

Will They Wig Out?

The Prediction of Workplace Violence

**26th IPMAAC
Annual Conference
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**Harry Brull
Personnel Decisions International**



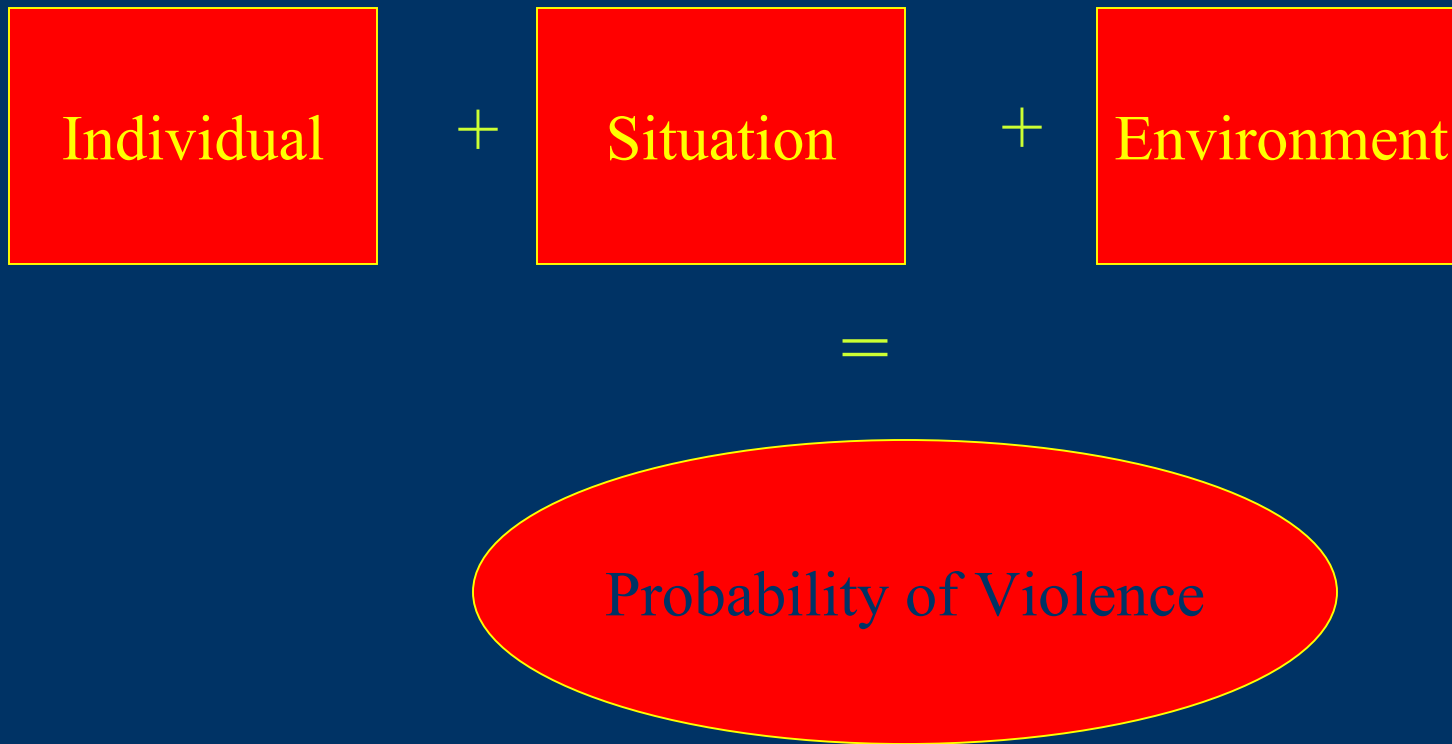
What do the following have in common?

- Earthquakes
- Volcanic eruptions
- Suicide
- Workplace violence

Answer

- **They continue to happen**
- **We wish they didn't**
- **We have difficulty predicting when/where**
- **Afterwards we say, "We should have seen it coming."**
- **All of the above**

Components of Workplace Violence



Components of Workplace Violence

Individual

Background and Personality characteristics

Probability of Violence

Components of Workplace Violence



A diagram illustrating the relationship between a situation and the probability of violence. At the top, a red square with a yellow border contains the word "Situation" in yellow text. To its right, the phrase "‘stuff’ happening" is written in white text. Below the square is a white equals sign. At the bottom, a red oval with a yellow border contains the text "Probability of Violence" in yellow text.

Situation

“stuff” happening

=

Probability of Violence

Components of Workplace Violence

Rigid rules
oppressive conditions

Environment

=

Probability of Violence

The Demographic Approach

To minimize workplace violence, an employer should try to hire and retain

- **law-abiding**
- **mature**
- **intelligent**
- **financially advantaged**
- **women**

The Demographic Approach (continued)

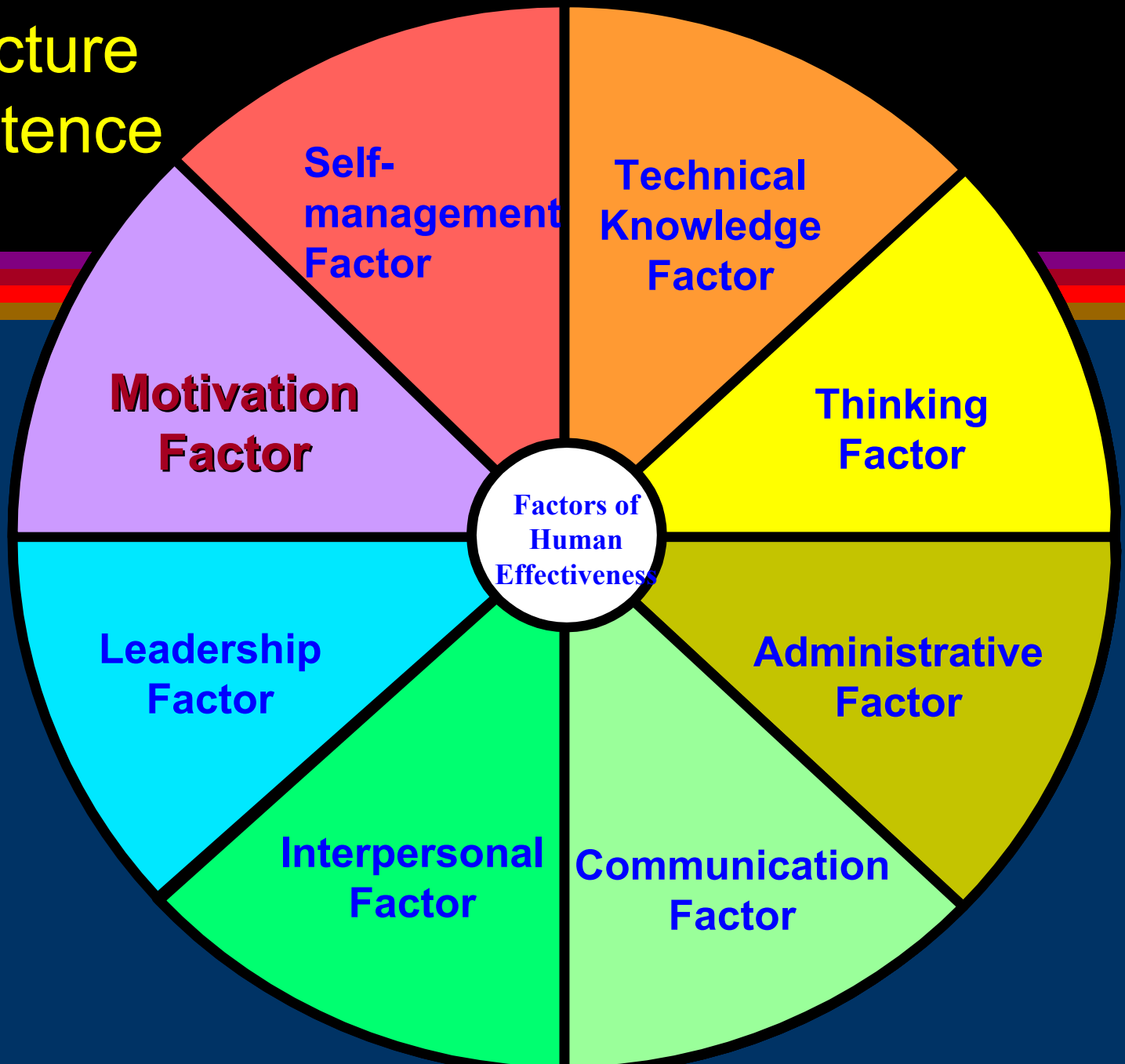
- **without criminal records**
- **who grew up in loving, intact families**
- **and who do not have histories of substance abuse or psychiatric histories**

***Violence Prediction, Workplace Violence,
and the Mental Health Expert***

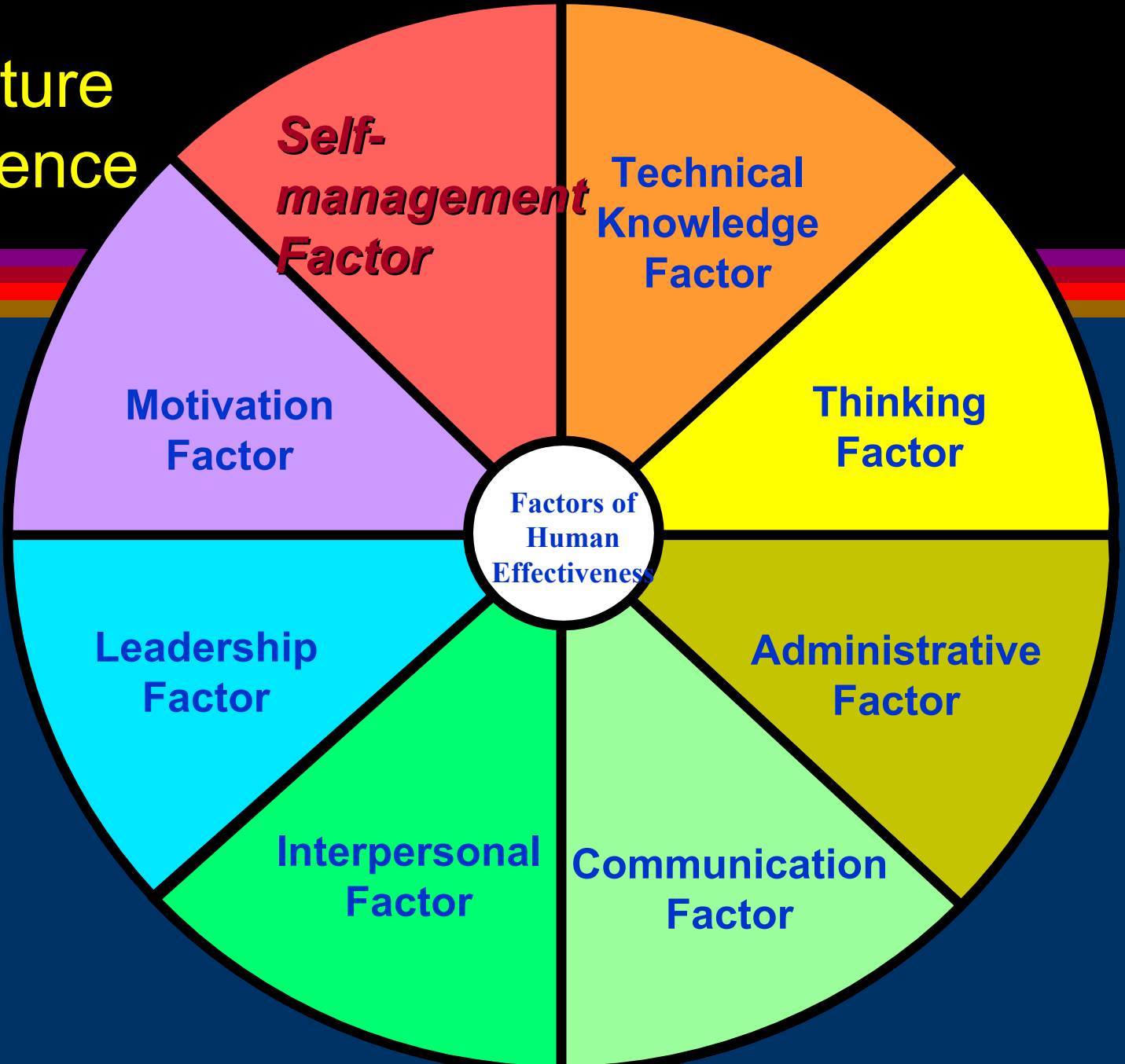
Douglas Mossman,

Wright State University School of Medicine

The Structure of Competence



The Structure of Competence



***Self-management
Factor***

**Technical
Knowledge
Factor**

**Thinking
Factor**

**Factors of
Human
Effectiveness**

**Administrative
Factor**

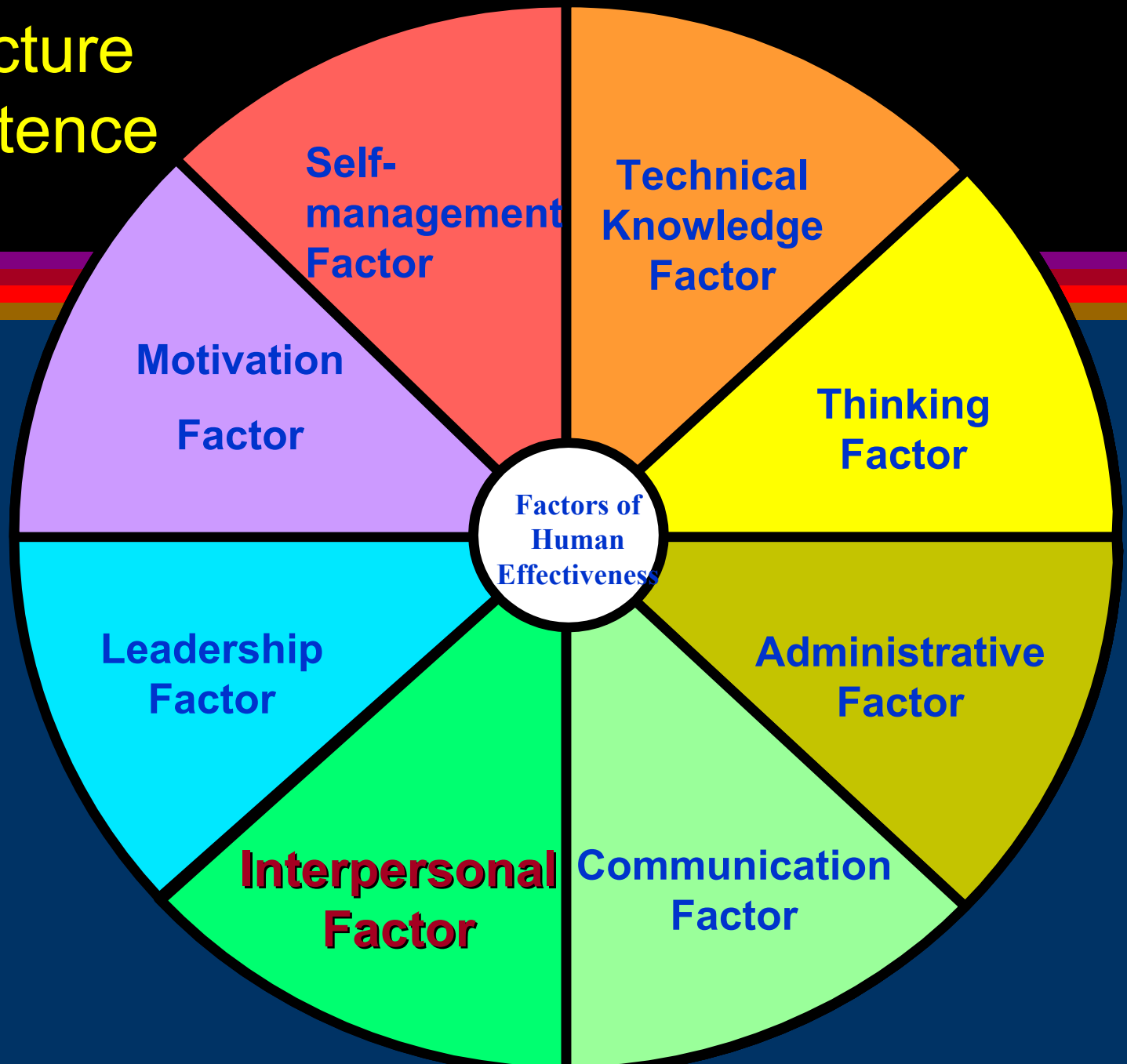
**Communication
Factor**

**Interpersonal
Factor**

**Leadership
Factor**

**Motivation
Factor**

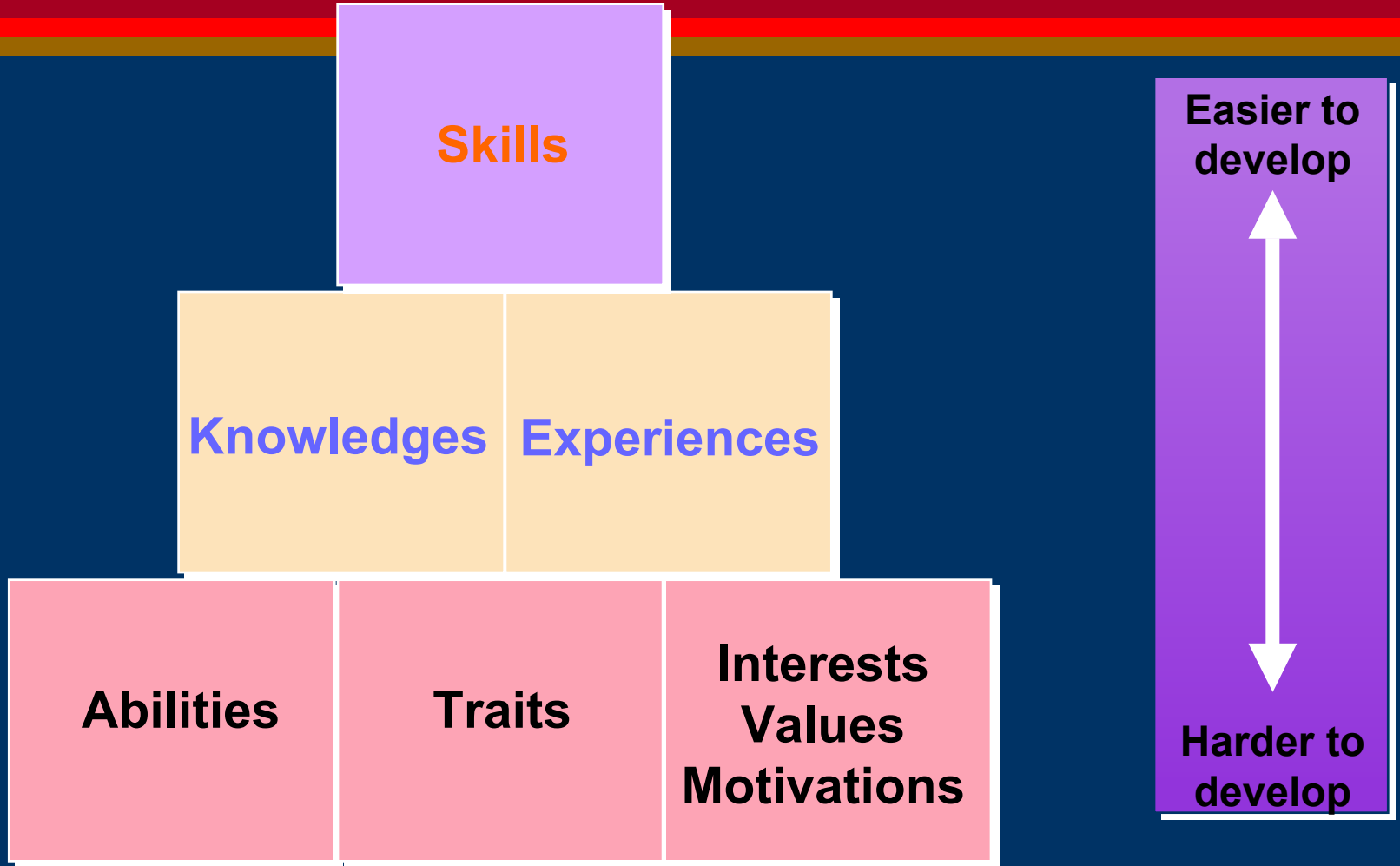
The Structure of Competence



The Structure of Personality

- **“Big 5” model**
 - **Surgency (Extroversion)**
 - **Dependability (Conscientiousness)**
 - **Adjustment (Neuroticism)**
 - **Agreeableness**
 - **Culture (Openness to experience or Intellectance)**

Building Blocks of Success



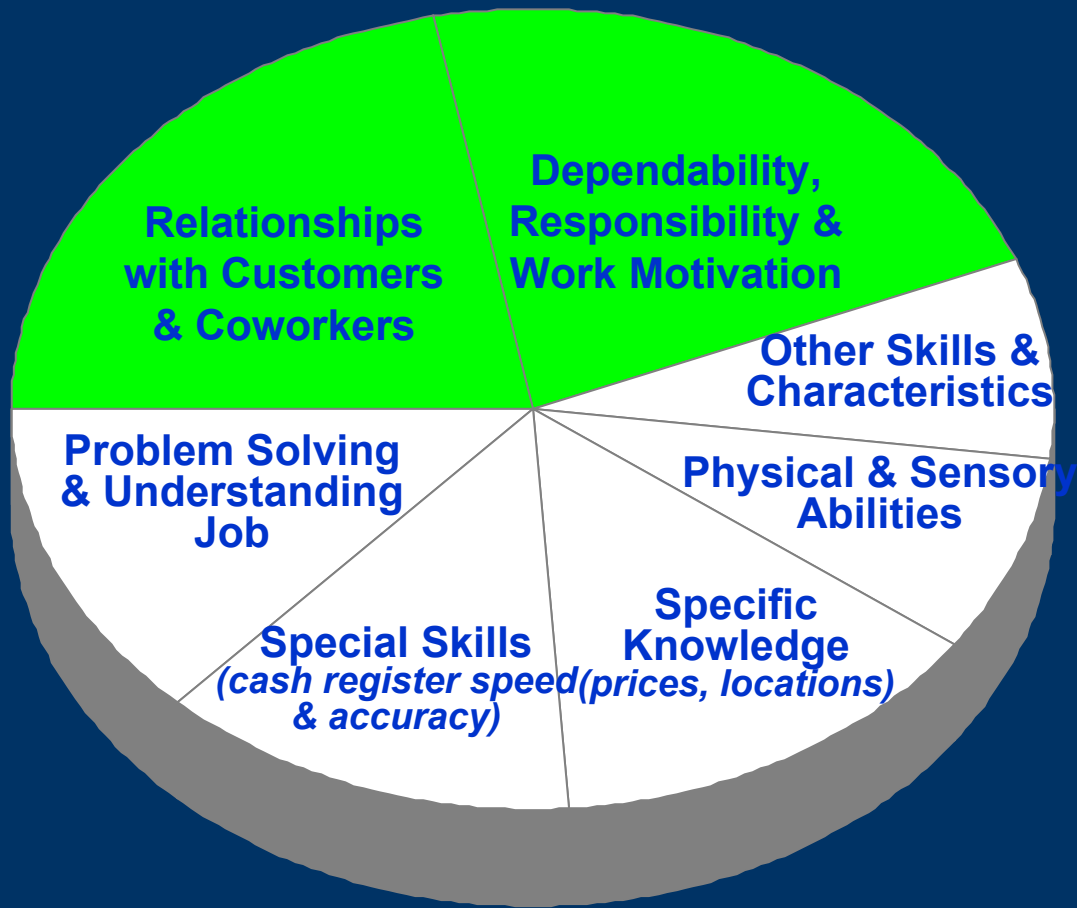
Individual Correlates of Violent Behavior

- **Trait anger**
- **Attitudes toward revenge**
- **Negative affectivity**
- **Attributional style**
- **Exposure to violent cultures**
- **Self control (???)**

Constraints to pre-employment assessment of violence potential

- **Practical**
 - **Time**
 - **Money**
 - **Candidate reaction**
- **Legal**
 - **ADA**
 - **Privacy**
 - **Access restrictions**

Hourly Job Performance



Assessment Tools



- Interviewing
- Standardized tests
- Work samples (simulations)
- Other people

Interviewing Principle

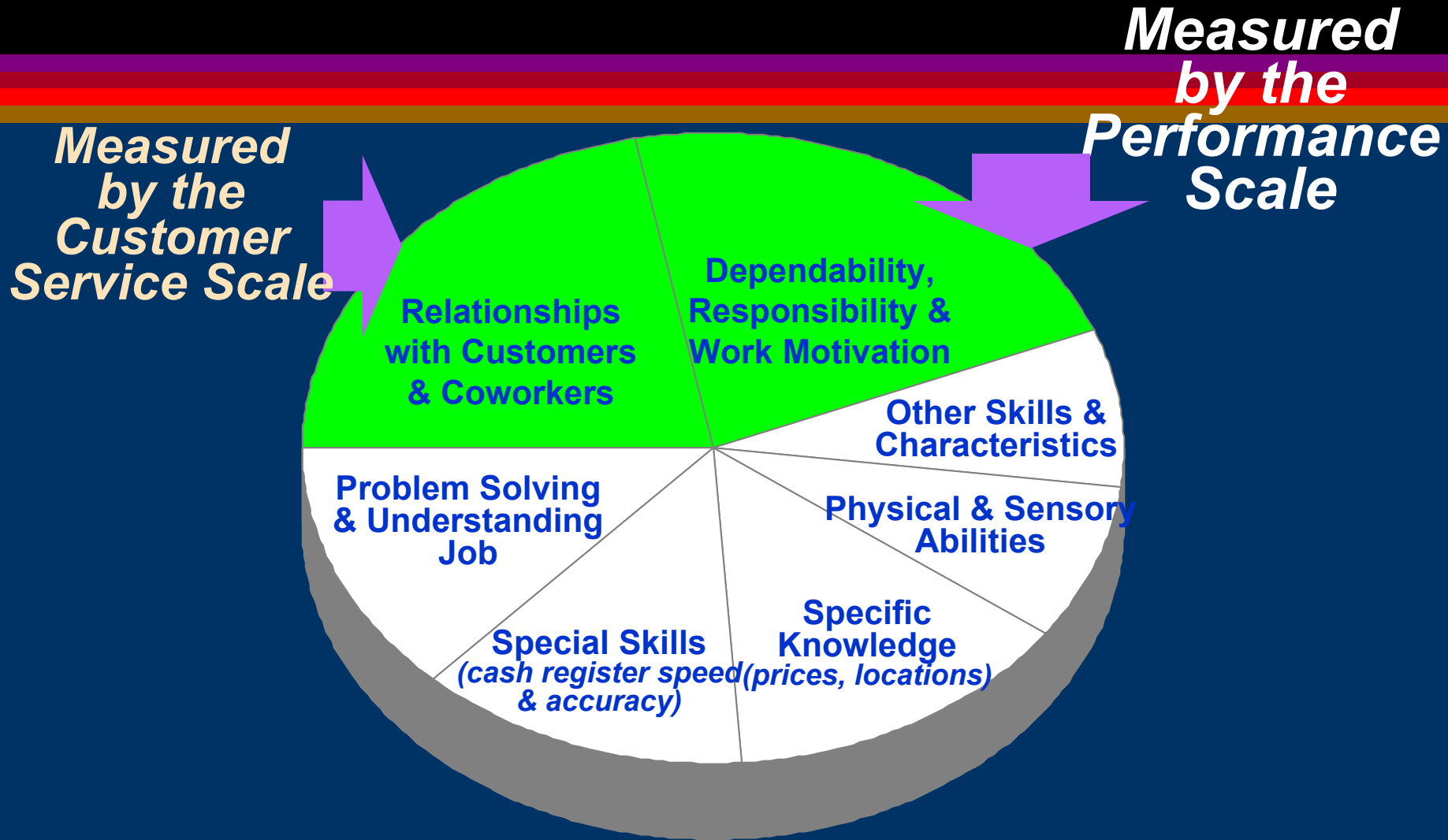
**The Best Predictor of
Future Behavior is Past
Behavior in Similar
Circumstances**

Testing Options



**Measures of
Conscientious work
behavior and
agreeableness**

Hourly Job Performance



The Same Instrument Can Measure Both Productive & Counterproductive Behaviors

Productive Behaviors

- Shows initiative
- Takes responsibility
- Exceeds expectations
- Follows rules
- Conscientious
- Orderly

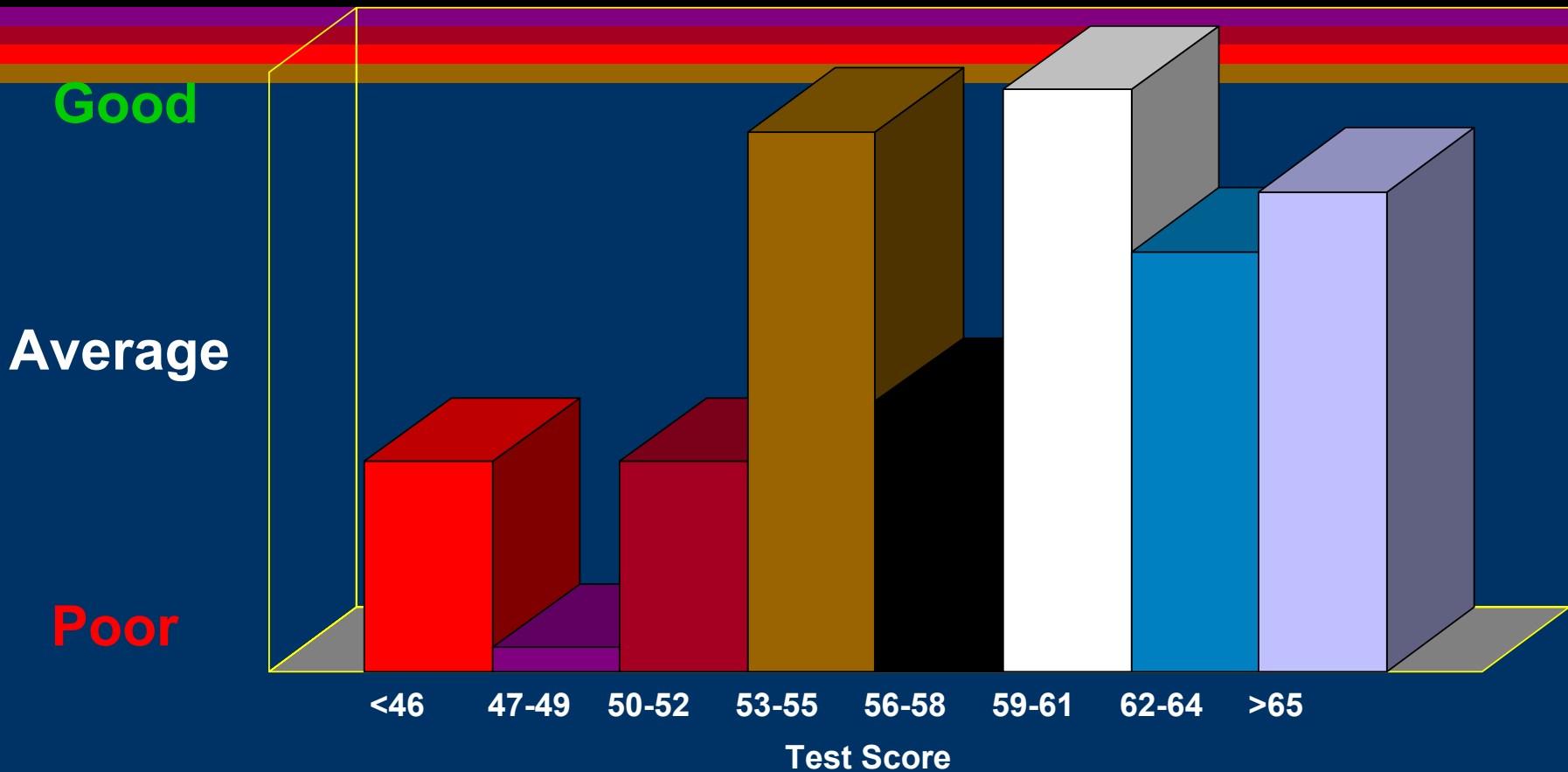
- Violates rules
- Makes claims
- Absent

- Tardy
- Long Breaks
- Socializes with Friends

- Theft
- Drugs
- Violence

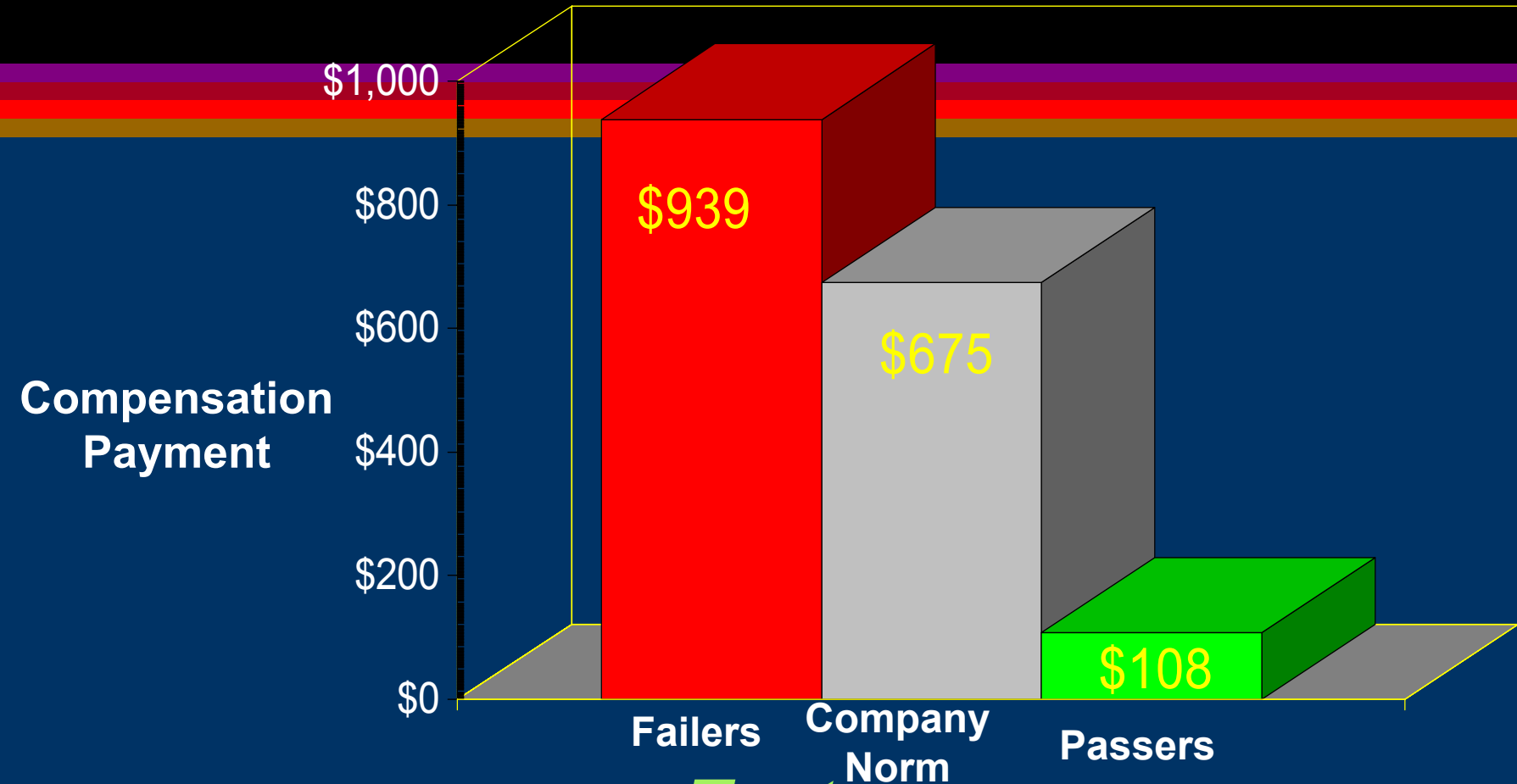
Counterproductive Behaviors

Overall Driving Performance



Bus Drivers with higher test scores have fewer accidents, fewer violations, and more commendations.

Workers' Compensation - Drivers



For a large bus company, **Test passers** collected **84%** less in workers' compensation payments

than the company norm and **88%** less than **failers**.

Other People

- **References**
- **Press searches**
- **Background investigations**
- **Psychologicals**

Maximizing return on references

- **Go beyond primary references**
- **Promise confidentiality (and maintain it!)**
- **Inform that you are talking to a number of people**
- **Use investigative reporting technique**

Lessons from the Nuclear Industry

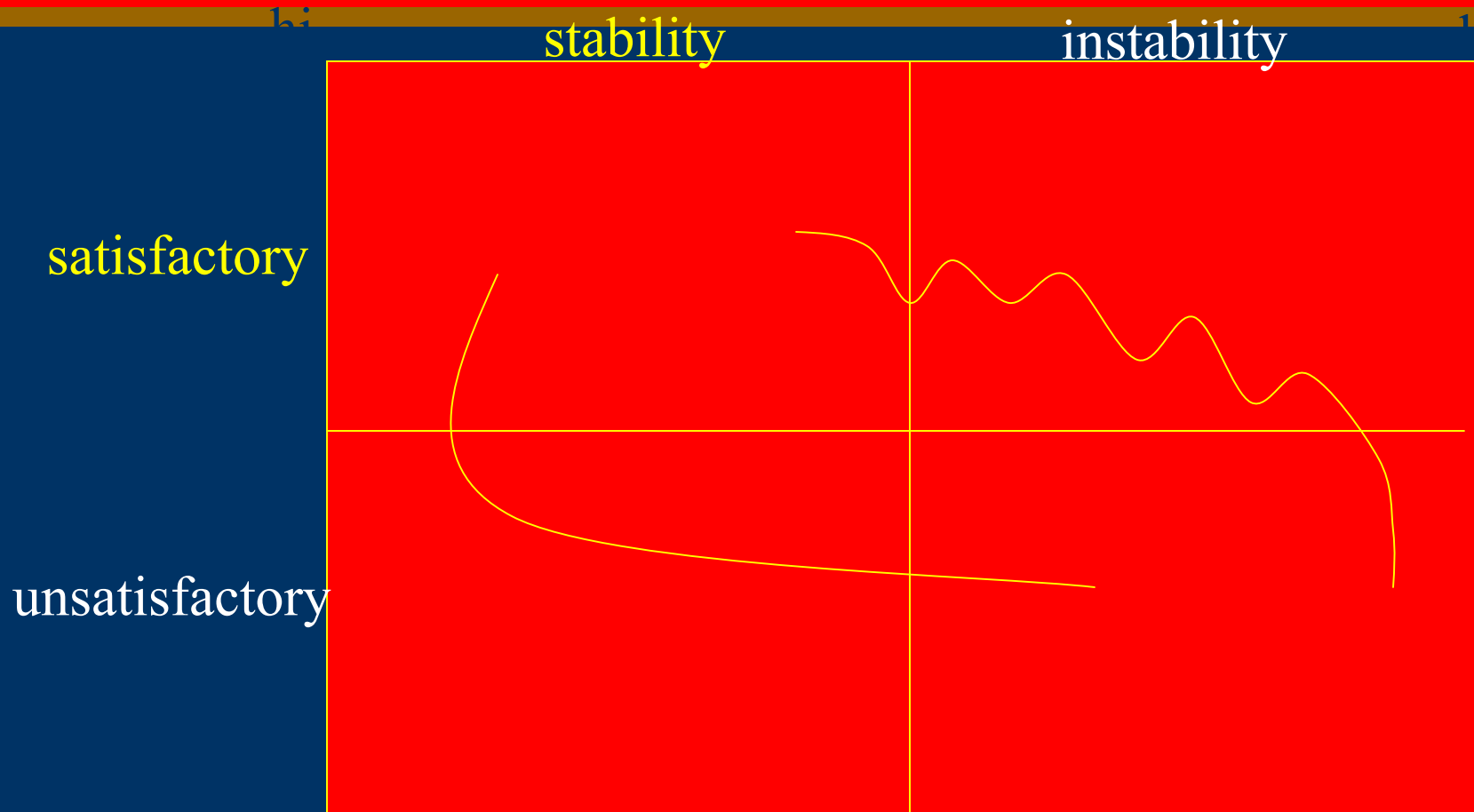
- **Selection alone isn't enough**
- **First line supervisors are first line of defense**
- **Organizational supports are important**
- **Training is critical**



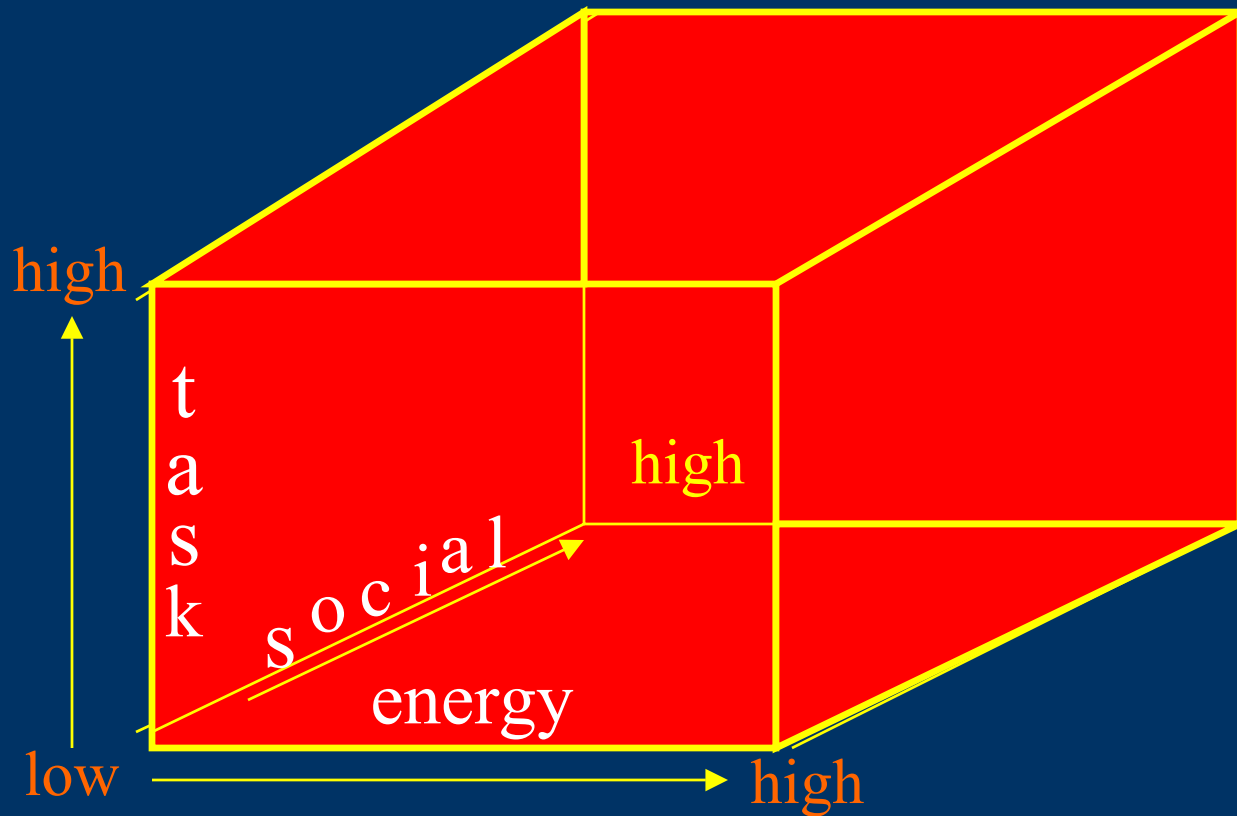
Think about an individual in the workplace about whom you were concerned.

What were the first signs that something was going on?

Interaction between behavior reliability and job performance



Behavioral Factors of Performance



Signal Areas of Change

- **Employee behavior**
- **Co-worker behavior**
- **Outcomes of employee behavior**
- **Supervisor internal cues**

Signal Areas of Change

- **Employee behavior**
 - **Energy level**
 - **Task orientation**
 - **Social interest**

Signal Areas of Change

- **Co-worker behavior**
 - **Avoiding the employee**
 - **Complaining about the employee**
 - **Anger toward the employee**

Signal Areas of Change

- **Outcomes of employee behavior**
 - **Work products**
 - **Safety violations**
 - **Attendance record**
 - **Other**

Signal Areas of Change

- **Supervisor internal cues**

Organizational Supports

- **Trained Supervisors**
- **Solid disciplinary process**
- **EAP or equivalent**
- **Access to re-evaluation professionals**

Conclusions

- **Good selection is first step**
- **Reduction of violence selects for better employees**
Selection alone isn't enough
- **Care and feeding is important**
- **Reduction of violence is good management**