quantitative examination of an antecedent of felt worth.

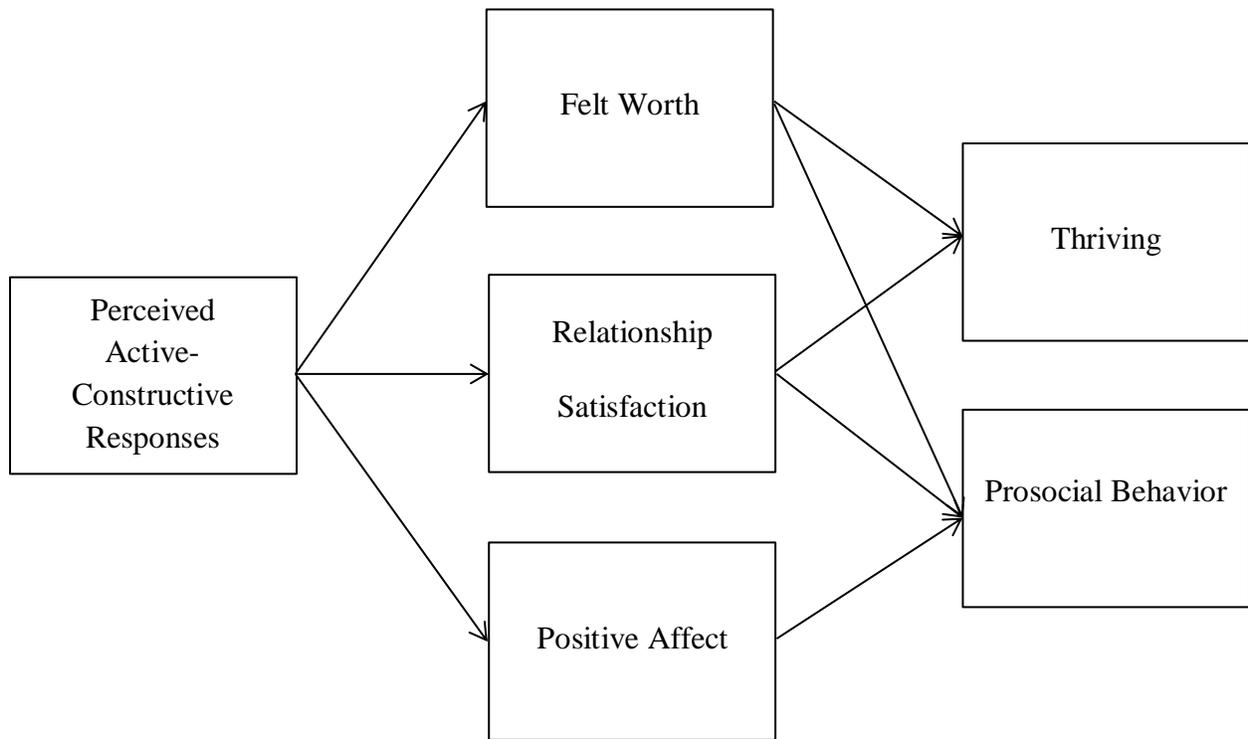
Third, by examining capitalization in the workplace, I contribute to the literature by gathering descriptive data on the prevalence and practices of sharing good news with others at work and by linking responses to good news to important work-related outcomes. As discussed below, prior research suggests that capitalization does not occur in the workplace. I question this assumption and provide an enriched picture of this phenomenon and its consequences at work, revealing it as a fertile area for inquiry in organizational studies. The particular outcomes I examine, thriving and prosocial behavior, are complementary in that they focus on how to enhance more vital states for the individual and collective. The latter is notable given that capitalization implies benefits for the self, and the inclusion of prosocial behavior broadens the range and scope of positive outcomes associated with sharing good news.

In what follows, I provide a brief overview of the capitalization literature. I then integrate this work with multiple streams of research to develop a theoretical model (see Figure 1) that describes how felt worth, relationship satisfaction, and positive affect at work mediate the impact

of active-constructive responses on thriving and prosocial behavior. Next, I present the findings of a pilot study and two field-based survey studies. The pilot study examines people’s propensity to share work-related good news with their coworkers. Study 1 builds on the pilot study by including additional descriptive information on sharing work-related and non-work related good news with coworkers, supervisors, or others at work, and it also examines whether capitalization responses are related to thriving and prosocial intentions. Study 2 tests the full hypothesized mediated model with multisource data. Finally, I discuss implications of these studies.

FIGURE 1

Hypothesized Mediated Model of the Effects of Perceived Capitalization Responses



HYPOTHESES

Interpersonal capitalization refers to the process of telling at least one other person about a positive personal event or experience and as a result, deriving additional benefit (Gable et al., 2004; Langston, 1994). Maynard (1997, 2003), working in the field of conversation analysis,

refers to this phenomenon as sharing good news. In addition to providing a language that does not imply deriving benefit, specifically self-interest, as a motive for sharing, Maynard (1997, 2003) adds to our understanding of *what* might be told and *how* the process of sharing it matters. In particular, he explains that good news is the participant's own phenomena, and in the course of conversation, the sharer and sharing partner work together to establish whether something is a) newsworthy and b) how good or bad it is. In other words, the degree to which an event or experience is positive and newsworthy is subjective. It is therefore not necessarily limited to that which directly affects or involves the self, and others may impact the sharer's perceptions or feelings about what was shared. Taken together, I define good news as an event or experience a person perceives as being positive, self-relevant (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), and potentially interesting, important, or valuable enough to another/others to warrant sharing (Gable et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2011; Langston, 1994).

Sharing good news is meaningful both in terms of the information conveyed and the action itself. Given that capitalization attempts involve both the disclosure of a particular event and communication of the positive value the sharer attaches to it, sharing good news conveys information about the sharer's qualities, opinions, goals, values, emotions, and needs (Gable & Reis, 2010). Capitalization attempts also may communicate information about the sharer's orientation toward the person with whom the news is being shared. I suggest that one way to conceptualize capitalization attempts is as a bid for connection (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001), an effort by one person to engage and connect with the other person. Although they may vary in magnitude and explicitness, bids for connection signal a desire to interrelate. Thus, the act and content of sharing good news is personally revealing in a number of ways.

Likewise, the subtext with which capitalization attempts are laden imbues capitalization responses with meaning making them more than just a means by which responders can affirm, or not, whether an event or experience is newsworthy and positive (Maynard, 2003). The capitalization process presents a prime opportunity for the other person to demonstrate responsiveness (Gable, Gonzaga, & Strachman, 2006), defined as understanding, validation, and care (Reis & Shaver, 1988). In other words, by sharing news with someone, sharers create a situation in which the other person may relate positively to their wants, needs, emotions, and behaviors (Miller & Berg, 1984).

Gable and colleagues' (Gable et al., 2006; Gable et al., 2004) have identified four types of responses that a sharing partner exhibits, or is perceived to exhibit, in reaction to someone who has shared a positive event or experience.: active-constructive (e.g., enthusiastic support), passive-constructive (e.g., subtle, understated support), active-destructive (e.g., demeaning or undermining the event), and passive-destructive (e.g., ignoring the event). Active-constructive (Gable et al., 2004), or supportive (Ilies et al., 2011) responses, are the only type of response that is consistently related to outcomes for sharers (Gable & Reis, 2010). This is likely because it is the most responsive reaction. By responding supportively, the responder is "turning toward" the sharer and accepting the bid for connection (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001). Empirical evidence also suggests that active-constructive responses show that the responder understands, recognizes, and appreciates the personal importance that the news has for the sharer. Specifically, Gable et al. (2006) found that a composite measure of romantic partners' general capitalization response style predicted how understood, validated, and cared for their partners felt after a specific positive event disclosure.

Responses to shared good news may therefore be used as direct diagnostic information, or useful cues, for people to construct and update their understanding of how they are perceived and valued by others. The social valuing perspective suggests that individuals' felt worth, the sense of the level of regard and importance afforded to them by others, develops and evolves in the course of daily interactions as they actively attend to and interpret how others treat them at work (Dutton et al., 2015). In particular, Dutton and colleagues' (Dutton et al., 2015; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003) argue that self-meaning at work is affected by the ongoing interpretation of interpersonal cues. Interpersonal cues are behaviors of an individual in context that are noticed, bracketed, and perceived as meaningful by another person (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). This model is based on ideas of the looking glass self (Cooley, 1902) which asserts that individuals continually monitor the self and its significance from others' perspectives, and interpersonal cues serve as reflected appraisals by which individuals develop a sense of self based on how others see them. Cues noticed in the course of everyday interactions, or interpersonal episodes, are interpreted as either affirming or disaffirming of who one is as a person at work. Cues are perceived as positive and affirming to the extent that they "communicate regard, care, competence, worth or any attribute that implies that the act confirms the employee's existence and endows the employee with some form of significance," whereas cues are negative and disaffirming to the extent that they convey "disregard, lack of caring or value, incompetence or some other derogatory attribute" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003: , 108). In other words, cues are perceived as symbolic of the degree to which others respect and value oneself.

Drawing on Gable and Reis (2010), I suggest that active-constructive responses are likely to affirm individuals' felt worth. Enthusiastic, positive responses convey that the responder

understands, appreciates, and recognizes the personal importance the shared event or experience has for the sharer. In a related vein, these responses may also indicate whether the other person is a source of autonomy support, support of the sharer's self-ascribed needs, values and goals (Deci & Ryan, 1980) that are implicitly or explicitly conveyed in the capitalization attempt. Finally, active-constructive responses can reflect how the responder feels about the sharer. As Gottman and DeClaire write (2001), successful responses to bids for connection demonstrate an interest for the "real" person. This is synonymous with respect, which "signals a *full recognition* as a person," and is vital because it communicates important information about status, prestige, and acceptance by others (De Cremer & Mulder, 2007: : 440). In terms of the theory of social valuing at work, a sharer is likely to experience another's positive, enthusiastic responses to shared good news as affirming of one's own worth. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. Perceptions of active-constructive responses to shared good news at work are positively associated with felt worth.

Responsiveness, such as that demonstrated by active-constructive responses, is also central to relationship development and quality. According to the Reis and Shaver (1988) model of intimacy, feelings of closeness, known as intimacy (Perlman & Fehr, 1987), develop over time as individuals share self-relevant information and experience others' reactions as understanding, validating, and caring (Reis & Patrick, 1996; Reis & Shaver, 1988). Reactions perceived as responsive convey that the sharing partner is engaged and emotionally invested in the relationship (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Also, the communication of understanding may lead to the sense that both sharing partners are experiencing an identical subjective experience with each other, which has been found to lead to liking, closeness, and a desire to interact (Pinel, Long, Landau, Alexander, & Pyszczynski, 2006). Finally, shared good news met with

responsiveness is likely to be a positive experience for both relationship partners. Positive social interactions are reinforcing (Gable & Reis, 2010), and so both sharers and responders are likely to be motivated to continue relating to each other, and perhaps others, in a positive manner. Active-constructive responses therefore signal that sharing partners are to some degree sharing a particular experience and that the responder cares about the sharer and the relationship they share. They also create fertile ground for positive interrelating more generally. Thus, enthusiastically positive responses should influence relationship satisfaction.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that active-constructive responses are related to relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. For instance, Gable and colleagues (2004) surveyed couples for at least three months and found that active-constructive responses were positively correlated with their relationship satisfaction. The authors also found in a sample of married couples that perceptions that their partners' usual response style was enthusiastically positive was positively associated with both global and daily ratings of marital satisfaction as well as daily reports of positive activities enjoyed by the couples. Supporting the theory that perceived responsiveness is a mechanism by which active-constructive responses impact relationship satisfaction, Gable et al. (2006) found that ratings of how understood, validated, and cared for individuals felt after telling their partner about a positive event or experience was positively associated with their relationship well-being in terms of how long they want their relationship to last and how much affection they feel for each other. Similarly, composite ratings of active-constructive responses (ratings of positively enthusiastic responses minus unenthusiastic positive responses and negative responses) by dating or cohabitating couples predicted break-ups three months later (Bermis, 2008).

Although capitalization has not yet been studied among coworkers, the same theoretical rationale should apply. Indeed, there is some evidence that capitalization responses matter in even brief, non-romantic interactions. Specifically, Reis et al. (2010) conducted an experiment in which participants were instructed to tell an interviewer (i.e., a confederate) about a positive event they had experienced, and the confederate responded with either interest and enthusiasm or asking follow-up questions while remaining affectively neutral. Participants in the former condition reported liking and feeling closer to the interviewer than those in the latter condition.

Studies also suggest that responsiveness may impact relationship satisfaction more broadly than just as it relates to the relationship between the sharer and sharing partner. A study of capitalization in families showed that parents' responsiveness to their children was associated with their children's responsiveness to their friends and the quality of their friendships (Tanner, Gonzaga, & Bradbury, 2009; as cited in Gable & Reis, 2010). This raises the possibility that positive social interactions are reinforcing not only within a particular relationship but also, across relationships. For instance, employees sharing and perceiving responsiveness are likely to be responsive to others and be more satisfied with their relationships. Work by Ilies et al. (2011) further implies that active-constructive responses impact relationship satisfaction in the domain in which sharing occurred (i.e., home) as opposed to the domain about which the news focused (i.e., work). If this is the case, regardless of the content of the good news (e.g., work-related or personal), active-constructive responses to shared news should impact relationship satisfaction at work. Taken together, this research indicates that responses to sharing at work are positively related to relationship satisfaction at work in general.

Hypothesis 2. Perceptions of active-constructive responses to shared good news at work are positively associated with relationship satisfaction.

Active-constructive responses also play a role in individuals' emotional experiences. First, enthusiastic positive responses magnify the perceived value of the event or experience that is shared (Reis et al., 2010). The initial positive experience prompts positive emotions; sharing enables an individual to savor the moment; and the understanding and validation signaled by active-constructive responses underscore its importance and valence. Second, research has demonstrated that interaction partners tend to mirror each other's emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Lakin, Jefferis, Cheng, & Chartrand, 2003). Active-constructive reactions inherently involve demonstrating positive affect with regard to the shared news. In this way, responders are mirroring the sharers' emotions, and in a positive feedback cycle, sharers are likely to do so in turn. Finally, as discussed above, active-constructive responses as a means by which to show responsiveness communicate that the responder cares about the sharer. This should also contribute to positive affect for the sharer because employees who perceive that their coworkers care about them experience more frequent positive moods (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). One of the initial studies on capitalization revealed support for the relationship between enthusiastic responses and positive affect. Specifically, a week long diary study with college students showed that active-constructive responses to capitalization attempts were positively related to daily ratings of positive affect and life satisfaction in general. Again, given the work by Ilies et al. (2010) that the benefits of capitalization are likely to accrue in the domain in which sharing takes place, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3. Perceptions of active-constructive responses to shared good news at work are positively associated with positive affect at work.

Generating Capacity for the Individual and Collective

Feldman and Khademian (2003: : 353) define capacity “as the ability of an organization to utilize understandings, connections, and information effectively to take on the broad objectives of an organization.” The authors explain that capacity represents a cascade of vitality that begins with individual employees and flows out to the collective as new resources (e.g., knowledge, connections) are generated. In this section, I argue that active-constructive responses to shared good news generate capacity in their effects on thriving and prosocial behavior. These outcomes focus on enhancing more vital states of the self and the collective, respectively. As discussed below, thriving and prosocial behavior enable individuals and potentially the collective to produce new resources and channel them toward achieving organizational goals.

Thriving. Thriving refers to the dual experience of vitality and learning (Spreitzer et al., 2005). In other words, people who are thriving feel alive and energized at work and that they are growing and acquiring knowledge and skills they can apply. Employees who are thriving at work tend to perform at a higher level and be more effective leaders than those who are not, perhaps because they are also more committed, more satisfied, healthier, and less burned out (Porath et al., 2012; Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012). Thriving at work may also contribute to performance because it is positively related to innovative work behaviors (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009).

Spreitzer and colleagues (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Spreitzer & Porath, 2013) theorize that relational resources and positive affective resources enable thriving. Relational resources refer to high-quality connections (HQCs), the dynamic “space between” (Josselson, 1996) people in short-term interactions or longer term relationships when it is generative and life-giving as opposed to depleting (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). According to Dutton and Heaphy (2003), the

subjective experience of HQCs includes positive regard (Rogers, 1951), vitality and mutuality. When the quality of a connection is high, interaction partners have the sense that they are known, cared for, accepted, and supported. They also feel that both people are engaged and actively participating in the relationship. As the authors note, positive regard captures a momentary feeling, and mutuality reflects a sense of potential movement, or growth, in the connection (Miller & Stiver, 1997). Thus, relational resources are closely related to both felt worth and relationship satisfaction in that the hallmarks HQCs are likely to signal that a person is well-regard, and people are likely to be satisfied with their relationships when they involve HQCs.

People who believe they are worthy and valuable organizational members are more likely to feel connected to others at work, thereby contributing to a sense of relatedness (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The greater degree of connectivity such interactions foster generate expansive emotional spaces that present opportunities for creativity and trying new things (Losada & Heaphy, 2004). People who feel trusted and respected also tend to feel autonomous and efficacious and engage in more exploration and experimentation with new behaviors (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Spreitzer, 1995). For these same reasons, Spreitzer, Porath, and Gibson (2012) suggest that minimizing incivility, which signals that the target is not a valued, worthwhile member of the organization, will help facilitate thriving.

Positive affective resources at work also contribute to agentic behavior and exploration. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build model of positive emotions (1998, 2003, 2004) shows that the experience of positive emotions broadens and individuals thought and action repertoires. Positive emotions enable individuals to recover more quickly from negative experiences and emotions, which serve to narrow attention (Fredrickson, 1998). Positive emotions also play an important role in fostering exploration in that they broaden the array of thoughts and actions that come to

mind in a given situation (Fredrickson, 1998). In particular, joy sparks play, interest urges exploration, and contentment prompts savoring and integration. Positive emotions are therefore likely to lead to a sense of thriving because they help individuals to engage with and be stimulated by their environment and to be exploring and experimenting such that they are growing and learning. As initial support for this hypothesis, Porath et al. (2012) found in samples of young adults and young professionals that thriving and positive affect were positively correlated.

Hypothesis 4. a) Felt worth, b) relationship satisfaction, and c) positive affect at work mediate the positive relationship between active-constructive responses and thriving.

Prosocial Behavior. Prosocial behavior, “positive social acts carried out to produce and maintain the well-being and integrity of others” (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986: 710: 710), is an important part of organizational functioning. Although some argue that there are some types of prosocial organizational behavior that are intentionally or unintentionally organizationally counterproductive, most forms (i.e., helping, cooperating, and sharing) are beneficial and enable the organization to achieve its goals (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). In their review of organizational citizenship behavior, a particular yet broad category of prosocial behavior, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000: : 543, 546) note that conceptually there are many reasons why this type of behavior can benefit the collective, including the following:

(a) enhancing coworker and managerial productivity; (b) freeing up resources so they can be used for more productive purposes; (c) reducing the need to devote scarce resources to purely maintenance functions; (d) helping to coordinate activities both within and across work groups; (e) strengthening the organization’s ability to attract and retain the best employees; (f) increasing the stability of the organization’s performance; and (g) enabling the organization to adapt more effectively to environmental changes.

In addition to this persuasive and comprehensive list of rationales, there is some empirical evidence to support the notion that prosocial behavior does in fact benefit the organization as a whole. Specifically, multiple studies in distinct organizational contexts revealed that organizational citizenship behavior, specifically helping, is significantly related to varied organizational performance indicators (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Walz & Nichoff, 1996).

Recent work by Reis et al. (2010) provides initial evidence that active-constructive responses lead to prosocial behavior on the part of the sharer. The authors conducted an experiment in which a confederate in the role of an interviewer asked strangers to tell them about one of their most positive events and responded to them in an active-constructive manner or with either disparaging or neutral feedback. Results revealed that participants in the active-constructive condition were significantly more likely to return a \$1 overpayment for their participation than were participants who received disparaging or neutral feedback.

Felt worth and relationship satisfaction are two of the mechanisms through which enthusiastically positive responses to capitalization attempts may influence individuals' prosocial behavior at work. Consistent with the social valuing perspective, the "respect as intragroup status" model (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005) and the group value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992) from which it emerged, certain interactions provide cues that a person is valued and respected. Specifically, these models suggest that the reason that interactions signaling worth and respect lead to prosocial behavior is that they indicate status in the group and are important indicators of the quality of the relationship they have with the organization as a whole. Employees who feel that they belong and are evaluated positively by group members, both of which experiences are underscored by HQCs and relationship satisfaction, are more likely to

identify with their organization. In turn, organizational identification motivates individuals to act in ways that are aligned with interests of the organization. Supporting this logic, research has found that perceived respect is positively related to organizational identification (Bartel, Wrzesniewski, & Wiesenfeld, 2012), and organizational identification mediates the effect of respectful treatment on group serving behavior (Simon & Strümer, 2003). In addition to extra-role behavior, working toward goals that are aligned with the organization may also result in expending more effort in one's job and improved job performance.

Empirical evidence also suggests that respectful treatment is positively related to group serving behaviors. For example, Tyler, DeGoey, and Smith (Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1996) found that respect from group members had a significant, positive impact on compliance with group rules and extra-role behavior. Results from a social dilemma experiment by De Cremer (2002) also revealed that respect within the group predicted monetary contributions to the group. In actual work contexts, employees might contribute to their workgroup or organization by striving to achieve collective goals with extra effort and better job performance. They may also try to benefit the individual group members and enhance group effectiveness by going above and beyond their prescribed job descriptions to help coworkers could benefit from assistance.

Another mechanism by which active-constructive responses may impact prosocial behavior is positive affect. Research also consistently shows that positive affect encourages helpfulness (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988). For example, George (George, 1991) found that positive mood at work, as an affective state, but not trait positive affect, was positively related to both extra-role and role-prescribed prosocial organizational behaviors. As mentioned above, positive emotions broaden individuals' momentary thought and action repertoires (Fredrickson, 1998). Good moods may also impact the way individuals think by causing people to perceive

people and situations in a more positive light and by increasing positive thoughts (Bower, 1981; Clark & Teasdale, 1985; Forgas, Bower, & Krantz, 1984). In addition, those experiencing positive emotions are more likely to exhibit approach behavior (Carver & Scheier, 1990) and have an increased readiness to act (Hackman, 2002). Taken together, people who are feeling positively are more likely to attend to others and situations beyond themselves; notice and favorably view opportunities for prosocial behavior; think broadly, playfully, and in an integrative way to determine options for acting; and take the initiative to actually behave prosocially.

Hypothesis 5. a) Felt worth, b) relationship satisfaction, and c) positive affect at work mediate the positive relationship between active-constructive-responses and prosocial behavior.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

My empirical examination of the capitalization process in the workplace begins with two studies designed to determine whether and to what extent capitalization occurs in the workplace. First, a pilot study explores people's tendencies to share work-related good news with coworkers. Study 1 is broader in focus and asks participants about the most recent time they had good news related to any domain and whether and with whom they shared it with others at work (e.g., supervisors, colleagues, clients, etc.). I also use data from Study 1 to test whether, while controlling for active-destructive responses, relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between individually active-constructive responses and both thriving and prosocial intentions.

In Study 2, I collect survey data about the impact of coworker responses to capitalization attempts and test the full mediated model I hypothesized. This study builds upon Study 1 in a number of ways. First, I include felt worth and positive affect at work as additional mediators of

the relationship between capitalization responses on work-related employee outcomes. Second, I control for passive-constructive, active-destructive, and passive-destructive responses. Third, I operationalize prosocial behavior in terms of actual behavior as opposed to behavioral intentions. Finally, to reduce single-source bias, the independent variable, mediators, and measure of thriving are reported by a focal employee in the role of the sharer, and prosocial behavior is assessed by the focal employee's supervisor.

PILOT STUDY

Participants & Method

In exchange for partial course credit, I asked 399 students in an introductory management course at a large mid-western university to recruit someone who worked full time to participate in an online survey. Those who were recruited by the students received an email with a link to the survey and were assured that their responses would remain confidential. Survey respondents responded to questions about the likelihood that they would share good news with their coworkers, how much they let their coworkers know about the good things that happen at work, and the nature of their coworkers' reactions to such disclosures.

The resultant sample included 206 adults working in a wide variety of industries including, healthcare, education, food service, finance, retail, manufacturing, arts and entertainment, and professional, scientific, and technical services. The participants ranged in age from 20 to 74 years old, with an average age of 46.6 years. Fifty-nine percent of participants were female, and 90.6% worked full-time. Their organizational tenure ranged from less than a year to more than 25 years, with an average of 3.4 years. In terms of race, 70.2% were white, 23% Asian, 2.6% Hispanic, 2.5% Pacific Islander, Native American or other, and 1.6% African American.

Measures

Likelihood of capitalization attempts. On a Likert-type scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely), participants were asked to indicate, “When something good happens to you at work, how likely are you to share it with your coworkers?”

Capitalization detail. On a Likert-type scale from 1 (nothing at all) to 7 (very much), participants rated the amount of detail they let coworkers know about positive events or experiences that happen at work.

Perceived responses to capitalization attempts (PCRA). To assess the general reactions participants perceive their coworkers to have when they share work-related good news, I adapted the PCRA Scale developed by Gable et al. (2004). This measure includes three items for each type of response, and the Likert-type response scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Active-constructive items include, “My coworkers react to my good fortune enthusiastically” and “My coworkers often ask a lot of questions and show genuine concern about the good event” ($\alpha = .75$). Passive-constructive items include, “My coworkers try not to make a big deal out of it, but are happy for me” and “My coworkers are usually silently supportive of me” ($\alpha = .87$). Active-destructive items include, “My coworkers remind me that most good things have their bad aspects as well” and “My coworkers often find a problem with it” ($\alpha = .95$). Passive-destructive items include, “Sometimes I get the impression that they don’t care much” and “My coworkers don’t pay much attention to me” ($\alpha = .91$). The subscales of the PCRA scale have been used individually (Gable et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2011) and to form a composite PCRA score (Gable et al., 2006; Reis et al., 2010). Given that the goal of this pilot study is to explore the capitalization process in a context in which it has not been studied, I chose to assess each type of response so as to gain insight into the prevalence of each in the workplace.

Results

When participants rated the likelihood that they would share positive work events or experiences with their coworkers, 91.2% were at least somewhat likely to disclose this kind of information. Specifically, 29.3% were somewhat likely, 39% were likely, and 22% were very likely to share this type of information. None of the participants reported that sharing work-related good news with their coworkers was “very unlikely.” The mean for the likelihood of sharing was 5.67 ($SD = 1.07$).

Results were similar with regard to how much participants reported that they might share about this type of news with their coworkers. No participants reported that they would share only “very little.” Ninety-two percent reported that they would share a “moderate amount” to “very much,” with 19% reporting “very much.” The mean for how much participants would share with coworkers was 5.28 ($SD = 1.33$).

Consistent with prior research, active-constructive responses ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.08$) were negatively correlated with passive-constructive ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.23$; $r = -.17$, $p \leq .05$), active-destructive ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.33$; $r = -.24$, $p \leq .001$), and passive-destructive ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.37$; $r = -.43$, $p \leq .001$) responses. The likelihood of capitalization attempts was significantly and positively correlated with active-constructive responses ($r = .35$, $p \leq .001$) and negatively correlated with active-destructive ($r = -.31$, $p > .001$) and passive-destructive ($r = -.28$, $p \leq .001$) responses. The correlation between passive-constructive responses and likelihood of capitalization attempts was marginally significant and negative ($r = -.13$, $p \leq .10$). Similar correlations were found for the responses and capitalization detail. Capitalization detail had a significant positive correlation with active-constructive responses ($r = .36$, $p \leq .001$) and

significant negative correlations with passive-constructive ($r = -.16, p \leq .05$), active-destructive ($r = -.24, p \leq .001$), and passive-destructive ($r = -.25, p \leq .001$) responses.

BRIEF DISCUSSION OF PILOT STUDY AND INTRODUCTION TO STUDY 1

The pilot study provided initial evidence that good news sharing, or interpersonal capitalization, occurs at work. The vast majority of working adults who participated in the study reported being likely to share good work-related news with coworkers and sharing at least a moderate amount about it. There was variance in the extent to which participants perceived each type of response described in the extant capitalization literature, and the pattern of correlations among them was similar to previous studies. It is interesting that the likelihood and detail of capitalization attempts were both positively associated to active-constructive responses and negatively correlated with the other three kinds of responses. This may indicate that people feel more comfortable sharing work-related good news with coworkers when those coworkers have a history of responding to such disclosures in a positive, enthusiastic manner. Negative reactions, or even positive yet unenthusiastic responses, may hinder sharing with coworkers.

Study 1 explores capitalization at work more broadly and concretely. In this study, I asked participants to think of the last time they had good news, work-related or otherwise, and whether they had shared it with anyone else at work. Specifically, an online survey prompted participants who had shared good news to report how many times, with whom, and how they shared it. Participants also reported the extent to which their sharing partners responded in an individually active-constructive manner and the extent to which they feel that they are thriving at work.

STUDY 1

Participants & Method

I conducted this study using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online labor market where employers (i.e., requestors) recruit employees (i.e., workers) to participate in a particular task known as a HIT (i.e., Human Intelligence Task) in exchange for a wage. Both parties remain anonymous, and a unique MTurk ID enables the researcher to link survey participation to payment. Potential participants read a brief description of the study and their participation, in exchange for a one dollar wage, was completely voluntary. Other have found that this online labor resource is well-suited for social science research (e.g., Alter, Oppenheimer, & Zelma, 2010). Also, MTurk data meet or exceed traditional psychometric standards and that MTurk participants are more demographically diverse than standard samples and significantly more diverse than typical samples of American undergraduates (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Sprouse, 2011).

The sample for this study was composed of 205 MTurk workers who represented a variety of industries including government and military, retail, manufacturing, health care, finance, food service, and education. Fifty-two percent of the participants were female, and they ranged in age from 18 to over 65 years old, with an average age of 35.25 years. They also varied with regard to employment status: 68% employed full-time, 25% employed part-time, and 6% currently unemployed but previously employed at least part-time. Among those who were employed, organizational tenure ranged from less than 6 months to more than 35 years, with an average of 5.54 years. In terms of race, 72% were White, 13.5% Asian, 6.7% African American, 3.8% “Other” or biracial, and 2.7% Hispanic.

MTurk workers who chose to participate in this study were directed to an online survey (see Appendix A for the full survey). Instructions directed respondents to think about the last time they had good news, defined as “something about which you [were] happy, proud, enthusiastic, excited, or appreciative.” Participants then reported whether or not they had shared this good news with at least one other person at work. If they responded “No,” they were automatically directed to the demographic portion of the survey. If they responded in the affirmative, they were presented with additional questions about the capitalization attempt, including the number of people with whom they shared the news, what categories of people they shared with (e.g., supervisor, coworker(s), clients/customers/patients, other), when, and how. They also provided ratings about capitalization responses, thriving, and prosocial intentions.

Measures

Timeliness. To assess timeliness, participants responded to the question, “Relative to when you experienced or learned of the subject of the good news, when did you first share it at work?” Response options included “1: same day,” “2: same week,” “3: same month,” or “4: later.”

Mode of communication. Participants reported whether they communicated the good news “in person” or “electronically (e.g., email, IM)”.

Capitalization detail. Participants rated the level of detail in which they relayed their good news on a scale of 1 to 3 (1: a little bit, 2: some, 3: quite a bit).

Perceived active-constructive response. This measure and the scale on which it was assessed was the same as those used in the Pilot Study ($\alpha = .64$).

Relationship satisfaction. Participants rated their relationship satisfaction with their coworkers by responding to five items adapted from Hendrick’s (1988) general measure of

relationship satisfaction with a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sample items include, “In general, I am satisfied with my relationships with coworkers” and “I like the relationships I have with my coworkers” ($\alpha = .92$).

Thriving. I used Porath et al.’s (Porath et al., 2012) ten-item measure to assess thriving at work. Half of these items tap vitality, including “At work, I feel alive and vital” and “At work, I have energy and spirit” ($\alpha = .93$). The other five items reflect learning with items such as, “At work, I find myself learning often” and “At work, I am developing a lot as a person” ($\alpha = .90$).

Prosocial intentions. To assess prosocial intentions, I adapted three items from (Reis et al., 2010), including, “I would consider giving up something important to myself to help others at work do something important for them,” and “I would go out of my way to do something nice for others at work” ($\alpha = .81$).

Perceived active-destructive response. Given that relatively low intensity negative interpersonal behaviors at work like incivility have negative impacts on their targets (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina & Magley, 2009; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001), I controlled for perceived active-destructive responses. This measure was the same as that used in the Pilot Study ($\alpha = .87$).

STUDY 1 RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Findings

The means, standard deviations, and internal reliabilities for key Study 1 variables, as well as the correlations among them, appear in Table 1.

Of the 205 participants, 185 (90%) reported that the last time they had good news of any sort they shared it with at least one other person at work. When asked how many times they had shared their good news at work, 44% reported telling others 2 to 3 times, 26% once, 15% four to

TABLE 1
Descriptives and Correlations for Study 1 Variables^a

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Active-destructive	1.89	1.20	(.87)					
2. Active-constructive	5.21	1.08	-.19**	(.64)				
3. Relationship satisfaction	5.73	1.00	-.29***	.48***	(.92)			
4. Vitality	5.54	1.13	-.17***	.42**	.56***	(.90)		
5. Learning	5.77	.95	-.25***	.45***	.52***	.71***	(.87)	
6. Prosocial intentions	5.08	1.11	-.22**	.48***	.45***	.34***	.38***	(.81)

^a $n = 184-206$.

*** $p < .001$. P-values are based on two-tailed tests.

five times, and 15% more than five times. Almost everyone (96%) shared their news with more than one person. Slightly more than half (55%) shared with 2-5 people, 21% shared with 6-10 people, 9% shared with 11-20 people, and 11% shared with more than 20 people. Whom did they tell their good news? Ninety-eight percent of participants shared their most recent positive event or experience with their coworkers, 56% told their supervisors, 14% disclosed the news to clients/customers/patients, and 8% shared with “others” at work.

In regard to timeliness ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 0.79$), 89% of respondents reported sharing their good news with others at work within one week. Specifically, 43% of respondents shared on the same day, and 46% shared in the same week. Eight percent shared the news after the first week but within the same month as the positive experience or event, and 3% told others about it after a month.

In terms of how news was shared, participants reported how they communicated the news and in what level of detail. The majority of respondents spread their news in person (86%) as opposed to electronically, either via email or instant message (13%). While only 17% of people reported sharing in only “a little bit” of detail, 41% shared “some” detail, and 42% shared in “a lot” of detail ($M = 11.48$, $SD = 0.75$).

Measurement Model

Prior to testing whether active-constructive responses to capitalization are significantly related to thriving and prosocial intentions, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the measurement model at the item level to determine whether scale items adequately indicate their intended underlying constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bandalos & Finney, 2001). Given participants reported sharing most with coworkers, I restrict my analyses to the participants’ perceptions of coworkers’ active-constructive and active-destructive capitalization

responses. The initial measurement model had seven latent factors (i.e., active-constructive responses, active-destructive responses, relationship satisfaction, thriving as a second-order construct comprised of vitality and learning, and prosocial intentions) and 24 indicators (i.e., three for active-constructive responses, three for active-destructive, five for relationship satisfaction, five for vitality, five for learning, and three for prosocial orientation). An adequate fit is indicated by a CFI value at or above .90 (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980), a NNFI value at or above .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and RMSEA values at or below .08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The initial model fit the data well ($\chi^2(242) = 476.73, p \leq .001$; CFI = .97; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .07) and is pictured in Figure 2.

There is potential for common method variance to bias results because all of the survey measures were collected with a single instrument. To assess whether common method variance posed a significant threat to the interpretation of findings, I used Harmon's one-factor test to assess whether a single latent factor accounted for all the manifest variables (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The single-factor model had a $\chi^2(246) = 648.76$. A chi-square tests revealed that the original model was superior to this alternative ($\Delta \chi^2(4) = 172.03, p \leq .001$), thus providing some evidence that the initial measurement model was robust to common method variance.

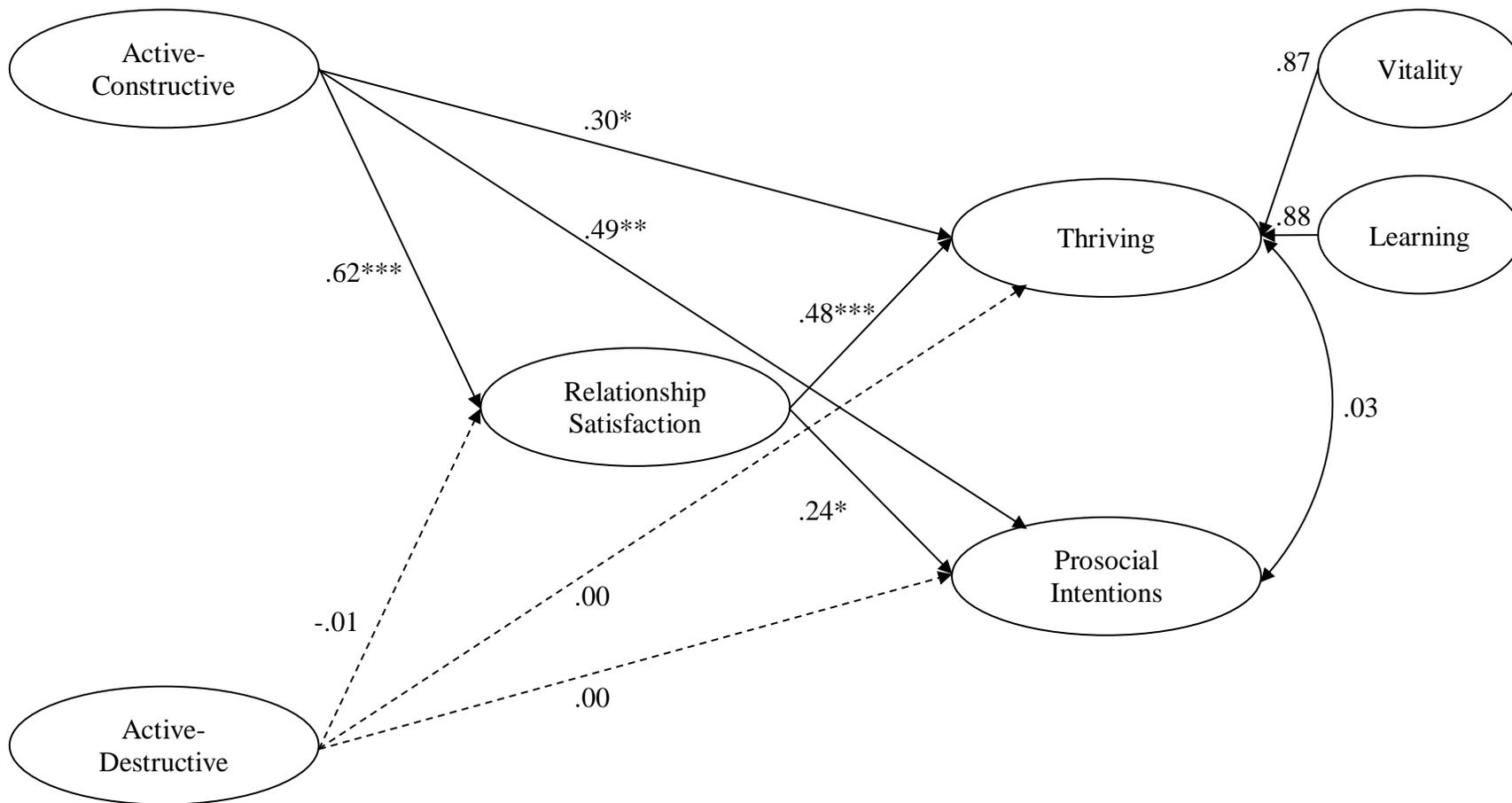
Structural Model

Having confirmed that the measurement model fit the data adequately, I conducted an initial test of the hypothesized structural model by testing a structural equation model¹ in LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) with paths from coworkers' active-constructive

¹ To deal with missing data, I used pairwise deletion. The pattern of results was the same using listwise deletion.

FIGURE 2

Maximum-likelihood Parameter Estimates for Study 1^a



^a Values are standardized path coefficients. Dashed lines are non-significant.
*** $p < .001$. P-values are based on two-tailed tests.

responses to relationship satisfaction and from relationship satisfaction to both thriving and prosocial intentions. Before testing this model, I created parcels for each measure with every other item in each scale. This resulted in one parcel of two items and one item each for active-constructive responses, active-destructive responses, and prosocial intentions, as well as two parcels each (one parcel with three items and one with two items) for relationship satisfaction, learning, and vitality. Parcelling is particularly beneficial for small sample sizes because it facilitates maintaining a manageable indicator-to-sample size ratio (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998; Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994), adequately representing latent constructs (Hagtvet & Nasser, 2004), having higher reliabilities than single items, and better approximating a normal distribution on continuous variables (Bentler & Chou, 1987).

Results indicated that this initial model generally fit the data well ($\chi^2(45) = 103.56, p \leq .001$; CFI = .97; NNFI = .96; RMSEA = .08). I compared this fully mediated model with a partially mediated model which included direct paths from active-constructive responses to both thriving and prosocial intentions. This model also fit the data well ($\chi^2(43) = 84.55, p \leq .001$; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .05), and a chi-square test revealed that this alternative model is a significantly better fit with the data alternative ($\Delta \chi^2(2) = 19.01, p \leq .001$). Therefore, I retained the partially-mediated model. Table 2 presents the standardized path estimates and fit statistics for both models.

In support of Hypothesis 2, perceived active-constructive responses from coworkers have a significant, positive relationship with relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .62, p \leq .001$). Hypotheses 4b and 5b, respectively, posited that relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between active-constructive responses and both thriving and prosocial behavior. Given that I hypothesized multiple mediators, relationship satisfaction should only partially mediate the

TABLE 2
Study 1: LISREL Model Estimates

Paths	Hypothesized Model	Partially Mediated Model
<i>Controls</i>		
Active-destructive to Relationship satisfaction	-.07	-.01
Active-destructive to Thriving	-.07	.00
Active-destructive to Prosocial intentions	-.13	.00
<i>Independent variable</i>		
Active-constructive to Relationship satisfaction	.52***	.62***
Active-constructive to Thriving		.30*
Active-constructive to Prosocial intentions		.49**
<i>Mediator</i>		
Relationship satisfaction to Thriving	.66***	.48***
Relationship satisfaction to Prosocial intentions	.50***	.24*
CFI	.97	.98
NNFI	.96	.97
RMSEA	.08	.07
χ^2	103.56	84.55
df	45	43
$\Delta \chi^2$ (df)		19.01*** (2)

* $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$
 *** $p < .001$

relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Consistent with these predictions, the paths from relationship satisfaction to thriving is positive and significant ($\beta = .66$, $p \leq .001$), as is the path from relationship satisfaction to prosocial intentions ($\beta = .50$, $p \leq .01$). The paths from active-constructive responses to thriving ($\beta = .30$, $p \leq .05$) and prosocial intentions are also both positive and significant ($\beta = .49$, $p \leq .01$). Active-destructive responses did not have significant relationships with relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.01$, $p > .05$), thriving ($\beta = .0$, $p > .05$), or prosocial intentions ($\beta = .00$, $p > .05$). Taken together, these results provide partial support for a model in which perceived active-constructive responses positively influence sharers' sense of thriving and their prosocial behavior.

BRIEF DISCUSSION OF STUDY 1 AND INTRODUCTION TO STUDY 2

Study 1 extended the findings of the Pilot Study in multiple ways. First, it conceptually replicated the findings of the first Pilot Study by asking participants about a specific instance of capitalization as opposed to capitalization in general. Second, it broadened the potential scope of positive events and experiences that may be shared at work from positive work-related news to good news of any kind. Third, it provided participants an opportunity to be more specific about how many people they shared good news with at work, the categories of people they shared the news with, and the modes of communication through which respondents made others aware of their positive events and experiences. In addition to this purely descriptive information about capitalization practices, Study 1 also included data on perceived active-constructive responses and thriving with which to test the general model in which active-constructive responses positively relate to employee well-being while controlling for active-destructive responses. The non-significant effects of passive-constructive responses also provide evidence that not all constructive responses have the same beneficial impacts.

Overall, the results of Study 1 support the initial evidence in the Pilot Study that sharing good news at work is a common phenomenon. The vast majority of respondents indicated that the last time they had good news they shared it with others at work. In fact, just less than three-quarters of the sample reported sharing their good news with at least two people, and a significant percent made the disclosure to 20 people or more. Almost everyone who shared did so with coworkers, and capitalization attempts with supervisors were also common. Additionally, face-to-face capitalization was much more common than electronic methods. Together, the Pilot Study and Study 1 provide empirical evidence that interpersonal capitalization in the workplace is widespread. Study 1 also revealed that participants' relationship satisfaction partially mediates

the relationship between perceived active-constructive responses from coworkers and both thriving and prosocial intentions. Study 2 extends these findings by testing the full hypothesized mediated model with multi-source data to examine the multiple mechanisms by which enthusiastically positive responses to good news shared at work relates to sharers' sense of thriving and their actual prosocial behavior.

STUDY 2

Participants

Of the 339 focal participants in Study 2, 54.6% were female, and 93.2% were employed full-time. Similar to the samples from the Pilot Study and Study 1, the participants represented a variety of industries including, manufacturing, finance, health care and social service, education, and professional, scientific or technical services. Their organizational tenure ranged from less than a year to more than 25 years, with an average of 3.38 years. They also ranged in age from 19 to 69, with an average age of 43.57 years. In terms of race, 76.7% were White, 17.6% Asian, 3.3% Hispanic, and 2.4% African American, Native American or "Other."

Of the 316 supervisors who participated in this study, 56% were female, and 96.3% were employed full-time. They ranged in age from 22 to 73 years old, with an average age of 49.20 years. Forty-three percent of the supervisors had worked with the focal person for one to five years, 19.5% for 6-10 years, 17.6% for less than a year, 8% for 11-15 years, 7% for 16-20 years, 3.2% for 21-25 years, and 1.6% for more than 25 years. In terms of race, 84.5% were White, 10.6% Asian, 2.2% Hispanic, 1.3% African American, and 1.3% Native American or "Other".

Method

To recruit participants, I used a snowball sampling procedure used in prior research (e.g., Mayer, Thau, Workman, Van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2012). In exchange for partial course credit,

undergraduates enrolled in an introductory management course at a large mid-western university had the opportunity to recruit one focal individual working full time as well as that person's supervisor. Individuals who gave permission to provide their names and email addresses received emails with links to an online survey. Focal employees received one version of the survey through which they were asked to reflect on the way in which a specified coworker usually responds when they (i.e., the focal employees) share their good news at work. They also rated their own felt worth, relationship satisfaction, positive affect at work, and thriving. Supervisors received a separate version of the survey to rate the focal employees' prosocial behavior. Each dyad received a unique identification code to enable matched data while maintaining participant anonymity.

Measures

Unless otherwise stated, participants rated each item on a Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (see Appendix B for complete survey).

Active-constructive response. This measure was the same as that used in the Pilot Study and Study 1 ($\alpha = .75$).

Felt worth. I measured felt worth with four items: "I feel valued at work," "I feel like I am an important person at work," "I feel like I have the respect of others at work," and "I feel needed at work" ($\alpha = .89$).

Relationship satisfaction. I used the same five-item measures of relationship satisfaction ($\alpha = .88$) as in Study 1.

Positive affect. To assess positive affect, I utilized three items from PANAS-X (Watson & Clark, 1999), including "happy" and "cheerful" ($\alpha = .88$).

Thriving. I used the same five-item measures of vitality ($\alpha = .90$) and learning ($\alpha = .90$) as in Study 1.

Prosocial behavior. To assess prosocial behavior, I utilized the eight-item measure Lee and Allen (2002) developed to assess interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Sample items include, “willingly gives his/her time to help others who have work-related problems” and “assists others with their duties” ($\alpha = .89$).

Controls. I included perceived passive-active, active-destructive, and passive-destructive responses to capitalization attempts to control for the possibility that these other responses may influence the mediator and dependent variables. I used the same subscales from the PCRA Scale (Gable et al., 2004) used in Pilot Study 1 to assess perceived individually perceived passive-constructive ($\alpha = .89$), active-destructive ($\alpha = .90$), and passive-destructive ($\alpha = .75$) responses to capitalization attempts.

STUDY 2 RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, and internal reliabilities for Study 1 variables, as well as the correlations among them, appear in Table 3.

Measurement Model

Prior to testing my hypotheses, I conducted a CFA with the items rated by the focal employee. The initial measurement model had 10 latent factors (i.e., active-constructive response, passive-constructive response, active-destructive response, passive-destructive response, felt worth, relationship satisfaction, and thriving as a second-order construct comprised of vitality and learning) and 34 indicators (i.e., three for each type of capitalization response, four for felt worth, five for relationship satisfaction, three for positive affect, five for learning,

TABLE 3
Descriptives and Correlations for Study 2 Variables^a

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Passive-constructive	4.12	1.37	(.89)					
2. Active-destructive	2.77	1.28	.39***	(.90)				
3. Passive-destructive	2.35	1.20	.22***	.55***	(.89)			
4. Active-constructive	5.20	1.02	-.08	-.28***	-.44***	(.75)		
5. Felt worth	5.94	.85	-.01	-.14**	-.19***	.20***	(.89)	
6. Relationship satisfaction	5.82	.75	.05	-.06	-.13*	.28***	.50***	(.88)
7. Positive affect	5.34	1.12	.10 [†]	.00	-.09 [†]	.22***	.48***	.51***
8. Vitality	5.66	1.01	-.03	-.18***	-.23***	.20***	.51***	.47***
9. Learning	5.78	.91	.08	-.09 [†]	-.13*	.21***	.47***	.35***
10. OCBI (S) ^b	5.91	.85	-.02	-.14*	-.10	.15*	.12 [†]	.20**

^a $n = 237-351$. P-values are based on two-tailed tests.

^b S = Supervisor rated variable.

[†] $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

TABLE 3 CONTINUED
Descriptives and Correlations for Study 2 Variables

Variable	7	8	9	10
1. Passive-constructive				
2. Active-destructive				
3. Passive-destructive				
4. Active-constructive				
5. Felt worth				
6. Relationship satisfaction				
7. Positive affect	(.93)			
8. Vitality	.63***	(.90)		
9. Learning	.44***	.56***	(.87)	
10. OCBI (S)	.23***	.16*	.12 [†]	(.91)

and five for vitality). The resulting model had an adequate fit ($\chi^2(499) = 1163.49, p \leq .001$; CFI = .96; NNFI = .96; RMSEA = .06). I compared this model with an alternative eight-factor model in which all of the constructive items loaded onto a single factor and all destructive items loaded onto a single factor ($\chi^2(512) = 2344.71, p \leq .001$; CFI = .91; NNFI = .90; RMSEA = .10), and a seven-factor model in which all capitalization response items loaded onto a single factor ($\chi^2(517) = 2596.61, p \leq .001$; CFI = .90; NNFI = .89; RMSEA = .11). Chi-square tests revealed that the original model was superior to each of these three alternatives ($\Delta \chi^2(13) = 1181.22, p \leq .001$; $\Delta \chi^2(18) = 1433.12, p \leq .001$). As in Study 1, to assess whether common method variance posed a significant threat to the interpretation of findings, I also compared the original model to a one-factor model in which all items loaded onto a single factor ($\chi^2(377) = 6557.55, p \leq .001$; CFI = .67; NNFI = .65; RMSEA = .22). Chi-square tests revealed that the original model was also

superior to the one-factor alternative model ($\Delta \chi^2 (122) = 5394.06, p \leq .001$; $\Delta \chi^2 (36) = 8124.63, p \leq .001$), suggesting that common method bias did not pose a significant threat.

Structural Model

Having confirmed that the measurement model fit the data adequately, I tested my hypothesized structural model². First, I created parcels for each measure with every other item in each scale. This resulted in one parcel of two items and one item each for each of the capitalization responses and for positive affect; two two-item parcels for felt worth; two parcels (i.e., one with three items and one with two) for relationship satisfaction, vitality, and learning, and three parcels (i.e., two two-item parcels and one three-item parcel) for supervisor rated OCB. Results indicated that this model fit the data well ($\chi^2(155) = 280.71, p \leq .001$; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .05). I also compared this model with a partial mediated model including paths from active-constructive response to thriving and OCB. This model also fit the data well ($\chi^2(153) = 280.71, p \leq .001$; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .05), but it did not provide a significantly better fit with the data ($\Delta \chi^2 (2) = .28, p \leq .001$). Therefore, I retained the fully mediated model (see Figure 3) for parsimony. Table 4 presents the standardized path coefficients and the fit statistics for both models. As detailed in Table 4, none of the paths from the control variables to mediators or dependent variables were significant.

Hypotheses 1, 4a, and 5a concerned felt worth. Supporting Hypotheses 1 and 4a, the paths from active-constructive responses to felt worth ($\beta = .19, p \leq .01$) and from felt worth to thriving ($\beta = .36, p \leq .001$) were positive and significant. In contrast, Hypothesis 5a was not supported; the path from felt worth to OCBI was not significant ($\beta = -.04, p > .05$). These results suggest that felt worth mediates the relationship between active-constructive responses and

² To deal with missing data, I used pairwise deletion. The pattern of results was the same with listwise deletion with the exception of the path from relationship satisfaction to OCB, for which the p value fell just below significance.

TABLE 4
Study 2: LISREL Model Estimates^a

Paths	Hypothesized Model	Partially Mediated Model
<i>Controls</i>		
Passive-constructive to Felt worth	.05	.05
Passive-constructive to Relationship satisfaction	.06	.06
Passive-constructive to Positive Affect	.09	.09
Passive-constructive to Thriving	.01	.01
Passive-constructive to OCBI	.00	.00
Active-destructive to Felt worth	-.06	-.06
Active-destructive to Relationship satisfaction	.02	.02
Active-destructive to Positive affect	.00	.00
Active-destructive to Thriving	-.10	-.10
Active-destructive to OCBI	-.12	-.12
Passive-destructive to Felt worth	-.09	-.09
Passive-destructive to Relationship satisfaction	-.02	-.02
Passive-destructive to Positive affect	-.05	-.05
Passive-destructive to Thriving	-.04	-.06
Passive-destructive to OCBI	-.01	-.01
<i>Independent variables</i>		
Active-constructive to Felt worth	.19**	.19**
Active-constructive to Relationship satisfaction	.31***	.31***
Active-constructive to Positive affect	.21**	.21**
Active-constructive to Thriving		-.04
Active-constructive to OCBI		.00
<i>Mediators</i>		
Felt worth to Thriving	.36***	.36***
Felt worth to OCBI	-.04	-.04
Relationship satisfaction to Thriving	.08	.09
Relationship satisfaction to OCBI	.14 [†]	.14 [†]
Positive affect to Thriving	.49***	.50***
Positive affect to OCBI	.17*	.17**
CFI	.98	.98
NNFI	.97	.97
RMSEA	.05	.05
χ^2	280.71	280.43
df	155	153
$\Delta \chi^2$ (df)		.28 (2)

^a P-values are based on two-tailed tests.

[†] $p < .10$

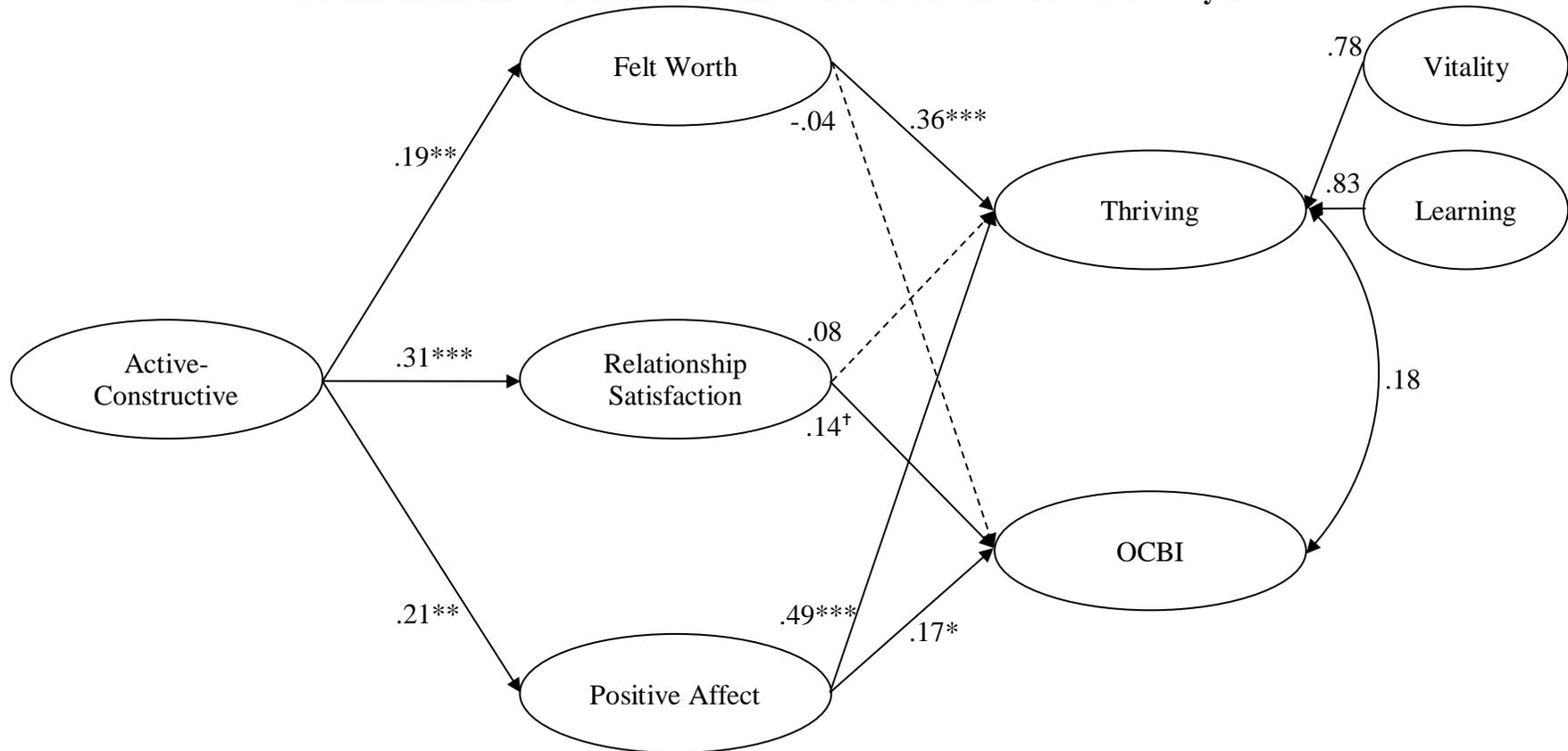
* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

FIGURE 3

Maximum-likelihood Parameter Estimates for the Modified Model of Study 2^{ab}



^a Values are standardized path coefficients. Dashed lines are non-significant. P-values are based on two-tailed tests.

^b The paths from the control variables to mediator variables and dependent variables are not shown as they are non-significant.

[†] $p < .10$

^{*} $p < .05$

^{**} $p < .01$

^{***} $p < .001$

sharers' sense of thriving but not the relationship between active-constructive responses and prosocial behavior.

Hypotheses 2, 4b, and 5b focused on relationship satisfaction. Similar to felt worth, only one of the two mediating hypotheses was supported. The path from active-constructive responses to relationship satisfaction was positive and significant ($\beta = .31, p \leq .001$) and the path from relationship satisfaction to OCBI was positive and marginally significant ($\beta = .14, p \leq .10$). These results support Hypothesis 2 and provide some support for Hypothesis 5b. However, Hypothesis 4b was not supported because relationship satisfaction was not significantly related to thriving ($\beta = .08, p > .05$).

The last set of hypotheses concerned positive affect. Hypotheses 3, 4c, and 5c all received support. Active-constructive responses were significantly and positively related to positive affect ($\beta = .21, p \leq .01$). In turn, positive affect was positively and significantly related to both thriving ($\beta = .31, p \leq .001$) and OCBI ($\beta = .31, p \leq .001$), suggesting that positive affect plays a mediating role in the relationship between active-constructive responses and sharers' thriving and prosocial behavior.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I presented a pilot study and two field-based survey studies to explore whether and how people share good news at work and to test my proposed mediated model. Specifically, I drew on and integrated multiple streams of literature, including the social valuing perspective, the broaden-and-build model, and the intragroup status model, to extend the work on interpersonal capitalization by developing a theory of how and why certain positive responses to shared good news are associated with employee thriving and prosocial behavior. The pilot study showed that most people are likely to share work-related good news with their coworkers, and

consistent with prior work on interpersonal capitalization, perceived active-constructive responses are negatively correlated with perceived passive-constructive, active-destructive, and passive-destructive responses. In Study 1, participants reflected on the most recent time they had good news, work-related or otherwise. The vast majority shared this news with at least one other person at work, and almost all of these people shared with coworkers. Study 1 also presented initial evidence for the hypothesized model, revealing that, controlling for active-destructive responses, active-constructive responses are positively associated with relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction is positively associated with both thriving and prosocial intentions. In Study 2, I tested the full hypothesized model, controlling for passive-constructive, active-destructive, and passive-destructive responses and using multi-source data (e.g., supervisor ratings of OCBI) for prosocial behavior. In the fully mediated, I find that active-constructive responses are positively and significantly associated with felt worth, relationship satisfaction, and positive affect at work. Although positive affect is positively related to both thriving and OCBI, felt worth is positively related only to thriving, and relationship satisfaction is positively related only to OCBI. These results have a number of implications for theory, which I discuss below.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

There are three main contributions of this work to the literature on interpersonal capitalization. First, in contrast to prior research that suggested people do not share good news at work (Gable et al., 2004; Rimé et al., 1991), the present studies reveal that interpersonal capitalization is a prevalent workplace phenomenon. Not only do most people share good news at work, but also, most people share their good news with multiple people at work. The most common sharing partners are coworkers. Second, perceived responses from one or more people

to a single episode of news or of a single person to multiple episodes of news sharing impact sharers' intrapersonal states and interpersonal behavior in ways that are personally and organizationally beneficial. Enthusiastically positive responses to shared good news are positively associated with the extent to which sharers feel that they are energized and learning at work as well as the extent to which sharers engage in prosocial behavior. Third, this work provides evidence that the relationship of active-constructive capitalization responses to work-related outcomes functions through multiple mechanisms. Specifically, sharers may thrive more and engage in more prosocial behavior because of how enthusiastically positive responses make them experience themselves, their relationships, and their emotions at work.

It is notable that in Study 2 only positive affect at work was significantly related to both thriving and OCBI. Relationship satisfaction, which was positively related to thriving in Study 1, had a non-significant path to thriving in Study 2. One possible explanation is that felt worth and positive affect capture some of the variance of relationship satisfaction that relates to thriving. Controlling for the positive emotions that come from have positive relationships with others at work and for the felt worth developed through HQCs, relationship satisfaction alone may not contribute to individuals' sense of vitality or development at work. Alternatively, the mixed findings may suggest a moderating factor. For instance, the relationship between relationship satisfaction and thriving may vary based on task interdependence, the degree to which team members must depend upon one another to perform their tasks in route to goal accomplishment (Saavedra, Earley, & Van Dyne, 1993). At high levels of task interdependence, relationship satisfaction may be more important for thriving because relationships are a more salient and powerful context for performing tasks.

These results also speak to the social valuing perspective. As the first quantitative test of the social valuing perspective, it is noteworthy that the results are consistent with Dutton et al.'s (2012) assertion that unique processes are related to being valued and devalued and that actions that recognize someone's presence or treat someone as a group member are affirming. Specifically, in this study, I find that only active-constructive responses, but not the passive or destructive responses are related to felt worth. This provides evidence that not all seemingly positive actions are affirming. While not harmful, responses that are "silently supportive" or otherwise positive in a low intensity way not only fail to affirm others, but they also fail to improve relationship satisfaction or significantly generate positive emotions. It may be that such responses seem perfunctory and are not perceived as quite thoughtful or genuine. Feeling understood, validated, and cared for would likely be hindered by a lack of these qualities in a response, however well meant. Therefore, it is important for individuals to be active responders. In organizations and teams, practices to share and celebrate good news may fall flat if the response becomes too routine and de-individualized. To benefit more fully from such practices, individuals (i.e., supervisors, coworkers) should consider following up personally with those whose good news was shared to inquire about, congratulate, or otherwise reinforce the positive nature of the news.

Building on the idea of capitalization attempts as bids for connection (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001), it is also worth noting that a person can initiate interactions that present opportunities to be affirmed by others. Individuals do not have to wait passively for someone to include them in the group, affirm their presence, or provide positive feedback. Instead, someone can reach out to others in ways that implicitly request another person to acknowledge and validate herself, her news, and potentially the relationship she has with the sharing partners she

chooses. As I argue earlier, social valuing cues may be especially salient in these cases when a person initiates the interaction and reveals details about who she is and what she values.

This research also contributes to the literature on thriving. As discussed, scholars (Spreitzer et al. 2005) have theorized that relational resources are one type of resource that fosters the dual experience of learning and vitality. However, Niessen and colleagues (Niessen, Sonnentag, & Sach, 2012) conducted a diary study of thriving at work, operationalized relational resources as social support, and concluded from the results that this was not the case. The present studies suggest that this conclusion was premature and needs refinement. The discrepancy between the evidence with regard to relational resources in the present work and in Niessen et al.'s (2003) may be due to the way in which relational resources were operationalized and the way in which relational resources were fostered. Niessen et al. (2003) examined thriving in connection with a form of relational resource born out of a likely negative situation (i.e., some type of problem or need). In contrast, the present work focuses on relational resources, felt worth and relationship satisfaction, that flow from positive situations (i.e., good news, active-constructive responses). Thus, it may be the case that relational resources generated in positive situations, but not those created in response to negative situations, that facilitate thriving. This is consistent with prior research that asserts capitalization is distinct from social support in that it operates to foster the growth of positive outcomes as opposed to alleviating negative outcomes (Gable & Reis, 2010).

Limitations

One limitation of the surveys presented is that they depend on participants' ability to recall their experiences with responses to their capitalization attempts at work. Responses were also assessed by the sharer and may not accurately reflect responders' behaviors. However,

Gable and Reis (2004) report that although diary studies can minimize recall biases, studies that have assessed with global retrospective measures have generated results very similar to those found in daily diary studies. Furthermore, Reis et al. (2010) found that perceived responses are relatively accurate as compared with ratings by independent coders.

A second limitation is that the cross-sectional design of the studies presented does not enable inferences to be made regarding causality. It is possible that people respond more positively to the good news of sharers who are considered particularly important, valued group members or are known to be especially competent or helpful. It is also conceivable that sharers feel worthwhile at work because they are proficient at their jobs and assist others when they need it. Future research might take a longitudinal approach to test to enable causality inferences and assess whether there are feedback loops.

Third, the studies in this paper may suffer from common method bias, because I assessed all of the variables via survey data (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Self-report data are, however, justified given the nature of most of the variable being investigated (Spector, 1994). Given that the focus is on the effects of perceived, rather than actual, responses to shared good news, only self-report data could be used. This type of data is also most appropriate for assessing felt worth, relationship satisfaction, positive affect, and thriving because internal states such as these are most accurately reported by the individuals experiencing them. To minimize the potential of common method bias, I collected ratings of sharers' prosocial behavior from their supervisors in Study 2 (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although supervisor ratings are preferable to self-reports for these types of variables, meta-analytic evidence shows that subjective performance ratings cannot be equated with objective performance (Bommer, Johnson, Rich, Podsakoff, &

MacKenzie, 1995). Therefore, those who wish to replicate this study should consider using objective measures of extra-role performance or prosocial behavior.

Finally, it should be noted that I used pairwise deletion to account for missing data. The limitation of this method is that it can lead to different sample sizes for correlations and related statistics (Enders & Bandalos, 2001b: 43; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996)(Enders & Bandalos, 2001b: 43; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). Research on the use of pairwise deletion has yielded mixed findings with regard to the bias of parameter estimates, and the results of a recent Monte Carlo simulation suggests that the use of full information maximum likelihood (FIML) may be preferable based on its efficiency, unbiased estimates, low proportion of convergence failures, and Type 1 error rates (Enders & Bandalos, 2001a).

Future Research

This research illuminates a number of promising avenues for future research. In light of substantial empirical findings that negative interpersonal behavior in the workplace has negative consequences, it is surprising that active-destructive and passive-destructive responses are not significantly related to the intrapersonal states and interpersonal behaviors of sharers. The positive event or experience that serves as good news and the positive emotions it generates may serve to buffer sharers from undesirable responses. The “undoing hypothesis” (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998) states that positive emotions help people correct or undo the aftereffects of negative emotions because of the ways in which they broaden thought-action-repertoires (Fredrickson, 1998). In the same way, positive emotions may prevent negative emotions. Future studies may explore whether and how good news sharers rationalize destructive responses. Researchers might also examine other types of effects of destructive responses on sharers. For

example, negative responses might impact the likelihood of a sharer to tell good news or bad news to the same responder or others.

In keeping with the notion of testing the relative impacts of positive and negative reactions, future research might examine what happens when someone receives constructive reactions from some and destructive reactions from others. Study 1 shows that most people who share good news at work do so with more than one person, so researchers could more fully specify models of the effects of capitalization responses by examining the dispersion of all of the responses a sharer receives. Drawing on DeRue and colleagues (DeRue, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, & Feltz, 2010), researchers could explore not only the magnitude of responses (i.e., how constructive or destructive) but also the impact of the four potential patterns of dispersion: shared (e.g., all the same), minority response (e.g., equal except for opposite response), bimodal, and fragmented (e.g., all different responses). Future research might reveal whether constructive-responses still benefit the sharer even if they are the minority response or part of a bimodal dispersion. Alternatively, one could ask whether one very negative response among a number of other very positive responses would be powerful enough to extinguish the latter's positive impacts.

Future research should also account for the social context of capitalization at work. One unique aspect of work relationships is that they occur within a web of other dyadic relationships, and through these webs, accounts of relational events spread, distributing and magnifying their impacts (Waldron, 2000). This means that there is ample opportunity for third parties to become aware of and be impacted by episodes of capitalization attempts and responses.

Witnessing or hearing about an active-constructive response to a coworker may have impacts on third parties similar to those on the sharer. On the flip side, third parties not buffered by the

positive emotions surrounding the good news event may not be shielded from negative consequences of destructive responses. Much like third parties to injustice, third parties to destructive responses may have negative emotional reactions and seek some type of retribution against the responder (O'Reilly & Aquino, 2011; Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010).

Finally, having established empirical evidence that interpersonal capitalization occurs commonly at work and that active-constructive responses matter in organizationally relevant ways, it is worthwhile to explore the earliest parts of the capitalization process (i.e., why and how individuals share good news). Individuals have choices about whether to share their news, with whom, how, and when. If someone with good news chooses not to share it, the benefits of the capitalization process revealed in this paper cannot be realized. There may also be other ramifications. Drawing on the notion of disenfranchised grief, “grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported” (Doka, 1989: 4: 4), there may be instances in which individuals have joy that they feel they cannot openly acknowledge or celebrate at work. Such an experience may cause someone with good news to feel alienated from the group or organization. For those who do share their news, the choice of sharing partners and the way in which they frame the news may impact the responses they receive. Learning more about how to elicit active-constructive responses as opposed to passive or destructive responses would have consequences for individuals as well as for the types of routines and practices organizations could develop to celebrate their members’ good news.

Conclusion

As coworkers continue to become more salient and influential in organizational members’ lives (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008), it is increasingly important for scholars to

understand how seemingly small, everyday coworker interactions influence individuals in ways that contribute to intrapersonal states and interpersonal behaviors that are desirable ends in and of themselves and are also organizationally beneficial. Extending the work on interpersonal capitalization by integrating it with the social valuing perspective, the broaden-and-build model, and the literature on thriving, these studies show that one way coworkers influence others' prosocial behavior and whether they feel like they are energized and developing at work is by responding to their good news in an enthusiastic, positive manner. Additionally, the results reveal that these relationships function through multiple mechanisms: how sharers experience themselves (felt worth), their relationships (relationship satisfaction), and their emotions (positive affect) at work. I hope that having demonstrated that sharing good news is a common workplace phenomenon and that responses to good news matter in a variety of ways for sharers, and indirectly for organizations, other scholars will be inspired to continue exploring how and why sharing good news matters at work.

CHAPTER 3

SHARING AND WITHHOLDING GOOD AND BAD NEWS AT WORK

“Someone to tell it to is one of the fundamental needs of human beings.” Miles Franklin

In the course of everyday life, individuals have a wide array of positive and negative experiences. There are simple daily pleasures like receiving a nice compliment or enjoying a tasty meal, and there are everyday annoyances like getting stuck in traffic on the way to work or dealing with a paper jam when you are in a rush to print a document. Other events are less common and more consequential like landing a dream job or losing a loved one. People tend to think about and refer to positive and negative events and experiences of varying magnitudes in terms of the categories of good and bad news. For instance, individuals often use the good news/bad news frame when telling others about situations that have an up and down side (Maynard, 2003), and they might ask others if they prefer the good news or the bad news first.

Meaning is found not only in the events or experiences themselves, but also in sharing with others. Illustrating this point, one man responded to a newspaper query about when you know you are in love by reporting that he knew he loved his fiancé when he realized that she “was the first person I wanted to share good news with and bad news, too” (as cited in Maynard, 2003: 21). Ample empirical evidence demonstrates when an event or experience is associated with any type of emotion, individuals of both genders, all levels of education, and different

cultures tell others about them (for a review, see Rimé, 2009). Furthermore, individuals are just as likely to talk to others about their positive events as they are their negative events (Rimé, 2007). Initial conversations usually include “giving the other person a full account of what happened,” “telling the other person what the event had meant”, and “telling the other person how the subject had felt” (Rimé et al., 1991).

Research suggests that there are a variety of important outcomes for withholding and sharing good and bad news with others. Keeping an important emotional memory secret is associated with poorer health and lower psychological well-being (Finkenauer & Rimé, 1998a), and those who do not share personal information about themselves at work may be perceived by others as aloof or antisocial (Chrobot-Mason, Button, & DiClementi, 2001). Conversely, the mere act of telling another person about a positive event or experience is associated with more positive emotions and greater life satisfaction (Gable et al., 2004). Work by Gable and colleagues also shows that people feel more accepted by others on days when they share a positive event, and they feel more connected to their partner when they share a positive event with him or her (Gable, 2009; Gable & Maisel, 2008). Sharing news also gives others an opportunity to respond. When others respond in an enthusiastically positive manner to good news shared at work, sharers have a greater sense that they are thriving at work, and they engage in more prosocial behavior (Chapter 2).

Sharing bad news, in contrast, provides others with a chance to offer comfort and assistance. For instance, compassionate action, efforts to reduce another’s suffering, will not occur if suffering is not first noticed, and as Dutton, Workman, and Hardin (2014:) imply, it is easier to become aware of it if sufferers express what is happening and how it makes them feel. Similar to enthusiastically positive responses to good news, compassionate responses to negative

events contribute to a sense of being valued at work because they signal dignity and respect (Clark, 1987; Dutton et al., 2015; Frost, Dutton, Worline, & Wilson, 2000). Additionally, there is evidence that compassion at work generates positive emotions (e.g., gratitude), reduces anxiety, and increases the extent to which sufferers feel attached and committed to their organization (Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Lilius et al., 2008). Although others reactions may be undesirable or counterproductive, responses to good news usually amplify sharers' positive emotions, and responses to bad news usually mitigate negative emotions (Hadley, 2014).

Despite the positive dynamics that can unfold when both good and bad news are shared, work exploring why people share and withhold good and bad news is both limited and fragmented across several research areas. The act of telling another person about the occurrence of a positive event or experience (i.e., sharing good news) and thereby deriving additional benefit from it is defined as interpersonal capitalization. Although some studies on this topic include telling others about negative events (Gable et al., 2006; Gable et al., 2004; Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008), the primary focus is on the sharing of good news. Specifically, work in this area examines the effects of others' responses to shared good news on the sharer and is largely silent about why or with whom people tell others about their positive events or experiences. Self-disclosure (Jourard, 1958, 1959; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958) and the social sharing of emotion (Rime, Mesquita, Philippot, & Boca, 1991) are broader concepts than good and bad news, but research on these topics provides clues about why and with whom people share information about themselves and their emotional experiences. Finally, others study "good news" and "bad news" in regard to how it is communicated. Maynard (1997, 1998, 2003), working in the field of conversation analysis, examines conversational patterns and the ways in which both the person sharing news and the person receiving news interact during news exchanges. A different take on

conversations about “bad news” and “good news” is research on the MUM effect, which refers to the fact that people are more hesitant to tell others “bad news” than “good news” (Rosen & Tesser, 1970, 1972; Tesser, Rosen, & Batchelo.T, 1972; Tesser, Rosen, & Tesser, 1971). However, it is important to note that this work conceptualizes and operationalizes “bad news” and “good news” in terms of delivering news to the person it is about as opposed to sharing one’s own news with others (e.g., providing test feedback; Dibble & Levine, 2010).

Looking across these streams of research, it is clear that although laypeople and academics alike think about sharing positive and negative events as news, there is much to learn about what news encompasses and what motivates or deters people from sharing it at work. Thus, this study seeks to address these limitations by exploring two research questions: 1) What are the domains and dimensions of news people could choose to share or withhold at work? and 2) Why do people share and withhold their news at work? I address these questions through a detailed analysis of semi-structured interviews with 42 hospital employees in different occupational roles. In so doing, I create a descriptive account of what people think of as news and inductively build theory that explains why and with whom people share or withhold good and bad news at work.

DELINEATING NEWS AS A CONSTRUCT

As a conceptual starting point, it is useful to integrate relevant literatures to develop an initial understanding of news and news sharing as construct. Interpersonal capitalization, as defined above, suggests that news is the occurrence of a personal event or experience, and news sharing is the act of informing another person about the event. The definition is limited to positive events and experiences and also specifies that additional benefit from the original event is derived through the act of sharing (Gable et al., 2004; Langston, 1994). While this seems to

imply a self-interested act, it is unclear whether deriving benefit is a conscious goal or for whom the benefit is derived. Maynard (1997, 2003) uses the terms “good news” and “bad news” and enriches the emerging definitions of news in key ways. Similar to the way in which Weiss and Cropanzano (1994: 31) define events as “a change in circumstances, a change in what one is currently experiencing,” Maynard describes news as a momentary or prolonged interruption in everyday life that evokes emotional reactions. He explains that news is the participant’s own phenomenon, so news may be primarily about the sharer, the news recipient (or sharing partner), or a third party. What constitutes news is subjective. In the course of news sharing conversations, the participants work together to establish a mutual sense of whether something is newsworthy and how positive or negative it is in terms of any kind of state, process, or outcome associated with the event or experience (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). Taken together, I define news as an event or experience a person perceives as having particular positive or negative qualities and being self-relevant (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and potentially interesting, important, or valuable enough to warrant sharing (Gable et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2011; Langston, 1994).

Shared news refers to news events or experiences that have become news stories. Stories simply represent “someone telling someone else that something happened” (Smith, 1981: 182). In sharing news, or telling a news story, individuals relay some details about the event or experience and communicate the positive or negative value they attach to it. Doing so conveys information about the sharers’ qualities, opinions, goals, values, needs, and emotions (Gable & Reis, 2010). Thus, shared news is a particular type of self-disclosure (i.e., act of divulging personal information about oneself to another; Jourard, 1958, 1959; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958) involving the social sharing of emotion (Rime et al., 1991). Although Derlega, Anderson, Winstead, and Greene (2011) conducted a study exploring what types of positive events college

students disclose to their parents, best friends, and romantic partners, scholars have yet to examine the range of positive and negative events that working adults consider sharing and withholding in the workplace.

FACTORS IN SHARING AND WITHHOLDING

Existing research suggests there are two general categories of factors that influence sharing and withholding of news at work: emotion-related factors and impression management. The overall picture of sharing and withholding from these perspectives is largely self-interested. In other words, individuals' concern for their own interests and well-being largely drives their choices about what to reveal to or conceal from others.

Emotion-related Factors

The literature on the social sharing of emotion offers some insights on whether or not news sharing occurs. First, there is preliminary evidence that people are less likely to share events and experiences associated with shame and guilt (Finkenauer & Rimé, 1998b). This is likely to occur because these feelings are associated with the desire to hide or disappear (Lewis, 1971). Second, sharing can be hindered to the extent that the social environment is not receptive and there is a stigma, or other social constraints, associated with a particular event (Pennebaker & Harber, 1993; Rimé, 2009). This contributes to the phenomenon of disenfranchised grief, “grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported” (Doka, 1989: 4). For example, women who have experienced perinatal loss often remain silent about the experience, particularly in the workplace (Hazen, 2003).

In addition to these explanations for the withholding of certain negative experiences, there is an emotion-related factor for sharing and withholding both good and bad news: emotion

regulation. Bryant (1989) suggests that people seek to alleviate negative outcomes and savor positive outcomes, and this receives some support in a qualitative study about the sharing of positive and negative work events by Hadley (2014). Hadley found that 70% of the negative work events shared resulted in mitigation of negative emotions, and 95% of sharing episodes involving positive work events resulted in reinforcement or amplification of positive emotions. For both negative and positive work events, there is a risk that others' responses could have a negative emotional impact. The interview data Hadley (2014) collected suggest that this risk has a differential effect on the sharing of good and bad news. People who have experienced a negative event are motivated to feel better and are thus more willing to take the chance that sharing might make them feel worse. In contrast, those who have experienced positive events are less likely to share because they are motivated to maintain their positive emotions and avoid potential dampening by others. Participants specified that one way sharing good news might make them feel worse is if it generated envy or resentment or if others seemed to perceive it as "bragging." This is consistent with research on the tall poppy syndrome that suggests people downplay their successes and privileges in order to prevent stirring envy and jealousy in others (Feather, 1989, 1991; Mouly & Sankaran, 2002).

Impression Management

Impression management, or more broadly, impression regulation, refers to the process by which people attempt to influence, either consciously or unconsciously regulate the information they present to audiences in an attempt to influence how others perceive them (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). In particular, individuals commonly engage in impression management in an effort to be seen as dangerous or threatening, likeable, dedicated, competent, or in need of assistance (Jones & Pittman, 1982). One of the ways people

may try to do so is by filtering or selectively sharing and withholding personal information. For instance, Episcopal priests interviewed by Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep (2006) revealed that they withhold and actively conceal aspects of their private lives out of a concern that personal information might undermine their professional persona by calling into question their competence or suitability for the profession. Along similar lines, Diefendorff and Greguras (2008) found that employees sometimes mask or downplay their happiness while interacting with colleagues to avoid being seen as unprofessional. Additionally, individuals managing impressions to be likable may be dissuaded from sharing bad news because it is perceived as poor etiquette to try to solicit too much sympathy from others (Clark, 2007).

Individuals may also attempt to manage others' impressions of their status. In their recent review, Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas (2009) integrated the literatures on self-disclosure and status distance to build theory about how the status differences associated with demographic diversity may hinder or encourage the disclosure of non-task related personal information. They contend that although there is much evidence to suggest that self-disclosure is a fundamental process involved with the development and maintenance of relationships (Collins & Miller, 1994), self-disclosure has the potential to increase perceived status distance. Furthermore, they propose that individuals are aware of this and make self-disclosure choices accordingly. Specifically, Phillips et al. (2009) posit that individuals will be less likely to share status confirming information in order to prevent greater perceived status distance, and they will be more likely to share status disconfirming information so that they may reduce perceived status distance. Although status has implications for how one's contributions are evaluated and how much influence one has over group decisions, Phillips et al. (2009) stress that managing status

distance is a way that individuals may connect and form higher-quality relationships with others at work.

Across multiple streams of research, there are scattered glimpses into motives people may have for sharing or withholding information about themselves. Some of this work offers substantiating empirical evidence, and some is purely theoretical. Generally, these perspectives are self-interested and focus on how individuals can minimize negative emotions, maintain or maximize positive emotions, and manage the impressions others form about them. Although, as mentioned above, self-disclosure and the social sharing of emotion are related to news, none of this work has looked at the sharing and withholding of news per se. In what follows, I describe the methods and findings of a qualitative study designed to deepen and further clarify our understanding of how people think about news, why they are motivated to share or withhold it at work, and how they make sharing partner choices. The use of semi-structured interviews provides a broad window into this phenomenon while also affording a focus on how news sharing does or does not unfold in the context of the workplace.

METHOD

I took an inductive qualitative approach to exploring the research questions stated above for a number of reasons. First, qualitative methods are particularly well-suited to exploring the processes involved with sharing and withholding news at work because they are effective in answering the questions “what is occurring?” and “how is it occurring?” (Lee, Mitchell, & Sablinski, 1999a). Second, qualitative methods are useful for developing an understanding of “the *meaning*, for participants in the study, of the events, situations, experiences, and actions they are involved with or engage in... [where meaning is used] in a broad sense, including cognition, affect, intentions, and anything else that can be encompassed in... the ‘participants’

perspective” (Maxwell, 2005: : 22). The participants’ perspective is crucial for moving understanding past the actual events and behaviors that are occurring to the sense that participants make of what is occurring and how that sense influences their behavior (Maxwell, 2005). Third, because qualitative research allows for the study of phenomenon in its natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), it provides the opportunity to explore how participants’ meanings and actions are shaped by the context in which they act (Maxwell, 2005). In terms of news sharing at work, understanding the participants’ perspective and context will enable insight into whether and how participants withhold or share good and bad news as well as how they experience and think about these decisions and actions. Finally, the inherent openness and flexibility of a qualitative approach creates the potential to reveal unanticipated phenomena, influences, and consequences (Maxwell, 2005). This is especially useful for examining news sharing because so little is known about the choices involved, particularly in the context of the workplace.

My approach to this study is predominantly interpretivist. This approach to theory emphasizes imaginative understanding rather than deterministic, generalizable explanations, and it “assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as inextricably linked; truth as provision; and social life as processual” (Charmaz, 2010: : 127). Rather than assuming there is one truth or reality to be revealed, my focus was on learning about what participants in the study assume is real and how they construct and enact their reality. In doing so, I looked for the presence of relationships between themes as well as the particular ways they are manifested.

Setting

Heart Hospital^{3*} and Children's Hospital* are specialized care hospitals within a larger health system, University Health*, located in the Midwest. As of 2014, University Health had been ranked among U.S. News and World Report's "Best Hospitals" in overall excellence for two decades. Heart Hospital, a cardiovascular treatment and research center, and Children's Hospital, a health care center specializing in newborns, children, and pregnant women, are each nationally recognized in their own right. Each had multiple specialties nationally ranked by U.S. News and World Report. Heart Hospital staff treat more than 6,000 hospital inpatients and more than 35,000 outpatients per year. In addition, they perform hundreds of surgeries, including more than 800 vascular surgeries and more than 1,400 open-heart operations on adults and children. In 2013, Children's Hospital had over 10,000 inpatient encounters, over 5,000 inpatient surgeries, and over 6,000 outpatient surgical cases.

Although these settings are likely to represent a typical case with regard to news sharing behavior, thereby providing a view into news sharing at work that reflects the average person and situation (Miles & Huberman, 1994), it is worth noting that within the last several years both Heart Hospital and Children's Hospital moved into new, state-of-the-art buildings. According to organization leaders and those who participated in this study, these moves were associated with periods of rapid growth that caused staffing and interpersonal issues with regard to higher turnover and an influx of new hires merging with long-time employees. Throughout Heart Hospital and the particular units of Children's Hospital from which participants were drawn, there was a conscious effort on the part of organization and unit leadership to continue improving the culture to fostering a positive, respectful, collaborative environment. This goal was largely responsible for the receptivity of organizational, unit leaders, and participants to this

³ * denotes use of a pseudonym.

study exploring why and how people relate in ways that foster acknowledgement, respect, and support in the workplace.

Semi-structured Interviews: Participants and Procedures

Managers of outpatient, critical care, pre- and post-op, and surgical units aided in participant recruitment by sending an email to the employees in their units explaining and endorsing the study. The email also provided a link through which interested individuals could sign up and schedule their interviews. As an incentive, I offered a \$100 gift card through a lottery in which all participants were entered. Creating a safe, comfortable environment for participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences was critical to the success of this study in terms of both recruiting participants and conducting honest, generative interviews. Through the recruitment email and at the beginning of each interview, I informed participants that their interview would be digitally recorded and assured them that every transcript would be de-identified, and pseudonyms would be used to identify respondents in any document related to the study. The recruitment email also specified that interviews would be held face to face in a private room during work hours with supervisors' permission. Forty-two Heart Hospital and Children's Hospital employees (3 men, 39 women) participated, and they represented different levels of unit management, tenure varying from less than six months to more than two decades, and various occupational roles, such as dietician, nurse, check in clerk, and social worker (see Table 5). Pseudonym

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews because they offer a window into individuals' lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and enable integration of the multiple perspectives of Heart Hospital and Children Hospital employees in service of developing of detailed, holistic descriptions, and insight into processes (Weiss, 1994). Interviews

were generally about an hour long, although they ranged from a half hour to almost two hours. As the unit of analysis is the news event, I designed each interview to gather first-person narrative accounts of specific news events. In particular, I used maximum variation sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and asked participants to describe a) a time when they had good news and shared it at work, b) a time when they had good news and did not share it at work, c) a time when they had bad news and shared it at work, and d) a time when they had bad news and did not share it at work. After the first few interviews, I invited participants to give an example of personal news if they had provided an example of professional news and vice versa. For each example, I asked participants what the news was, why they shared or withheld it, with whom and why if it was shared, what the response was, and how the response made them feel. I also asked participants general questions about news sharing in their units including, what types of good and bad news is shared and whether there are specific sharing or responding practices. I concluded each interview by providing each participant the opportunity to share any other information he or she felt might be pertinent to the topic. Appendix 1 presents the full interview guide.

During interviews, validity depends on the trustworthiness and fullness of participants' accounts as well as the researcher's comprehension of what participants are trying to communicate (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition to providing a private interview space and guaranteeing anonymity, I worked to minimize self-presentation issues by following Weiss' (1994) recommendations to avoid being evaluative, attempting to modify the respondents' feelings, or acting as a solicitous friend, but rather to respect the interviewee by sitting quietly, indicating understanding, and/or asking if he or she feels comfortable continuing the interview. Through informed consent and the introduction to the interview, I also informed participants that

TABLE 5
Overview of Interview Data

Pseudonym	Informant	Current Position
Abigail	16	RN ^a , PACU ^b
Alice	4	Clinical Care Coordinator
Alicia	25	RN, Operating Room
Angela	14	Dietitian
April	8	Clinical Social Worker
Betty	9	Patient Services Assistant
Cecilia	42	RN, Operating Room
Claire	6	RN, Case Manager
Evelyn	2	Medical Records Clerk
Fiona	21	Clinical Manager, Operating Room
Genna	36	Clinical Social Worker
Grace	1	RN, Clinical Care Coordinator
Hope	23	Perioperative Tech, Operating Room
Jack	3	Patient Services Assistant
Janet	15	Lead Clerk
Joy	41	Surgical Tech, Operating Room
Justin	12	Patient Services Assistant
Katrina	13	Medical Assistant, Outpatient Care
Kerry	37	RN, Operating Room
Lilly	32	RN, Operating Room
Lola	40	Surgical Technologist, Operating Room
Lorraine	38	RN, Service Lead, Operating Room
Lucy	24	Patient Services Assistant, Operating Room
Margo	11	RN, Nursing Supervisor, Outpatient Care
Marsha	10	RN, Outpatient Care
Megan	22	RN, Operating Room
Mindy	27	RN, Operating Room
Molly	5	Medical Records Clerk
Nikki	18	RN, Intensive Care
Olivia	19	RN, Service Lead, Operating Room
Pauline	30	Patient Services Assistant, Outpatient Care
Pearl	39	RN, Operating Room
Rita	31	RN, Nursing Supervisor, Operating Room
Rose	34	RN, Operating Room
Ruth	35	RN, Operating Room
Samantha	33	Medical Assistant, PACU
Sarah	29	RN, Nurse Manager, Operating Room
Steve	17	RN, Charge Nurse, In-patient Care
Vanessa	26	RN, Intensive Care
Veronica	20	Educational Nurse Coordinator
Vicky	7	Administrative Specialist
Vivian	28	Nurse Practitioner, Operating Room

^a Registered nurse

^b Post-anesthesia care unit

they could choose to have part of their responses “off the record” or discontinue participation at any time. There were several instances when participants chose to tell me something with the recorder off. When this happened, I asked if they might feel comfortable providing an abridged version of their off the record comments, and each person agreed. To minimize issues with recall, I asked about concrete incidents and followed up on generalized statements with probing and specifying questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Weiss, 1994). After the first several interviews, I also changed the order of questions so that I posed questions about good news sharing in the unit in general before asking for specific instances when the participant had good news, and I did the same with bad news. Participants seemed to have an easier time recalling their own good news and bad news events after thinking about others’ news. Finally, as a form of “validation in situ”, I asked interpreting questions throughout the interviews so as to carefully question and continually check the meaning of what the participants said (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interviews resulted in accounts of 135 news events. Of these, 75 were good news events, and 60 were bad news events. Although when posing the interview questions, I defined shared news as news shared with at least one person at work and unshared news as that which was not shared with anyone at work, eight positive news events were discussed as both shared and withheld, and seven negative news events were described as both shared and withheld. This seeming contradiction is explained below with regard to selectively shared news. Participants described 60 specific incidents of shared good news, 23 specific incidents of withheld good news, 52 specific incidents of shared bad news, and 15 specific incidents of unshared bad news. I supplemented these concrete episodes of participants sharing and withholding their own news with generalizations they made about their own sharing and withholding behavior (e.g., I never

share news at work because...) and specific episodes and generalizations about others sharing and withholding at work (e.g., people here share news about pregnancies, deaths, etc.).

Data Analysis

My analysis involved three phases. First, I engaged in close listening to the interview recordings and close reading of interview transcripts (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Maxwell, 2005). Reviewing all the interview data in a relatively concentrated period of time is useful in that it affords new insights as one reinterprets the significance of what has been heard before, observes patterns, and make comparisons across news episodes, individuals, and units (Emerson et al., 1995). During this analytically motivated process, I verified each transcript and developed detailed interview summaries. These summaries included thorough, organized outlines of each interview, quotes that seemed potentially interesting and important, and notes about emerging themes and topics to probe and verify in future interviews. The notes in the summaries served as initial theoretical memos, a tool used to “step back from the [data] to identify, develop, and modify broader analytic themes and arguments” (Emerson et al., 1995: , 157).

The second and third phases involved coding the data. I engaged in open coding of the interview transcripts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). My goal during this phase was to fully capture the range of ways participants described types of news events, the thoughts and behaviors associated with sharing and withholding news at work, and the impacts of sharing and withholding good and bad news at work. These codes were primarily substantive, meaning that they were close to the data, descriptive of participants’ concepts and beliefs, and did not inherently refer to a more abstract theory (Maxwell, 2005). It became clear at this point that individuals had a variety of motives for sharing and withholding news at work, so I began more focused coding and created theoretical categories, or second-order themes, that were more

abstract. I examined the first-order codes and the relationships among them to generate higher order codes that grouped first-order categories of news dimensions and sharing or withholding motives. To help organize my thoughts about the emerging codes, I used organizing figures and memos to develop aggregate dimensions and form the basis of the findings section.

As is common in qualitative research, the data analysis process was very iterative (Locke, 2001). I continually compared and revised codes as I worked through each interview, recoding coded interviews as new codes emerged or old codes were consolidated or broken into more specific codes. I also iterated between my data and existing literature to ground my constructs in a way that was true to the data yet abstracted from the particular context (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013) and to progressively refine my focus and understanding (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). For instance, “emotion management” was initially a code under “sharing functions”, and it included codes for “release emotion” and “enable humor.” Through iterating with the literature, I changed the name of the code to “emotion regulation.” Iterating across interviews, I realized there were a number of emotion related codes under “sharing decision motives,” including “keep mind off news,” “avoid embarrassment,” and “make others feel good.” I moved “emotion management” under “sharing decision motives,” and recognizing that it involved tactics targeted to benefit the self and tactics to benefit others, I broke it apart to make the more specific codes “regulate own emotions” and “regulate others’ emotions.” I also subsumed “enable humor” under “make others feel good” because the purpose of enabling humor, as described by the participants, was to foster positive emotions in others.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

My research findings fall into three major clusters. First, I describe the domains and dimensions of news stories. This section is meant to provide a window into how individuals

think about what news is, and thus, the examples of news events include news that was eventually withheld as well as that which was shared. Next, I discuss the nature of sharing and withholding news at work by illustrating sharing self-perceptions, selective sharing and withholding, and unintentional sharing. Finally, I unpack sharing choices by identifying and illustrating individuals' motivations for sharing and withholding as well as the considerations involved with selecting sharing partners.

DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS OF NEWS EVENTS

Domains of News

When asked to discuss the good and bad news they have shared or withheld at work, participants described a wide variety of events and experiences, ranging from minor and mundane to significant and uncommon. Although I did not define "professional" or "personal" news for the participants, their responses reflected a common understanding of both categories. Professional news includes a wide range of events or experiences primarily related to individuals' work lives at Heart Hospital or Children's Hospital, such as how or how well tasks are accomplished (work-related news); patients' health and personal lives (patient-related news); the nature or quality of interactions employees have with each other or patients (interpersonal news); the policies, practices, accomplishments, and resources associated with a particular work group or organization at large (work group or organization news); advancement and/or recognition of one's work-related knowledge skills, and abilities, care, or citizenship (development and acknowledgement news); and employees' financial compensation (compensation news). Personal news included events or experiences that are primarily non-work related, or in one case, related to a second job completely unrelated to the individual's line of work at the hospital. Personal news could relate directly to oneself, children, or loved ones, and

TABLE 6
Representative Quotes about Professional News

	Good News	Bad News
Work related	“We share when we get tasks done like if somebody accomplishes a discharge instruction for a certain thing. We all share that.” <i>Alice</i>	“When we have an incident in the operating room, it is usually pretty severe. We work in a mine field. There are so many things that can happen in an operating room. You can have a burn. You can have a pressure ulcer. You can leave something in, unintentionally.” <i>Sarah</i>
Patient related	“Sometimes I would share, especially with my office mate because she’s right there and it’s real easy to say, ‘Oh, Mr. so-and-so’s son got married, they just got back from Greece,’ and you know ...” <i>Claire</i>	“You know people will talk about the cases and how difficult it was or the prognosis of the patient. I mean we never give the names because nobody can remember the patient’s name anyway.” <i>Alicia</i>
Interpersonal	“[My coworker] was going to give an in-service, and she was telling me how nervous she was about it, and she goes, “You speak confidently all the time in our section meetings. How do you do it?” I said, “Well, you’re going to do it, too.” I helped her prepare the slides... That was shared in our staff meeting. [She] said, “Grace kind of forced me to practice. [It] was what I needed.” <i>Grace</i>	“Another guy was very inappropriate. He’s married, and he just ... I’m not going to say the stuff he said to me. It was very inappropriate, in appropriate gestures. Just creeped me out. We call them creepy people, creepy old men. ‘I had a creepy old man today.’ ... We can also instant message back to each other, sitting next to each other, like, ‘The creeper is at my desk right now. I need to get rid of him.’ She can do whatever. She can call me.” <i>Pauline</i>
Organization or work-group related	“We were looking to get a blanket warmer because we have a lot of patients who are cold in clinic all the time... I was shocked to find out that even a small blanket warmer was like a \$5,000... A long story short, I got as a free one... I told my boss and she was so excited. She sent to all an email to everybody. She’s like “We now have a blanket warmer thanks to [Vicky], and she got it for free.” <i>Vicky</i>	“We come in the morning and they give a morning report... This is seriously it goes - Everybody is in the lounge and they say okay ... This is 10 minutes before you start working. ‘We had so many call-ins today. Apparently people don’t know it’s snowing. We’re really short so be quick with your breaks. Get out there.’” <i>Joy</i>

TABLE 6 CONTINUED

Development or acknowledgement	“I recently got inducted in Sigma Theta Tau... It’s a lot of recognition for things that you do clinically [and in] research. They really focus on research, so that’s why to get into this based on my clinical experience was really amazing.” <i>Alice</i>	“Oh, bad news had to do with me applying for another job outside of here... I really thought I had gotten the job... Long story short, it was a 40-hour position, then all of a sudden, the manager decides he wants to split it into two 20-hour positions part time.” <i>Olivia</i>
Compensation	“If I got a bonus or something, I’d want to share that, and that happened a couple different times.” <i>Evelyn</i>	“There’s also another situation with the medical assistant who’s definitely sharing the bad news with us. She’s now going to nursing school but because of that she was originally going to just switch to a 32-hour full time position but again because of that financial situation or whatever is going on with the administration they weren’t going to do that and so she’s now being switched to a 10 and losing all of her benefits, every single one of them.” <i>Justin</i>

TABLE 7
Representative Quotes about Personal News

Good News	Bad News
“My weight loss, bills I got paid off, [my daughter’s] softball tournaments.” <i>Claire</i>	“My sister that passed away was a drug user, and she ended up here at one point and was in a coma.” <i>Janet</i>
“When I was off last week, we redid our family room.” <i>Katrina</i>	“The day my husband put divorce papers on the table.” <i>Lilly</i>
“My mother's elderly and she recently moved into a senior citizen apartment. My family lives back in State 2 and I've been going back and forth a lot, helping. About a week ago, she was resenting moving. She said to me, “This was really the right thing for me to do.”” <i>Vivian</i>	“A co-worker of mine... she signed me up for an online dating service... It was a 6-month thing. Literally, no success there whatsoever, and so yeah, I had to break the bad news back in June, “Sorry, there’s been nothing off this online dating site. I’m just done with it. It’s been horrible.” <i>Justin</i>

included topics like pregnancies and births, academic endeavors, romantic relationships, and health issues. Table 6 provides examples of good and bad news in each category of professional news, and Table 7 provides examples of good and bad personal news. In short, the news stories participants relayed covered the full range of human experience in and out of their professional roles.

Temporality of News

Much like the news stories covered by the press, individuals’ news can be about either discrete or ongoing events or experiences. When asked about good personal news, Jack mentioned having a nice afternoon at an art fair, and Olivia talked about how excited she was to get a great deal at a nursery auction on some evergreen and flowering trees. These particular news events were discrete in that each was a singular, independent event.

In contrast, the account Evelyn provided of professional good news involved an ongoing, unfolding stream of events. As she explained, it began when she successfully implemented process changes aimed at improving the patient family experience:

My goal was to have one person that completely took care of our families. We always take care of the patients so I wanted to be able to hire somebody that completely took care of our families because our families would sit out there for eight to 12 hours at a time. [For] the families, every minute is a lifetime, when you're sitting, worrying about the family. So going through the lean [management] training we got to choose a project. Mine was that I wanted to be able to hire somebody, and I had to present it to the board. [Also,] we would have some physicians that would come up to the waiting room and speak to the families about how the procedure went, but unfortunately it was a huge HIPAA violation, not to mention, you get one doctor that would come out and say blah, blah, blah; this is what happened in your procedure. And then, we'd have another doctor who was really good who would take patients into the consult room. If you're sitting in there you think, "Oh, my gosh, I have to go to the consult room; what's wrong?" Part of the lean project was for me to standardize. I made all of these changes.

For Evelyn, this work-related news was good because the changes she spearheaded were implemented, but more importantly, because she felt like she and her team were “doing the right thing” as evidenced by positive feedback and expressions of gratitude from families. After some time, individuals from other hospitals expressed interest in adopting the program at their own institutions. Heart Hospital recognized the efforts of Evelyn and her team with an article in its organization-wide newsletter, which was later picked up and posted on the website of a national organization. Thus, good news that began as simply work-related grew to include elements of development and acknowledgment news as well as work-group and organization news. Ongoing news, such as the success of Evelyn’s process improvements, is particularly dynamic. As the experience evolves, the news can expand in scope and importance as it takes on or changes meaning.

Bad news may also be either discrete or ongoing. In discussing the kinds of bad news that occurs or is talked about on her unit, Abigail described, “[T]he biggie around here, unfortunately to say, but that is how life is, are [patient] deaths” but she and her coworkers will also share “if something was going on with the patient, if they’ve been here for a while and they hadn’t been doing good, and they had a good day today.” Patient-related news may refer to a discrete event,

like a death. It may also be ongoing for those who are familiar with the particular patient's history and follow the patient's progress. As will be discussed later in this paper, the sharing of ongoing news such as this can be motivated by a desire to maintain or improve performance and can be part of the everyday work of updating others about patient conditions (Christianson, 2009).

Valence of News

Although some news is all good or bad, the valence of other news is more complicated. Discrete news events sometimes involve elements of good and bad news simultaneously. This form of mixed valence news involves feelings of ambivalence, "the sensation of being pulled in opposite directions as one feels both positive and negative affect toward or about something" (Pratt & Doucet, 2000). For example, Alice felt torn about an upcoming change in her daughter's life.

My daughter got a job overseas. She's going to be gone a year so that gives me mixed feelings. Number one, she still lives with me, she's 28 years old. That's not too good [laughs], because she should be out on her own at this time in her life but she's not. She got a teaching job in Korea so she's leaving to go... Not that I don't want her go because I do for her sake. The reason why I don't want her to go is I always think about North Korea, those types of things. Things that you can't control... the safety issue.

Alice clearly articulated that she perceived this singular piece of news, her daughter accepting a job offer in Korea, as both good and bad news. As a mother, Alice was ambivalent because her daughter was making an important step toward independence, yet she was uncertain whether her daughter would be safe in the particular location she would be living.

Ongoing news may include particular events or experiences about which a person feels ambivalent, or ongoing news may be of mixed valence in terms of an unfolding stream of events, some of which are positive and some of which are negative. An example of the latter came from

Grace who had bittersweet ongoing news about her elderly parents. Like many of her coworkers, Grace had dealt with a number of episodes of bad news concerning health emergencies with each of her parents. However, her parents' age and ailing health contributed to good news when she took them on a vacation quite some distance away to visit one of her own children and her eight-year-old granddaughter.

My parents are very volatile as far as illnesses go, so all I have to do is blow sideways, and my dad's in the hospital. In fact, he got home, and ended up being admitted. We got through the whole week, and it was just a joyous week!

Grace's "joyous" vacation with her elderly parents demonstrates ongoing mixed valence news in especially stark relief. The vacation was good news for Grace because they had a nice time, and even more importantly, her parents made it through the entire week without a health crisis. The bad news of prior health emergencies and her father's hospitalization upon their return home underscored how positive it was to spend a happy, relatively healthy time together. Viewed holistically as the unfolding news story about dealing with aging parents, negative events "served as foil against which to interpret and activate the strengths in the positive" (Cameron, Dutton, Quinn, & Wrzesniewski, 2003: 364).

Taken together, the participants' descriptions of the news they shared or withheld at work enriches our understanding of what news is in multiple ways. News events are not always simply good or bad, as the focus on positive events in interpersonal capitalization might suggest. Rather, individuals can recognize that a particular event has elements that are positive and elements that are negative. Maynard's (2003) statement that news is participants' own phenomena applies not only to the valence of news but also, to the content and scope of the news. Participants perceive a wide range of experiences as "news" including events in their personal lives and at work. Their characterizations of events and experiences as discrete or ongoing also demonstrate that the emphasis, scope, and temporal nature of news are subjective. The bracketing of ongoing

experiences facilitates making sense of and meaning about those events (Weick, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Thus, whether individuals perceive events as discrete or ongoing is indicative of how they are trying to understand those events. If news is shared, describing news as discrete or ongoing may be one way in which sharers engage in sensegiving and influence the meaning that others make about the news (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

THE NATURE OF SHARING AND WITHHOLDING NEWS

Although individuals differ in their sharing tendencies and choices, all sorts of news is shared at work. Steve, a nurse in Heart Hospital, noted:

I don't think there's anything that's not shared, maybe on a more limited basis, but I think for the most part everything is shared pretty openly... I've heard it all... You will literally know everything about everybody on our unit.

Samantha, a medical assistant in Children's Hospital, voiced a similar perception. When asked about the sharing of good news in her unit, she responded, "If something great is happening in someone's life, I feel most of us try to get it out there." Likewise, she answered, "Everything," to the question, "In general, what types of bad news do people in your unit share with each other?"

Sharing is not only an activity which colleagues engage in with each other but also, something that happens with employees and patients and their families. Working as a checkout clerk, Betty schedules patients for their next appointments and any testing that needs to be done in the interim. The patients are her favorite part of her job, and she says that they often share news with her "[j]ust about their grandchildren, about their lives... Just everything. All their stuff. Anything. Even their medical stuff they talk about sometimes." Sharing is not necessarily one-sided. As she explained, "They look for you when they come back. They look for you. They want to talk to you and know. I'll have people come up and ask about my mom or different things."

Among the participants interviewed, sharing was so common that more than a third of the participants reported there was not a time they could recall when they had good news of some sort that they did not share with at least one other person at work. The same was true for bad news, although some participants claimed this was because they had not had any bad events or experiences to share. Conversely, every participant was able to provide at least one example of sharing good news at work, and with the exception of two people who had experienced no bad news, everyone was also able to provide an example of sharing bad news at work. To better understand the prevalence of news sharing, the following sections detail how some individuals have stronger sharing tendencies than others, sharers may be more or less selective in their audience, and sharing is not always intentional or under one's own control.

Sharing Self-perceptions: Sharers and Non-sharers

Many participants perceived themselves as either being a person who shares or a person who does not, and they referred to others in this manner as well. For instance, Angela said, "Well, I'm just a sharer. It's my nature." Fiona stated that she is "one of those open people," and could not think of an instance of withholding good news nor an instance of withholding bad news. In relation to bad news she had this to say: "I don't think there's ever been anything that I wouldn't share with anyone, but I probably wouldn't share it as freely as I do good news."

Some participants preferred to limit their news sharing. Steve is one such person, and he said, "It's just my personality. I've always been a close to the chest kind of guy." Olivia was similar. Comparing perceptions of others with her perceptions of herself, she explained, "We have individuals that are very private; I'm one of those." Throughout Vicky's interview, she described herself as "just a private person," "really a confidential kind of person," and "really not

much of a sharer.” Surprisingly, at the very end of her interview, she stated, “I’m definitely somebody who shares news. I don’t keep much in. I have to talk about it.”

Whether individuals perceive themselves as either sharers or private people seems to have implications for their sharing behavior. Sharers seem to be more comfortable with sharing in general and relate to sharing almost as a reflex. In contrast, private people are more guarded and are more careful and thoughtful in deciding whether and with whom to share.

Selective Sharing and Withholding

The way in which Fiona qualified her likelihood of sharing bad news and the curious contradiction in how Vicky so strongly perceived herself as both a sharer and non-sharer points to the fact that people have choices not only in whether they share but perhaps more importantly, when and with whom. As Fiona explained, the likelihood of sharing versus withholding might be the same, but the number of people with whom she would share was likely to be lower.

Restricted or limited sharing occurs when a person intentionally shares news with one or more others, but intentionally withholds the news beyond those selected sharing partners. Sharers and non-sharers mentioned that they have go-to work colleagues with whom they can share their news. Even Vicky said, “I seek out certain people who can help me talk it through.” Lilly could not think of good news or bad news she never shared at work because she shares all her news with one particular coworker with whom she has worked for many years.

People may also engage in staggered sharing, telling the news to particular individuals (e.g., go-to colleagues, those who have a need to be in the know, etc.) and then sharing more broadly later. For instance, when Samantha first learned she was pregnant, she shared with a close coworker because she “had to tell someone” even though she was not in her second trimester yet. After she had safely passed the 12-week mark, she “decided to come into work and

be open” about it. Similarly, when Rose found out that her mother had breast cancer, she told a colleague the next day because that woman’s mother was also dealing with cancer. Aside from confiding in that one person, she said, “I didn’t really tell anybody at first, and then I did and people were very sympathetic, so I started telling a bit more people.” The responsiveness with which the few people Rose shared the news of her mother’s cancer lessened her hesitancy about, and made her more comfortable with, sharing the news with others.

Selective sharing highlights that the decision to share news is often involves multiple choices about with whom to share and when. It also illustrates that people often have a desire to share their news with at least one person at work. Sometimes, sharing with one person is enough to accomplish what motivated the sharing, like processing an event. News shared with very few confidants may also indicate particularly high quality relationships. Staggered sharing also evidences that motives to share and the impact of others’ responses may change over time or vary depending on the number of people with whom news has been shared.

Unintentional Sharing

Although individuals often have a choice about whether, when, and with whom to share or withhold their news, this is not always the case. Study participants also conveyed that there were occasions in which news sharing happened, but it was not done intentionally. Unintentional sharing may occur in at least a couple of ways. First, news may be shared accidentally. Olivia relayed how she recently learned of her coworker’s divorce by accident:

I happened upon some information that had printed out on the printer. You have to be careful about printing confidential stuff. I had printed something out. They had printed this out. “Oh, I don’t think you really want this out here.” I would say I’m not the only one who has got stuff from other stuff that’s confidential, but that’s how I found out the person was going through that.

Olivia also noted that that coworker removed pictures of herself and her husband which she had had posted on her locker. In this example, Olivia's coworker may not have intended to publicize the dissolution of her marriage, but she shared it inadvertently by leaving evidence in a public place and removing artifacts of her personal life from her office space.

Another way in which unintentional sharing occurs is when news is shared by a third party without giving advanced notice to or asking the permission of the person whose news it is. For instance, the news about Grace's wonderful trip with her parents travelled faster than she anticipated.

I know that Josh, who's one of my other nursing colleagues, said to me, "Hey, I heard that you had a great vacation." I hadn't touched base with him yet. He said [my officemate] said it was so great, so yes, I know it got passed on.

Grace reported that it made her feel "great" when Josh followed up on her trip with her. She had been very open with her coworkers about her parents' health and her vacation, so it was not upsetting when her officemate told him the vacation was a great success. However, other participants expressed less positive feelings about the secondary sharing of their news. In particular, participants referred to gossip and the telephone game. As Hope explained, both good and bad news can be shared by secondary sources, and often, the story gets distorted.

It's just the story changes 100 times and then by the time it gets through everybody, it's a completely different story, and it could make the person look even worse than what the bad news really was. It might've been good news turned bad.

News sharing can happen in a variety of ways. It can occur freely and almost as a reflex for those who are "sharers," in a careful and thoughtful manner through selective sharing, by accident, or second-hand. This variety helps explain why news of all kinds is shared at work. The fact that people selectively share a certain piece of news with some and not with others is

especially informative. It underscores the necessity of examining multiple motives for sharing and withholding as well as the considerations involved with selecting sharing partners.

SHARING CHOICES

There are two main choices involved with sharing at work: whether or not to share and with whom to share. The following sections detail the participants' motive talk (Mills, 1940) around the sharing and withholding news as well as the considerations involved with choosing sharing partners.

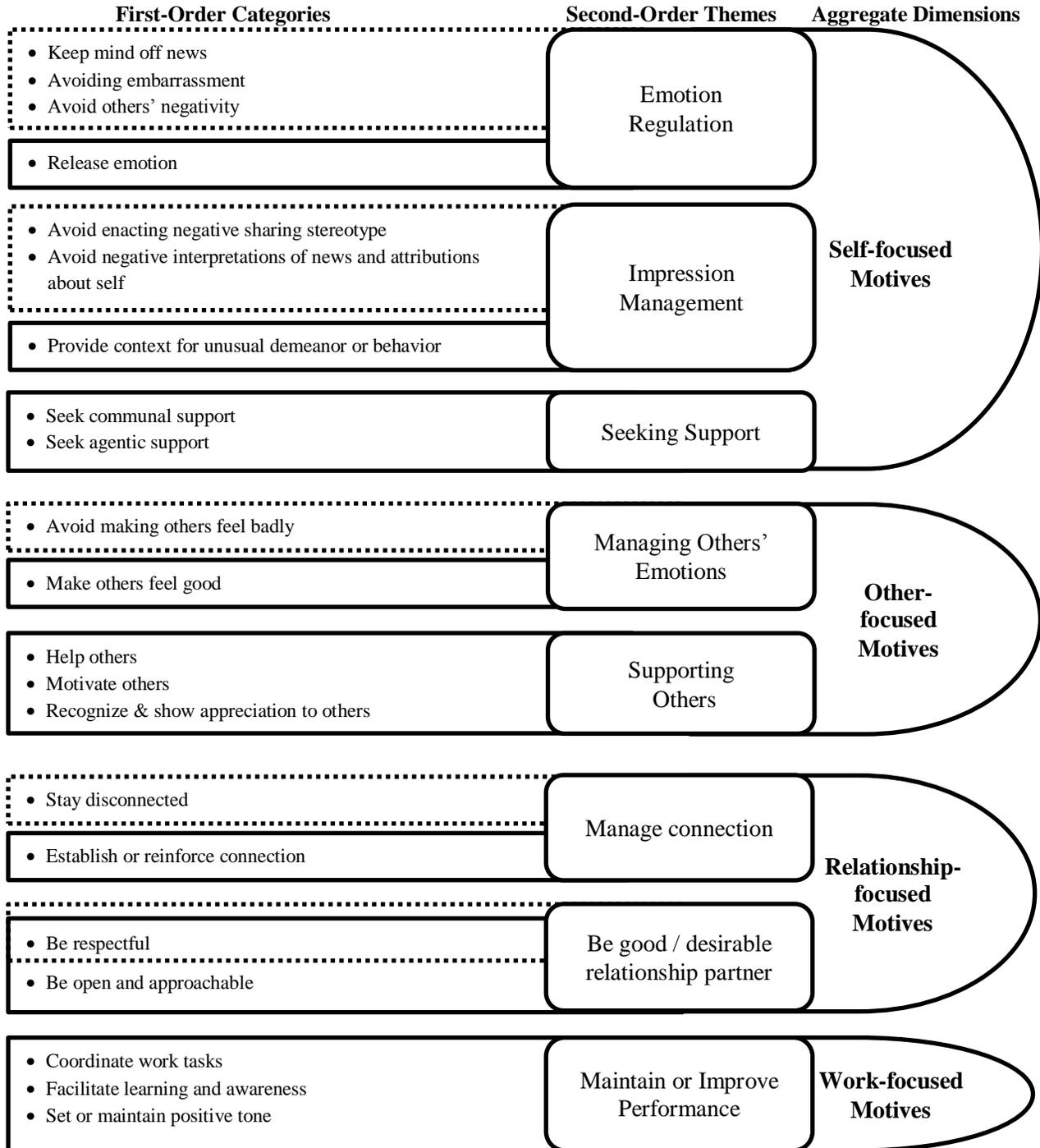
Motivations for Sharing or Withholding News at Work

Many of the examples thus far, including Rose and Samantha, hint that individuals have different motivations for sharing and withholding their news. Participants described four general types of motivations behind their decisions to share or not to share news: self-focused, other-focused, relationship-focused, and work-focused motivations. Although some motives are similar for sharing and withholding, others are unique. Figure 4 presents the data structure of sharing and withholding motives, and Table 8 provides representative quotes.

Self-focused motivations. Self-focused motivations are primarily oriented toward minimizing negative outcomes and promoting positive outcomes for one's self. They include various efforts to self-regulate emotions, engage in impression management, and seek social support.

Consistent with other work recognizing talking about emotions as a common means to manage them (Gross, 1998; Reis et al., 2010), several of the motivations participants identified for sharing or withholding referred to self-regulating their own emotions. Emotion regulation has been defined as "the processes by which individuals influence the emotions they have, when they

FIGURE 4
Sharing and Withholding Motives: Data Structure^a



^a Boxes with dashed outline denote motives for withholding. Boxes with solid outline denote motives for sharing.

TABLE 8
Representative Quotes Underlying Second-order Themes

First Order Categories	Second Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions	
	<u>Managing Own Emotions</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep mind off news • Avoiding embarrassment • Avoid other’s negativity 	<p>“I was so focused on work and that was my goal to stay focused on work and just kind of block to it through.” <i>Evelyn</i></p> <p>“You feel like you don’t want to share that because it’s almost embarrassing.” <i>Janet</i></p> <p>“Sometimes, especially with situations like mine, you get some people who say, “You’re better off not knowing.” Maybe they don’t want to know you. Maybe they don’t care. You get the negative, and that was not something that I wanted to hear. I was already hearing that from a family member.” <i>Katrina</i></p>	<p>SELF- FOCUSED MOTIVATIONS</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release emotion 	<p>“I go home and tell my boyfriend; he doesn’t want to hear about it. You have to vent. They get the whole healthcare thing, and it drives them nuts, the details of each situation. No one understands, so you have to vent with your colleagues. They’re the only ones that will really tolerate you.” <i>Vanessa</i></p>		
	<u>Impression Management</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid enacting negative sharing stereotypes • Avoid negative interpretations of news and attributions to self 	<p>“I just don’t want somebody to feel like I was bragging or things like that – not that I would brag, because I don’t as you can tell.” <i>Alice</i></p> <p>“It’s one of those you don’t want to tell somebody who I think will look at me, and I’m one of the people who’s been there longer, and they ask me questions, they look me up when they need something. I didn’t want them to feel like, “Oh God,” I can’t be there for them.” <i>Megan</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide context for unusual demeanor or behavior 	<p>“[I told] my close friends just to they knew if I wasn’t my happy, cheerful self, there was a reason for it.” <i>Angela</i></p>		

TABLE 8 CONTINUED

<u>Seeking Social Support</u>		} SELF-FOCUSED MOTIVATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek agentic support • Seek communal support 	<p>“It was very interesting because I even composed a letter, an e-mail to my brother and to say what I felt was the issues here. They proofread it for me to be sure that my... because I’m very careful not to let emotion overplay something so that you don’t make a situation worse because of emotions.” <i>Grace</i></p> <p>“I think it also helps when people can talk about things and certain things come up and they know they’re not the only ones, and how they’re not crazy, there’s nothing wrong with them.” <i>Megan</i></p>	
<u>Managing Others’ Emotions</u>		} OTHER-FOCUSED MOTIVATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding making others feel badly • Make others feel good 	<p>“Because I was close with my coworkers, and I knew some of them might get hurt or angry that I was leaving because I was there for a long time, I kind of kept that a secret for a little bit.” <i>Marsha</i></p> <p>“You don’t want to burden people with talking about the same thing all the time like, say, you’re struggling with a chronic issue.” <i>Vivian</i></p> <p>“It’s because someone else might be happy by it. I’d be happy if I heard something good about somebody. I think that would be great.” <i>Betty</i></p>	
<u>Supporting Others</u>		} OTHER-FOCUSED MOTIVATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help others 	<p>“[I told her] So she knew that she wasn’t alone and that it happens elsewhere, and that she can confide in me and I understand where she’s coming from. This is how I’m working through [my bullying], and it’s probably not the best way, but this is how I’m getting through mine.” <i>Hope</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate others • Recognize others / show appreciation 	<p>“I just thought it was really good, and I think it showed an example of working collegially and multidisciplinary. So, I use that as an example, in sharing it with other people, that how people can work together with a good outcome. And, learning and growing is always a good thing no matter what age.” <i>Angela</i></p> <p>“I think a lot of people here don’t feel recognized and so me just being an OR tech, I don’t have any way of really recognizing people so I do the littlest things I can. I do that and so they’ll probably think, “Oh, that’s cute. Participant 23 got me an award,” or whatever, but that goes in their file so that can be looked at during their review.” <i>Hope</i></p>	

TABLE 8 CONTINUED

<u>Managing Connection</u>		RELATIONSHIP- FOCUSED MOTIVATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay disconnected 	<p>“Somebody you don't like, why would you want them to know anything about you? That's how I feel. I don't really particularly care a whole lot. Right now, I wish them no ill, but I'm not thinking I'm going to find out “How was your weekend?” or “What are you doing for the holidays?” I really don't care.” <i>Vivian</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish or maintain connection 	<p>“I just felt like we could connect I guess, because she was kind of dealing with her mom and she was upset about it. It wasn't the same type of cancer but it was an illness.” <i>Rose</i></p>	
<u>Be good or desirable relationship partner</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be respectful 	<p>“So, I just really want to be respectful of letting them know because sometimes it's hard to feel that everybody else around you know and not the people who are your biggest advocates.” <i>Genna</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open and approachable 	<p>“I'm hoping that it makes me more approachable, you know, that people can come up to me and ask me questions about anything... I think it's kind of being open. I like to be open and honest. You know like I'm not hiding anything, and everybody knows my whole history.” <i>Alicia</i></p>	
<u>Maintain or Improve Performance</u>		WORK- FOCUSED MOTIVATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate work tasks 	<p>“When I first started here, my grandfather was in the hospital, and he wasn't doing very well in the hospital. I shared that, but it was mostly with education because I was actually still on orientation, so I shared it mostly with my managers and the education staff. I had to skip out on a day of orientation and stuff like that, because I had to drive back.” <i>Nikki</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate learning and awareness 	<p>“When we make a mistake, it is nothing light, so I am a very big proponent of sharing when that happens because of the old saying, “There, but for the grace of God, go I.” We call it situational awareness, so if something happened, we will share it because you want to fix it and don't let it happen. We are humans. We are going to make mistakes.” <i>Sarah</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set or maintain positive tone 	<p>“I think it kind of set that tone that we appreciate them, and they were happy that people were writing each other up and acknowledging each other.” <i>Rita</i></p>	

have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998: 275). For example, individuals with bad news sometimes choose not to share because they want to keep their minds off of it. As Claire explained, “I don’t think you want to remember it at work; it’s kind of a release to be here at work and not have to think about that if it’s something really bothersome and concerning.” By withholding bad news, someone with bad news may be trying to make their negative feelings about the event or experience less salient. Bad news is also withheld due to concerns that sharing would cause additional distress in the form of embarrassment. While some participants related to potential “embarrassment” about others learning of the news itself (e.g., marital discord, family members in trouble), Alicia said she would be unable to share her news without crying, and she would be “embarrassed” to cry at work.

In contrast to keeping one’s mind off the news and avoiding embarrassment, other efforts to manage one’s own emotions pertained to decisions about whether to share both good and bad news. Some choose to withhold news because they want to avoid others’ negativity. Once when Joy told her coworkers that her husband was having job issues in relation to changing jobs, her coworkers continually gave her a hard time about it.

Later, they’ll chide you or tease you about it, which they think is funny, and it’s really not. “When is that lazy husband of yours going to get a job?” or “Your husband left you?”...It’s our way of coping with some of the things that we see that we focus on petty things or try to tease people. I would never tell them anything anymore.

Due to how her coworkers would “pick, pick, pick” at her in a negative way about the news she shared and how badly it made her feel, she subsequently made an effort to avoid sharing news, good or bad, because she did not want to deal with similar negativity. Likewise, Hope did not tell

anyone at work when she earned her Certified Nursing Assistant license because she was afraid they would have a negative reaction.

When I mentioned I was going to nursing school, they all said, “Oh, you’ll never be a nurse.” I told my family, too, and they said the same thing that I’d never make it... I’ve been told that by my parents my whole life so I’m just kind of used to it, but that’s why I’m very hesitant to share good news with anybody.

Based on her past experience with family and coworkers discounting her news, bringing her down, and discouraging her after sharing what she perceived as good news, Hope now generally decides not to share good news with others. By withholding, those with bad news can prevent responses that make them feel worse, and those with good news can maintain their positive emotions by avoiding responses that call into question the valence of the news.

Other participants felt they had to share their news to let out their emotions. Multiple people described sharing bad news as “venting” or “stress release.” Justin explains that this is one reason he shares the negatives in his life.

I think it’s sort of like a relief, a stress relief. You get probably pent up or angry or frustrated, so I guess talking about, “I can’t believe that I tried,” it’s like releasing it. Sort of like the event happening was inhaling, and you’re just like holding on to it, and then finally talking about it is like the exhale, and you can breathe again.

Justin’s metaphor portrays sharing as a natural and necessary activity which enables a person to let out the emotions that build up as a result of a particular negative experience. Likewise, individuals feel the need to share to release built up positive emotions like joy, excitement, and pride. Samantha was noted above to have “had to tell someone” about her pregnancy despite its early stage because “it was the happiest moment of [her] life,” and she “couldn’t hold it in.” Both bad news and good news can cause feelings of such intensity that the news cannot be kept inside. Individuals use sharing as a means to regulate, or more specifically to lessen, overwhelming positive or negative feelings.

Another category of self-focused motivations is impression management, the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them (Baumeister & Kowalski, 1990). People withhold news to avoid being perceived as a negative sharing stereotype as well as to avoid negative interpretations of the news and the attributions others may make about the sharer. The most common negative sharing stereotype is someone who brags, and a number of participants explained that they sometimes withhold news because they do not want others to think they are bragging. For instance, Pearl does not generally tell others when her husband is recognized in the academic community.

He gets awards all the time, but like I would never tell people that because that would be really braggy. They wouldn't understand it anyway. They'd be like, "Okay whatever." ... There's a lot of stuff I wouldn't share because it would be braggy or whatever, but that's okay. I have other friends whose husbands are also professors like I share with them, and they would understand and be happy for me because their husbands are getting awards, too.

Pearl's concern about being seen as "braggy" is relative. She is comfortable sharing good news with others who understand because they have also had the same experience, but it is "braggy" and better to withhold when interacting with people who do not have the same good fortune. Participants also wanted to avoid being too negative or being a chronic over-sharer. As mentioned above, Angela was not pleased when her son started dating a girl she did not like. Angela said she did not want to share this because, "I didn't want to be a Debbie Downer." Likewise, Jack tends to limit his sharing of good or bad news because he "does not want to be like a chatty Cathy," who is "constantly talking" and "telling you every little detail."

In addition to concerns about the impression implications of whether or how news is shared, people take into account how others might interpret the news or their behavior in the wake of the news. Those who think the news might reflect negatively on them might refrain from sharing it with others. For instance, Molly, who runs a property management business, was very

happy when one of her tenants renewed a lease. She decided not to share this development with others at work because she did not want others to think that her property management work interferes with her job at the hospital. Ruth voiced that she had had “a long history of people using positive or negative information in a negative way,” and others echoed a concern that even if there was not a clear or straightforward way in which a piece of news might reflect badly on themselves, it might be misinterpreted or twisted in a damaging way. Hope, among others, related to this as “like the telephone game, where it’s one person’s version of another person’s [news], and it get changed quite a bit.” She went on to explain the potential dangers associated with news passed from one person to another:

People's opinions get added to it or changed. Someone got a promotion so then when they tell somebody, “Oh, well, so and so got a promotion probably because they know this person.” Then the next person overheard it and was like, “Oh, she got a promotion, but it's because she knows this person.”... It's just the story changes 100 times, and then by the time it gets through everybody, it's a completely different story, and it could make the person look even worse than what the bad news really was. It might've been good news turned bad.

Whether people are concerned about the news itself or how it might be misconstrued or used against them, some participants are hesitant to share with others. In contrast, there are instances when sharing is used to clarify a situation or prevent it from being misinterpreted. Specifically, individuals sometimes share their news to provide context for their unusual demeanor or behavior. Lorraine is aware that others make judgments and attributions about her based on her behavior, so she makes it a point to proactively explain if something is happening in her life that might cause her to interact with them in a seemingly negative or uncharacteristic manner.

If something's going on with me be it professionally or personally, it depends on who I'm talking to, how much detail I might share, but I try to say, "Look, this is what's going on with me, I have stuff that I'm dealing with, so I might seem like short, I might be dizzy, I might respond to you in a different way today." I try to

name my feelings, because I think if we can share that with people, then they can understand, not draw conclusions about, "Why are you being so this or that or the other way?" People draw conclusions about how people respond.

By sharing news, individuals like Lorraine are seeking to manage the impressions others form of them by providing them information that will help them make sense of their behavior accurately rather than making negative or unflattering judgments or assumptions.

The final set of self-focused motivations includes seeking social support. Participants discussed sharing their news because they wanted agentic support (e.g., advice, assistance) (e.g., advice, assistance; Horowitz et al., 2001) or communal support (e.g., care, concern, reassurance; Horowitz et al., 2001). New moms, Genna and Samantha, have shared pregnancy and baby-related news with colleagues who are mothers as a means to solicit their advice and support. When Genna first learned she was pregnant, she shared the news obtain advice about how to manage the demands of being a working mother.

I was excited to share with them because I really appreciate and value their input and also for me, it's that work-life balance which had been a really good resource and to ask them like "how have you done it" and what has worked well.

Samantha has also kept the mothers with whom she works updated on the trials and tribulations that arise as she tries to maintain parental control over how her baby girl is cared for while they live in her own mother's home. At the time of her interview, she had recently dealt with an incident in which her mother gave her infant Tylenol against her wishes and solid food she was too young to handle it.

I look to these women, and I say, "What am I supposed to do?" These aren't the worst things, but these are pretty huge in my life right now. I have one concern. At lunch, I asked three other nurses. These are the horrible things that are happening. I feel like they're horrible. I don't know how much sugar she's getting in a day and I feel like I'm getting my toes walked on... They also said it's a huge deal.

In telling other mothers about their own experiences, Genna and Samantha are able to solicit advice about how to handle their challenges and stresses. They also facilitate communal support from colleagues as the other women respond in a way that shows they care and they validate the thoughts and feelings they have surrounding particular pieces of news.

Other-focused motivations. Other-focused motivations are primarily oriented toward minimizing negative outcomes and promoting positive outcomes for at least one other person. In choosing to share or withhold their news, individuals took into account how the news might impact others' emotions and how sharing news could support others. In regard to the former, people withheld news if they thought it would make other people feel negatively. Echoing the statements made about bragging, Angela explained that she feels people with good news should keep in mind that others "might not feel that they have the same opportunity" and "it might bother them," causing them to feel "jealous or resentful." For this reason, she did not tell people when she paid off her mortgage. Fiona expressed a similar sentiment in regard to sharing good news about her husband with her supervisor, who is a widow.

She was with her husband her whole life. It was her only marriage. She married him at 18, so yes, I forget sometimes that even after years go by, it can still be painful for her, so I try to be careful not to talk about my wonderful husband too much. I can't tell you anything specific, but I know I've felt like, oh, I've gone too far, or something, talking about all the things he can fix in the house because he is handy... You have to be sensitive about those kinds of things.

As evidenced by Angela and Fiona, sharing of good news may be restricted if the potential sharer thinks that another person may feel badly about their situation in contrast. Bad news is also withheld out of regard for others' feelings but because it might place a burden on them, which suggests that the potential sharer has some knowledge about the other person upon which to make this assumption. When Megan was dealing with anxiety issues and had to go on

medication, she decided to keep the news to herself, not because she was worried about what others would think but rather, because she “did not want to put the burden on them to worry.”

On the flip side, people share good news because they think it would have a positive impact on another’s emotions. Jack described this as the potential of good news to “uplift people.”

I think it helps uplift people. Because I think it's: I'm acknowledged in some way by someone, and I pass it off to somebody else, "Hey, so-and-so said something to me." I think I might give that employee that I'm telling or those employees that I'm telling maybe a little positive feeling that, okay, well you know, somebody is being recognized... "Maybe something like that will happen to me," or whoever. I would definitely, even if it happened to somebody else, I would try to get the word out.

Especially because Jack perceived that there was low morale in his unit, he felt it was important to pass along not only his own work-related good news, but also that of others. He made it a habit to do so in an effort to make people feel more positively and potentially give them hope they might have a similar experience.

In addition to benefiting others emotionally, individuals also saw sharing news as a means by which to support others in multiple ways (i.e., helping, motivating, recognizing). Steve, as mentioned earlier, went through the unfortunate and difficult experience of losing his home during the mortgage crisis. Although he self-identified as a non-sharer, he did end up telling others about his experience because his story would be helpful for those dealing with the same issue.

Basically, I looked at it as an opportunity to help other people. Once I figured out what was all going on, I thought, "Well, other people are going through it, too." We talked about it, and I told them what my experiences were. I go, "Okay, yes we were going through it too, and this is what we did, and this is what we're expecting to happen."

Much as some people share their own news to generate agentic and communal support, Steve shared his news as a means by which to provide others with information that could be useful and comforting in helping people know that they were not alone in their struggle.

Similar to the way in which some choose to share good news to generate good feelings in others, some choose to share their positive events and experiences in hopes that their stories will motivate others. Katrina had the unusual, and somewhat unlikely, experience of finding and meeting her estranged biological father. When she learned of a patient who had a similar goal, she told the patient about her long, but ultimately successful journey.

It helped me out with talking to that patient on, "Don't give up. You're going to get a couple of no's. You're going to get some doors closed on your face, but if this is what you want, you need to keep pursuing it."

Katrina not only shared her news with those in a similar situation, but she also used her story as a general example of the value of following your dreams.

To let them know that whatever your dreams and your hopes are, go for it. Go for them. Don't let someone say to you, "You can't do this. You can't achieve this."

Whereas Katrina shared to help motivate people in their personal or professional endeavors,

Nikki explained that she has shared news with patients to motivate them to get well.

I have a patient who has a tube feeding in, and he's really discouraged about not passing his swallow evaluation. I was just brought back to what happened to my grandfather last summer. I was, "This is a really bad situation, but you do get better." I'll bring my personal life into it kind of like that, but not like vivid details or anything like that. I just feel like it gives them kind of like them motivation for patients to be really, "Okay, yeah, it will get better" type of thing.

By sharing personal good news (i.e., that her grandfather is now in good health) in a limited, appropriate manner, Nikki tried to supplement the treatment of the patient's physical ailments by relating to the man's psychological and emotional suffering with care, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

The last other-focused motivation for sharing good news is to provide recognition and show appreciation. When asked for examples of good news, participants commonly referred to awards associated with a recognition program established by University Hospital or similar unit-specific recognition efforts. Employees receive such awards when they are nominated by patients, families, visitors, or other staff for doing something to make a difference or going above and beyond the call of duty in some way. Participants related to these awards as good news not only for the individuals receiving them but also, as a way to share good news with others. Often staff members nominate each other when someone does something to help them or otherwise make their job easier. The act of making a difference was initially good news for the beneficiary, and sharing the experience through the award is a means by which to recognize and express gratitude to the person who helped. Rita provided the following examples of the kinds of good news people write up in nominations:

They would say thank you for coming in and giving me an extra pair of hands and for your clinical skills and excellence. It made the case go better. It made my day go better. Thank you for staying over and helping out when you didn't have to.

Awards are typically presented at unit meetings by a manager who reads the nomination statement aloud to the group. However, not all good news shared to recognize or appreciate others is shared in such a formal manner. Grace recalled that a coworker mentioned in an impromptu way at a meeting that she had successfully given an in-service presentation because Grace had helped her practice and build her confidence.

Relationship-focused motivations. Relationship-focused motivations are primarily oriented toward affecting the quality of the relationship or interpersonal interactions (i.e., quality of communication, trust, closeness, satisfaction; Collins & Read, 1990; Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000; Gable et al., 2004) the potential sharer has with another person. One type of

relationship-focused motivation is to manage connections with others. Individuals with news are motivated to refrain from sharing to the extent that they wish to stay disconnected from others.

Due to high turnover, Alicia had little interest in putting forth effort to get to know new employees or let them get to know her:

We have a lot of new people. It's like you can tell who's going to stay, and who's not going to stay... and there are people who say that they are not going to stay, and it's like I don't want to waste my ... I don't want to say it that way, but I don't want to invest the time and energy and then just have them go.

Alicia explained that sharing news was a way to build relationships with others, but because her demanding job kept her very busy and there was a high level of uncertainty with regard to whether her coworkers would stay, she had little motivation to share with many of the people at work.

At work and outside of work, Molly is an extremely private person who is cautious about what she shares and with whom. To underscore this fact about herself, she stated that she is so selective in her sharing that there is no one person, even her significant other, who knows everything about her. However, when asked about a time when she had bad news and shared it at work, she readily recalled a recent example. She found out while at work that her partner was at risk of losing his job because his company was permanently closing his worksite. Molly relayed that she kept the news to herself that day because she did not have enough information about the situation and needed to process it herself. The next day, Molly told her officemate, whom she is in the process of getting to know, about what was happening “more for friendship and conversation than emotional support or a way to fix it.” Molly further explained her decision by saying, “When you share your personal problems, it brings you closer together; a friendship develops that way.”

Genna was similarly conscious of news sharing as a tactic to establish, reinforce, or deepen interpersonal connections. As mentioned above, Genna's most salient example of good news was her pregnancy and the recent birth of her first child. When interacting with patients in her role as social worker, Genna was careful about revealing that she was pregnant or had recently had a baby:

For me, it's just being very thoughtful about what I do share and would it be beneficial. For some families, absolutely not, and for others, that might be the only piece that we can connect on in a really stressful situation so then to be able to at least feel like you can connect so that next interaction will go a little bit smoother.

By sharing this personal good news in her professional interactions, Genna was able to build rapport through finding common ground with patient families or gaining their trust by establishing legitimacy as someone who could understand the concerns and feelings of parents wanting what is best for their children.

A second type of relationship-focused motivation to share or withhold news is to be a good or desirable interaction or relationship partner. In particular, participants referred to being respectful as a motive for both withholding and sharing news. Steve, for example, felt strongly against sharing family-related news at work:

Personally, I don't really share anything at work. I'll never say anything bad about my wife because it's my responsibility to protect her when she's not here. I'm never going to say anything bad about my kids because they're not here to protect themselves.

Steve, someone who sees himself as private and not much of a sharer in general, saw sharing news about someone who is not present to speak on their own behalf as disrespectful. He also said, "The only person who needs to know everything about me is my wife." This suggests that it is not only respectful to withhold news about someone else, but it is also important to respect and

honor close relationship partners by keeping a certain amount or a certain type of news for their ears only.

For Sarah, respect has motivated her decision to share news. She was very happy and excited to have accepted a new job within the University Health System, but she was also aware that her good news would impact others. Before making the news public, Sarah made a point to share it with her direct report because she said, “I felt that I owed her that respect, to tell her.” This example not only demonstrates respect as a motivation for sharing, but also, that selectivity and timing with which individuals share news is meaningful to the sharers. Additionally, sharers like Sarah and potentially Steve are cognizant of the possibility that these sharing choices are meaningful to those with whom they interact.

In an effort to be, or signal that they are, good relationship partners, others share news to try to be open and approachable. Fiona described sharing news as a means by which to manage the strain her promotion to management put on her relationships with others at work:

I try and go sit in the lounge with people because like I said, a lot of those people were my friends before I became management, and I thought it was a good thing to try and maintain some of that... it's really weird when you go into a management role how differently you're perceived just like within a day, now being a manager or something from being a staff member. I remember there were people that misinterpreted what I said when I was joking about something, but it's like, oh, I guess they don't know me, and they just think of me as a boss, so they don't get that I'm just kidding. It's different, so I try to maintain some of that.

To “try to maintain some of that” friendship, help others to “know” her, and reduce perceived distance between them, Fiona made a point to make herself physically available by spending time in the same place as her subordinates and demonstrate relational availability by sharing news with them.

Work-focused motivations. Work-focused motivations are primarily oriented toward affecting whether and how work is accomplished. Participants related to sharing or withholding

their news to either maintain or improve performance. One such motive for sharing is to allocate or coordinate tasks. For instance, many participants related to sharing as a necessity when the news could have implications for whether they would be able to come into work or how well they would be able to do their jobs. This was particularly common in relation to illnesses and deaths of loved ones. For example, when Jack found out his stepfather had passed, he said, “Obviously, I had to talk to my manager, ask her to leave.” Lucy tried to be proactive in alerting her boss about potentially needing time off for family reasons:

My father-in-law was just diagnosed with terminal cancer, so I had to tell my boss just in case I have to go at the last minute and something comes up and the person that does the schedule. I've told a couple people that way.

Managers, in particular, try to motivate their subordinates to share news when it may impact staffing or employees’ ability to do certain tasks. Steve spoke about how he tried to take into account employees’ personal situations when allocating and coordinating work assignments:

I know that if you're having a hard time with your child at home, knowing you have a teenager, I'm probably not going to give you an 18-year-old kid going through alcohol withdrawal or... I've told some of my nurses if I'm in charge and you think you're pregnant, let me know ahead of time. I'm not going to tell anybody, but I'm not going to give you patients with these contagious diseases that could affect your child. I know I probably shouldn't do that, make the assignment based on that, but in reality, that's how it's got to be because I know they're going to put their child ahead of things.

Although Steve recognized that making decisions based on people’s personal situations might not be politically correct, he was acutely aware of the high stakes environment in which he and his staff were operating. Sharing particular types of news could provide critical information for the care of patients as well as the wellbeing of staff members.

As mentioned above, news sharing may also be a means by which coworkers coordinate among themselves (e.g., relational coordination; Gittell, 2002; Gittell & Douglass, 2012), particularly to provide continuity of care. Sometimes, this takes the form of good and bad news

about a patient's health status (e.g., having a good or bad day), as Abigail described above. Others who regularly interact with patients also share personal good or bad news about patients. For example, Claire recalled a patient telling her that he was going to Greece for his son's wedding, and she shared it with her officemate "to have that camaraderie... a connection maybe," because she thought it would be "appreciated... knowing that they would care about it," and because it may facilitate interactions with the patient in the future:

I know that the nurse in the same office, that she is going to be talking to them on Monday when I'm off. She's going to have to deal with it, so she's going to have to know whatever dynamics or whatever's happening.

By sharing a patient's good news or bad news with others who work with them, Claire not only fosters a collaborative environment and provides information that might inform and ease others' work, but also, she is likely improving the overall experience of the patient in a way that makes it smoother and more personal.

Another motive for sharing news is to facilitate learning and awareness. With regard to bad news, this usually involves preventing or remedying problems. Marsha once had a serious issue regarding a prescription dosage for a patient, and she shared what happened with her supervisor and coworkers:

Like, one patient passed away. It was something directly related to what I did, and the patient died. I think back now. It was a huge mess. It was because of a long holiday weekend that this patient had got into trouble, so we fixed it so it could never happen again. That I shared with everybody because at first I was like, "What did I do? Did I intentionally hurt this person? No, I didn't." But we worked it out together. We were all like, "Wait a minute. Let's figure out what happened." As a team, we figured it out. "Okay, this is what happened, and we're okay." ... It was good because we all came together and said, "Oh my gosh. This can never happen again."

Marsha was motivated to share not only so that she could figure out and understand what had gone wrong, but also, so that the processes could be changed to prevent a similar issue from

occurring in the future. Indeed, after she and her colleagues identified the cause of the error, the hospital changed the process so that it now remains open on Fridays of holiday weekends, thereby enabling more timely assessment and treatment of patients.

Good news is also shared out of a desire to learn and improve. At the monthly staff meeting she runs, Margo tries to make space for sharing good news, which she calls “positive sharing.” At one of the recent meetings she said, “What’s going well? I want everybody here to share one thing that’s going well.” If she received positive feedback about her staff, she would report it back to them and encourage them to share it with the others in their unit.

Sometimes I’ll even say, “Because that worked so well, I’d like you to talk about this at the next staff meeting to ... Let’s have a group discussion about it, to see if we can make it part of our service standard.” I had a nurse who did a really good job. Also, a lot of our concerns in the clinic are related to customer service, patient delays, mostly patient delays. She did a really good job of when her surgeon was called back into surgery, proactively assessing the patient’s needs, proactively trying to reschedule and/or get them what they needed. If they were willing to wait, can we get them some lunch? What can we do for them? We talked. I thanked her personally for that. Then I said, “Can we talk about this at the staff meeting to say should this be the standard for your peers? Do we need to empower you guys with some service coupons? What can we get you to help this be easy for you next time? How can we make this the norm?”

In encouraging the nurse to share the good news about how well her efforts were received, Margo demonstrated openness to change and to learning from the front line. She also sought to motivate sharing by suggesting that it could evolve into a broader conversation with the potential for real impact by way of improving best practices.

Margo’s effort to make sharing good news more common in her unit also illustrates another motivation to share news: setting a positive tone.

There’s a time and a place for the good and the bad news, and there’s a way to deliver both. Figuring out strategically when to share, what news, or sandwiching the constructive feedback between positive. That’s all very important. I think trying to set the tone as a manager, I think you have that ability. That’s one of the privileges of being in this role, is that you have the ability to set the tone. When I

round, and when I interact with my staff, I want those interactions to be supportive and mostly positive, because I do think that it's contagious. I do think it's important to try to leave people feeling good. Then, the more challenging discussions need to take place here, and also in a supportive environment, but never publicly.

Tone generally refers to affective tone, the aggregate of the moods of group members if they are experiencing similar moods (George, 1990). By being thoughtful about the positive and negative news shared in her unit, Margo was generate a positive affective tone as part of a larger effort to construct and maintain an environment in which people would feel good about themselves, each other, and their work. Margo's description of her goals for news sharing on her unit indicate a desire for high quality connections (HQCs) with and among her staff. According to Dutton and Heaphy, HQCs are marked by the expression of a greater range of emotions (i.e., emotional carrying capacity), a strengthened ability to withstand strain caused by challenges and setbacks (i.e., tensility), and generativity and openness to new ideas (i.e., connectivity). These relational base conditions would serve as a strong foundation on which to build a high functioning team.

Even those not in management positions were cognizant that the news they share could influence the tone in their workgroup. Joy, an operating room nurse, started a routine prior to procedures that provided an opportunity to share good news about family.

I have a little routine that I do. I ask the doctor when they first come in because I'm trying to start on a positive note. I'm like, "Do you have any pictures of the kids?" We have a little routine where they show me their latest picture before we start... Yeah, let me show you." It takes two seconds out of their day to show the latest picture. Then we start the day. It starts on a positive note. We really try to be super positive.

With the simple act of sharing a picture, Joy and her colleagues are able to share a moment that sets a positive affective tone and a positive relational trajectory for the surgery. She further explained acknowledging family at the start "has them park at the door any problems they're having" because it "delineates home from work." Thus, sharing news in their routine way

impacts their interactions by setting a tone that is positive in terms of positive affectivity as well as professionalism.

Overall, the work-focused motivations reveal that people are likely to share news for a variety of reasons that are aimed at benefitting one's own work, the work of one's group, and the person being served (i.e., patients and their families). Like the other-focused and relationship-focused motivations, these reasons for sharing demonstrate that people with news are often thoughtful about the impact of their news on others, especially those with whom they are interdependent. The sharing and withholding of news can be a tool by which to impact others and interactions in ways that enable a variety of positive dynamics.

Sharing Partner Factors and Considerations

As mentioned before and evidenced by quotes throughout, sharing choices are just as much, if not more, about with whom to share than whether to share at all. Primary factors and considerations about with whom to share or withhold include: physical proximity, relationship quality (relational closeness & trust), compatibility with experience (likelihood of understanding), and valuing the other's opinion or insights (see Table 9).

One basic factor influencing whom someone shares news with is physical proximity. Grace and Molly were both noted above as sharing news with their officemates. For these women, and others who have joint workspaces, sharing sometimes occurred because other people were present for part of a news-related incident or to overhear part of a news sharing conversation. Sharing is also a way to pass the time when co-located with others. Janet had this experience in the office where she works with her supervisor.

I sit in the same room with my supervisor, so, you know, you tend to have a much... you probably share more of that stuff, because you know, you're sitting with them every day, all day.

TABLE 9
Representative Quotes about Sharing Partner Factors and Considerations

Theme	Quote
• Physical proximity	“We were both having coffee in the locker room. I said, “Oh hey, let me just share this with you.” <i>Olivia</i>
• Relational quality	“Because they’re the ones that I felt closer to and basically were like my friends here at the clinic.” <i>Justin</i>
• Valuing the others’ opinion, insight or expertise	“There was Tylenol given [to my daughter], but was never voiced to me. I come to work, and I’m with women that push meds all day and express my concerns... I wanted to know from fellow mothers that I work with that are nurses, share my news and try to get their insight.” <i>Samantha</i>
• Common experience	“There’s certain people you don’t tell things to that you think they won’t understand because maybe their family’s perfect... and um, there’s other people I might tell something to because they have a similar thing.” <i>Claire</i>

Particularly when sharing happens as a way to release emotion, sharing partners tend to be whoever is nearby. For instance, Betty was at her desk when she received an email from her sister offering to fly her to another city for a vacation. She was excited and shared with all three of the people who were sitting around her.

In addition to proximity, which is a feature of a particular time and place, other factors that impact sharing involve thought and consideration. For instance, the most commonly cited reason for sharing with particular people is relational quality in terms of closeness and trust. This is evidenced in large part by the fact mentioned earlier that participants often had a go-to person at work with whom they shared news. Lilly called her work person her “BFF,” her best friend forever.

I have my BFF... We’ve known each other for 10 years. We started [college] at the same time, and we’ve worked here, so if there’s anybody, I tell her... she would be the one person that I would tell and know that it wouldn’t go any further. If I tell her, then I know I’m good. It’s out, and I told somebody... We do that a lot, we’re, “Okay, I need to get this off my chest because otherwise I’m going to brew about it.”... [She’s] very good at telling me, “You’re tired, let it go,” or “This is stupid. Let it go.”

Lilly has a long history with her BFF, and the relationship is close enough that she can trust her to keep certain matters private. Her friend knows her well and can be depended upon to give her an honest read on situations. Their friendship is also defined by mutuality, and they both frequently go to each other with their news.

On the other hand, Mindy was reluctant to share news at work because she did not feel her relationships with coworkers were close enough.

I've only been here for two years, so I don't feel like totally sharing. Some of these people have been working together for like 20 years. They are kind of like family in a sense. I'm newer, so I'm still kind of feeling people out, getting to know people.

As a relatively new person, Mindy has yet to develop the kind of close, trusting relationship that Lilly has with her go-to sharing partner. She also recognizes that others in her unit have relationships that are stronger, and this likely makes her tentative relationships more salient.

Others with news seek out people whose opinions or insights they value. When Olivia lost her husband, she turned to women she respected and told them what she was going through.

It was interesting because I was working with people that were widowed, but I didn't know they were widowed. For me that was huge. It's something that you've never experienced before and it's like, "You will never get through this," with the help of the Lord. I found out, oh my goodness, all these women here, they are still working and going on and continuing on, and don't have a sad face. If they did, I didn't know them when, but they're strong women. They're women that I admire. It was interesting because I sought them out, and then found out one had been widowed for seven years, and another one had been widowed for [inaudible]. Just hearing their stories was such a healing experience for me.

More generally, Vicky said that she "would be lost without having people, these close friends of mine who can kind of give me a different angle or perspective on things." Vicky and Olivia, like Lilly, recognize that sometimes it is useful to let others know what is happening in your life so that people whose judgment and experience you respect can provide you with new insights and a different outlook.

A closely related consideration in sharing partner selection is relevant or compatible experience. Having similar experience facilitates useful feedback, but on a more basic level, it enables the sharing partner to display responsiveness, the demonstration of understanding, validation, and care (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Pearl explained that she was selective about whom she shared the news that her child was accepted to a particular university:

I told two friends whose kids were also getting into colleges... because they would be interested. Because their kids were applying to colleges too and they would understand that that's a good thing. Someone who has a baby would be like, "Oh okay, that's fine," but they wouldn't... They don't have a kid who's applying to colleges.

Pearl shared only with people who were in a similar life stage and going through the same kind of experience, because she thought they would care and be able to understand what it meant to her. In her earlier quote about her reluctance to share news about her husband's good job and awards with those whose spouses were less fortunate, Pearl alluded to other implications for sharing with people who would not understand her news. Given that they had very different experiences, she imagined that they would perceive her sharing that kind of good news as bragging.

Rita expressed a similar sentiment when she said she would not talk about booking a tropical vacation with others at work who were not making enough money to afford such a trip:

Human nature is human nature. One of the groups that I work with is the preoperative tech groups. These people are paid anywhere between \$12 and \$15 an hour. I get a couple that [get paid] \$16 because they've been here so long. But I can say to them I'm not going be here next week because I'm going take some vacation days. I would never say to them or I don't like to say to them, "Oh by way, I'm going to Cancun or Fiji or whatever." Do you know what I mean? I just wouldn't say to those people. It's so far out of their picture. I don't ever want them to say, "Well, look at her." Do you know what I mean? Because it's just not right to me.

In this case, Rita exposes a dual risk in this kind of situation. First, telling someone about her excitement over her good news regarding travel they are unlikely to experience is not “right” because it might highlight their relative lack of means. Second, Rita’s mention of “human nature” and the potential response of “look at her” express a concern that this kind of news sharing interaction could generate envy or jealousy.

The desire to share with someone who would really understand the situation and its meaning also came into play for work-related news. In addition to the reasons already described, Molly shares news about her job, like daily frustrations or a successfully accomplished task, with her officemate because she holds a similar position. As she explained, “other people take the availability of medical records for granted and wouldn’t understand.” Thus, Molly would be unlikely to share specific work-related news with those who were unfamiliar with its challenges.

DISCUSSION

The central aims of this study were to develop a richer understanding of how people think about what news is and to examine why and with whom people do or do not share their news with others at work. As a starting point, I integrated literature on interpersonal capitalization (Gable et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2011; Langston, 1994) and conversation analysis of good and bad news (Maynard, 1997, 1998, 2003) to introduce and differentiate the concepts of news events and shared news. Prior work on related topics has reflected a narrowed focus by whether an event is shared, by the valence of the event (e.g., positive events told to others in interpersonal capitalization), or by the domain of the event (e.g., work events; Hadley, 2014; Ilies et al., 2011). Thus, to this point, research has provided only fragmented glimpses of a larger landscape of news that obscures commonalities across these various distinctions. A focus on news events and news sharing enables a broader, more comprehensive window onto how individuals bracket their

life experiences into particular events they perceive as newsworthy and what motives and considerations are involved with whether and with whom people share those events at work. Specifically, this wider lens on news makes it possible to see that news events are not always perceived as having a single valence, but rather, news events may prompt ambivalence by representing both positive and negative elements. Furthermore, news may include discrete as well as ongoing events. This is a subjective figure ground distinction that may reflect individuals' evolving efforts to make sense of their life experiences (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Exposing these nuances illustrates that the phenomenon of news has a breath, depth, and dynamic complexity that has not adequately been addressed by or explored in prior research.

Across individuals, all types of news are shared. This finding is striking in light of prior research identifying various motivations and factors involved in withholding certain information about the self. For instance, research on boundary theory suggests that some individuals prefer to and benefit from maintaining a divide between their work and non-work lives (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Nippert-Eng, 2008; Ollier-Malaterre, Rothbard, & Berg, 2013; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005), and impression management scholars have identified several reasons why individuals may attempt to regulate the impressions others form about them (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Additionally, there is evidence that workplaces often put demands on employees to display positive affect (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988), which might hinder the sharing of bad or ambivalent news. Conversely, Hadley's (2014) interviews of human service workers in various professions revealed that employees often perceive group norms to be more accepting of sharing a select set of negative emotions and emotional work events than positive emotions and emotional work events.

Regardless of whether they self-identified as sharers or not sharers, every participant in the study was able to recall an example of sharing news with at least one other person at work. This was largely a function of selective sharing and withholding. Although individuals may not always be able to control when and how their news is shared, as demonstrated by examples of accidental and secondary sharing, people are often thoughtful and discriminating about with whom they share their news. Many people have at least one confidant at work with whom they can share what is happening in their lives which allows them to tell others about their news without broadcasting it widely. Thus, it is appropriate to conceptualize the decision to share or withhold as multiple choices to share or withhold from particular individuals or groups.

The broad range of motives for sharing and withholding is informative in a number of ways. First, as described above, existing theoretical perspectives cast news sharing as a generally self-interested act. Interpersonal capitalization is defined and empirically studied in a way that implies that positive events and experiences are shared to derive an additional benefit for the self (Gable et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2011; Langston, 1994). The work on compassion, which inherently centers around bad news events and experiences, is relatively silent about when, why, and with whom sufferers might disclose their plights, but it suggests that the expression of suffering is primarily associated with whether another person notices, feels, and acts to reduce that suffering (Dutton et al., 2014; Kanov et al., 2004). More generally, emotion-regulation and impression management perspectives focus on how individuals reveal information about themselves to benefit their emotional experience and how they are perceived by others. Participants' accounts of their sharing and withholding decisions certainly substantiate each of these views. In fact, self-focused motives represent the largest aggregate dimension of sharing and withholding motivations. Sharing can be motivated, for instance, by a need to release strong

emotions after both good and bad experiences; a desire to manage impressions proactively by providing correct details of events before news gets distorted; or a need for practical and emotional support from others. However, participants' accounts also reflect motives that clearly move beyond self-interest. Individuals can be motivated to share and withhold their news out of consideration of the other, their relationships, and the work they and their colleagues do every day.

It is particularly intriguing that motives for withholding are most heavily concentrated under self-focused motives. Together, other-, relationship-, and work-focused motives seem to provide more incentive to share than to withhold. Dibble and Levine (2010), extending research on the MUM effect, suggest that individuals are more eager to deliver good news, as opposed to bad or neutral news, because it can boost the mood of the recipient. Although this work relates to delivering news to the person it is about, it seems that this translates to news sharing as defined here. Individuals share news about themselves to make others feel good as well as to provide them with information they might find practically useful, motivating, or inspiring. Sharing news, especially publicly, is also a means by which to demonstrate appreciation and gratitude. Although the relative weight of each particular category of motivation cannot be determined by the present study, examples such as Steve, an extremely private person, sharing the foreclosure of his home suggests that other-focused motivations can override an individual's sharing self-perception as well as certain self-focused motivations.

Individuals also engage in news sharing as a means to impact relationships. As suggested by Phillips et al. (2009), disclosing or concealing particular events and experiences is a way for individuals to manage their connections with others. In the current study, participants generally withheld to avoid connecting with others and shared as a way to establish or reinforce their

relationships. Argyle and Henderson (1984) identified sharing good news as the most important rule of friendship, closely followed by verbal intimacy and opinion exchange. Participants' accounts of news sharing suggest that these rules may extend to bad news as well as good and from friendships to other types of high-quality relationships, including professional relationships.

In terms of work-related motives, participants only related to ways in which sharing good and bad personal and professional news could be beneficial. Specifically, people are motivated to share news so that they as individuals can perform their tasks at a high level and so that their work groups can maintain and improve their performance through thoughtful and informed coordination of work tasks, learning and awareness, and setting and maintaining a positive tone. When news sharing is motivated to benefit the work group or organization through learning and awareness, it may sometimes be an initial, subtle step in issue-selling, the process by which individuals influence others' attention to and understanding of events, developments, and trends that may impact organizational performance (Ansoff, 1980; Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Whereas the coordination of work tasks and learning and awareness tend to be directly related to individual and group performance, sharing news to set and maintain a positive tone is more indirect. Using news in this manner, individuals are helping to create a context for workplace interrelating that facilitates HQCs among colleagues. The emotional carrying capacity, tensility, and generativity that are characteristic of HQCs, however momentary or prolonged (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), are likely to ease and smooth interactions so that individuals can work together in a more productive manner.

The last set of findings focused on the factors and considerations involved with whom individuals share or withhold their news. First, in line with prior empirical evidence that physical proximity is positively related to the frequency of informal communication (Allen, 1984),

participants reported that they often shared news with other people who were nearby (e.g., officemates, coworkers in a small break room). Second, people tend to share with those who are relationally close and whose opinions or insights they value. This is generally consistent with the findings of the review and meta-analysis Collins and Miller (1994) conducted about liking and self-disclosure. Specifically, these authors found that a) people who disclose intimate information tend to be more liked than people who disclose less, b) people disclose more about themselves to those who they initially like, and c) people tend to like others as a result of having shared information about themselves with them. Third, individuals prefer to share news with those who are likely to understand because they have had similar experiences. This preference is born out of a desire for a responsive reaction, one that demonstrates that the person understands, validates, and cares (Reis & Shaver, 1988), as well as a consideration for the other. In addition to hoping for a certain kind of response, people do not want to bother or bore others with topics about which they are likely to be uninterested.

Although the findings with regard to sharing partner factors and considerations are not counterintuitive, they underscore an important point about the nature of news sharing at work. Accounting for the relationship context is crucial for understanding sharing behavior. As Reis, Collins, and Berscheid (2000: 863) note, “the interpersonal context – who one is with, one’s history with this partner and with similar others in related situations, and what one is trying to accomplish with the partner – represents a potent causal factor” in individuals’ behavior. As illustrated by the quotes and stories throughout this paper, people’s experiences with particular coworkers, others they have worked with, and even family and friends impact their sharing choices – both in terms of whether and with whom to share. In some instances, like staggered sharing, recent history can impact current sharing. For example, Rose initially only told one

person at work about her mother's breast cancer because she was not sure what effect it would have on others, or how they would react to her. When this initial sharing seemed to go well, she decided to share with other coworkers. Fiona, who had enjoyed a history of open, mutual sharing with coworkers, was a little surprised that this dynamic changed when she was promoted. In an effort to recapture and maintain that original dynamic, she made a concerted effort to be available and continue to share news with those who had gone from her peers to her subordinates.

Even aspects of a sharing history from years ago can bear on current sharing. For Joy, the "pick, pick, pick" responses of coworkers earlier in her career in the form of mocking and teasing had a powerful impact on her, and since those early years, she has made it a personal rule to restrict sharing at work. Hope's sharing history was particularly disheartening. As she grew up, her sharing of good news with family was consistently met with put downs and other unsupportive responses. She has generalized this non-work experience to the work context and is hesitant to share news at work due to a concern that she will be brought down by similar reactions by coworkers. Unfortunately, bullying at work has only justified and reinforced her expectations. In sum, participant accounts in this study suggest that individuals look to their past experiences to make sense of and generate expectations about who would be a safe, desirable sharing partner.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This research opens a number of new avenues for future research. First, scholars might consider exploring the implications of implicit norms against enacting a negative sharing stereotype, like a "Chatty Cathy," a "Debbie Downer," or someone who brags. Although none of the participants could provide a concrete example of someone who brags, the perceived admonition not to brag was particularly strong and was cited multiple times as a motivation to

withhold good news. This concern also emerged in Hadley's (2014) study of disclosure of positive and negative work events among human service professionals. Future studies might examine whether organizational cultures that are particularly adverse to bragging and self-promotion are associated with the disenfranchisement of joy. That is, just as certain types of losses are not socially recognized or encouraged as topics of discussion (Bento, 1994), it may be the case that individuals feel they cannot publicly acknowledge their personal and professional successes. Similar to the experience of disenfranchised grief, disenfranchised joy may cause people to feel disconnected and isolated at work (Hazen, 2003).

Another fruitful direction for research involves focusing in on *how* news is shared. Experiments may be useful in examining whether and how motives for and against sharing impact the way in which sharers frame the news for particular audiences as well as whether framing impacts others' responsiveness to the news. Most of the research on the communication of "bad news" is based in the medical context and refers to how medical professionals deliver news to patients (for reviews, see Harrison & Walling, 2010; Ptacek & Eberhardt, 1996). Although research shows that medical professionals find this process stressful (Shaw, Brown, & Dunn, 2013), the focus of this work is on limiting the negative impact of the bad news on patients and their families. This research may inform how individuals can manage the delicate task of sharing good news that may be bad news for sharing partners, a situation which might evoke bragging perceptions.

Scholars should also further explore the concept of ongoing news. A longitudinal study would be useful for providing insight into how sharing and withholding motives evolve over time and how through the process of sharing and responding, the meaning, emotional experience, and scope of a news event can develop and change. News that is continuing to unfold may

present unique opportunities for others to demonstrate responsiveness and for individuals to connect over time. Participants reported that others periodically checked in with them to find out how their academic endeavors or pregnancies were progressing, or what the latest developments were with regard to their own or loved one's health issues. Researchers might examine whether these types of responsive behaviors impact sharers over and above responses to discrete events because they demonstrate that others have kept the news events in mind and made some effort to reintroduce the news events as topics of conversation.

Finally, the focus to this point in the present study and in the work on interpersonal capitalization has been almost exclusively on sharers. Especially given that news sharing is a dynamic interpersonal interaction (Maynard, 2003), researchers should broaden their focus to include the impacts of good and bad news sharing on sharing partners and third parties. The motives discussed in this paper indicate that sharing often occurs for multiple reasons related to benefiting other individuals and the collective. It remains an open question as to whether and how news sharing achieves these goals.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I drew on and integrated various streams of research in social psychology, conversation analysis, and organizational studies to introduce and define the concepts of news events and news sharing. The initial goal of this research was to examine why and with whom individuals share or withhold their good and bad news at work. Detailed analysis of interviews with employees in a hospital setting revealed that individuals have many motives for sharing and withholding beyond those that primarily benefit themselves. In particular, employees can be motivated to share or not to share because of the potential impacts the news might have on others, their relationships, and their work. Answering Gable and Reis' (2010) call to examine

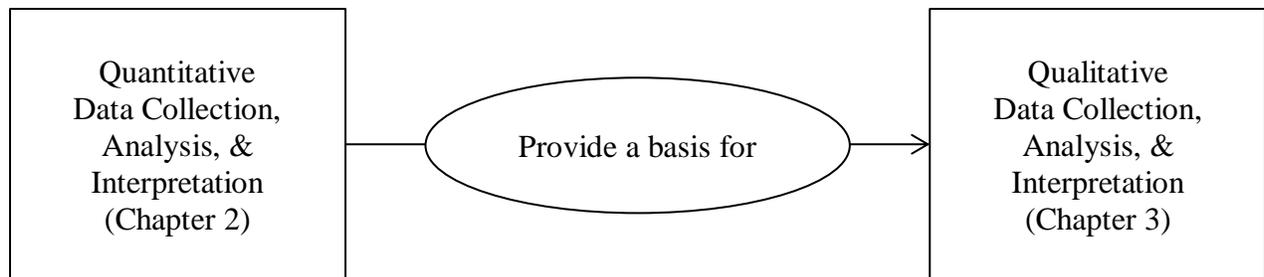
how people know with whom to capitalize, this work also sheds light on how individuals' relationships function as a contextual factor that shapes selective sharing and withholding of news at work. It is my hope that as research in this area continues scholars will explore the temporal dimension of news events and the way in which news sharing unfolds over time as well as continue to develop bridges between news sharing and related topics like compassion, gratitude, and positive relationships at work.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The major objective of this dissertation was to establish news sharing as an area of inquiry in organizational studies. Specifically, I sought to a) define and refine the concepts news events and news sharing with respect to relevant existing constructs, b) determine the prevalence of news sharing at work, c) examine whether and how it matters in organizationally relevant ways, and d) gain insights into why and with whom individuals share or withhold their news at work. To do so, I synthesized multiple streams of literature in social psychology, conversation analysis, and organizational studies; conducted three surveys of adults working full-time in a variety of industries; and conducted 42 interviews with employees in various occupational roles at two nationally recognized hospitals.

FIGURE 5

Sequential Mixed-Methods Dissertation Design



I employed a sequential mixed-methods design (see Figure 5) in which the quantitative set of studies and the qualitative study were independent and given equal priority (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) because I used each method to address different research questions (Bryman, 2006). I began where the literature was, by focusing on the closest existing construct to news sharing, interpersonal capitalization (i.e., sharing good news). I applied the language of news to

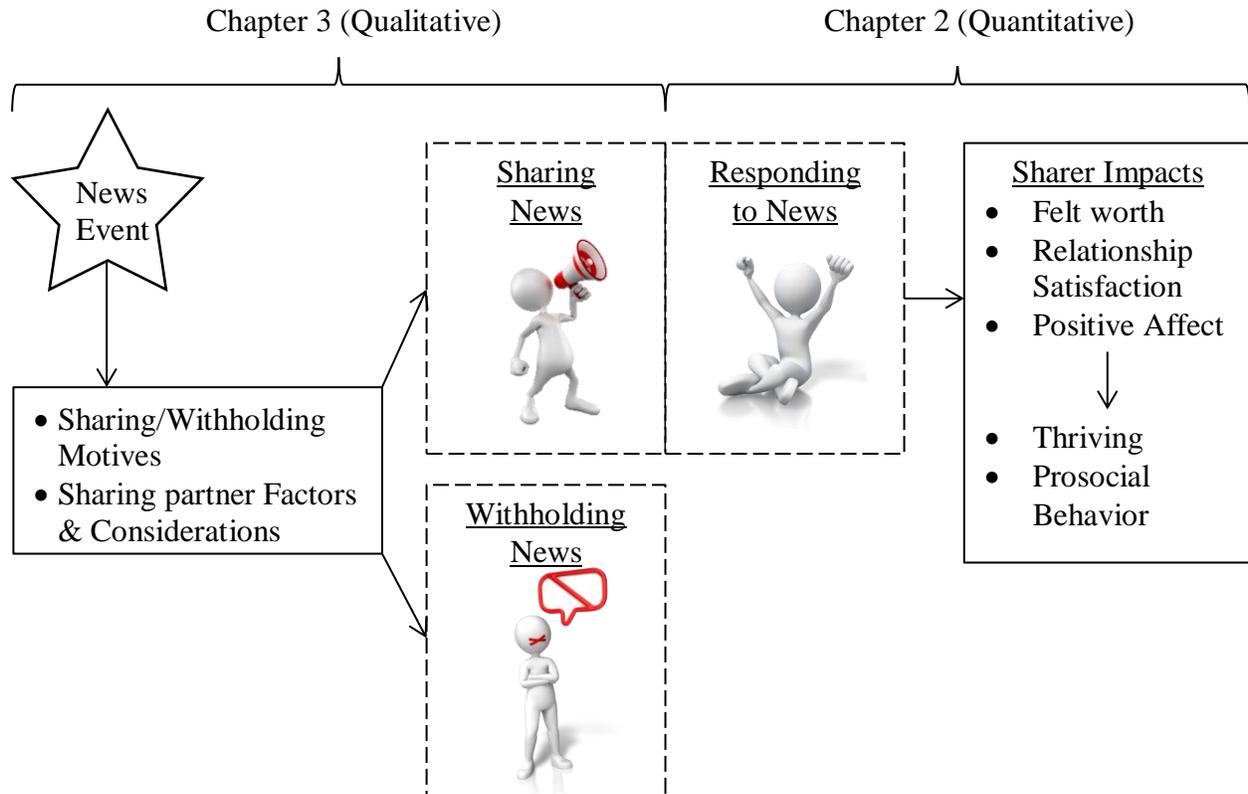
capitalization to lay the groundwork for a broader, more inclusive conceptualization of news and news sharing that would facilitate studying both interpersonal capitalization and the process of sharing and responding to bad news. To extend the work on interpersonal capitalization and bring it into the workplace, I used quantitative methods to test hypotheses about the multiple mechanisms by which coworker responses to shared good news may impact work-related outcomes for sharers. Descriptive findings and the results of analysis using structured equation modeling provided empirical evidence, as further detailed below, that sharing good news is prevalent at work and it creates the potential, via coworkers' active-constructive responses, for outcomes that benefit sharers and likely, the collective.

This work revealing that news sharing does indeed matter in the workplace provided the basis for the qualitative study exploring why and with whom individuals share or withhold, because unless sharing occurs, the positive dynamics evidenced in Chapter 2 cannot unfold. The purpose of the qualitative study was theory elaboration (Lee, Mitchell, & Sablinski, 1999b) in that it drew on pre-existing ideas from interpersonal capitalization (Gable et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2011; Langston, 1994) and conversational analysis of good and bad news (Maynard, 1997, 1998, 2003). Through analysis of semi-structured interviews, I inductively worked to refine the concepts of news and news sharing as well as to identify a more comprehensive range of motives for sharing or withholding. As a whole, this mixed-methods dissertation enabled expansion, using different methods for different inquiry components so as to extend the range of inquiry (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989: 259), and it represents important steps toward completeness, developing a more comprehensive account of the news sharing process (Bryman, 2006). Specifically, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 provide different views of this phenomenon,

shedding light both on what hinders or spurs sharing and on the downstream effects of sharing given certain types of responses (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6

Illustration of Mixed-Method Design and the News Sharing Process



Ample quantitative and qualitative evidence reveals that news sharing is, in fact, a prevalent workplace phenomenon. In the Pilot Study and Study 1 of Chapter 2, about 90 percent of those surveyed reported that they are at least somewhat likely to share good news at work or that they shared the last piece of good news they had with at least one person at work. Additionally, most news is shared with multiple people at work, and the primary sharing partners are coworkers. The qualitative data in Chapter 3 complemented these findings. Participants discussed examples of sharing a wide range of news. Although people share and withhold from

particular individuals selectively, one of the reasons that most news is shared is that many people have a go-to person with whom they can share anything.

The qualitative paper also sheds light on the content and dimensions of news events. Interview participants discussed personal and professional events ranging in scope and importance, suggesting that individuals think about a full range of life events as news. Additionally, their accounts of news revealed two important insights into the nature of news. First, news events can be discrete or ongoing. This likely reflects how individuals are bracketing their life events in order to make sense of them (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Second, news is not necessarily all good or bad. Discrete events or an ongoing stream of events can include both positive and negative elements. Thus, people can have news about which they are ambivalent.

With regard to sharing and withholding, there are a range of motives and considerations. In addition to the self-focused motivations related to emotion regulation and impression management suggested by related literatures (Hadley, 2014; Phillips et al., 2009), individuals also share and withhold because they are motivated to do so in ways that are focused on others, their relationships, and their work. This indicates that news sharing is not necessarily a purely self-interested act. Instead, choosing to engage in or refrain from sharing good and bad news may be a means to benefit others, manage closeness with others, or positively impact the organization and those it serves.

If individuals with news do choose to share, and others respond in an active-constructive manner, sharers are likely to have a greater sense of thriving at work and engage in more prosocial behavior to benefit those with whom they work. The results of Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that active-constructive responses across individuals to a particular event or for one

person generalized across events have such beneficial outcomes. As argued in Chapter 2, although thriving and prosocial behavior are operationalized specific to sharers, these outcomes are organizationally important because they contribute to organizational capacity, the ability of individuals and the collective to achieve organizational outcomes. The findings of the quantitative paper provide evidence that active-constructive responses have the potential to impact capacity through its effects on how sharers experience themselves, their relationships, and their emotions at work.

It is notable, however, that not all constructive responses to shared good news are significantly related to positive intrapersonal states and interpersonal behavior for sharers. In Study 2, I controlled for passive-constructive responses, and the paths from this type of response to the mediators and dependent variables were non-significant. This suggests that even if sharers believe that responders are happy for them and supportive of them, reactions from which sharers can only infer responsiveness have little to no impact on sharers. The explicit responsiveness inherent in active-constructive responses may seem more genuine and convey that responders are more invested in their interaction and relationship with sharers.

Given the accumulating research on the substantial negative impacts associated with negative interpersonal behavior like social undermining, bullying, and incivility (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina & Magley, 2009; Cortina et al., 2001; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002), it is also surprising that active-destructive responses (i.e., undermining how good the news is) and passive-destructive responses (i.e., ignoring the news sharing) did not significantly affect sharers' felt worth, relationship satisfaction, positive affect at work, sense of thriving, or prosocial behavior. Indeed, Spreitzer, Porath, and Gibson (2012) suggest that minimizing incivility, which signals that the target is not a valued, worthwhile member of the organization,

will help facilitate thriving. It may be, however, that the positive emotions generated by the news event, or perhaps from the active-constructive responses of others, buffers the sharer against the potential harm of destructive responses. Accounts of sharing and responding from participants in Chapter 3's qualitative study suggest another alternative. In a handful of instances in which participants recalled feeling either that their sharing was ignored or that someone reacted in a way to bring them down, participants seemed to attribute the response to causes external to the responder. For instance, participants stated that perhaps the responders were legitimately too busy to pay attention or that they were feeling under the weather that day. While this might be a self-protective response, shielding the person from making negative attributions about what the response says about themselves, the news event, or their relationships with the responders, it might also be a means by which sharers help responders to save face.

An important limitation of this dissertation, in addition to those discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, is that it does not adequately capture the truly interpersonal nature of sharing and responding to good news. Unfortunately, there is often misalignment between theory and methods in research on dyadic phenomena (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012). Chapter 2 focuses on the impact of perceived, but not actual, responses to shared good news. Although Reis et al. (2010) found that perceived responses are relatively accurate as compared with ratings by independent coders, there may be differences among what reactions responders want to convey, what behavior they actually exhibit, and what sharers perceive. In Chapter 3, participants related to being both sharers and responders across different episodes of news sharing, but I focused primarily on the experience of sharers, or more accurately, potential sharers. As mentioned in the discussion of Chapter 2, even adopting a more dyadic methodological approach would likely not fully capture sharing and responding given that people share with multiple others. In describing

selective sharing and withholding, especially staggered sharing, Chapter 3 points to the fact that the responses a sharer perceives from one person impact decisions to share or withhold that same news from others as well as future sharing decisions related to other news. With this in mind, it might be beneficial for future researchers to utilize network approaches and examine dispersion patterns to better understand the impacts of multiple responders.

Finally, it is critical to examine what organizations can do to foster and facilitate effective news sharing and responding. The interviews from Chapter 3 revealed that people are hungry for it. Margo, cited in Chapter 3 as trying to motivate and make space for positive sharing, has leveraged her managerial position to establish a good news board where people in her unit can share positive events and experiences. At the time of her interview, this had not yet caught on and become a common practice, but a similar board was very popular among the staff of Rita's unit. As the context in which much news sharing and responding occurs, the organization, at various levels, has the potential to facilitate and shape these processes. To benefit both individuals and organizations, research is needed to examine how organizations can develop and implement practices that validate sharing and responding by providing time and space for sharing and by encouraging responses that convey respect, understanding, and caring.

Taken together, the papers that comprise this dissertation have served to clarify and deepen our understanding of what news is, established that it is quite prevalent in the workplace, shown that there are many motivations for both sharing and withholding news at work, and provided evidence that because of the power of others' responses, news sharing at work matters in organizationally beneficial ways. I hope that by integrating, refining, and building upon prior work in related areas that this dissertation will be a starting point for continued study on news sharing and responding. This dissertation suggests that these dynamic processes, although based

in seemingly simple, everyday behavior, are a generative, worthwhile area for research in that they are an integral part of positive interrelating at work and the overall effective functioning of individuals and potentially the collective.

APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 SURVEY

Please think about the *last time* when you had good news, and answer the questions below in as much detail as you can.

- What was the good news? (Provide a brief description below.) [open response]
- Why was it good news? [open response]
- Did you share the good news with at least one other person at work?
 - Yes
 - No

If YES...

- How frequently did you share the good news at work?
 - Once
 - Several times
 - Often
- With how many people did you share your good news? [drop down 1-100]
- With whom did you share your good news? Check all that apply
 - My supervisor
 - My coworker(s)
 - My clients / customers / patients
 - Other [Fill in blank]

[*Note:* The next set of questions will employ fill in logic to make matrices so that participants respond to each item in reference to each of the people/groups selected in previous question.]

- Relative to when you experienced or learned of the subject of the good news, when did you first share it at work?
 - Same day
 - Same week
 - Same month
 - Later
- How did you share the news?
 - In person
 - Electronically (e.g., email, instant message)
- In how much detail did you share your good news?
 - A little bit
 - Some
 - Quite a bit
 - In its entirety
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about how others at work responded to your good news? (1: Strongly disagree, 7: Strongly agree)

(Perceived Response to Capitalization Attempts Scale, PCRA; Gable et al., 2004)

- [Active-constructive response]
 - He/She/They reacted to my good fortune enthusiastically.
 - I sometimes got the sense that he/she/they were even more happy and excited than I was.
 - He/She/They asked a lot of questions and showed genuine concern about the good event.
- [Active-destructive response]
 - He/She/They reminded me that most good things have their bad aspects as well.
 - He/She/They found a problem with it.
 - He/She/They pointed out the potential down sides of the good event.

Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements...

(1: Strongly disagree, 7: Strongly agree)

- General Relationship Satisfaction (Adapted from Hendrick, 1988)
 - In general, I am satisfied with my relationships with my coworkers.
 - Compared to most, I have good relationships with my coworkers.
 - My relationships with my coworkers have met my expectations.
 - I like the relationships I have with my coworkers.
 - My relationships with my coworkers are relatively unproblematic.
- Thriving (Porath et al., 2011)
 - At work...
 - I find myself learning often.
 - I continue to learn more and more as time goes by.
 - I see myself continually improving.
 - I am not learning. (R)
 - I have developed a lot as a person.
 - I feel alive and vital.
 - I have energy and spirit.
 - I do not feel very energetic. (R)
 - I feel alert and awake.
 - I am looking forward to each new day.
 -
 - Prosocial Intentions (adapted from Reis et al., 2010)
 - I would consider giving up something important to myself to help others at work do something important for them.
 - I would be willing to put aside your hurt feelings and respond nicely if others at work had done something rude or unpleasant (intentionally or unintentionally).
 - I would go out of my way to do something nice for others at work.

Demographics

- How old are you? (drop-down)
- What is your gender? (Male / Female)

- Which best describes your current employment status?
 - Employed Part-time
 - Employed full-time
 - Currently unemployed, but previously employed at least part-time
 - Unemployed with no employment history
- How long have you been in your current organization? (drop-down)
- What is your highest education level? (drop-down)
- Which best describes your race? (drop-down)
- What is the main industry in which your organization operates? (open response)

APPENDIX B: STUDY 1 SURVEYS

Focal Employee Survey

How often do you share good news (e.g., something about which you were happy, proud, enthusiastic, excited, or appreciative) with your coworker?

- Never [If selected, then skip remaining questions]
- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Daily

How does your coworker usually respond to you when you share good news?
(1: Strongly disagree, 7: Strongly agree)

- Active-constructive response (PCRA; Gable et al., 2004)
 - My coworker usually reacts to my good fortune enthusiastically.
 - I sometimes get the sense that my coworker is even more happy and excited than I am.
 - My coworker asks a lot of questions and show genuine concern about the good event.
- Passive-constructive response (PCRA; Gable et al., 2004)
 - My coworker tries not to make a big deal out of it, but is happy for me.
 - My coworker is silently supportive of the good things that occur to me.
 - My coworker says little, but I know he/she is happy for me.
- Active-destructive response (PCRA; Gable et al., 2004)
 - My coworker reminds me that most good things have their bad aspects as well.
 - My coworker finds a problem with it.
 - My coworker points out the potential down sides of the good event.
- Passive-destructive response (PCRA; Gable et al., 2004)
 - Sometimes I get the impression that he/she doesn't care much.
 - My coworker doesn't pay much attention to me.
 - My coworker often seems distracted.

Using the scales provided, please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with each statement in reference to yourself at work. (1: Strongly disagree, 7: Strongly agree)

- Felt worth
 - I feel valued at work.
 - I feel like I am an important person at work.
 - I feel like I have the respect of others at work.
 - I feel needed at work.
- General relationship satisfaction (Adapted from Hendrick, 1988)
 - In general, I am satisfied with my relationships with others at work.
 - Compared to most, I have good relationships with others at work.
 - My relationships with others at work have met my expectations.

- I like the relationships I have with others at work.
- My relationships with others at work are relatively unproblematic.
- Positive affect (Watson & Clark, 1999)
At work, I feel...
 - happy
 - cheerful
 - joyful
- Thriving: Items 1-5 for learning and 6-10 for vitality (Porath et al., 2011)
At work...
 - I feel myself learning often.
 - I continue to learn more and more as time goes by.
 - I see myself continually improving.
 - I am not learning. *R*
 - I have developed a lot as a person.
 - I feel alive and vital.
 - I have energy and spirit.
 - I do not feel very energetic. *R*
 - I feel alert and awake.
 - I am looking forward to each new day.

Demographics

- How old are you? (drop-down)
- What is your gender? (Male / Female)
- Do you work full-time or part-time?
- How long have you been in your current organization? (drop-down)
- What is your highest education level? (drop-down)
- Which best describes your ethnic or racial background? (drop-down)
- What is the main industry in which your organization operates? (open response)

Supervisor Survey

- OCB (Lee & Allen, 2002)
This person...
 - helps others who have been absent.
 - willingly gives his/her time to help others who have work-related problems.
 - adjusts his/her work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time off.
 - goes out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group.
 - shows genuine concern and courtesy towards coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations.
 - gives up time to help others who have work or nonwork problems.
 - assists others with their duties.
 - shares personal property with others to help their work.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Intro Script...

Thank you for your willingness to share your experience with me. I expect the interview to take about 45 minutes. I would like to begin with a couple general questions about your job. Next, I will invite you to share some specific stories about sharing good and bad news with others at work. Then, I will ask you about your unit and the sharing news impacts you.

You have already read and submitted the informed consent form. As the form described, I would like to audio record the transcript to make sure that I completely and accurately capture your responses. Do you have any questions about this? Do you agree to be audio-recorded (please respond with yes or no)?

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so please respond freely. This interview will be integrated with other interviews to look for patterns and themes in the experiences of [this hospital's] employees. If you need to take a break for any reason and resume at a later time, feel free to do so, and we can reschedule. Some questions may sound repetitive, but just answer each question the best you can. I hope you will bear with me as I explore your experience from different angles. If at any time I ask you a question that doesn't make sense or that you don't understand, please let me know, and I'll try to ask it more clearly. Throughout the interview, please only share things that you feel comfortable sharing. I respect the confidentiality of those work with, so please feel free to use pseudonyms. If you want something you're about to say to be off the record, feel free to tell me, and I will turn the recorder off/stop taking notes. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background

- What aspects of your job and/or working for [this hospital] do you enjoy the most?
- What aspects of your job and/or working for [this hospital] are you proudest of?

Good News

- In general, what types of good news – something someone is proud of or excited or happy about –do people in your unit share with each other, and how do they share it?
 - Are there types of good news that are less likely to be shared (i.e., good news you or others might feel uncomfortable bringing up, are discouraged from bringing up)? Why?
 - What, if anything, do you feel works well about the way people share and respond to good news in your unit?
 - What, if anything, do you feel does not work well or could be improved about the way people share and respond to good news in your unit?
- Can you tell me about the most recent time when you had good news and you shared that news with at least one person at work?
 - Why did you share the news?
 - How did you share the news?
 - What were you thinking and feeling when you shared it?
 - How did the person/people with whom you shared the news respond?
 - How did their response make you feel?

- Is there anything you would do differently? Why?
- Can you tell me about the most recent time when you had good news and you did *not* share that news with anyone else at work?
 - Why did you decide not to share the news?
 - How did you feel at the time about keeping the news to yourself?
 - How do you feel now about your decision not to share the news?

Bad News

- In general, what types of bad news – something someone is sad, angry, stressed, or otherwise upset about – do people in your unit share with each other, and how do they share it?
 - Are there types of bad news that are less likely to be shared (i.e., bad news you or others might feel uncomfortable bringing up, are discouraged from bringing up)? Why?
 - What, if anything, do you feel works well about the way people share and respond to bad news in your unit?
 - What, if anything, do you feel does not work well or could be improved about the way people share and respond to bad news in your unit?
- Can you tell me about the most recent time when you had bad news – something you were sad, angry, or otherwise upset about – and you shared that news with at least one person at work?
 - Why did you share the news?
 - How did you share the news?
 - What were you thinking and feeling when you shared it?
 - How did the person/people with whom you shared the news respond?
 - How did their response make you feel?
 - Is there anything you would do differently? Why?
- Can you tell me about the most recent time when you had bad news and you did *not* share that news with anyone else at work?
 - Why did you decide not to share the news?
 - How did you feel at the time about keeping the news to yourself?
 - How do you feel now about your decision not to share the news?

Unit Context

- In general, how would you describe the quality of relationships people in your unit have with each other? Why?

Impacts

- What impact does sharing your own good or bad news have on you and your relationships with others in your unit?
- What impact does hearing others' good or bad news have on you and your relationships with others in your unit?
- How does sharing good or bad news impact the unit in general?

Is there anything else you would like to share or think would be important or useful for me to know?

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