

# Relational Self-Perceptions as Predictors of Social Interaction Satisfaction Across Neurotypes

**Presenter: Veronica du Plessis**

Co-Authors: Jackson McFadden, Cailee M. Nelson, Ph.D., & Caitlin M. Hudac, Ph.D.

Department of Psychology & Carolina Autism and Neurodevelopment (CAN) Research Center

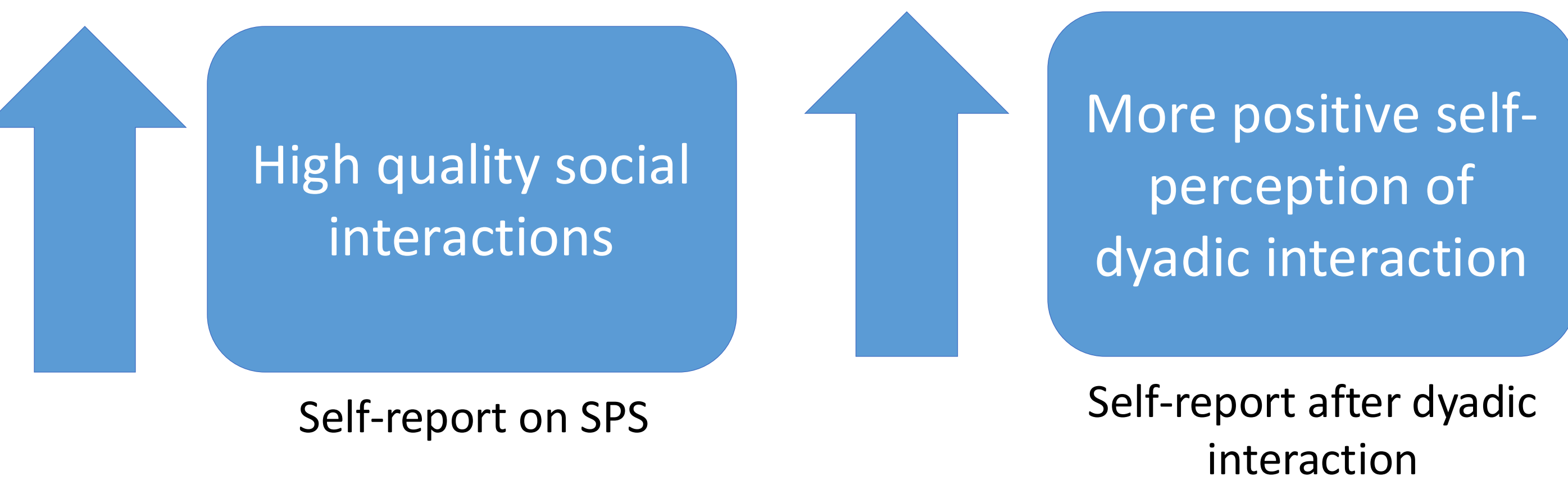
## Background

- Social relationships are essential to psychological well-being and life satisfaction.
- Prior research shows interpersonal perceptions both shape and reflect personal well-being (Harris & Orth, 2020).
- In interactions between **autistic (AUT)** and **non-autistic (nAUT)** individuals the "double empathy problem" must be considered, in which a bidirectional mismatch in understanding may occur due to differences in social communication and perspective (Milton, 2012)

## Objective

The present study examines how self-perceptions of relationships relate to perceived interaction quality after dyadic interactions.

## Hypothesis

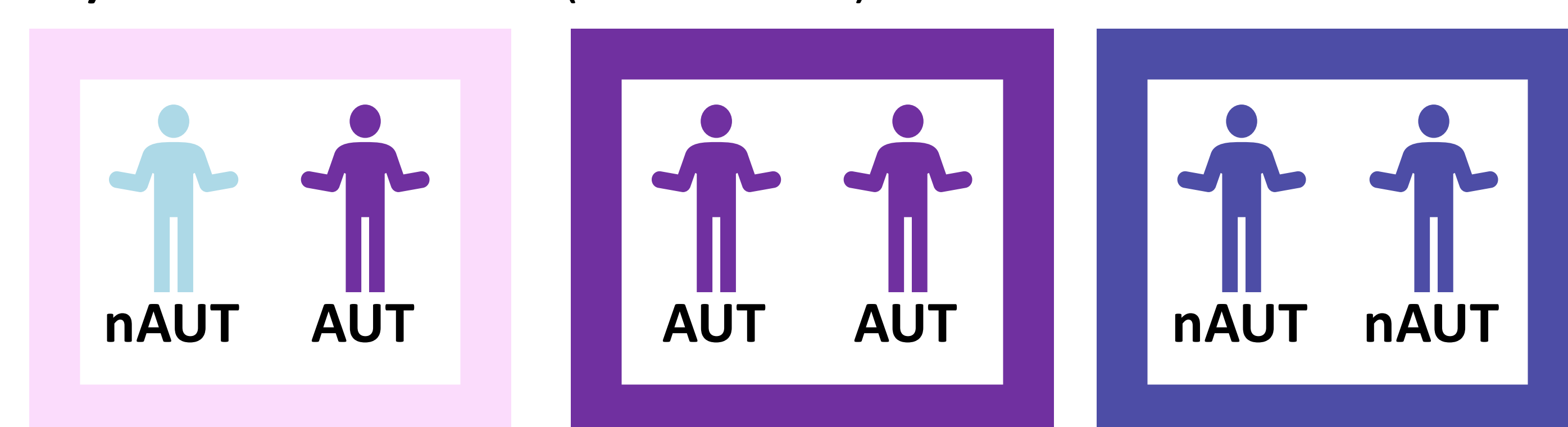


## Methods

Participants were autistic and non-autistic adolescents and young adults (ages 8-21; n = 54; study ongoing)

1) **Social support and relationship quality** via Social Provisions Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russell, 1987)

2) **Social interaction** (tasks + EEG)



	nAUT	AUT	nAUT
N sessions	6	5	14
Age M(SD)	10.3 (3.06)	11.4 (1.88)	19.7 (.85)
Age range	8-17	10-15	19-21
Gender	5 male, 3 female	8 male, 1 female	5 male, 20 female, 1 non-binary
	n = 7	n = 6	n = 39
SPS M(SD)	35.29 (5.6)	31.33 (4.2)	36.44 (3.9)
SPS Range	29-41	24-35	27-42

3) **Post-interaction affect:** Rate positive (e.g., comfortable, supported) and negative (e.g., distant, phony) emotions on 10-point Likert scale

nAUT individuals reported **more social support** on average.

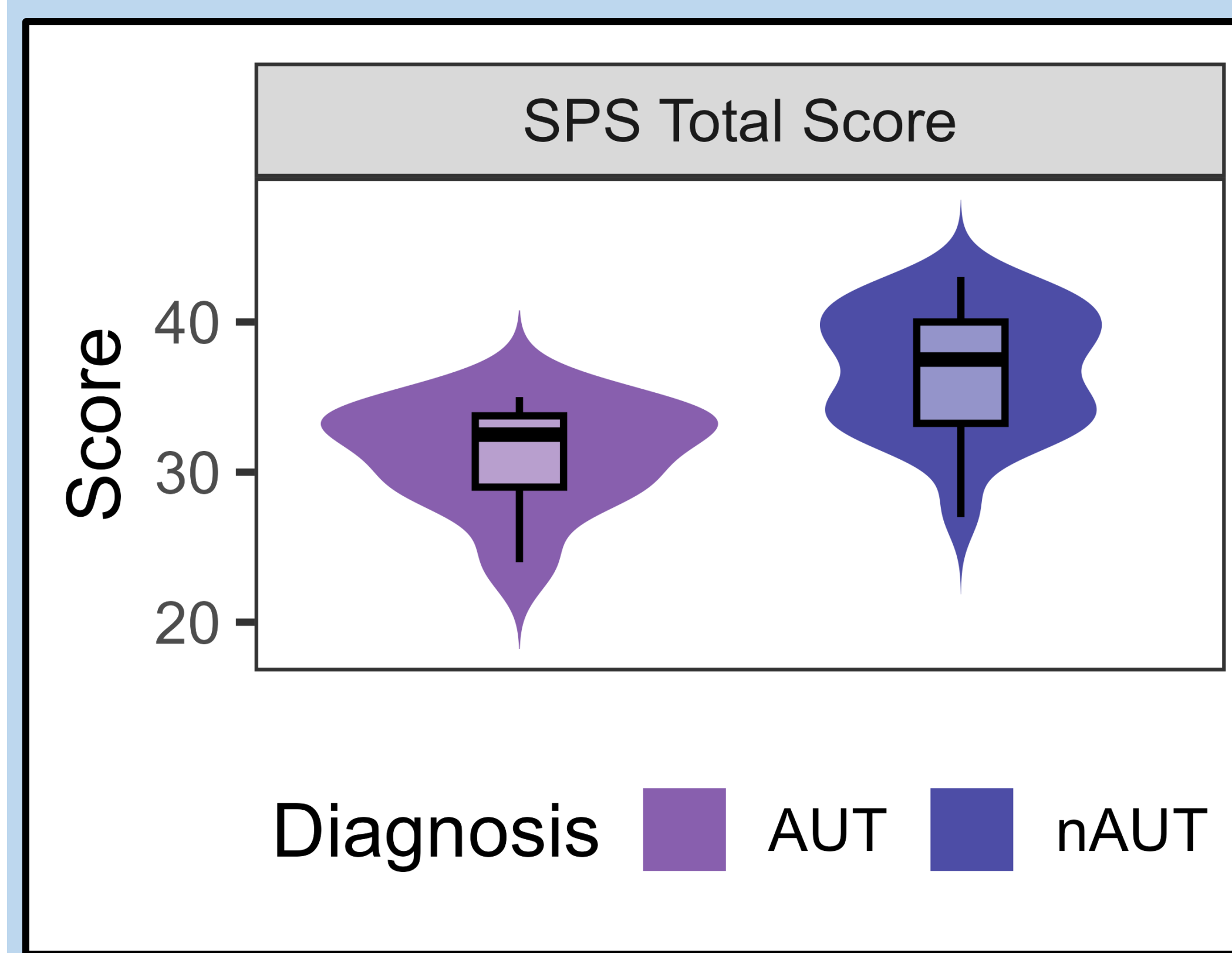


Figure 1. *SPS by Dyad Type Violin Plot.* SPS scores did differ by diagnosis:  $F(1, 45) = 10.01, p = 0.003$

Dyadic interaction ratings **did not differ by dyad group.**

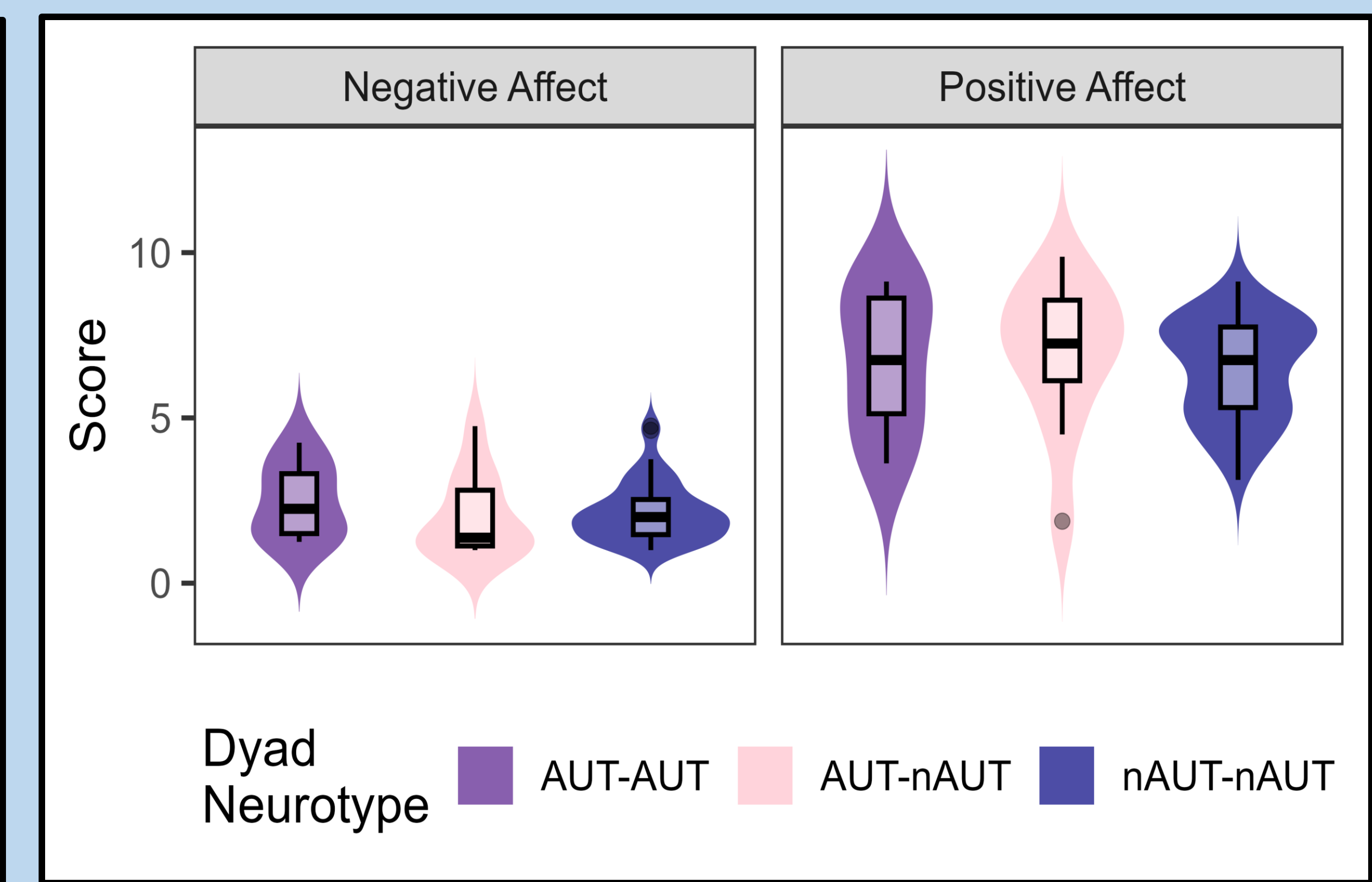


Figure 2. *Affect by Dyad Type Violin Plot.* Positive Affect:  $F(2, 55) = 0.32, p = 0.728$ ; Negative Affect:  $F(2, 55) = 0.46, p = 0.634$

**AUT-AUT** dyads with **less** social support but **nAUT-AUT** with **more** social support reported **more positive** dyadic interactions.

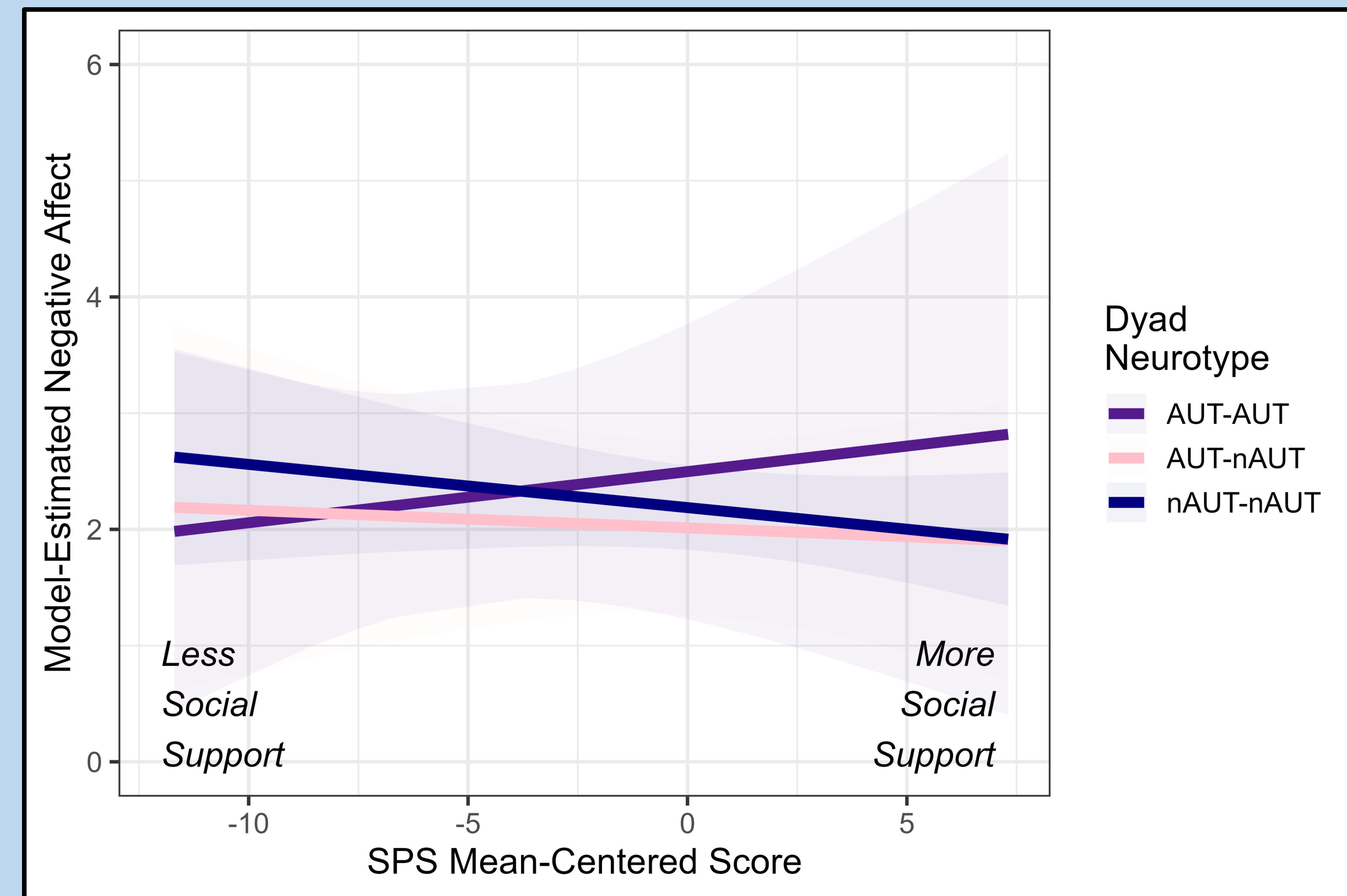


Figure 3. *SPS Positive Affect Interaction by Dyad Type.* A significant intercept suggested that Aut-Aut dyads at average values of SPS rated their interactions as positive:  $F(1, 27) = 817.61, p < 0.0001$ . There were no significant interactions between dyad type and SPS scores  $p > 0.240$ .

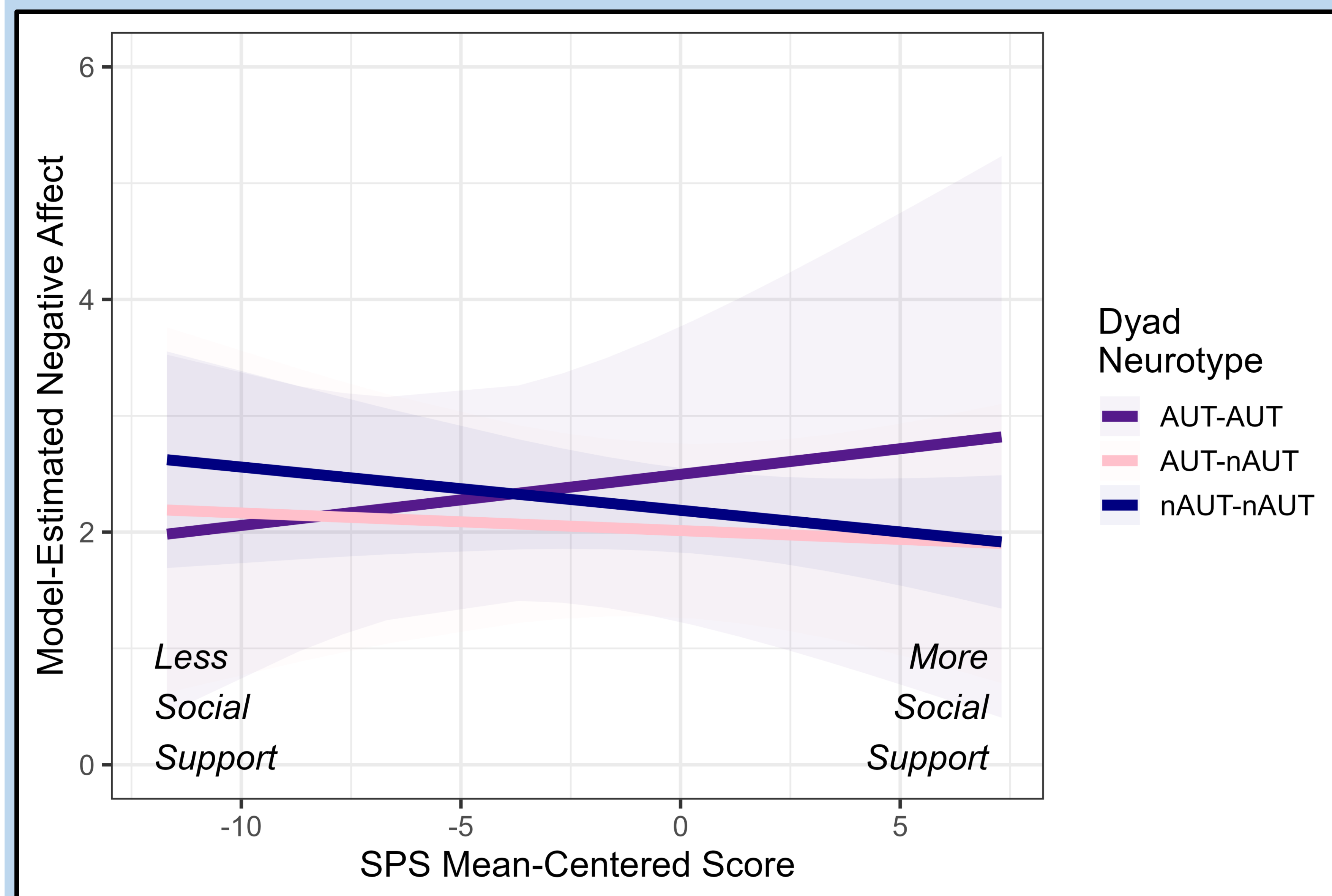
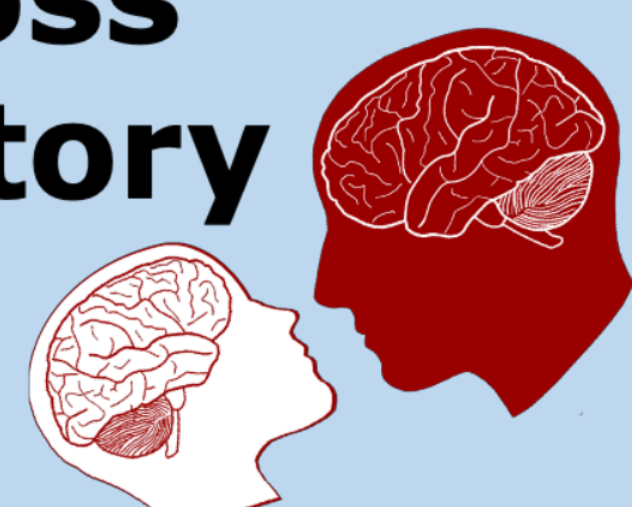


Figure 4. *SPS Negative Affect Interaction by Dyad Type.* A significant intercept suggested that Aut-Aut dyads at average values of SPS rated their interactions as negative:  $F(1, 27) = 191.88, p < 0.0001$ , though negative affect was not statistically greater than zero ( $p = 0.75$ ). There were no other significant interactions ( $p > 0.407$ ).

**Negative ratings** of dyadic interactions increased slightly with **higher social support** in **AUT-AUT** dyads.

## Brain Research Across Development Laboratory

PI: Dr. Caitlin Hudac  
www.b-radlab.com



## References:

- Cutrona, C. E., & Russell, D. W. (1987). Social Provisions Scale. *PsychTESTS*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/06213-000>
- Harris, M. A., & Orth, U. (2020). The link between self-esteem and social relationships: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *119*(6), 1459–1477. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000265>
- Milton, D. E. M. (2012). On the ontological status of autism: The 'double empathy problem.' *Disability & Society*, *27*(6), 883–887. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2012.710008>

## MAIN TAKEAWAY

- Non-autistic individuals reported more social support than autistic individuals
- Perceived social support showed opposite effects across dyads, with higher support related to poorer interaction ratings in autistic-autistic dyads and better interactions ratings in autistic-non-autistic dyads.
- Interactions between autistic individuals may be especially comfortable and supportive, especially when they feel less supported in their personal relationships