Rethinking reappraisal: The double-edged sword of regulating negative emotions in the workplace

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ABSTRACT

Cognitive reappraisal can benefit employees, in terms of their emotional health. However, we propose that reappraisal can also entail hidden costs. Drawing on social-functionalist emotions theory, we posit that the use of reappraisal to control negative self-conscious emotions (guilt and shame) results in both positive employee outcomes (increased satisfaction, decreased burnout) and negative employee outcomes (increased counter-productive workplace behaviors (CWBs)). In Study 1, employees who used reappraisal to control guilt and shame were more satisfied and less burnt out, but also more likely to engage in CWBs. In Study 2, employees described what CWBs they would engage in if they faced no consequences: those using reappraisal to control guilt and shame reported more unethical CWBs and a greater willingness to actually perform the behavior. Study 3 assessed working MBA students in a live interaction (a heated negotiation), finding those who used reappraisal to control guilt and shame behaved more unethically. Studies 4 and 5 experimentally manipulated the use of reappraisal to control guilt and examined its effect on CWBs. Individuals in the reappraisal condition were more likely to withhold valuable resources from task partners (Study 4) and cheat on a work task (Study 5) than individuals in a control condition, providing causal evidence that reappraisal led to more CWBs.

1. Introduction

When people feel unpleasant emotions too often or too intensely, they face impaired well-being, health, and general functioning (Association, 2013; Beck, 1967; Gross & Jazaieri, 2014; Pressman, Gallagher, & Lopez, 2013; Smith, Glazer, Ruiz, & Gallo, 2004). In the workplace, negative emotions can account for low job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, and even vandalism (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Judge & Larsen, 2001; Martocchio & Jimeno, 2003; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & de Chermont, 2003). Employees prone to negative emotions tend to suffer poor physical and mental wellness, both on the job and after work (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Wegge, Dick, Fisher, West, & Dawson, 2006). Not surprisingly, employees are highly motivated to avoid or alleviate negative emotions, and organizations, both formally and informally, encourage their workers to avoid experiencing them (Diefendorff & Richard, 2008; Grandey, 2000; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Employees can control their negative emotions and, thus, avoid these troubling outcomes, by using emotion regulation strategies (Gross & Thompson, 2007), which enable employees to minimize the intensity of negative emotions, or simply avoid them altogether. One effective strategy, *cognitive reappraisal* (henceforth "reappraisal"), involves reframing or rethinking an emotion-eliciting situation in a way that changes how it emotionally impacts the focal individual (Denny & Ochsner, 2014; Elfenbein, 2007; Gross & John, 2003; Gross, 1998; Lazarus & Alfert, 1964). Reappraisal is often used to feel better in the context of negative situations and has been reliably linked with lower negative emotion across a broad literature (see Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012, for meta-analysis). Although people can use reappraisal at any point during the emotion process, it is considered an "antecedent-focused" emotion regulation strategy, in that the use of reappraisal tends to occur early in the emotion process, often heading off, or minimizing, the full-blown experience of an emotion (Barrett, 2012; Grandey, 2000; Gross, 2015; Kalokerinos, Résibois, Verduyn, & Kuppens, 2017; Lawrence, Troth, Jordan, & Collins, 2011).

Reappraisal might involve minimizing the impact of a negative situation (e.g., thinking that "it isn't a big deal") or enhancing its positive aspects (e.g., considering unexpected benefits or opportunities). For example, if a job applicant feels herself starting to get anxious about an

upcoming interview, she might rethink the situation in a way that renders it exciting instead of stressful (e.g., "This is my chance to make it big!"; e.g., Brooks, 2014) to mitigate her anxiety. Reappraisal research shows that it is frequently used in daily life, both in the workplace and outside of it (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Gross & John, 2003; Feinberg, Ford, Thai, & Gatchpazian, unpublished manuscript; Ford, Karnilowicz, & Mauss, 2017; Totterdell & Holman, 2003).[1] Individuals who use reappraisal benefit from less negative and more positive affect, suffer fewer depressive symptoms, are more optimistic, have higher self-esteem, cope with stress better, and report greater life satisfaction (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2001; Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004; Kraaij, Pruymboom, & Garnefski, 2002; Mauss, Cook, Cheng, & Gross, 2007; Troy, Wilhelm, Shallcross, & Mauss, 2010).

Despite the myriad benefits associated with reappraisal, we suggest that it may not always produce desirable workplace outcomes. Instead, researchers and practitioners have overlooked a critical potential cost of having employees use reappraisal to regulate negative emotions at work. Drawing on functional theories of emotions (Barrett, 2012; Frijda, 1986; Keltner & Haidt, 1999, 2001), we propose that when employees down-regulate their experience of negative emotions, they minimize the important functions these emotions serve: emotions guide appropriate behavior, helping individuals engage in actions that are best suited for the situation at hand. For instance, although sadness is an unpleasant emotion, it has been shown to inspire greater task perseverance (Forgas, 2013): employees who use reappraisal to overcome this emotion might be less committed to completing their tasks. Similarly, fear accounts for higher levels of caution (Hartley & Phelps, 2012): employees who use reappraisal to reduce their fear of making errors may be less cautious in their work. At the same time, we recognize the negative impact such emotions can have on employee well-being when they are not effectively regulated. Noting these trade-offs, we propose that reappraisal represents a double-edged sword: using reappraisal to control negative emotions corresponds with higher levels of employee well-being, including more job satisfaction and less burnout, but using reappraisal can also impair important functions these negative emotions serve.

In the present research we focus on the effects of using reappraisal to control negative self-conscious emotions (i.e., guilt, shame), in particular, because we expect this type of reappraisal to be especially challenging for organizations. On one hand, feelings of guilt and shame can impair psychological well-being, and predict negative workplace outcomes such as low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of burnout (Gil-Monte, 2012; Iacovides, Fountoulakis, Kaprinis, & Kaprinis, 2003; Maslach, 1982; Severinsson, 2003). Employees who use reappraisal to minimize or avoid the experience of these emotions should be less prone to their ill effects. On the other hand, negative self-conscious emotions are crucial in deterring selfish and immoral

behavior (Haidt, 2003).[2] People feel such emotions in *anticipation of* performing CWBs, which can discourage employees from engaging in these harmful acts (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011; Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2013; Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). Behaviors such as stealing company property, lying about missing work, cheating on expense reports, and withholding valuable resources from other employees can result in lower profitability, higher turnover, and decreased productivity (Ariely, 2008; Deyle, 2015; Goldschein & Bhasin, 2011; Kabins, 2015). Thus, even though using reappraisal to regulate negative self-conscious emotions can be beneficial in terms of employee well-being, it can also be costly in terms of CWBs.

Our work makes several contributions. First, we highlight a critical downside to employees using reappraisal that has been overlooked by both scholars and practitioners. To date, the reappraisal literature in organizational behavior has been largely one-sided—depicting reappraisal as an optimal strategy for dealing with unpleasant affective events in the workplace. We challenge this assumption, instead drawing attention to the hidden costs of down-regulating one's negative emotions, especially when these emotions serve important moral functions. Moreover, our research demonstrates how important it is to take a discrete-emotion approach to emotion regulation, which stands in contrast to past research that has primarily explored the regulation of positive versus negative affect on employee outcomes (cf., Brooks, 2014). Finally, our research draws attention to the asymmetry that can exist between positive/negative emotions and positive/negative workplace outcomes (Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012; Lindebaum & Jordan, 2014). Simply put, sometimes it can be good for employees to feel bad.

1.1. The benefits of reappraisal in the workplace

In the organizational behavior literature, myriad studies have identified the positive impact of emotion regulation on employee outcomes (e.g., Diefendorff, Gabriel, Nolan, & Yang, 2019; Diefendorff, Richard, & Yang, 2008; Grandey, 2000; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Niven, Sprigg, & Armitage, 2013; Wallace, Edwards, Shull, & Finch, 2009). However, most research on emotion regulation at work has centered on the concept of emotional labor (Grandey & Krannitz, 2015). Hochschild (1983) originally identified two overarching emotion regulation strategies—surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting involves "putting on the emotional mask that is expected," which resembles *expressive suppression*. In contrast, deep acting involves efforts to truly create the feelings that must be expressed, which is akin to reappraisal (Grandey, 2000). Like reappraisal, deep acting involves using cognitive processes to alter one's emotional experience in an authentic manner (see also Sutton, 1991; Côté, 2005; Grandey, 2000; 2015; Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011).[3] For example, in her seminal ethnography of Delta Airlines flight attendants, Hochschild (1983) describes how flight attendants imagined passengers as children in need of constant assistance, which enabled them to deal with the stress of their jobs (Diefendorff et al., 2008; Grandey, 2000).

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[1] The most common means for measuring cognitive reappraisal is the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & Jazaieri, 2003) which asks participants to indicate their agreement with statements like "When I am faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm." Mean scores on the reappraisal component of the ERQ typically find "agreement" with the reappraisal items, suggesting a high frequency by which individuals use this type of emotion regulation strategy. Research exploring another emotion regulation measure, the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) finds that on average individuals frequently employ reappraisal, and Garnefski and Kraaij (2006) found reappraisal was the most common regulation strategy used out of the nine strategies assessed by this questionnaire (the other eight: self-blame, acceptance, rumination, positive refocusing, refocus on planning, putting into perspective, catastrophizing, other-blame). Additionally, Ford et al. (2017) found that across a week's span, participants reported using reappraisal two-thirds of the days, on average. Similarly, Feinberg et al. (unpublished manuscript), found that participants reported using reappraisal on 12 days during a 14-day study, on average.

[2] It should be noted that evidence for the relationship between feelings of shame and increased moral behavior is more mixed than that of guilt, with some research indicating that shame can lead individuals to hide away from others rather than inspire them to behave ethically. These mixed findings highlight how emotions do not directly cause behavior, but serve as signals that individuals incorporate into a larger network of influences on behavior (Baumeister et al., 2007). We discuss this further in the General Discussion.

[3] The emotion regulation literature has been mixed in its view on the interchangeability of reappraisal and deep acting, with some viewing the two as essentially the same thing with different labels (Hartley & Phelps, 2014; Grandey, 2000; 2015; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015) while others have come to highlight differences, most specifically that deep acting represents a broader category of cognitive change tactics, which includes reappraisal, but also other strategies (e.g., refocusing attention; Grandey & Krannitz, 2019). We return to this point in the general discussion.

Studies examining reappraisal-like processes in the workplace (typically operationalized as various forms of "deep acting") show that reappraisal leads to many favorable work outcomes (Lawrence et al., 2011).[4] Employees using reappraisal express more authentic positive emotions when performing job tasks (i.e., emotional performance; Bono & Vey, 2007; Fisher, 2000; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). Perhaps as a result, employees who use reappraisal tend to perform better, particularly when their performance is measured by customer satisfaction ratings (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Wallace et al., 2009). They also have more collegial interactions with their co-workers (Kiffin-Petersen, Jordan, & Soutar, 2011; Trougakos, Beal, Cheng, Hideg, & Zweig, 2015), higher levels of job satisfaction (Grandey, 2003; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013) and lower levels of turnover (Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009).

Reappraisal has become an important topic in the organizational literature, almost always viewed through a positive lens (Grandey & Sayre, 2019). Researchers have highlighted its many benefits in the workplace, not only to reduce negative emotion, but to boost job satisfaction and avoid burnout (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Lee & Chelladurai, 2018). Organizational scholars have developed emotion regulation training programs, such as the Affect Regulation Training program (Berking & Schwarz, 2014; Berking & Whitley, 2014), which promote the use of reappraisal strategies aimed at modifying and controlling negative emotions. Such programs have been shown to help employees with their negative emotions and, in turn, their well-being (Berking, Meier, & Wupperman, 2010; Buruck, Dörfel, Kugler, & Brom, 2016). These findings have led researchers to call on practitioners to train their employees to utilize reappraisal techniques (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015).

In response, organizations have begun to implement emotion management training via in-house classes and workshops (e.g., Abbott, Klein, Hamilton, & Rosenthal, 2009; Carr et al., 2013; Giang, 2015; Howard, 2015; Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013; Pidgeon, Ford, & Klassen, 2014; Tan, 2012), with a heavy emphasis on reappraisal (e.g., Abbott et al., 2009; Kelly, 2012; Truta, 2013). For instance, Google has garnered attention for its "Search Inside Yourself" mindfulness course that trains employees to master their emotions via regulation strategies, particularly reappraisal, for the sake of personal and organizational improvement (Giang, 2015; Tan, 2012). Specifically, Tan (2012) emphasizes how important it is to engage in "cognitive work" when faced with negative emotions, where "cognitive work … means reframing and reinterpreting the meaning of the situation (Tan, 2012, p. 102)" (i.e., reappraisal). The Google course has become so popular that other corporations, such as SAP, Comcast, and American Express, have hired trainers to teach the content to their own employees (Everson, 2015; Grosse, 2015; Yourself, 2019). More generally, in recent years, a whole industry has developed around training managers and employees in the art of emotion management with a central focus on the use of reappraisal as a means for regulating one's emotions to foster personal and organizational well-being (Duxbury & Anderson, 2018; Mullen, 2018).

1.2. The trouble with reappraisal in the workplace

Based on a review of the reappraisal literature, one might assume that employees should always use reappraisal in the face of negative emotional experiences. However, we contend that using reappraisal to control negative emotions can be problematic. We draw from the social-functionalist emotions theory (Keltner & Haidt, 1999, 2001), which asserts that negative emotions, though unpleasant, often serve key social functions. This perspective hinges on the theoretical claim that emotions have evolved—biologically and culturally—to be useful, particularly in our social lives. Emotions attune individuals to the norms and desires of others and the larger group (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Elfenbein, 2007; Goldenberg, Halperin, van Zomeren, & Gross, 2016). When emotions help people behave in ways that are consistent with the goals of the group, they are socially rewarded, and the social-functional role of the emotion is further reinforced. Of note, an emotion can serve a social function by signaling important information to others via emotional displays, but emotions can also serve a social function by guiding individuals to act in ways that have important social value. For instance, experiencing compassion for a victim or anger toward a perpetrator may compel a person to help the victim or punish the perpetrator, thereby serving important social functions beyond the expression of emotion the person may or may not have displayed.

In a similar vein, our theorizing is consistent with the feelings-as-information model of emotions (Schwarz & Clore, 1983, 2003), which outlines how individuals ascribe informational value to their feelings. According to this model, individuals use that information to judge their current circumstances and guide their future behavior. Negative emotions signal to the individual that something is wrong and if the signal is heeded, the individual should be more likely to rectify the problem (e.g., Ketelaar & Au, 2003). Inferences drawn from emotional experiences, or feelings, can be highly malleable, context-dependent, and idiosyncratic (Schwarz, 2011). When listening to these feelings helps the individual manage situations more successfully, the informational value of the emotion is further reinforced (i.e., the emotional experience is judged to be useful).

Negative emotions often serve to facilitate socially appropriate behavior. In particular, *negative self-conscious emotions* are integral in motivating moral judgment and action (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011). Negative self-conscious emotions, including guilt and shame, are considered a family of moral emotions that "are linked to the interests or welfare … of society as a whole" (Haidt, 2003, p. 853). There are two families of negatively-experienced moral emotions: "other-condemning" and "self-conscious." Other-condemning emotions (i.e., contempt, anger, disgust) motivate individuals to keep *others* behaving ethically, while self-conscious emotions motivate individuals to keep *themselves* behaving ethically. Self-conscious emotions push individuals to attune to, and often prioritize, the interests of others in the group or organization (Haidt, 2003; Smith, 1976; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). According to past research, self-conscious emotions, whether naturally occurring or induced, discourage counter-normative and unethical behavior while encouraging cooperation, trust, and adherence to ethical norms in the workplace and in everyday life (e.g., Cohen et al., 2011; Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2012; 2013; Feinberg, Willer, & Keltner, 2012; Boehm, 2012).

Negative self-conscious emotions can occur in reaction to an unethical act, or in anticipation of it. When individuals experience self-conscious emotions, especially guilt, in response to their own ethical failings, it often serves a reparative function, compelling transgressors to make amends for their actions in order to repair any harm done to their social relationships and their personal reputation (Cohen et al., 2013; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In contrast, the experience of anticipatory self-conscious emotions occurs when individuals mentally simulate engaging in an unethical behavior. This anticipatory emotional experience stems from having internalized moral values, and is central to the experience of moral conscience (Cohen et al., 2013). In this way, anticipatory self-conscious emotions help deter individuals from engaging in unethical behavior. In a study involving MBA students, measures of anticipatory guilt about simulated unethical acts predicted lower levels of unethical behavior several weeks in the future

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[4] Although a central focus of emotional labor research has been on employees' outward expression (i.e., display) of emotion, researchers have also focused on employees' internal states, especially when it comes to deep acting. In this way, the emotional labor research is concerned with both emotion displays and experiences.

(Cohen et al., 2011).

Despite the positive social functions these negative self-conscious emotions serve, an individual's experience of them is unpleasant (Fourie et al., 2011; Kemeny, Gruenewald, & Dickerson, 2004; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). As with any unpleasant emotional experience, individuals will feel motivated to prevent and/or minimize their experience via regulation processes like reappraisal. As an antecedent-focused strategy, typically occurring early in the emotion-generation process, reappraisal can help individuals avoid such unpleasantness and improve well-being, but, at the same time, minimize the emotion's perceived informational value and its crucial functions. Thus, using reappraisal as a strategy for controlling negative self-conscious emotions could increase the chance that the reappraiser will engage in unethical behavior. In the following sections, we will outline these trade-offs more clearly, in terms of their benefits and costs.

1.3. The benefits of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame at work

Employees often feel guilt and shame whenever they fail to fulfill (or anticipate failing to fulfill) expectations (Bohns & Flynn, 2013; Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012). For example, an employee may feel guilty or shameful because he or she fell short of monthly goals, delivered work full of mistakes, or failed to address a customer's need (cf., Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Experiencing too much guilt and shame can be detrimental, both to the employee and the organization. These emotions weigh heavily on people, even leading to depression and other clinical disorders (e.g., Andrews, Qian, & Valentine, 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Ghatavi, Nicolson, MacDonald, Osher, & Levitt, 2002; Tangney, 1995). For instance, soldiers reporting high levels of guilt after combat exposure were more likely to suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (Owens, Steger, Whitesell, & Herrera, 2009). Guilt and shame have also been linked to job dissatisfaction and burnout (Gil-Monte, 2012; Iacovides et al., 2003; Maslach, 1982; Severinsson, 2003), and to chronic feelings of low self-esteem (Harder & Lewis, 1987; Konoske, Staple, & Graf, 1979).

Recognizing the high cost of guilt and shame, employees should be motivated to find ways to control the experience of these self-conscious emotions (e.g., via reappraisal; cf., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). Likewise, given that guilt- and shame-ridden employees can hurt an organization's bottom line, there is good reason for employers to encourage their employees to use reappraisal to regulate both emotions (Bohns & Flynn, 2013). Although various workplace events can induce feelings of guilt and shame, these events need not translate into a full-blown experience of either emotion. Rather, employees who successfully reappraise the guilt- or shame-eliciting event should help stave off the negative effects that often accompany the actual emotional experience. At the same time, those employees who use reappraisal to control guilt and shame should experience better workplace outcomes than do employees who do not use reappraisal to control these emotions.

We expect the benefits of using reappraisal to regulate guilt and shame to manifest across the two main categories of employee well-being: job-related well-being and personal ill-being (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). In terms of job-related well-being, employees who use reappraisal to minimize or prevent the experience of guilt and shame at work should have more positive attitudes about their jobs. They should feel less anxiety about their co-workers, supervisors, and customers judging them negatively for failing to meet expectations (Bohns & Flynn, 2013). Further, minimizing these extrinsic concerns should lead employees to view their work as more intrinsically motivating (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Porter & Lawler, 1968). By minimizing or eliminating the experience of guilt and shame, reappraisal should make it more likely for employees to experience positive affect (John & Gross, 2004), which is a strong predictor of job satisfaction (Fisher, 2000; Staw & Cohen-Charash, 2005).

Hypothesis 1. Using reappraisal to control guilt and shame is positively related to job satisfaction.

As for personal ill-being, guilt and shame can be severe emotional stressors (Andrews et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Ghatavi et al., 2002; Owens et al., 2009; Tangney, 1995). Such stressors take their toll on employees, particularly in the form of burnout (Gil-Monte, 2012; Iacovides et al., 2003; Maslach, 1982; Severinsson, 2003), whereby employees become emotionally exhausted and detached from their work. The experience of guilt and shame requires employees to devote extensive cognitive and emotional resources toward addressing their dysphoric feelings (Hobfoll, 1989). For instance, an employee who feels shame for not meeting a sales quota (or in anticipation of not meeting this quota) may ruminate on what she could have done differently and obsess over how she will be judged negatively or even fired. When these emotional stressors become overwhelming, she might experience job withdrawal or burnout (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). However, if she used reappraisal to control her experience of guilt and shame, she would be less susceptible to such emotional stressors and better equipped to deal with and improve upon her shortcomings, thereby making her less likely to experience burnout.

Hypothesis 2. Using reappraisal to control guilt and shame is negatively related to burnout.

1.4. The costs of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame at work: CWBs

Guilt and shame serve a fundamental social function by promoting moral behavior (Bohns & Flynn, 2013; Ilies, Peng, Savani, & Dimotakis, 2013; Keltner & Harker, 1998; Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). Both emotions signal to the individual that her or his actual or anticipated behavior violates a moral standard (Cohen et al., 2012; Tangney et al., 2007). In line with social-functionalist theories, feeling guilty or ashamed signals to individuals that what they have done—or envision doing—is a transgression (Cohen et al., 2012; Lindsay-Hartz, de Rivera, & Mascolo, 1995). When the individual is rewarded for avoiding such transgressions, the function of these emotions is reinforced even though their experience may have felt unpleasant (Cohen et al., 2012). Further in line with the feelings-as-information model, feeling guilt and shame is interpreted by the individual as information that their behavior (or anticipated behavior) is at odds with what is socially expected or appropriate. When the individual is rewarded for avoiding such behavior, the informational value of these emotions is reinforced—again, even though experiencing either emotion is unpleasant.

In this way, guilt and shame can deter individuals from behaving unethically toward others in the group—to prevent them from inflicting harm, loss, or suffering (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Boehm, 2012; Haidt, 2001; Tangney et al., 2007). Research has demonstrated that both guilt and shame are useful in keeping self-interest and exploitative motives in check, thereby facilitating cooperative behavior (Ketelaar & Au, 2003; Tomasello & Vaish, 2013). Employees who are prone to experience guilt and shame are less likely to make unethical choices like vandalism or theft (Cohen et al., 2011, 2013). These emotions are also negatively associated with delinquency (Stuewig & Tangney, 2007), absenteeism (Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017), lying (Cohen, 2010), and recidivism (Tangney, Stuewig, & Martinez, 2014) and positively associated with self-control and self-restraint (Tangney & Dearing, 2002), particularly when there is conflict between one's personal interest and collective goals (Schaumberg & Flynn, 2012). Further, when employees were made to feel guilty about CWBs, they tended to engage in more prosocial acts (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors; Ilies et al., 2013).

Taking these benefits into account, although it makes sense for employees to use reappraisal strategies to avoid and/or minimize their experience of guilt and shame for the sake of their own well-being,

doing so should also give rise to a problem: when employees use reappraisal to regulate their experience of these emotions, they are also minimizing the emotion's function of deterring unethical behavior. As a result, employees who use reappraisal to control negative self-conscious emotions should be more prone to engage in CWBs. Although employees might occasionally feel the urge to miss work by pretending to be sick, lie on time sheets, or steal office supplies, the experience of guilt and shame in anticipation of going through with such unethical acts should minimize the likelihood that employees perform these behaviors. However, employees who can successfully control their experience of guilt and shame via reappraisal should be *more* inclined to perform these unethical acts.

Hypothesis 3. Using reappraisal to control guilt and shame is positively related to counterproductive workplace behaviors.

1.5. The present research

Research on emotion management in the workplace underscores the benefits of using reappraisal. However, our theorizing challenges this perspective, and instead posits that reappraisal strategies involve trade-offs. In line with past research, using this emotion regulation strategy when experiencing unpleasant feelings should prevent these emotions from impairing one's well-being at work. However, using reappraisal should also come at the expense of minimizing the important functions these emotions serve. In the present research, across five studies, we demonstrate this trade-off by examining the impact of using reappraisal to control the negative self-conscious emotions of guilt and shame. In doing so, we highlight the challenges organizations face regarding employees' use of reappraisal, while also calling into question the enthusiasm toward this emotion regulation strategy evident in both the organizational literature and many organizations' training practices.

In Study 1, we surveyed employees who reported experiencing guilt and shame at work and measured how much they use reappraisal to regulate these emotions. We also assessed their job satisfaction, level of burnout, and how much they engage in CWBs, expecting that the more employees reappraised their guilt and shame, the more satisfied and less burnt out they would be, but also the more likely they would be to engage in interpersonal and organizational forms of CWBs. In this first study, we measured reappraisal of other negative emotions (anxiety, anger), expecting that the use of reappraisal to control these emotions would correlate with satisfaction and burnout in the same way the use of reappraisal to control guilt and shame would, but would not correlate with CWBs because, unlike guilt and shame, the underlying function of these other emotions is not to deter immoral behavior.

In Study 2, employees were asked to imagine a situation where they could engage in CWBs without consequences. After describing this behavior, they reported how likely they would be to actually perform this behavior if it was consequence-free. We expected that the higher the employees scored on the tendency to use reappraisal to control their experience of guilt and shame, the more unethical their described CWBs would be and the more willing they would be to engage in such behavior if the situation were real. In Study 3, we filmed MBA students as they participated in a heated negotiation task and coded how unethically they behaved during the task, predicting that the tendency to use reappraisal to control guilt and shame would predict ratings of unethical behavior. In Studies 4–5, we manipulated participants' use of reappraisal when given the opportunity to withhold valuable resources from task partners (Study 4), and to cheat on a simulated work task (Study 5), expecting that those in the reappraisal condition would be more likely to behave unethically in each study. In Studies 2–4 we also assessed the extent to which participants experienced guilt to test whether the relationship between reappraisal and CWBs can be explained by lower levels of negative self-conscious emotion. All data, syntax, and materials are available at https://osf.io/dfjv4/?view_only= 8f2a03477f69441297fd017b22f65d39.

2. Study 1

In Study 1, we tested Hypotheses 1–3 by surveying employees who reported feelings of guilt and shame at work (employees who did not feel any guilt and shame would not need to engage in reappraisal as a means for controlling these emotions). We assessed how much respondents used reappraisal to regulate their experience of both emotions. Further, we examined how use of this regulation strategy corresponded with workplace well-being, which was measured in terms of job satisfaction and burnout (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011), as well as the tendency to engage in CWBs.

To establish discriminant validity, we assessed employees' tendency to use reappraisal to control their experience of two other negative emotions: anxiety and anger. These emotions have been shown to predict impaired workplace well-being (see Elfenbein, 2007). In line with past research, we expected that using reappraisal to regulate these emotions would, like guilt and shame, correspond with higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout. However, because anxiety is not a moral emotion (Haidt, 2003), we did not expect that the tendency to reappraise anxiety would correlate with CWBs. For anger, we were uncertain as to whether the use of reappraisal to regulate this emotion might correlate with CWBs. Although anger is considered a moral emotion in certain contexts (Haidt, 2003), its role is to guide people toward enforcing moral standards on others, not on oneself. As such, the use of reappraisal to minimize anger would likely not correspond with one's tendency to engage in CWBs unless they were intended to punish or deter the unethical behavior of others within the organization (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001; Ilie, Penney, Ispas, & Iliescu, 2012; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999; Spector & Fox, 2005). In that case, we would expect to see a negative relationship between the use of reappraisal to control one's anger and CWBs.

To further establish discriminant validity for our findings, we assessed employees' use of a different emotion regulation strategy: expressive suppression (henceforth "suppression"). We expected to find the hypothesized relationships only for reappraisal and not for suppression because past research has consistently found that using reappraisal is an effective means for regulating one's emotional experience, while suppression either leaves the emotional experience unchanged or exacerbates its experience (Gross & John, 2003; Gross, 1998; Hochschild, 1983; Webb et al., 2012). In other words, those individuals using suppression may effectively hide their emotional experience from others, but internally the emotion is still fully present.[5]

2.1. Study 1 method

2.1.1. Participants

One hundred seventy-seven employees (93 male, 84 female) were recruited from the Prolific Academic platform and were paid $3.00 for their participation. The average age was 33.97 (SD = 9.97), 129 (73%) reported being white, 12 (7%) reported being Black, 19 (11%) reported being South Asian, 10 (6%) reported being Asian, and 7 (4%) reported being either mixed race or not fitting into these categories.

We advertised the study as an exploration of workplace attitudes and used a screening procedure (described in detail below) to restrict participation to those who were employed full-time and who reported feeling guilt and shame at work over the past month. In total, 343 individuals were recruited as potential participants. Of these 343 individuals, 32 were screened out because they were either unemployed or employed only part-time, leaving 311 eligible participants. Of these, 134 were screened out because they reported not experiencing any guilt

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[5] There is also reason to believe that suppression of guilt and shame would not deter CWBs from taking place because suppression takes place after individuals have experienced the emotion.

or shame at work over the past month. This left a total of 177 participants (57%) who had experienced guilt and shame in their workplace over the past month, pointing to the relatively large percentage of employees facing these emotions in the workplace in a given month and highlighting how relevant these emotions are to organizations (for comparable findings, see Fisher, 2000). These employees had been at their current workplace for an average of 4.50 years (SD = 4.61). Twelve (7%) reported working in service jobs (e.g., butcher, food and beverage servers), 14 (8%) reported working as physical laborers (e.g., cleaning staff, fruit picker), 37 (21%) reported working in a management position, 44 (25%) reported working in a technical or skilled trade (e.g., plumber, electrician), 49 (28%) reported working in professional jobs (e.g., doctor, architect), and 21 (12%) selected the "other" option.

2.1.2. Procedure

Potential participants were unaware of the criteria we used for screening. Among a series of filler questions aimed at hiding the focus of the study (e.g., "Do you speak another language?"), we asked participants to indicate whether they worked full-time, part-time, or were unemployed. Those individuals indicating they did *not* work full-time were immediately removed from the survey. Those indicating they worked full-time were asked whether they had experienced each of the following emotions at work over the past month: anxiety, anger, guilt, and shame. Those who indicated they had experienced guilt and shame were invited to participate and provided with the following information about emotion regulation strategies, based on commonly used emotion regulation scale instructions (see the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, ERQ; Gross & John, 2003):[6]

There are two main ways people can deal with their experience of negative emotions. The first is to suppress them. That means you still feel the emotion, but you don't show it. The other is to rethink the situation or event that led you to feel the emotion in the first place. That means you introduce new thoughts about the thing that triggered your negative emotion and then you think of reasons as to why that situation or event should not be making you feel the emotion.

Following this prompt, participants were asked about their use of reappraisal. For guilt, they read "You've indicated that you've felt guilty at work over the past month. When you felt guilty how much did you rethink or reconstrue the situation or event that caused you to feel this emotion so that you would feel better (less guilty)?" For the other emotions (shame, anxiety, and anger), the wording was identical except for the specific emotion being referenced. Participants were also asked about their use of suppression. For the guilt item, they read "When you felt guilty how much did you hide it so others did not know you were feeling this emotion?" As with reappraisal, for the other emotions the wording was the same except for which emotion was being referenced. The order of the questions was counterbalanced. However, only participants who (along with experiencing guilt and shame) reported experiencing anxiety (n = 173) or anger (n = 173) over the past month completed the questions relating to these two other emotions.

Participants responded to all items on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a great deal). These anchors and the wording of the items were selected because they mirrored those in the ERQ. We used these items to assess the use of reappraisal and suppression instead of the full 7-item ERQ because doing so would entail presenting the participants with four almost identical questionnaires, each 7 items long, which we feared would result in fatigue and inaccurate responding.[7] In addition,

because we predicted similar outcomes as a result of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame, for the sake of parsimony, we composited reappraisal scores for the two emotions (reappraisal-guilt_shame; r = 0.46) and suppression scores for the two emotions (suppression-guilt_shame; r = 0.64). For separate results for each emotion, see Supplementary Materials. After completing the emotion regulation measures, participants answered questions about their place of work, including their job type, industry sector, and annual salary, followed by three measures that assessed workplace well-being and CWBs.

2.1.2.1. Job satisfaction. As a measure of workplace well-being, we assessed job satisfaction with a 4-item satisfaction measure taken from Weiss, Nicholas, and Daus (1999). Sample items include "All in all I am satisfied with my job" and "In general I like working here". Participants responded using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A reliability analysis indicated that the reliability of the questionnaire was high, α = 0.90.

2.1.2.2. Burnout. As a measure of employee personal ill-being, we measured burnout using the *Copenhagen Burnout Inventory*'s work-related burnout subscale (Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen, 2005). The scale authors define work-related burnout as "The degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion that is perceived by the person as related to his/her work" (p. 197), which is consistent with others (Maslach, 1997). The subscale consists of 7 items (e.g., "I feel worn out at the end of the working day", "I feel burnt out because of my work."). The reliability for this measure was α = 0.90.

2.1.2.3. Counterproductive Workplace Behaviors. To measure employees' tendency to engage in CWBs, we used Bennett and Robinson (2000) measure, which consists of two components – one that assesses CWBs directed at other individuals at work (CWBs-Interpersonal) and one that assesses CWBs directed at the organization (CWBs-Organizational). The CWBs-Interpersonal measure asks participants to indicate how often they engaged in seven different behaviors at work, including making fun of someone, saying something hurtful, and acting rudely toward someone, and the CWBs-Organizational measure asks participants to indicate how often they engaged in 12 different behaviors, including dragging out work to get overtime, taking property from work without permission, and falsifying a receipt for reimbursement. For both scales, participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (daily). The reliabilities for CWBs-Interpersonal and CWBs-Organizational were α = 0.93 and α = 0.94, respectively.

Finally, participants completed demographic measures, and a second version of the screening question asking whether they were employed full-time, part-time, or were unemployed (we used this as an additional check to ensure participants were indeed employed full-time). All 177 participants indicated they were employed full-time. Once participants had completed these questionnaires, they were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

2.2. Study 1 results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for our key measures. In line with past research (Garnefski et al., 2002; Grandey & Sayre, 2019; Totterdell & Holman, 2003), the relatively high mean scores on the reappraisal items indicated that, on average, employees commonly use reappraisal to control their emotions, attesting

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[6] All participants who reported experiencing one of the two self-conscious emotions (guilt or shame) also reported experiencing the other.

[7] In Studies 2 and 3, where we only measure emotion regulation of guilt and shame, we use the full ERQ measure. In addition, using four different samples (Ns = 100–110) we had participants complete the full version of the ERQ for

(footnote continued)

either guilt, shame, anxiety, or anger, as well as the corresponding two items from Study 1 used to assess reappraisal and suppression of that same emotion. Results from these four additional datasets found that the items used in Study 1 correlated above r = 0.82 with their corresponding ERQ measure, thereby indicating the validity of the items used in the present study.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, and correlations for key variables measured in Study 1.

	Mean (SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Reappraisal-guilt_shame	4.15 (1.46)	0.41***	0.34***	0.15*	0.30***	0.08	0.24**	−0.16*	0.22**	0.24**
2. Suppression-guilt_shame	4.83 (1.62)	–	0.03	0.33***	0.08	0.41***	−0.08	0.08	−0.01	0.10
3. Reappraisal-anxiety	4.11 (1.61)		–	0.07	0.26***	0.04	0.18*	−0.24***	−0.03	−0.11
4. Suppression-anxiety	5.14 (1.46)			–	0.19*	0.44***	−0.05	0.14†	−0.10	−0.01
5. Reappraisal-anger	4.23 (1.81)				–	0.18*	0.17*	0.01	0.12	0.04
6. Suppression-anger	4.93 (1.73)					–	−0.06	0.20**	−0.02	0.09
7. Job Satisfaction	4.48 (1.61)						–	−0.66***	−0.17*	−0.24***
8. Burnout	3.22 (1.03)							–	0.19**	0.23**
9. CWBs-Interpersonal	2.22 (1.38)								–	0.81***
10. CWBs-Organization	2.55 (1.32)									–

Note: Results pertaining to anxiety include the 173 participants who reported feeling this emotion over the past month, and the results for anger include the 173 participants who reported feeling this emotion over the past month.

† $p < .10$.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

to how relevant this behavior is in the workplace. More specifically, we found that 67% of the participants indicated a 4 or higher on the 7-point frequency scale for using reappraisal to regulate guilt, and 64% indicated a 4 or higher on the 7-point frequency scale for using reappraisal to regulate shame.

In line with Hypotheses 1 and 2, the use of reappraisal to control guilt and shame correlated with both measures of workplace well-being: employees who used reappraisal to control these emotions more often were more satisfied with their jobs and less likely to suffer from workplace burnout. As expected, we also found that employees who used reappraisal to control their anxiety or anger were more satisfied with their jobs. Employees who used reappraisal to control anxiety were also less likely to suffer from burnout, although this link did not hold for the use of reappraisal to control anger. These correlations suggest that using reappraisal can be an effective means for increasing workplace well-being.

In support of Hypothesis 3, reappraisal-guilt_shame correlated with CWBs-Interpersonal and CWBs-Organizational, such that those who reappraised these emotions more often were significantly more likely to engage in CWBs directed at both their colleagues and their organization. In contrast, there was no significant correlation between the use of reappraisal to control anxiety and CWBs, or between the use of reappraisal to control anger and CWBs, suggesting that it was the use of reappraisal to control these negative self-conscious moral emotions, whose function is to deter selfish and immoral behavior, and not simply reappraisal of any negative emotion that corresponds with increased CWBs.

We also found that employees who used suppression to regulate anger and anxiety tended to experience more workplace burnout, which aligns with past research on emotional labor, demonstrating the negative effects of suppressing one's emotions (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003). However, we did not find that suppression of these emotions correlated with job satisfaction, and suppression-guilt_shame did not correlate with either of the workplace well-being measures. Also, none of the suppression measures correlated with CWBs. Considering that reappraisal-guilt_shame correlated with CWBs, but suppression did not, this provides evidence that it is not simply the use of any guilt- or shame-regulation strategy that predicts CWBs, but instead this result begins to establish the specific impact of reappraisal. Along these lines, when both reappraisal-guilt_shame and suppression-guilt_shame are entered as simultaneous predictors of CWBs, reappraisal-guilt_shame is a significant predictor (CWBs-Organizational: $b = 0.21$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .005$, CWBs-Interpersonal: $b = 0.26$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .001$), whereas suppression-guilt_shame is not (CWBs-Organizational: $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .924$, CWBs-Interpersonal: $b = −0.11$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .123$).

The results of Study 1 provide support for Hypotheses 1–3, and point to the double-edged sword that comes with employees using reappraisal to regulate the guilt and shame they experience at work. Although using reappraisal to control these emotions corresponded with higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of workplace burnout, it also corresponded with increased likelihood of engaging in CWBs.

3. Study 2

The results from Study 1 are consistent with past research on the benefits of reappraisal in the workplace—employees who used reappraisal to control negative emotions enjoyed better workplace well-being. However, employees who used reappraisal to control negative self-conscious emotions were also more prone to CWBs, a harmful side-effect of reappraisal that has been overlooked. We turn our attention to this unexplored consequence of reappraisal in the remaining studies.

In Study 1, we measured reappraisal use at the same time we measured employees' CWBs. As a result, it is impossible to verify that reappraisal was a cause as opposed to a consequence of engaging in CWBs. Employees can use reappraisal to control their experiences of guilt and shame before (in anticipation of) and after (in reaction to) an unethical behavior. However, a central aim of the present research is to better understand what facilitates CWBs in employees and how to deter such behavior *before* it happens. As such, Studies 2–5 directly examine reappraisal as a means for regulating anticipatory guilt and shame.

In Study 2, we used a time-separated design in which employees first indicated their tendency to use reappraisal as a regulation strategy when they experience guilt and shame in the workplace, and then, one week later, described CWBs they would engage in if they faced no negative consequence for doing so. We then assessed how much guilt and shame the employees felt while thinking about engaging in these behaviors, and, finally, how willing they would be to engage in the behavior if such a possibility actually existed. Because reappraisal was measured at time 1 and the measure of unethical behavior was not introduced until time 2, employees' reported levels of reappraisal could not be a consequence of the unethical behavior. In addition, because the unethical behavior was not something the employees actually engaged in, their reported levels of guilt and shame must have been anticipatory, rather than reactive, in nature. Therefore, any impact that reappraisal might have on participants' willingness to engage in the unethical behavior in the future must have been in an effort to regulate the anticipatory guilt and shame experienced. As such, Study 2's design allowed us to more directly isolate the role that using reappraisal to control guilt and shame plays in facilitating CWBs.

Study 2's design also allowed us to examine the process by which

using reappraisal to control guilt and shame predicts increased CWBs. By including a measure of guilt and shame prior to participants indicating how likely they would be to engage in their described CWBs, we were able to test if the effects of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame on participants' willingness to engage in the CWBs could be explained by reappraisal use resulting in less guilt and shame being experienced when contemplating these CWBs.[8]

3.1. Study 2 method

3.1.1. Participants

Two hundred fourteen (114 male, 100 female) full-time employees recruited from Mechanical Turk participated in two study sessions in exchange for $0.80. We used the same screening procedure used in Study 1 to recruit only full-time employees, and we incorporated a two-step quality assurance procedure to ensure high quality data (see details below). In the first session, we recruited 400 potential participants. Sixty-two were disqualified from participating because they indicated either working part-time or being unemployed. An additional 26 were disqualified for failing the first step of the quality assurance screening. The 312 participants who successfully completed Session 1 were sent an invitation to participate in Session 2. Of those recruited, 214 participated in Session 2 approximately one week after Session 1. Every one of these participants successfully passed our second quality assurance screening. These employees had been at their current workplace for an average of 4.80 years (SD = 5.14). Twenty-eight (13%) reported working in service jobs (e.g., butcher, food and beverage servers), 16 (8%) reported working as physical laborers (e.g., cleaning staff, fruit picker), 30 (14%) reported working in a management position, 36 (17%) reported working in a technical or skilled trade (e.g., plumber, electrician), 70 (33%) reported working in professional jobs (e.g., doctor, architect), and 34 (15%) selected the "other" option.

3.1.2. Procedure

In Session 1, participants completed three general knowledge/ability questions ("What is 2 + 3?", "What is the last letter of the word 'Ready'?", and "Type 'I am not a robot. I am a human'."). Failure to respond to any of these questions correctly resulted in exclusion from participating in the study. Next, participants completed a background questionnaire, including their age, gender, and ethnicity, and answered the same questions about their workplace described in Study 1. Following this, they completed a series of questionnaires that assessed their use of reappraisal as a strategy for regulating feelings of guilt and shame in the workplace (see below). In Session 2, participants described what CWBs they would perform in their workplace if there were no consequences for their actions, followed by a measure of how much they felt a variety of emotions, including guilt and shame. Finally, participants indicated how willing they would be to engage in their described behavior if it was consequence-free (see below). As a second quality assurance screening, we intended to exclude any participants who coders rated as providing blank or incoherent responses as part of the unethicality task; however, no participants failed this quality assurance measure.

3.1.2.1. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. We measured participants' use of cognitive reappraisal when faced with a situation at work that evokes guilt and shame with two slightly modified versions of the well-

established ERQ (Gross & John, 2003). The ERQ is commonly used to measure tendencies to use reappraisal to regulate one's negative emotions, in general, and has been shown to predict a variety of real-world outcomes. To assess the tendency to regulate guilt, we modified the wording of the scale so that participants answered questions about how they deal with guilt instead of all negative emotions (e.g., "When I am faced with a situation that makes me feel guilty, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me feel less guilty."; see Supplementary Materials for all items). To assess the regulation of shame, we modified the wording of the scale so that the items asked about shame instead of negative emotions. To make these questionnaires specific to workplace contexts, the instructions asked participants to "Answer the following questions about how you deal with feelings of guilt [shame] when you experience them in the workplace." Both the ERQ-guilt and the ERQ-shame scales had a total of seven items, four of which measured the use of reappraisal (α_{guilt} = 0.94; α_{shame} = 0.93) as a technique for regulating feelings of guilt [shame] and three measured the use of expressive suppression (α_{guilt} = 0.78; α_{shame} = 0.88) to deal with feelings of guilt [shame]. We included these measures of suppression both because they were part of the original measure of emotion regulation, and because they allowed us to examine whether our hypothesized effects regarding reappraisal would apply to other emotion regulation strategies.[9] Because we expected similar outcomes as a result of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame, and for the sake of parsimony, we formed a composite reappraisal score for these two emotions (reappraisal-guilt_shame; r = 0.79) as well as a composite suppression score for each emotion (suppression-guilt_shame; r = 0.62). For separate results for each emotion, see Supplementary Materials.

3.1.2.2. CWBs Task. Participants were given the following instructions: "Imagine that hypothetically a genie is giving you a special gift. The genie is giving you the opportunity to do something really 'bad' while you are at work and totally get away with it. Whatever 'bad' thing you choose to do, you will never get in trouble for. In fact, no one will ever know that you did this thing except for you. You can do whatever you want. In a couple of sentences, please describe what you would do." Participants were then presented with a text box to describe what CWBs they would engage in.

3.1.2.3. Emotions. Participants were asked "When thinking and writing about the 'bad' thing you would do at work, to what extent did you experience each of the following emotions?" and were then presented with the following (in randomized order): guilt, shame, anger, sadness, anxiety. Participants responded by separately indicating how much they experienced each of the emotions on a scale ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 7 (A Great Deal). We then formed a composite measure of guilt and shame (r = 0.85; for separate results, see Supplementary Materials).

3.1.2.4. Willingness to Engage in the CWBs. Participants responded to the following item "Let's say this genie situation were actually real. How likely would you be to take him up on this offer and do the 'bad' thing you wrote about earlier?" using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (Definitely would not do it) to 7 (Definitely would do it).

3.1.2.5. Unethicality Coding. Four coders blind to hypotheses coded each participant's description of the CWBs they would engage in on a scale ranging from 0 (not unethical at all) to 4 (extremely unethical).

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[8] Although reappraisal is generally viewed as an effective form of emotion regulation that helps people reduce their experience of negative emotion (see Webb et al., 2012 for meta-analysis), reappraisal is not always used successfully (see Ford et al., 2019 for a review). People who attempt using reappraisal are often met with mixed success and thus, it is important to demonstrate that reappraisal does, in fact, reduce the experience of guilt, which in turn contributes to unethical behavior.

[9] It should be noted that unlike reappraisal which can be used at any point during the emotion process, including early on at the initial onset of the emotion, suppression occurs when the emotion has already formed and individuals are trying to physically hide their experience of the emotion from others.

Interrater reliability across coders was good (ICC = 0.89), so we averaged the coders' scores together to form a single measure of unethicality.

3.2. Study 2 results

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations among all variables. As in Study 1, the relatively high mean scores for our reappraisal measures suggest that employees often use this strategy to control their feelings of guilt and shame in the workplace. In support of Hypothesis 3, employees' tendency to use reappraisal at work to control their feelings of guilt and shame was positively associated with both how unethical coders rated their CWBs, and how likely they would be to actually engage in this behavior if the situation were real. To explore whether the effects were particular to reappraisal and to help establish discriminant validity, we conducted a series of multiple regression analyses, entering both reappraisal-guilt_shame and suppression-guilt_shame simultaneously as predictors. We found that reappraisal-guilt_shame significantly predicted both coded unethicality, $b = 0.18$, $S.E. = 0.06$, $p = .001$, and willingness to engage in the CWBs, $b = 0.31$, $S.E. = 0.11$, $p = .007$, whereas suppression-guilt_shame did not significantly predict either coded unethicality, $b = 0.12$, $S.E. = 0.06$, $p = .056$, or willingness to engage in the CWBs, $b = 0.07$, $S.E. = 0.13$, $p = .624$.

Finally, we examined whether the effect of reappraisal on employees' willingness to engage in the CWBs they described was mediated by levels of guilt and shame they were experiencing prior to indicating how likely they would be to actually engage in the unethical behavior. We conducted a mediation analysis using the *PROCESS SPSS macro* (Hayes, 2013) with 50,000 bootstrapped samples to estimate the indirect effects. We found that the positive effect of reappraisal-guilt_shame on employees' willingness to engage in the CWBs was mediated by the amount of guilt and shame experienced, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.01, 0.21]. This mediation suggests that the higher employees scored on using reappraisal as a means for controlling their feelings of guilt and shame in the workplace, the more willing they would be to engage in their described CWBs, and this effect could be explained by the use of reappraisal resulting in the employees experiencing less guilt and shame when contemplating this opportunity.

The results of Study 2 provide strong support for our hypothesis that the use of reappraisal as a strategy for regulating the experience of guilt and shame corresponds with CWBs. As in Study 1, we found that these effects were particular to reappraisal: using reappraisal to control the experience of both guilt and shame consistently predicted CWBs, whereas using suppression to regulate these emotions did not. In addition, because we used a time-separated design and had participants describe an unethical act they had not actually performed but could envision doing so, our results indicate that the effects of using reappraisal must have occurred in response to anticipatory guilt and shame and not reactive guilt and shame. Further, our mediation results indicated that the effects of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame on participants' willingness to engage in CWBs was explained by reappraisal resulting in the experience of less guilt and shame when contemplating the CWBs. Together, our results demonstrate the role that reappraisal plays in facilitating CWBs – impeding the experience of emotions that would otherwise help deter unethical behavior.

4. Study 3

In Study 3, we further explored the effects of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame on CWBs, this time using a sample of MBA students (full-time employees) engaged in a heated negotiation. We used a time-separated design that involved the MBAs completing measures of reappraisal use during Session 1, and being filmed as they engaged in the heated negotiation during Session 2. We moved away from self-reported CWBs and instead had coders rate the MBAs on how

unethically they behaved, which provided a more objective measure of unethicality. We also measured the extent to which the MBAs experienced guilt and shame in the lead-up to the negotiation task as they devised their strategies, which again allowed us to test whether the effect of reappraisal to control guilt and shame on increased unethicality could be explained by lower levels of experienced guilt and shame.

4.1. Study 3 method

4.1.1. Participants

One hundred two professional MBA students (69 male, 33 female) from an Organizational Behavior course at a large Northeastern university participated as volunteers. The professional MBA program was comprised of students with full-time jobs, who were completing their MBA in morning and evening courses. The average age was 29.60 (SD = 3.53). The sample size was based on the total number of students in the course willing to participate.

4.1.2. Procedure

The study involved two sessions. In the first session, participants completed an online questionnaire that assessed background information, including gender, age, and ethnicity, the same emotion regulation questionnaires used in Study 2, and a scale assessing their willingness to use a variety of unethical practices when involved in a negotiation (see below). In total, 90 MBAs completed this first session. Approximately 2–3 weeks later, as part of a class activity, students were separated into dyads and provided with information about their randomly selected role in a negotiation task.[10] Students received this information a day in advance of the negotiation and were instructed to develop their negotiation strategy beforehand. On the day of the negotiation, each dyad was sent to a breakout room where a research assistant instructed each individual to fill out a questionnaire assessing the emotions he or she felt after preparing for the negotiation. Next, the research assistant began recording the dyad and instructed them to begin negotiating once the assistant had left the room. The MBAs then negotiated for approximately 30 min (for details about copyrighted materials used for the negotiation task, please contact the first author). After the MBAs had finished this questionnaire, the research assistant directed them to return to the classroom. In total, 97 MBAs completed this second session.[11]

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. We used the same ERQ-based (Gross & John, 2003) measures of emotion regulation used in Study 2. The reappraisal measures for both guilt and shame showed high reliability ($\alpha_{guilt} = 0.81$; $\alpha_{shame} = 0.87$) as did the suppression measures ($\alpha_{guilt} = 0.88$; $\alpha_{shame} = 0.90$). As in Study 2, we formed a composite reappraisal score for the two emotions (reappraisal-guilt_shame; $r = 0.63$) as well as a composite suppression score for the two emotions (suppression-guilt_shame; $r = 0.75$).

4.1.3. SINS Scale

We assessed the MBAs' proneness toward using unethical negotiation tactics with the Self-reported Inappropriate Negotiation Strategies scale (SINS; Robinson, Lewicki, & Donahue, 2000). This 16-item scale measures five different types of unethical tactics used in negotiations

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[10] Due to the odd number of students attending the course that day, a research assistant (unaware of the study hypotheses) who had been given all the necessary supplies for the negotiation task, took part as a negotiator in one of the dyads. Although this research assistant engaged in the negotiation, we did not collect data from her.

[11] Along with being randomly assigned to dyads and roles in the negotiation, one person from each dyad was also randomly assigned to display anger during the negotiation. This assignment was part of the class activity and not intended for research purposes. For this reason, for all analyses presented below we control for this variable.

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, and correlations for key variables measured in Study 2.

	Mean (SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. CWB engage	5.06 (2.15)	0.08	0.21**	0.10	−0.43***	−0.10	−0.22**	−0.16*
2. CWB unethicality coded	1.64 (1.06)	–	0.28***	0.21**	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.03
3. Reappraisal – guilt_shame	4.79 (1.35)		–	0.35***	−0.15*	0.08	−0.09	−0.08
4. Suppression – guilt_shame	5.09 (1.17)			–	−0.09	0.10	−0.10	−0.02
5. Guilt_Shame	2.62 (1.84)				–	0.22**	0.51***	0.70***
6. Anger	1.90 (1.61)					–	0.54***	0.27***
7. Sadness	1.87 (1.49)						–	0.53***
8. Anxiety	2.70 (1.79)							–

Note:
†$p < .10$.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

(e.g., misrepresentation/lying, misuse of information, false promises), measured on a scale from 1 (not at all appropriate) to 7 (very appropriate). The scale showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$), so we averaged all items together to form a single SINS scale measure.

Emotions. We instructed the MBAs to indicate how much they had been experiencing each of the following emotions as they devised their negotiation strategy: guilt, shame, anger, anxiety, sadness, and regret. For each emotion they used a scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (A great deal). We averaged scores on guilt and shame to form a *guilt-shame* composite ($r = 0.76$).

Coded Unethicality. Three coders blind to hypotheses coded how much participants perceived their behavior to be immoral (ICC = 0.72), unethical (ICC = 0.75), unfair (ICC = 0.72), selfish (ICC = 0.63), mean (ICC = 0.73), antagonistic (ICC = 0.69), and ruthless (ICC = 0.62). These coding terms were selected after pilot testing revealed that these were the words that came to mind when individuals thought of the term "unethical." An exploratory factor analysis indicated that ratings on these seven characteristics formed a single factor with all characteristics loading above 0.87 and together explaining 82.58% of variance. Further, reliability was calculated at $\alpha = 0.96$, so we averaged these scores to form a coded unethicality composite.

4.2. Study 3 results

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for key variables. Again, the mean score on the reappraisal measure was relatively high, providing further evidence for its frequent use in workplace contexts. Scores on the reappraisal-guilt_shame measure strongly correlated with scores on the SINS questionnaire, such that the higher MBAs scored on using reappraisal as a strategy for controlling guilt and shame, the more appropriate they viewed engaging in various unethical negotiation tactics. Most importantly, scores on the reappraisal-guilt_shame measure also correlated strongly with coder-rated unethicality, indicating that the higher the MBAs scored on using reappraisal to control guilt and shame, the more unethically they behaved during the negotiation.

Next, we explored the extent to which these effects were unique to the use of reappraisal to control guilt and shame, compared to the use of other emotion regulation strategies, like suppression. We conducted multiple regression analyses entering reappraisal-guilt_shame and suppression-guilt_shame as simultaneous predictors, finding that while reappraisal-guilt_shame significantly predicted scores on the SINS scale, $b = 0.30$, $S.E. = 0.10$, $p = .003$, suppression-guilt_shame was a nonsignificant predictor, $b = 0.09$, $S.E. = 0.07$, $p = .246$.

To examine whether reappraisal-guilt_shame also predicted unethicality during the negotiation task, we used hierarchical linear modeling to account for the nested structure of the study design (MBAs within dyads), using an unstructured covariance matrix and including random slopes for predictors. When examined alone as a predictor, reappraisal-guilt_shame significantly predicted each MBA's coded unethicality score, $b = 0.40$, $S.E. = 0.13$, $p = .003$. When entering both reappraisal-guilt_shame and suppression-guilt_shame as simultaneous predictors, reappraisal-guilt_shame was significant, $b = 0.42$, $S.E. = 0.15$, $p = .005$, but suppression-guilt_shame was not, $b = -0.04$, $S.E. = 0.12$, $p = .714$.

Finally, we tested whether the amount of guilt and shame experienced in the lead-up to the negotiation task mediated the relationship between reappraisal-guilt_shame and how unethical the MBAs were judged to be during the negotiation task. We again used hierarchical linear modeling, first finding that reappraisal-guilt_shame (controlling for suppression-guilt_shame) significantly predicted the amount of guilt and shame the MBAs reported feeling while preparing their strategies for the negotiation task, $b = -0.34$, $S.E. = 0.14$, $p = .019$. Next, we used the Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation (Selig & Preacher, 2008), and found that the relationship between reappraisal-guilt_shame and coders' judgments of unethicality was significantly mediated by lower levels of guilt and shame experienced when preparing for the negotiation, $CI_{95\%}$ [0.004, 0.24].[12]

The results of Study 3 provide consistent evidence that using reappraisal as a means for controlling the experience of guilt and shame corresponds with the increased likelihood of behaving unethically—an effect explained by lower levels of experienced guilt and shame. As in Studies 1 and 2, we found that the effects were specific to reappraisal and not another emotion regulation strategy, suppression, which further attests to the particular role played by reappraisal to control guilt and shame. Also, because we assessed MBAs' guilt and shame prior to engaging in the negotiation but after they had prepared for it, our results point to the role reappraisal can play in facilitating future unethical behavior. Specifically, using reappraisal to control the experience of guilt and shame in anticipation of behaving unethically corresponded with an increased likelihood of actually behaving unethically.

5. Study 4

The correlational nature of our study designs in Studies 1–3 limit our ability to make causal claims about the impact of reappraisal on CWBs. In Studies 4 and 5, we conducted experiments that manipulated the use of reappraisal, so we could more directly test the idea that reappraisal of negative self-conscious emotions *causes* an increase in employee CWBs. In these studies, we chose to focus on the use of reappraisal to control guilt (as opposed to shame), in particular, for two

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[12] Preliminary tests showed that all tests were significant and highly similar whether or not we included random effects. Thus, for the sake of parsimony, we conducted the mediational analyses with fixed effects.

Table 3
Means, standard deviations, and correlations for key variables measured in Study 2.

	Mean(SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Negotiation Unethicality Coded	0.63 (1.49)	0.17	0.28**	0.12	−0.27**	−0.07	−0.12	−0.08	−0.08
2. SINS score	2.90 (0.98)	–	0.39***	0.26*	−0.27**	0.14	0.05	−0.01	−0.03
3. Reappraisal – Guilt_Shame	4.62 (1.08)		–	0.41***	−0.20†	0.22*	0.04	−0.01	0.06
4. Suppression – Guilt_Shame	4.24 (1.45)			–	0.04	0.13	0.14	0.02	−0.09
5. Guilt_Shame	1.70 (1.29)				–	0.10	0.35***	0.36***	0.16
6. Anger	2.83 (1.93)					–	0.21*	0.31**	0.36***
7. Anxiety	3.70 (1.91)						–	0.36***	0.36***
8. Sadness	1.45 (1.11)							–	0.60***
9. Regret	1.65 (1.41)								–

Note:
† $p < .10$.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

reasons. First, existing research has successfully manipulated participants' experience of guilt in a laboratory setting (de Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Jordan, Flynn, & Cohen, 2015; Ketelaar & Au, 2003), providing us with a valid template for developing our experimental procedures. Second, because the experience of shame stems from an individual seeing the *self* (i.e., their identity) as being inadequate and immoral, whereas the experience of guilt stems from an individual seeing a particular *behavior* as inadequate and immoral (Tangney et al., 2007), manipulating the experience of shame could have ill-effects on our participants' psychological well-being—something we wanted to avoid.

To manipulate reappraisal aimed at reducing guilt, we conducted two separate experiments that draw on existing validated manipulations used in the psychological literature. Any manipulation of reappraisal faces a necessary trade-off between enhancing internal validity (i.e., ensuring that we were manipulating the intended construct: the use of reappraisal to control guilt) and minimizing demand effects (i.e., conveying to participants how we expected them to behave). Accounting for this trade-off, Studies 4 and 5 varied in how much emphasis we placed on one side of the trade-off versus the other. In Study 4, for the sake of internal validity, we manipulated participants' use of reappraisal to control guilt while they were faced with the opportunity to behave unethically—the most direct causal test of our hypotheses. This approach can also generate demand effects. To address this, Study 5 provided separation between the manipulation of reappraisal and the assessment of CWBs. Participants recalled an event they felt guilty about and then we manipulated whether they used reappraisal to minimize these feelings. Expecting this manipulation of reappraisal to control feelings of guilt would carry over to a subsequent task, we gave participants an opportunity to cheat on a separate work assignment for their own financial gain. If both approaches provide evidence that the use of reappraisal leads to more CWBs, then, taken together, they would indicate strong causal support for Hypothesis 3.

5.1. Study 4 method

5.1.1. Participants

Two hundred forty-five students (84 male, 159 female, 2 did not indicate) at a major university in the western United States participated in this study. Each was given a $10 flat payment for their participation and whatever bonus money (ranging from $1 to $15) they earned depending on their choices during the economic game portion of the study. We estimated that the effect of experimental condition on CWBs would be small-to-medium (estimated *Cohen's d* of 0.35–0.40). With this in mind, we determined that to find a statistically significant effect (with power at 0.80) we would need between 200 and 250 participants.

5.1.2. Procedure

The study took place in a behavioral laboratory with each participant seated at a separate computer cubicle. At least four participants took part in each session. We chose this multi-person format so participants would believe they were actually engaging in activities with other participants. Upon arrival, participants were seated and directed to follow the instructions on their computer. Participants learned they would engage in a series of financial allocation tasks with other participants. Each task would involve a different *Sender* and *Receiver*, and each task was independent (i.e., the results of one task would not carry over to the other tasks, and no one would know the results of prior tasks except those participants who took part in them). The instructions stated clearly that the decisions participants made as senders and receivers involved real money, and that, in addition to the standard $10 compensation they would earn for participation, they would receive extra payment based on how they and their interaction partners behaved in the financial allocation tasks.

At that point, the computer interface explained the task. Participants learned they would be either the *Sender* or the *Receiver*. *Senders* would be allocated $15. This money was theirs to keep, but their task was to share any portion of it, from $1 to $15, with their task partner (the other participant). Whatever amount the *Sender* shared would then belong to the *Receiver*, and whatever amount was not shared would belong to the *Sender*. Participants were informed they would complete several of these tasks, each with a different person. At the end of the study, the experimenter would randomly choose one of the tasks that the participant participated in and whatever money the participant earned during that task would be paid out to them. Also, the interface informed participants that to limit the influence of irrelevant details on their financial decisions, they would be given only minimal information about their task partners. They would learn their year in school and their major, but the task would otherwise be anonymous.

After reading these instructions, the survey interface informed participants they would be randomly assigned to either the role of the *Sender* or the *Receiver* and presented them with a series of dots moving in a circle, indicating that computer processing was taking place. After three seconds, the interface changed to a screen informing participants they had been assigned the role of *Sender* and briefly reminded them of what this role entailed. Participants were then asked "What is your role in the resource allocation task you are about to complete?" and presented with four options: "Sender", "Receiver", "Both Sender and Receiver", and "Neither Sender nor Receiver". All participants except one correctly indicated "Sender." The one participant who incorrectly selected the "Receiver" option was then presented with an additional set of instructions further explaining that he or she would actually serve as the *Sender*.

Next, participants responded to a series of items asking them about their emotions at the present moment, which served as a baseline

measure. Specifically, on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a great deal), they indicated how much they felt relaxed, bored, happy, confident, guilty, alert, excited, and annoyed. Responses to the "guilty" item served as our time-1 measure of guilt. Participants were then randomly assigned to either the *reappraisal* or *no-reappraisal* condition using instructions based on manipulations commonly employed in past emotion regulation research (Denny & Ochsner, 2014; Gross, 1998; McCrae, Ciesielski, & Gross, 2012; McRae, Jacobs, Ray, John, & Gross, 2012; Troy et al., 2010; Urry, 2009; van 't Wout, Chang, & Sanfey, 2010). Those in the reappraisal condition were provided information about reappraisal and asked to try it out (e.g., "…we would like you to 're-think' the task in a way that reduces your guilt."), whereas those in the no-reappraisal condition learned about paying attention during work-related tasks and were asked to read and listen to instructions carefully (e.g., "To ensure you are paying attention during this task, we recommend that you read and listen to all instructions very carefully."). The exact wording of these manipulations can be found in the Supplementary Materials.

All participants then took part in three financial allocation tasks via computer, ostensibly with other participants in the same lab session who were serving as the *Receiver*. For each task, participants first received information about their interaction partners' year in school (e.g., Junior) and their major (e.g., Computer Science). Then participants were asked how many dollars they were willing to share with the *Receiver* and selected a number ranging from $1 to $15. Participants' allocation choices were consistent across the three tasks (α = 0.89), so we averaged them together to form a single measure for the sake of parsimony; however, we find consistent results if we examine each of the allocation choices separately.

After the third financial allocation task ended, participants indicated their *reappraisal use* during the task: "When you were making your decisions about how much to send to the receiver, to what extent did you try to change the way you were thinking about the resource allocation task so that you felt less guilty about the offers you were making?". After that, participants completed a time-2 measure of guilt that asked "During the allocation task, to what extent were you feeling guilt?" answered on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a great deal), embedded within the same list of emotions described earlier.[13] Finally, all participants completed a short demographic questionnaire, listened to a debriefing, and received their earnings.

5.2. Study 4 results

Reappraisal use. A comparison of the means on the *reappraisal use* item between participants in the two conditions yielded a significant difference, $t(2\,4\,3) = 2.17$, $p = .031$, 95% CI$_{\text{difference}}$ [−0.91, −0.04], $d = 0.28$, with participants in the reappraisal condition indicating greater use of reappraisal, $M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.68$, than participants in the no-reappraisal condition, $M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.76$. This difference suggests that our manipulation succeeded in getting participants in the reappraisal condition to rethink the situation in a way that would minimize their guilt. Of note, the relatively high mean for the no-reappraisal condition indicates that participants in this condition also relied on reappraisal to help them control their experience of guilt. Since participants in the no-reappraisal condition also used reappraisal (though to a lesser extent than those in the reappraisal condition), significant effects due to condition should be considered conservative

tests of our hypothesis (we would expect larger effects if participants in the no-reappraisal condition did not use reappraisal to control their guilt at all).

Guilt. To test whether participants in the reappraisal condition experienced less guilt relative to participants in the no-reappraisal condition, we conducted a mixed-design ANOVA, entering participants' reported feelings of guilt at time 1 and time 2 as the within-subjects variables, and experimental condition as the between-subjects variable. This analysis yielded a significant interaction, $F(1, 243) = 4.27$, $p = .040$, indicating that change in guilt from time 1 to time 2 differed due to experimental condition. Participants in the no-reappraisal condition demonstrated a significant increase in guilt from time 1 ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.49$) to Time 2 ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.63$), $F(1, 122) = 15.74$, $p < .001$) whereas those in the reappraisal condition did not differ between time 1 ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 1.35$) and time 2 ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.36$), $F(1, 121) = 0.22$, $p = .638$. In other words, participants in the no-reappraisal condition experienced more guilt (relative to their baseline) than did those in the reappraisal condition.

CWBs. We next tested Hypothesis 3 by examining whether our experimental manipulation resulted in more selfish resource allocation behavior. A comparison between the two conditions on the amount of money participants chose to keep for themselves yielded a significant difference, $t(2\,4\,3) = 2.97$, $p = .003$, 95% CI$_{\text{difference}}$ [0.40, 1.98], $d = 0.38$. Participants in the reappraisal condition kept, on average, $10.01 ($SD = 3.08$) out of the $15 total (67%), whereas participants in the no-reappraisal condition kept an average of $8.81 ($SD = 3.20$; 59%). In other words, participants in the reappraisal condition chose to be more selfish and share fewer resources with others whom they believed were taking part in the study.

Mediation. We tested whether individuals in the reappraisal condition were more selfish than those in the no-reappraisal condition because the former experienced lower levels of guilt. We first established that the experience of guilt at time 2 (controlling for baseline) predicted participants' financial allocation, $b = -0.37$, S.E. = 0.14, $p = .007$, CI$_{95\%}$ [−0.68, −0.04], such that participants who felt less guilty kept more money for themselves. Then, we conducted a mediation analysis using the *PROCESS SPSS macro* (Hayes, 2013) with 50,000 bootstrapped samples to estimate the indirect effect. This analysis found that 0 was not in the 95% confidence interval, [0.04, 0.44], indicating that the indirect effect was significant. In other words, participants in the reappraisal condition behaved more unethically than did those in the no-reappraisal condition because they experienced less guilt.[14]

6. Study 5

Study 4's method involved manipulating participants' use of reappraisal to control their guilt as they faced a choice to behave ethically or not. The benefit of this approach was that it allowed for the most direct, internally valid test of our hypotheses; however, it could also have generated demand effects. To address this concern, in Study 5 we tested the effect of using reappraisal to control guilt on ethical behavior using a less direct manipulation. Specifically, we built on past research

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[13] We included the time-2 guilt measure at this time point instead of before participants made each of their financial allocation decisions for two reasons: (1) we did not want to ask participants to complete the same questionnaire three times in quick succession as that could cause participants to feel frustrated and become fatigued, (2) we feared that asking them about guilt prior to each decision might introduce demand effects since the manipulation involved information about guilt.

[14] Although the time 2 measure of guilt directly asked about participants' experience of guilt prior to their allocation decisions, it is possible that participants' time 2 levels of guilt were lower in the reappraisal condition because participants in that condition employed reappraisal *after* they behaved unethically in the allocation task, rather than before it. If so, the decrease in guilt would not be an explanation for why participants in that condition behaved more unethically but rather a consequence of it. However, we believe this alternative ordering of events is unlikely because there is no other plausible answer to why participants in the reappraisal condition behaved more unethically than those in the no-reappraisal condition. We believe the more plausible explanation is, as predicted, participants in the reappraisal condition experienced less guilt when contemplating how much to share with their partner, and as a result behaved more selfishly.

demonstrating that both emotions and emotion regulation strategies elicited in one domain can carry over to a subsequent unrelated domain (e.g., Feinberg, Willer, Antonenko, & John, 2012; Feinberg, Antonenko, Willer, Horberg, & John, 2014; Lerner, Small, & Loewenstein, 2004; Wheatley & Haidt, 2005). We first manipulated reappraisal in response to a guilt-inducing transgression, thereby training participants to use this regulation strategy in the face of guilt. Then, we presented participants with a subtle opportunity to cheat for financial gain in a subsequent, ostensibly unrelated task. We hypothesized that participants who reappraised a past transgression to experience less guilt would employ this same regulation strategy when subsequently deciding whether to cheat. These participants would therefore be more likely to behave unethically.

6.1. Study 5 method

Participants. Two hundred ninety-nine participants (172 male, 121 female) were recruited from across the United States through the Amazon Mechanical Turk website in exchange for $1.00 each. Three participants were excluded from all analyses: two because they provided comments indicating they were unable to follow directions, and one because he suspected that the study was about cheating. Because the manipulation relied on subtle carryover effects, we hypothesized the effect would likely be small. Thus, we collected a sample size that would allow us to reach statistical significance with approximately 0.80 power for a relatively small effect (approximately $d = 0.25$–0.30).

Procedure. The online interface informed participants they would need to toggle between the survey window and a separate website and they should not participate if they were unable to do this. Once participants indicated this would not be a problem, they were presented with a cover story explaining that the study involved "different emotional experiences people have, how they deal with those experiences, and how this relates to cognitive ability." Participants then completed a guilt induction used in prior research (de Hooge et al., 2007; Ketelaar & Au, 2003). Specifically, they were asked to "recall a recent experience you had where you felt really guilty or self-blaming. Describe exactly what happened in as much detail as possible." Next, participants answered an item assessing how much they were currently experiencing guilt, which served as a time 1 measure. This item was embedded within a questionnaire about their experience of various other emotions.

Participants were then randomly assigned to either a reappraisal condition or a control condition that involved using the emotion regulation strategy of emotional acceptance, which we included to establish further that our effects do not generalize to all emotion regulation strategies. The instructions for the reappraisal and emotional acceptance conditions were modeled directly after existing reappraisal manipulations commonly used both in experimental research and therapy sessions (e.g., Denny & Ochsner, 2014; Gross, 1998; McCrae et al., 2012; Troy, Shallcross, Brunner, Friedman, & Jones, 2018; see Supplementary Materials for exact wording). Emotional acceptance involves viewing emotions as natural reactions to the current situation and not trying to control or change these emotions. We selected emotional acceptance as a comparison condition because both reappraisal and emotional acceptance help improve well-being in the face of negative emotional experiences (Shallcross, Troy, Boland, & Mauss, 2010; Troy et al., 2018). However, unlike reappraisal, which aims to help individuals avoid the emotional experience, emotional acceptance entails allowing the emotional experience to take place and accepting it. Following this manipulation, all participants filled out a time 2 measure of their guilt, again embedded within a questionnaire about their experience of various emotions.

As part of what was ostensibly a cognitive ability task, participants learned they would need to unscramble seven scrambled words as quickly as possible. To incentivize participants, we informed them that the five individuals who successfully completed the task the quickest

would earn a $10 bonus. Participants were provided with a link to an external website that would serve as a stopwatch (http://www.online-stopwatch.com) and were given clear instructions on how to use the stopwatch. Participants were instructed to click "next" on the survey page, immediately go to the stopwatch page and start the stopwatch, return to the survey to complete the word unscramble task, and, when finished, stop the stopwatch and immediately click "next" on the survey page. The survey then asked them to indicate how long it took them to complete the word unscramble task.

Unbeknownst to the participants, the web interface was timing how long they spent on the unscramble task page. This allowed us to compare the length of time it took to complete the task with the length of time participants reported taking to complete the task. Participants who reported taking less time than they actually took were deemed "cheaters." Pilot testing revealed that it took 2–5 s to toggle between the survey page and the stopwatch page both at the beginning and end of the word unscramble task. Given this margin of error, we chose a 5 s "grace period", and deemed participants to be cheaters only if their reported time was at least 5 s faster than what was recorded.

6.2. Study 5 results

6.2.1. Emotion Change

To examine whether our reappraisal manipulation led to a decrease in guilt, we conducted a 2 (reappraisal condition versus emotional acceptance) × 2 (reported guilt time 1 versus guilt time 2) mixed-design ANOVA, with experimental condition serving as the between-subjects factor and reported guilt serving as the within-subjects factor. This analysis yielded a significant interaction, $F(1, 294) = 72.75, p < .001$, and simple comparisons revealed that the drop in reported guilt from time 1 to time 2 in the reappraisal condition, $M_{drop} = 1.29, SD = 1.37$ ($M_{guilt\_time1} = 4.64$; $M_{guilt\_time2} = 3.35$) was significant, $t(146) = 11.38, p < .001, CI_{95\%}[1.06, 1.51], d = 0.95$, whereas the drop in the emotional acceptance condition, $M_{drop} = 0.02$ ($M_{guilt\_time1} = 4.44$; $M_{guilt\_time2} = 4.42$), was not, $t(148) = 0.21$, $p = .84, CI_{95\%}[-0.17, 0.21], d = 0.02$. As such, we can conclude that our reappraisal manipulation was successful.

6.2.2. Cheating behavior

Five participants were removed from analyses because they either did not attempt the word unscramble task and/or did not report a time. An additional participant was removed because the survey page timer failed to record a time for her. Thus, all analyses reported below are conducted using the remaining 290 participants.

We examined the effect of reappraisal on cheating behavior in two ways. The first involved operationalizing cheating as a categorical variable. We did this because the influence of using reappraisal on cheating behavior might occur in an either-or manner for individuals, such that using reappraisal pushes individuals across a threshold where they are willing to behave unethically, but once past that threshold the reappraisal has no influence on *how much* cheating takes place. Participants who reported their time as being at least 5 s faster than the survey page timer were coded as cheaters and those whose difference was less than 5 s were coded as non-cheaters. We employed a $\chi2$ test to examine whether the ratio of cheaters to non-cheaters was different due to condition. Table 4 presents the frequency table used for this analysis. The $\chi2$ test confirmed that the proportion of cheaters to non-cheaters was significantly different, $\chi2(1) = 6.09, p = .014, Cramer's V = 0.15$, such that there were more cheaters in the reappraisal condition than the emotional acceptance condition.

We also measured cheating behavior in a more continuous manner, using a Tobit regression approach. This accounts for a threshold at which point variance in the data drops to zero because all values after that threshold are treated as equal (McDonald & Moffitt, 1980). As before, we coded all participants who scored lower than 5 s as a zero, but this time for all participants scoring higher than 5 s, we kept their

Table 4
Frequency table depicting the number (and percentage) of cheating and non-cheating participants within each experimental condition.

	Non-Cheaters	Cheaters	Total
Reappraisal Condition	91 (63%)	52 (36%)	143
Acceptance Condition	113 (77%)	34 (23%)	147
Total	204	86	290

difference score as a continuous measure of the extent to which they were cheating (with positive numbers indicating greater amounts of cheating). The Tobit regression (using a logistic distribution) yielded a significant effect of reappraisal, $b = 8.84$, $S.E. = 4.00$, $z = 2.21$, $p = .027$, suggesting that those in the reappraisal condition cheated more than those in the emotional acceptance condition. Overall, these results indicate that those in the reappraisal condition were significantly more likely to cheat, thus supporting Hypothesis 3 that the use of reappraisal of negative self-conscious emotions can increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in CWBs.[15]

7. General discussion

Past research on reappraisal in the workplace has highlighted the benefits of using reappraisal to regulate negative emotions. Drawing from the social-functionalist theory of emotions, we challenge the assumption that reappraisal always yields positive outcomes, instead highlighting the double-edged sword that comes with regulating negative emotions. Beyond the benefits reappraisal can have for employee well-being, it minimizes the important functions these emotions serve in guiding expected and appropriate behavior. We demonstrate that using reappraisal can be both beneficial and costly when employees use it to control their experience of guilt and shame. Using reappraisal to control these self-conscious emotions corresponded with higher levels of workplace well-being, but at the same time, predicted a greater tendency to engage in CWBs. Taken together, these findings indicate that reappraisal can pose trade-offs that scholars and practitioners have previously overlooked.

We believe our findings are critical for practitioners, given how common it has become for organizations to highlight the importance of, and even train employees to use, emotion management strategies that involve reappraisal techniques aimed at mitigating unpleasant emotions (e.g., Giang, 2015; Tan, 2012). In Studies 1–3, employees reported utilizing reappraisal often in the workplace, which makes sense given that reappraisal helps them deal with the dysphoric affective experiences they face as they perform their job, interact with co-workers, and serve customers. At the same time, reappraisal increased the rate of CWBs, which is problematic for organizations. These unethical behaviors can harm organizations in terms of profitability and productivity (Ariely, 2008; Kabins, 2015). Companies lose hundreds of billions of dollars each year because their employees engage in theft and fraud (Deyle, 2015; Goldschein & Bhasin, 2011). Even if just a small fraction of these costly behaviors occurs because employees use reappraisal to down-regulate their self-conscious emotions, it could be a steep price to pay. Thus, organizations seem to be faced with a dilemma: on one hand, using reappraisal to control unpleasant emotions helps maintain employee well-being, but, on the other hand, using reappraisal to control unpleasant emotions, like guilt and shame, can translate into higher levels of CWBs, which can have detrimental effects on the organization

and its bottom line.

Beyond practical implications, the present findings point to an underappreciated, but highly important, fact about emotions at work: emotional experience does not occur in a vacuum, particularly when the emotion is unpleasant. People will often engage in emotion regulation to avoid feeling unpleasant emotions. As a result, the process by which an emotion-eliciting stimulus translates into behavior is more complex than typically assumed (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, & Zhang, 2007): It involves a complex interplay between the emotion-inducing stimulus, one's motivation to regulate the emotion, and one's ability to employ emotion regulation (see Ford & Troy, 2019 for a review). For example, before giving an important sales pitch, two employees may begin feeling a strong sense of anxiety, but because they differ in how motivated they are to regulate this anxiety and their ability to regulate it, their outcomes differ, with one employee "choking," and the other performing well. The employees' performance was not simply a product of how anxiety-evoking they found the situation to be, but whether and how they regulated that anxiety. Researchers examining the influence of emotion in the workplace must account not only for the *strength* of the emotion, but the extent to which employees *regulate* the emotion.

In addition, the present findings substantiate a growing concern that emotion regulation strategies can have a downside (c.f., Ford, Feinberg, Lam, Mauss, & John, 2019; Ford & Troy, 2019; Troy, Shallcross, & Mauss, 2013; van 't Wout et al., 2010). Although using effective strategies such as reappraisal can help individual employees feel better, better feelings may not always promote better outcomes. Our emotions (even unpleasant emotions) are largely functional experiences that help us respond to our environment in adaptive ways (Frijda, 1988; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). It is not necessarily adaptive to try to minimize these emotions, given that they can serve as critical sources of motivation to improve our circumstances and guide us to behave in socially appropriate ways (see Troy et al., 2013).

In a similar vein, the present research extends theorizing on the asymmetries between the negative and positive experiences of emotion and their negative and positive outcomes (Lindebaum & Jordan, 2014). Researchers and practitioners alike typically conceive of positively-valenced emotions as coinciding with positive outcomes and negatively-valenced emotions as coinciding with negative outcomes. It follows, then, that engaging in emotion regulation strategies, such as reappraisal, that minimize negatively-experienced emotions, should be something we strive for as a means of avoiding negative outcomes and achieving positive ones. However, the present research demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between the valence of an emotional experience (positive versus negative) and the outcomes the emotion facilitates (e.g., using reappraisal to control the negatively-experienced emotions of guilt and shame had both positive and negative consequences).

Our research might also help reconcile mixed results regarding the impact of deep acting on personal well-being. Deep acting can be conceptualized as a broad category of regulatory strategies that involve cognitive change, which certainly includes reappraisal, but can also include other strategies such as distraction. Unlike the consistent results found in the reappraisal literature (and in Study 1) showing a positive relationship between reappraisal and well-being, studies of deep acting sometimes find that it corresponds with improved mood and well-being, but other times it does not. A positive relationship between deep acting and improved well-being may depend on whether employees' use of deep acting includes reappraisal. Studies finding a positive link between deep acting and emotional benefits may indicate that the deep acting involved reappraisal. But studies finding no positive link may indicate that the deep acting involved a different cognitive change strategy besides reappraisal. Future research might delve more deeply into what type of cognitive change strategies employees are using when they report using deep acting, and test whether the presence or absence of reappraisal is the main determinant of whether deep acting predicts higher levels of well-being.

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[15] Unlike Study 4, the use of carryover effects in Study 5 did not allow for testing the mediating role of guilt experienced. The measures of guilt collected at Time 1 and 2 were unrelated to the dependent variable in the study (cheating behavior). Time 1 guilt measured guilt experienced after recalling a recent experience, while Time 2 was measured after the reappraisal manipulation, but before the cheating behavior task had been introduced.

The present research also methodologically advances the organizational literature on emotion and emotion regulation. By demonstrating that using reappraisal to control self-conscious emotions, but not other negative emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety), can foster CWBs, our research underscores the importance of a discrete emotion approach to exploring the effects of emotion regulation (Brooks, 2014). This stands in contrast to much of the organizational research on emotion regulation that explores the impact of regulating positive versus negative affect, grouping the regulation of various discrete emotions into overarching categories. Our findings suggest that such broad categories can obscure the different effects of regulating each negative emotion. For instance, Study 1's results indicate that the use of reappraisal to regulate some negative emotions (e.g., anxiety) correlates negatively with CWBs, while the use of reappraisal to regulate guilt and shame correlates positively with CWBs. If we had explored only the regulation of negative affect instead of discrete emotions, we likely would not have found any evidence for a trade-off between increased workplace well-being and CWBs due to reappraisal.

Finally, our research capitalizes on the use of experimental manipulations to understand the causal impact of using reappraisal in organizational contexts. Although psychologists conducting basic research have often manipulated the use of different emotion regulation strategies, like reappraisal, no organizational studies have examined the impact of emotion regulation using such an approach. As a result, past findings cannot allow for causal interpretations. Rather, the correlational nature of most of this past research leaves open the possibility of spurious relationships between the use of emotion regulation strategies and workplace outcomes. For instance, past research finds that the use of reappraisal in the workplace correlates with customer satisfaction ratings (e.g., Chi et al., 2011; Groth et al., 2009), but cannot rule out the possibility that other variables account for this relationship. For example, those who self-monitor their actions may be likely to score high on reappraisal tendencies and customer service, thereby calling into question whether it is the tendency to reappraise as opposed to self-monitoring that is leading to better customer service. By introducing more experimental techniques into the organizational literature on emotion regulation, we believe both organizational researchers and practitioners could be more confident about the ways in which emotion regulation *causes* various work-related outcomes.

7.1. Limitations and future directions

The present research offers novel insight on how reappraisal can affect workplace outcomes, but it is important to note its limitations. For instance, the dark side of reappraisal we chose to highlight involved guilt and shame felt in *anticipation* of engaging in an unethical act, rather than in *response* to an unethical act. We focused on this type of reappraisal because we viewed it (and the ability to manipulate it) as a lever on future unethical behaviors, especially CWBs. Yet, methodologically, it can be difficult to isolate when individuals experience guilt or shame—either before or after an unethical act. In Studies 2–3, the apparent decrease in guilt and shame may have been evidence of using reappraisal to feel better after behaving unethically. Nonetheless, we feel confident that our findings demonstrate the effects of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame in anticipation of behaving unethically. Studies 2 and 3 used time-separated designs and specifically asked about the experience of guilt and shame prior to the measure of unethical behavior. Further, it is unclear what else besides a decrease in the experience of guilt could explain the effects due to our reappraisal manipulations in Studies 4 and 5. The most plausible account for our findings across studies is that the use of reappraisal resulted in individuals experiencing less anticipatory guilt and shame when contemplating behaving unethically, and that is why they ultimately behaved more unethically.

That being said, the use of reappraisal to control guilt and shame in response to, rather than in anticipation of, an unethical act is an interesting topic that future research should explore. We expect that reappraisal use in such contexts would result in transgressors feeling more willing to commit the same transgression (or a similar transgression) in the future. These individuals might earn negative reputations in their organizations among coworkers who feel mistreated. If this is the case, there may be an additional dark side to the use of reappraisal beyond the one we focused on here—those who use reappraisal to control guilt and shame may suffer socially because they are more likely to develop negative reputations.

In a similar vein, it can be difficult to know exactly when in the emotion process individuals are implementing reappraisal—at the onset of the emotion or after the emotion has fully engulfed them. These temporal differences may determine the costs and benefits of reappraisal. For instance, the benefits of reappraisal could manifest most clearly when employees regulate high levels of guilt and shame that already exist. In contrast, the costs of reappraisal may manifest when employees use reappraisal at the onset of guilt or shame because that is when it is easiest to stave off these self-conscious emotions. Our measures of reappraisal (e.g., ERQ) did not ask when in the emotion process our participants used reappraisal. Thus, we cannot know for sure whether and how the timing of reappraisal mattered. Even so, understanding these nuances could shed more light on the trade-off that arises when employees use reappraisal, and therefore may provide key insights into how best to deal with this trade-off. We hope future research delves deeper into these temporal distinctions.

We relied mainly on samples from the United States, but differences in emotion and emotion regulation exist across cultures. Relatively collectivistic (vs. individualistic) cultures are more likely to value self-conscious emotions like guilt and shame. As a result, individuals within a collectivistic culture are more likely to experience these emotions—given that these emotions help individuals prioritize the welfare of the social group over personal well-being (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006). Cultural differences in the value of guilt and shame may lead to differences in the extent to which employees are likely to use reappraisal to reduce the experience of these emotions. Likewise, in cultures where guilt and shame are valued, experiencing these emotions may not impair employees' workplace well-being to the extent that it does for employees in more individualistic cultures. Examining the effects of using reappraisal to control guilt and shame within other cultures, particularly collectivistic cultures, represents a key area for future research.

Study 1 attempted to address whether the link between reappraisal and CWBs was specific to using reappraisal to reduce negative self-conscious emotions, compared to other emotions (anxiety, anger). But, we did not explore the impact of using reappraisal to regulate many other negative emotions on CWBs. It remains to be seen how reappraisal aimed at embarrassment, another self-conscious emotion, might correspond to CWBs. Embarrassment compels individuals to avoid counter-normative behaviors (Keltner & Anderson, 2000). We expect that employees who use reappraisal to control embarrassment would be more willing to act in ways that go against workplace norms. They may be more likely to speak out of turn or violate informal procedure. Given how interconnected norms and ethics are, these employees may also be more prone to act unethically. Of course, it should be noted that disregarding organizational norms may not always be negative for the organization because creative and innovative ideas often stem from such deviance (Gino & Ariely, 2012). We hope future research might explore different effects, both positive and negative, that using reappraisal to regulate embarrassment has on workplace outcomes.

Our research also raises questions about work-related consequences that stem from using reappraisal to control "other-condemning" moral emotions, such as anger, contempt, and disgust (Haidt, 2003). Study 1 found that employees who use reappraisal to regulate anger experienced higher levels of job satisfaction, suggesting that using reappraisal to regulate these emotions can be good for employees' workplace well-

being. Study 1 also found that employees who used reappraisal to control their anger were no more likely to engage in CWBs than were those who did not reappraise their anger, which makes sense considering that other-condemning moral emotions motivate individuals to keep *others*' immoral behavior in check, not their own. With this in mind, future research might explore how the tendency for employees to use reappraisal to regulate other-condemning emotions might affect workplace outcomes related to others' unethicality. One could imagine that employees who control these emotions via reappraisal would be less judgmental (see Feinberg et al., 2014; Feinberg et al., 2012), and therefore less likely to confront, or report, coworkers who break the rules.

In Studies 1–3, we measured participants' use of reappraisal to control both guilt and shame. The results for these two emotions were highly overlapping, leading us to treat the two emotions as a composite measure (see Supplementary Materials for separate results). Such strong overlap may seem at odds with previous research suggesting that shame and guilt result in different outcomes (Cohen et al., 2011; Schmader & Lickel, 2006; Tangney et al., 2007, 2014), with guilt decreasing unethical behavior and shame showing little influence on, or even increasing, unethical behavior. To be clear, we explored only the effects of using reappraisal in the face of these emotions rather than their direct effects. Nevertheless, our results point to shame and guilt serving similar ends (i.e., deterring unethical behavior). Perhaps anticipatory shame deters unethical behavior in the same way anticipatory guilt does. But, the impact of these two emotions may diverge in how individuals respond to the full-blown experience of these two emotions, with guilt resulting in a desire to make amends, while shame results in more unethical behavior (i.e., denial, rationalization, lashing out at others). If so, then using reappraisal to down-regulate anticipatory shame would facilitate increased unethicality, but using reappraisal to minimize shame after committing an unethical act might not.

Although our research highlights an important trade-off that arises when employees use reappraisal, the question of how organizations might overcome this trade-off remains. One possible approach would be to ensure emotion management training highlights the functionality of negative emotions, especially self-conscious emotions. When employees experience unpleasant emotions, they should ask themselves: "Why am I experiencing this emotion? What is the function of it?" Training employees to ask themselves such questions should help them gain a better understanding of whether experiencing the emotion is useful or not, and in what ways. Having such self-insight, and realizing the functional role these emotions play, may help employees feel better, thereby improving their well-being, while still letting the emotion guide their moral judgment. The effectiveness of such training needs to be explored in more particular detail. In general, we hope future research will explore ways that organizations and their employees can balance the trade-offs that come with reappraisal.

On a related note, our research assumes that organizations do *not* want their employees to engage in unethical behaviors because such behavior is both financially and morally problematic. However, there may be organizations that want, even need, their employees to engage in ethically questionable behaviors (Thau, Derfler-Rozin, Pitesa, Mitchell, & Pillutla, 2015; Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010). For instance, organizations that knowingly pollute the environment need employees who are willing to engage in this questionable act with minimal compunction. These organizations, it would seem, do not face a trade-off when it comes to employees using reappraisal to down-regulate their experience of guilt and shame; instead, these emotions would serve to bolster employee well-being and decrease the likelihood of resistance in executing required tasks.

8. Conclusion

We call attention to a difficult challenge that organizations face: when employees experience negative emotions, like guilt and shame, it impairs their workplace well-being. They experience less job satisfaction and more burnout. Therefore, it makes sense for employees to regulate the experience of these emotions via reappraisal and for organizations to encourage and train employees to use such regulation strategies. However, when employees use reappraisal to control their emotions, they are undermining the important functions these emotions serve. As we show, employees who use reappraisal to control their guilt and shame are more prone to engage in CWBs. This double-edged sword of reappraisal poses a dilemma for organizations. How do they balance the benefits of reappraisal with the costs it can impose? Developing a solution to this problem, we believe, will help organizations maintain well-adjusted and satisfied employees while minimizing the organization's losses due to bad behavior.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Matthew Feinberg: Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing. **Brett Q. Ford:** Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing. **Francis J. Flynn:** Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing.

Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2020.03.005.

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