

Using Evidence to Design Effective Interventions: Some Lessons Learned from Evaluating Correctional Programs

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Lesson 1

Everyone says they are Evidence Based



Evidence Based – What does it mean?

There are different forms of evidence:

- The lowest form is anecdotal evidence; stories, opinions, testimonials, case studies, etc - but it often makes us feel good
- The highest form is empirical evidence – research, data, results from controlled studies, etc. - but sometimes it doesn't make us feel good



Evidence Based Practice is:

Easier to think of as
Evidence Based
Decision Making

Involves several steps
and encourages the
use of validated tools
and treatments.

Not just about the
tools you have but
also *how* you use
them

Evidence Based Decision Making Requires:

1. Assessment information
2. Relevant research
3. Available programming
4. Evaluation
5. Professionalism and knowledge from staff





Lesson 2

Some things don't work

Lakota tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. However, in corrections, and in other affairs, we often try other strategies, including the following:

- Buy a stronger whip.
- Change riders
- Say things like “This is the way we always have ridden this horse.”
- Appoint a committee to study the horse.
- Arrange to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
- Create a training session to increase our riding ability.
- Harness several dead horses together for increased speed.
- Declare that “No horse is too dead to beat.”
- Provide additional funding to increase the horse’s performance.
- Declare the horse is “better, faster, and cheaper” dead.
- Study alternative uses for dead horses.
- Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.

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Running teaches inmates value of success

'This is the highlight of our year'



Inmate Jason Upchurch runs the marathon at the Middle Tennessee Correctional Complex.

Story Tools

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP) -- Until this week, Jordan Davis had never run 2.4 miles, much less completed a race

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FREE SPIRIT DRUM CIRCLES

Patricia Prince Thomas Drum Circle Facilitator

To; Marta Daniel

Subject; Drum Circles

I am enclosing the latest research and articles on drum circles. I have been researching drum circles for the past year since experiencing one at the Southeastern Conference. I am amazed that something so basic actually boost the immune system and its fun. I am enclosing an e-mail from a friend that works in a New Zealand prison. She introduced the first drum circle in a New Zealand prison and she describes it as WOW. The staff was amazed because most clients continued drumming for two hours without stopping to smoke.

I am uncertain as to how parolees will respond to a drum circle , however I am sure it will be very positive. I realize that substance abuse and cognitive behavioral programs are probably your number one priority. I would like to introduce drum circles to the prison system. It may be cost effective preventing depression therefore saving money on antidepressants. In addition research indicates that it is stress reducing which may prevent Disciplinary Reports.

I am willing to demonstrate a drum circle free of charge to any prison within a 150 mile radius of Athens. I realize that you are very busy and I appreciate your taking the time to read over the materials that I have enclosed.

Sincerely,
Patricia Thomas MA., MAC., LPC.,

Patricia Thomas



Gardening Conquers All How to cut your jail recidivism rates by half

Lisa Van Cleef, Special to SF Gate
Wednesday, December 18, 2002
©2003 SF Gate

URL: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/archive/2002/12/18/greeng.DTL>



In 1982, Catherine Sneed was lying in a hospital bed, so ill with kidney disease that her San Francisco County Jail co-workers were coming to say their good-byes -- prematurely, it turns out. While in the hospital, Sneed read Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" and came to the pivotal realization that people feel most hopeful when they have a connection to the land, and that vital connection was missing at the county jail.

Sneed, a high school dropout who put herself through law school, became a jail counselor rather than a lawyer because, she says, she wanted to keep people out of jail rather than put them in. She attributes her recovery to that Steinbeck-inspired epiphany which then led to her determination to start [the Garden Project](#).

Today, the county jail's Garden Project has employed more than 4,300 ex-prisoners and served thousands of incarcerated men and women, teaching them essential job and life skills and providing literacy courses and computer training all while they work the jail's 12-acre organic garden in San Bruno or the project's second garden in Hunters Point.

The garden serves as a setting where the participants not only acquire horticultural skills and an awareness of the role plants play in our lives but also learn the basics required in the working world, such as adhering to a schedule, working with a group and accepting responsibility for specific tasks.

Sneed says her goal is to provide Garden Project apprentices an alternative to the cycle of crime that has more than half the parolees returning to jail within a year. Her program shows them that "getting up every day and going to work, doing the best you can while there and getting a paycheck is easier than dealing drugs, easier than prison," she adds.

And it works. According to San Francisco County Sheriff Mike Hennessy, "The Garden Project is a tremendously effective crime-prevention program. It not only helps individuals rebuild their lives, but recidivism studies we've conducted also show that while 55 percent of our prisoners are rearrested within a year, those who go through the Garden Project have a recidivism rate of 24 percent, and that's after two years.

"The participants of the Garden Project are what we call 'frequent fliers' -- those people who were in and out of jail many times," Hennessy points out. "You don't find too many other programs this successful."

DOGSLEDDING AS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE METHOD –

London Free Press – 07/03/11

The Hollow Water First Nation, who live 200 km northeast of Winnipeg, have used dogsledding as a restorative justice program, which tries to restore relationships between victims and perpetrators in criminal cases. Exercising wilderness skills was seen as a way of rebuilding the perpetrator's self-esteem, explained Marcel HARDESTY, restorative justice program director.



Ineffective Approaches

- Programs that cannot maintain fidelity
- Programs that focus on non-criminogenic factors
- Classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals
- Shaming techniques
- Drug education programs
- Non-directive, client centered approaches
- Talking cures
- Self-Help programs
- Vague unstructured rehabilitation programs
- “Punishing smarter”



Lesson 3

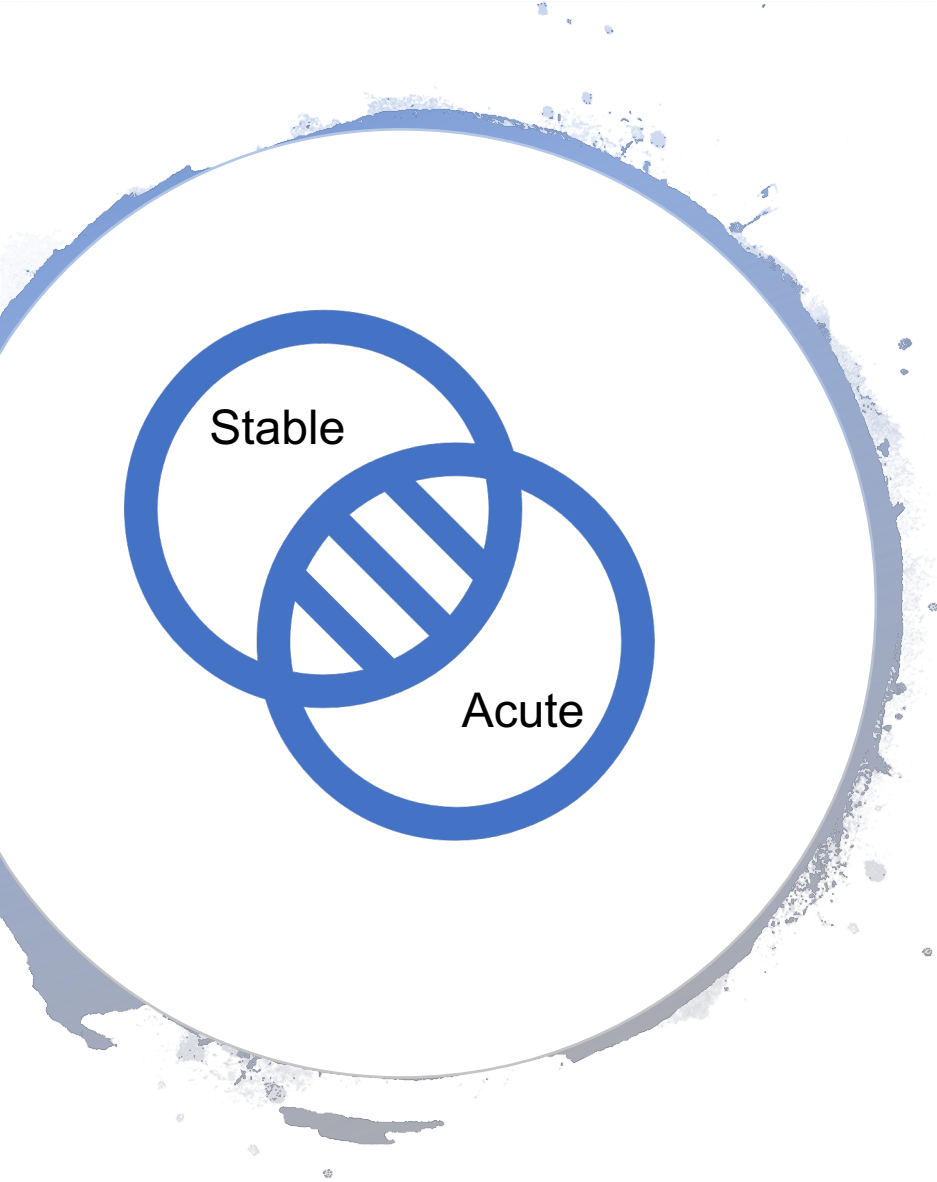
Almost anything you want to fix starts with assessment

Assessment is the engine that drives effective correctional programs

- Helps us know “who” to target and “what” to target
- Can help reduce bias
- Aids decision making
- Allows you to target dynamic risk factors and measure change
- Best risk assessment method is the actuarial (statistical) approach

Dynamic and Static Factors

- Static Factors are those factors that are related to risk and do not change. Some examples might be number of prior offenses, whether person has ever had a drug/alcohol problem.
- Dynamic factors relate to risk and *can change*. Some examples are whether someone is currently unemployed or currently has a drug/alcohol problem.



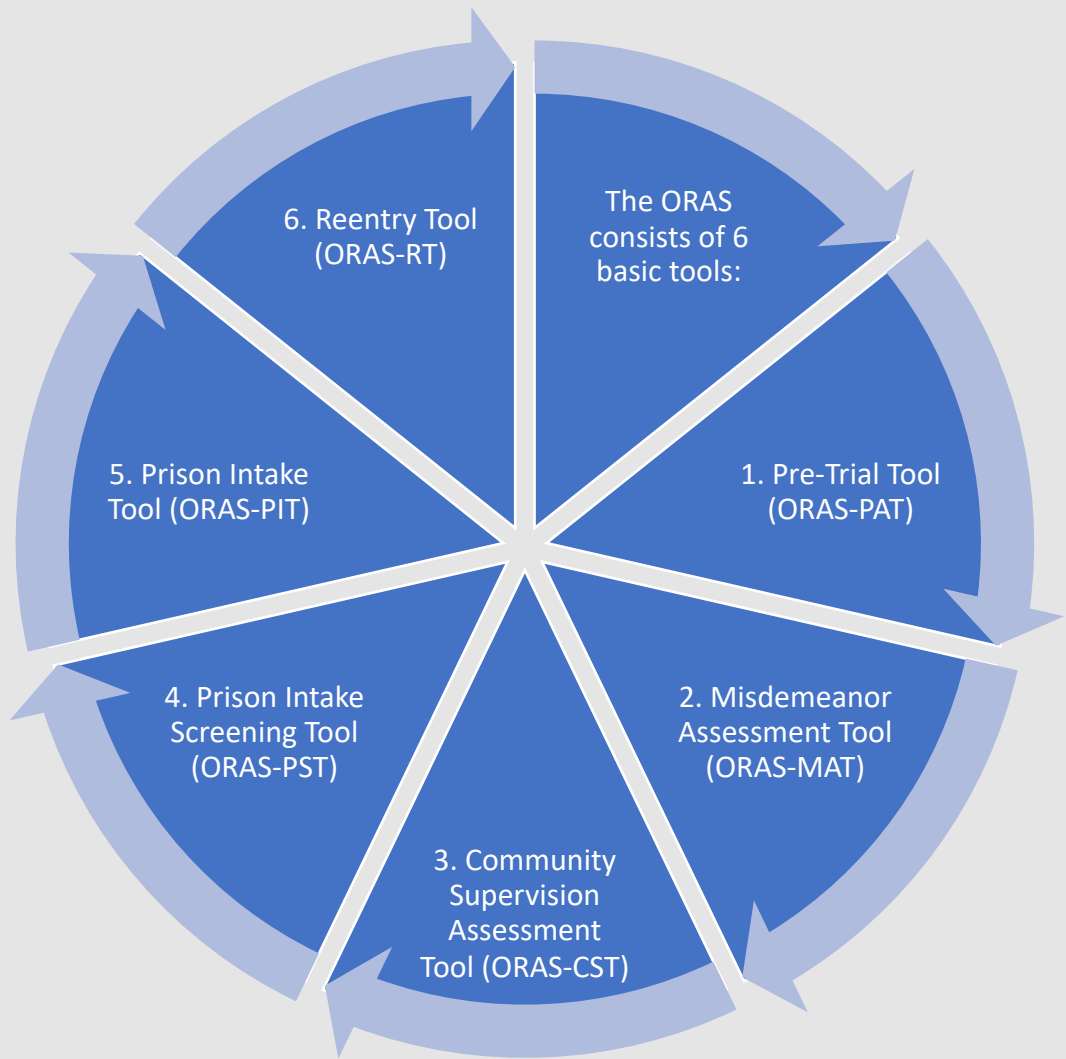
There are two types of dynamic risk factors

According to the American Heart Association, there are a number of risk factors that increase your chances of a first heart attack

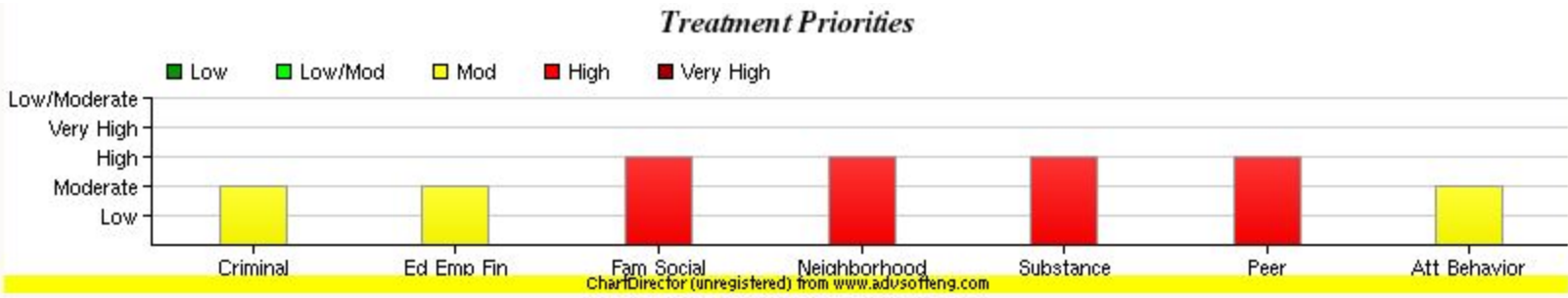
- ✓ Family history of heart attacks
- ✓ Gender (males)
- ✓ Age (over 50)
- ✓ Inactive lifestyle
- ✓ Over weight
- ✓ High blood pressure
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ High Cholesterol level



In Ohio we
use the
Ohio Risk
Assessment
System
(ORAS)



ORAS-CST Assessment

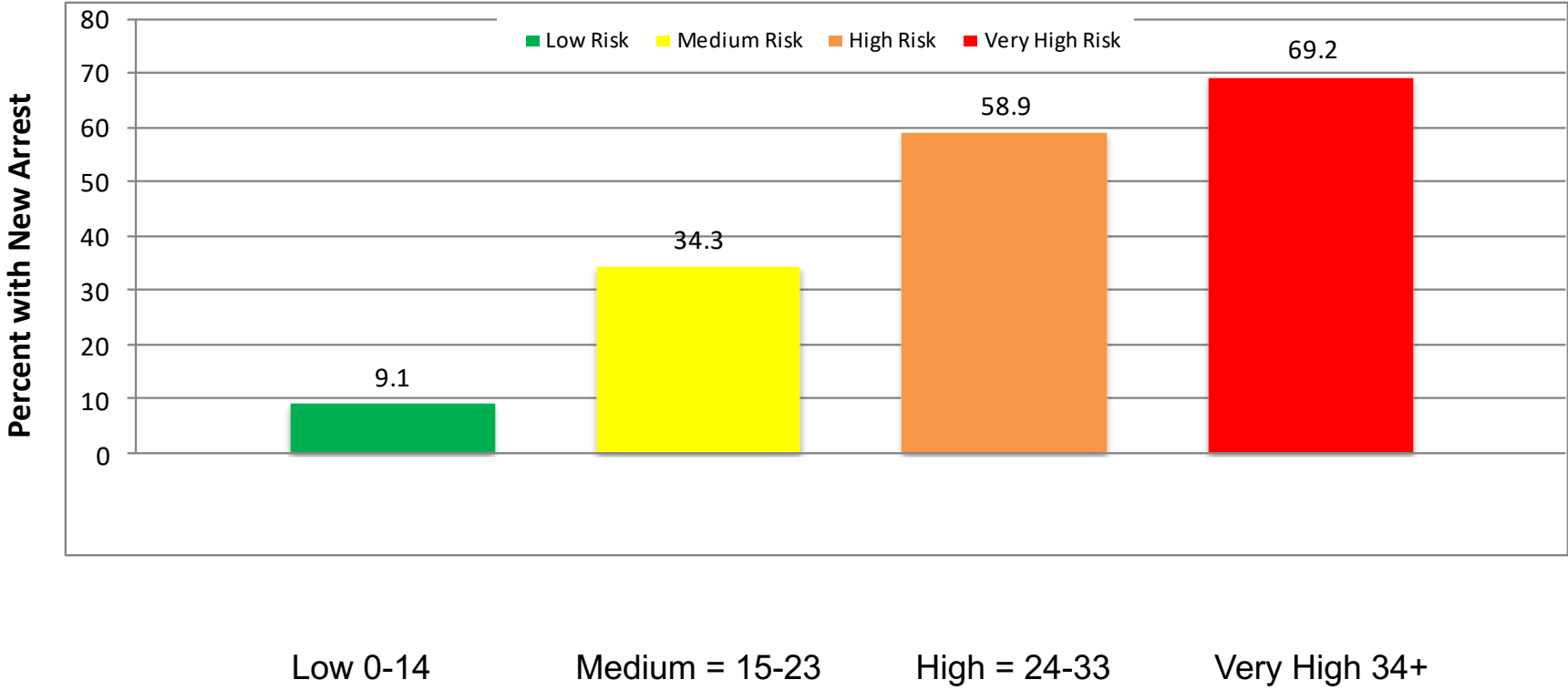




Lesson 4

If you want to reduce recidivism focus on those most likely to recidivate

Example of Risk Level by Recidivism for a Community Supervision Sample (males)





Lesson 5

Comparing Low Risk to High Risk tells us Nothing about a Treatment Effect

10 High Risk Offenders



No EBP



EBP



10 Low Risk Offenders

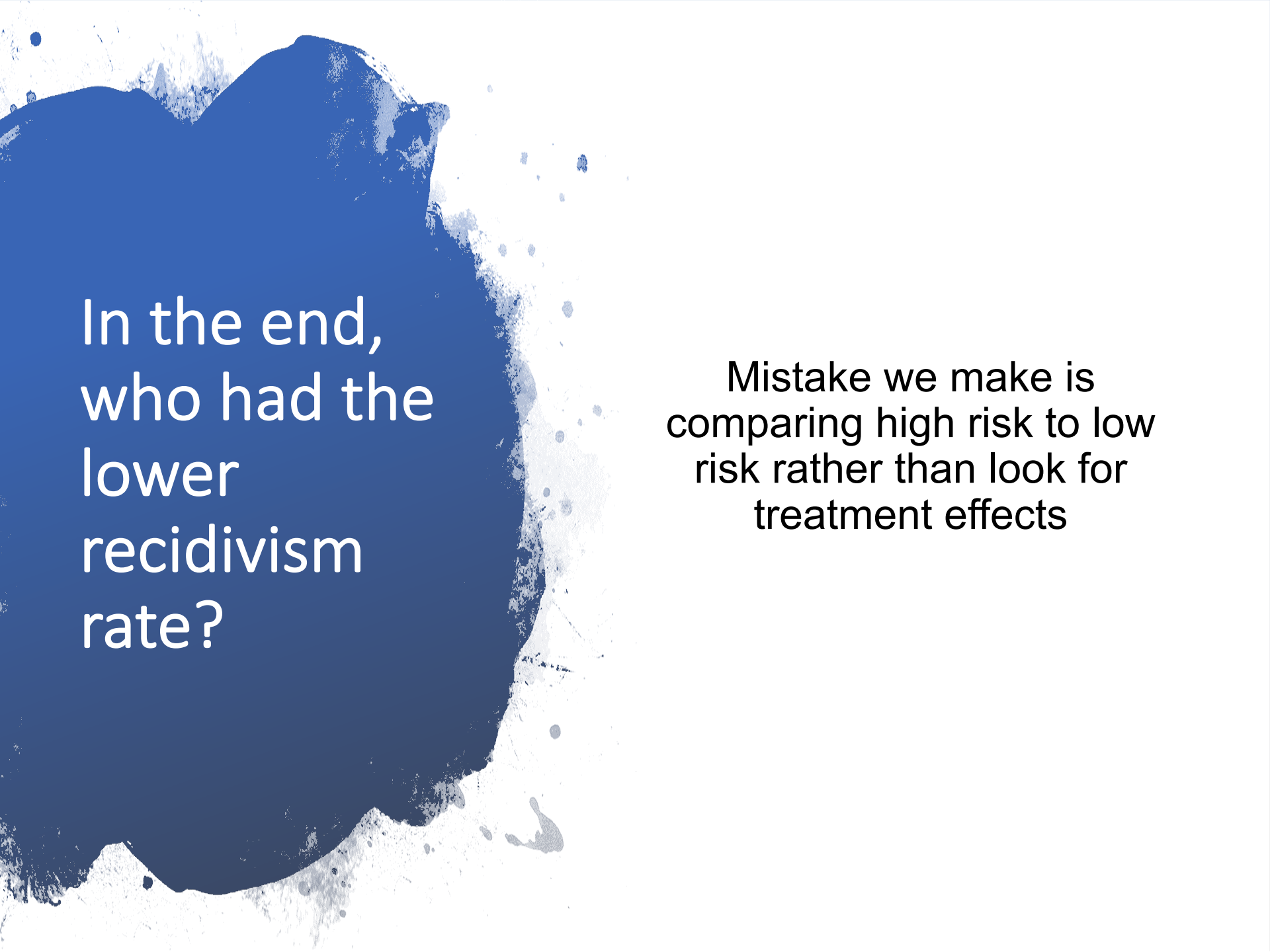


No EBP



EBP





In the end,
who had the
lower
recidivism
rate?

Mistake we make is
comparing high risk to low
risk rather than look for
treatment effects



Lesson 6

Sometimes we fail because we provide intensive programs or place too many requirements on the wrong people

Risk Principle

Generally, treatment effects are stronger if we target higher risk, and harm can be done to low risk

- Risk refers to risk of reoffending and not the seriousness of the offense
- Seriousness usually trumps risk

Intensive Treatment for Low Risk will Often Increase Failure Rates

- Low risk will learn antisocial behavior from higher risk
- Disrupts pro-social networks
- Increased reporting/surveillance leads to more violations/revocations

2010 Study of Ohio Community Corrections Programs

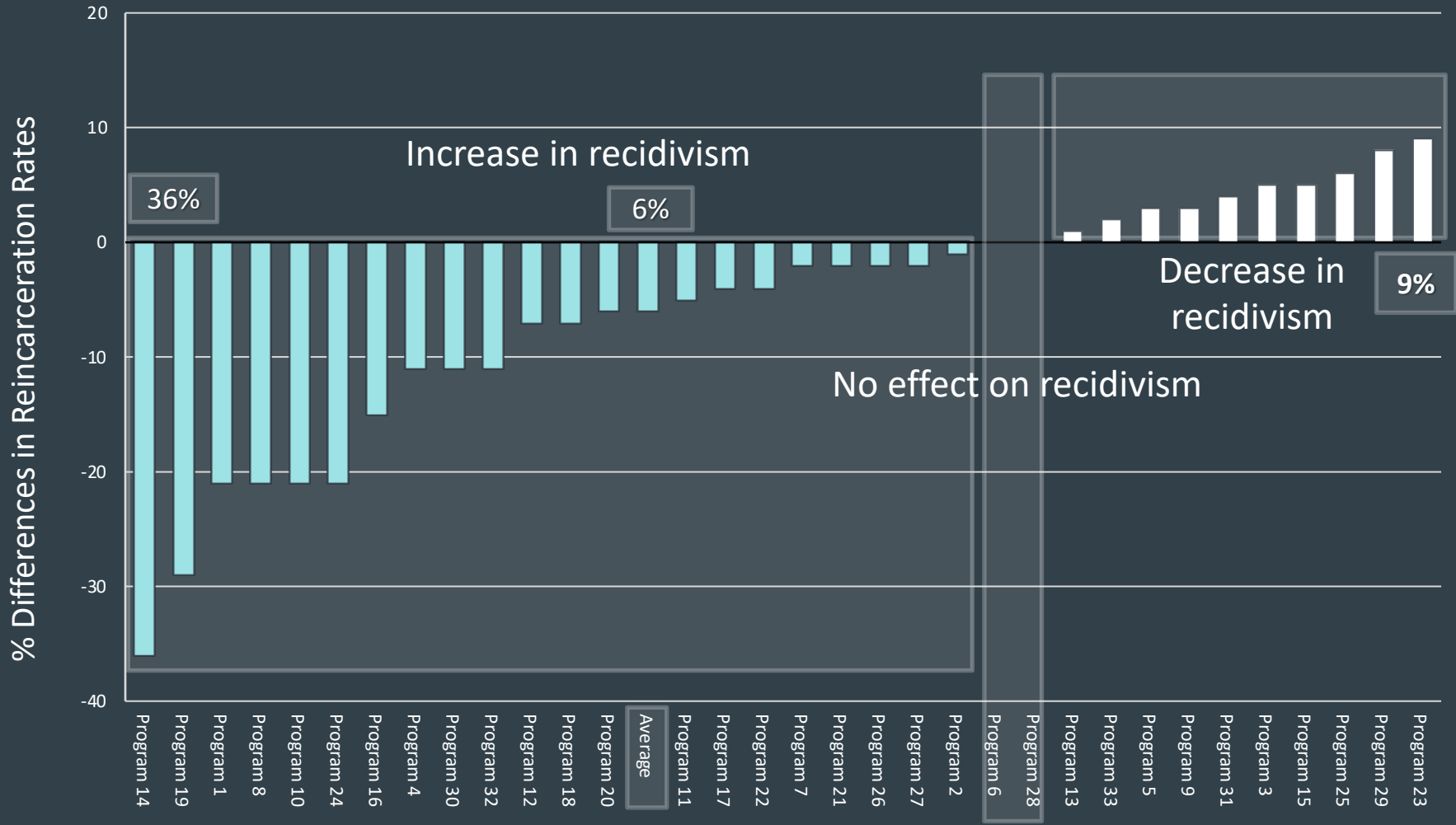
Control



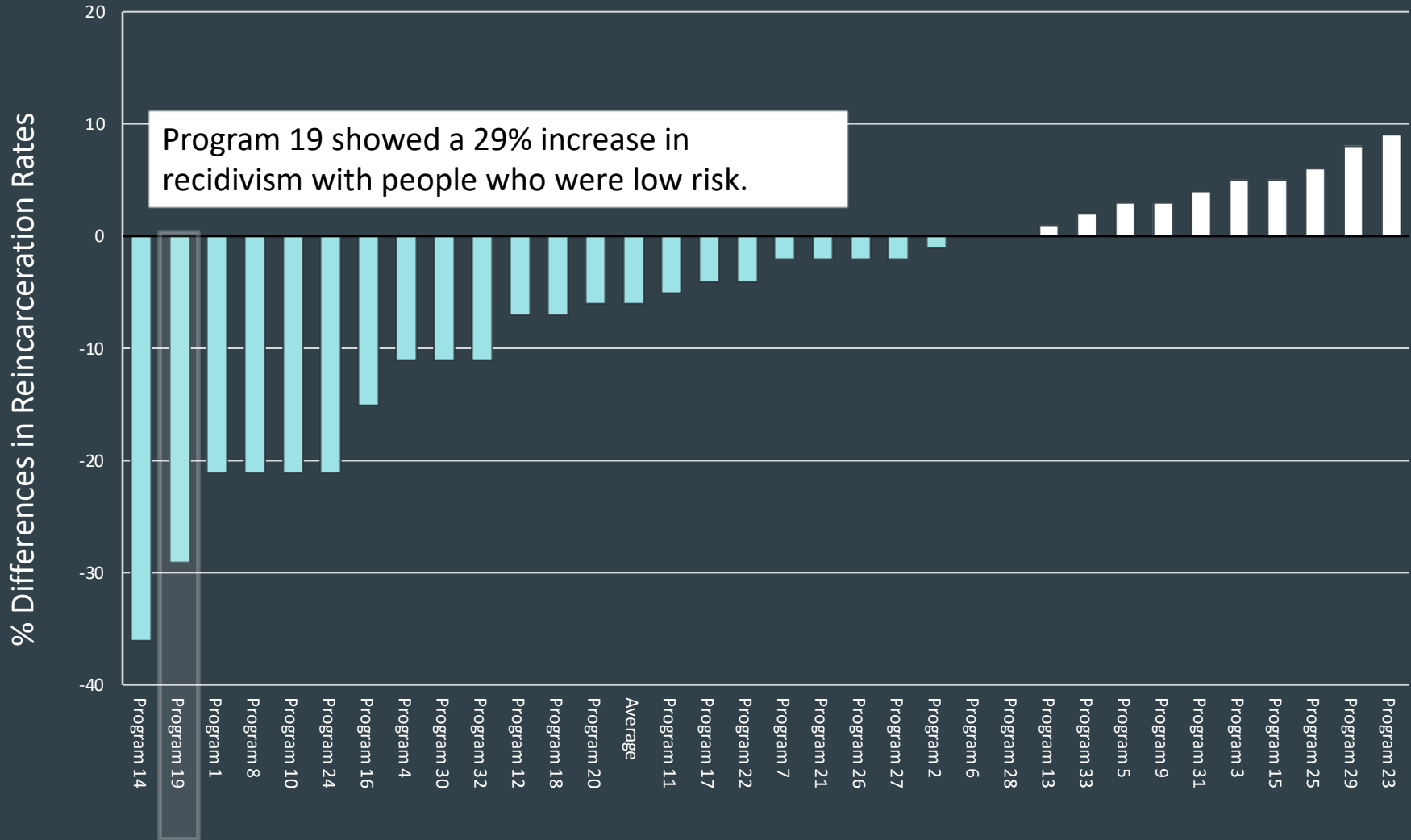
Experimental



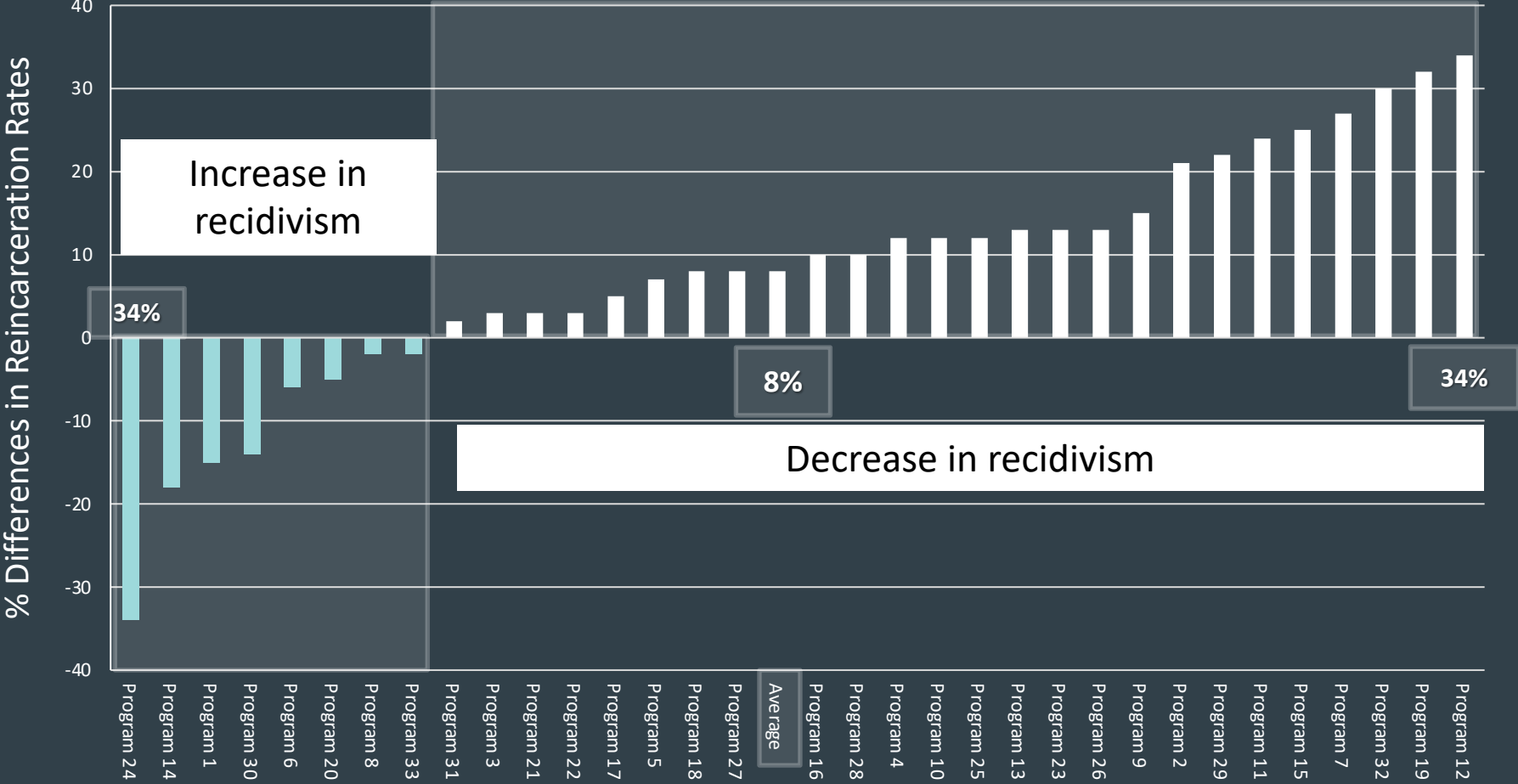
Program Effects: Low Risk



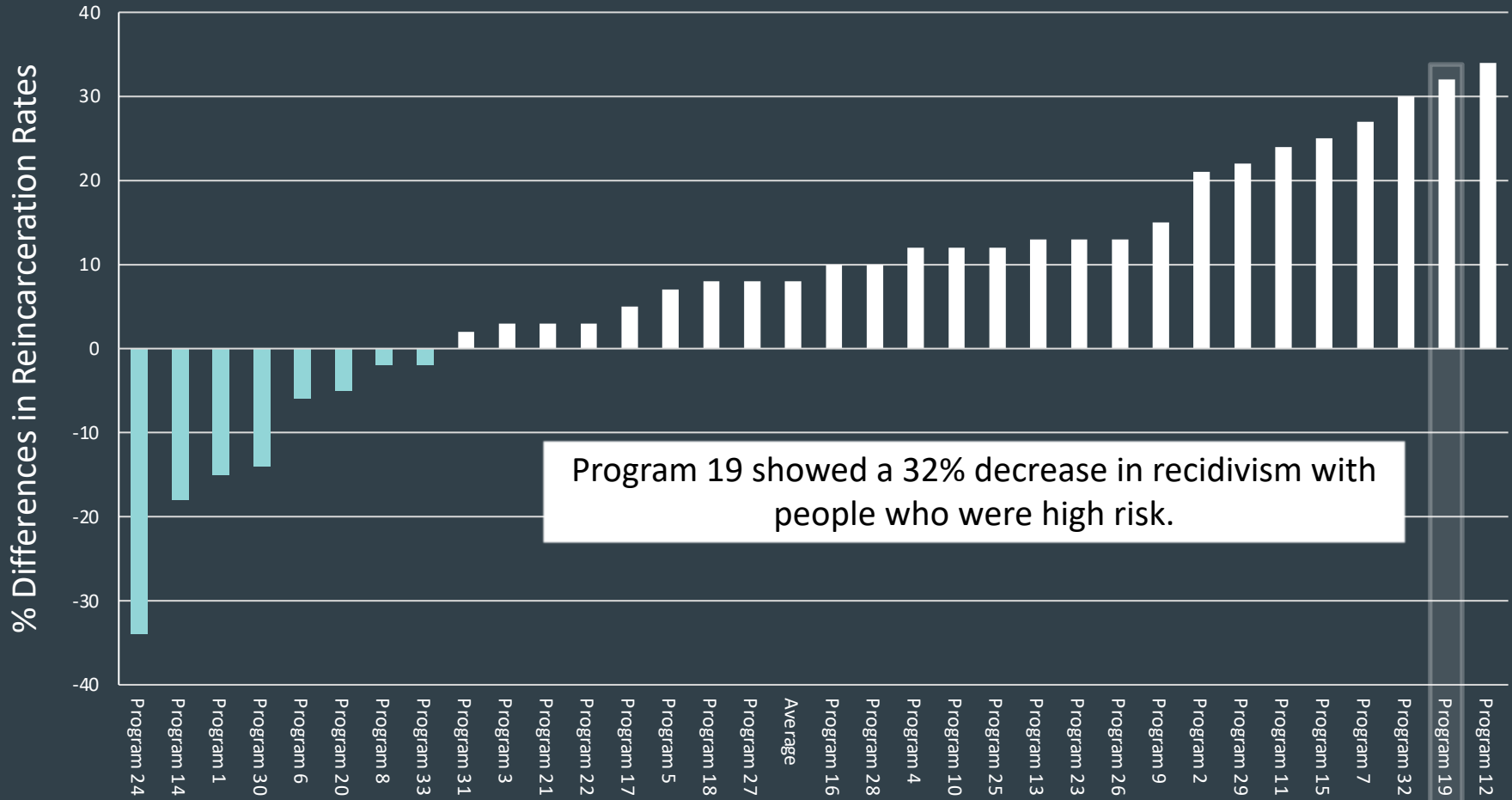
Program Effects: Low Risk



Program Effects: High Risk



Program Effects: High Risk





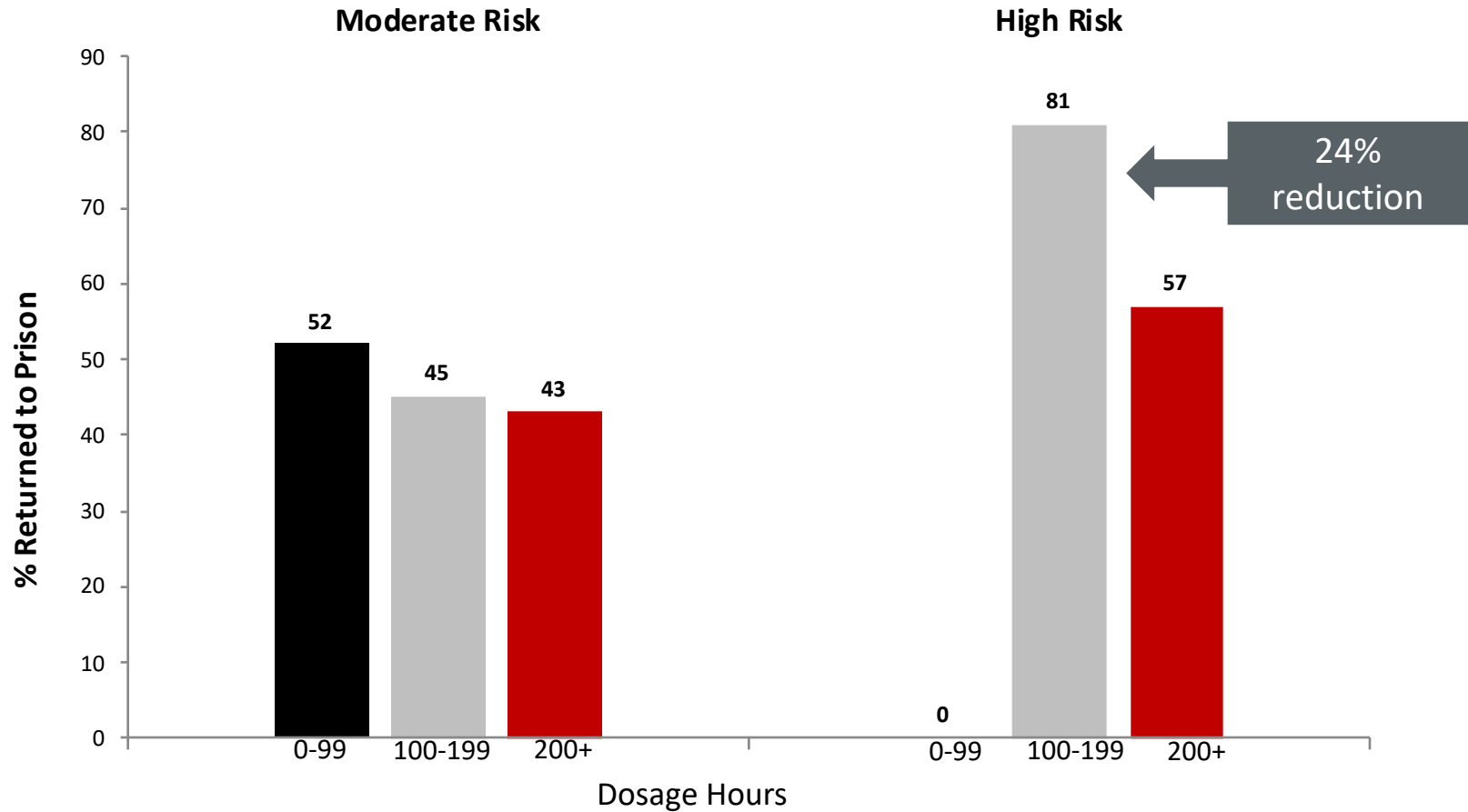
Lesson 7

Sometimes we fail because we do not provide enough treatment

The
question
is: What
does more
“intensive”
treatment
mean in
practice?

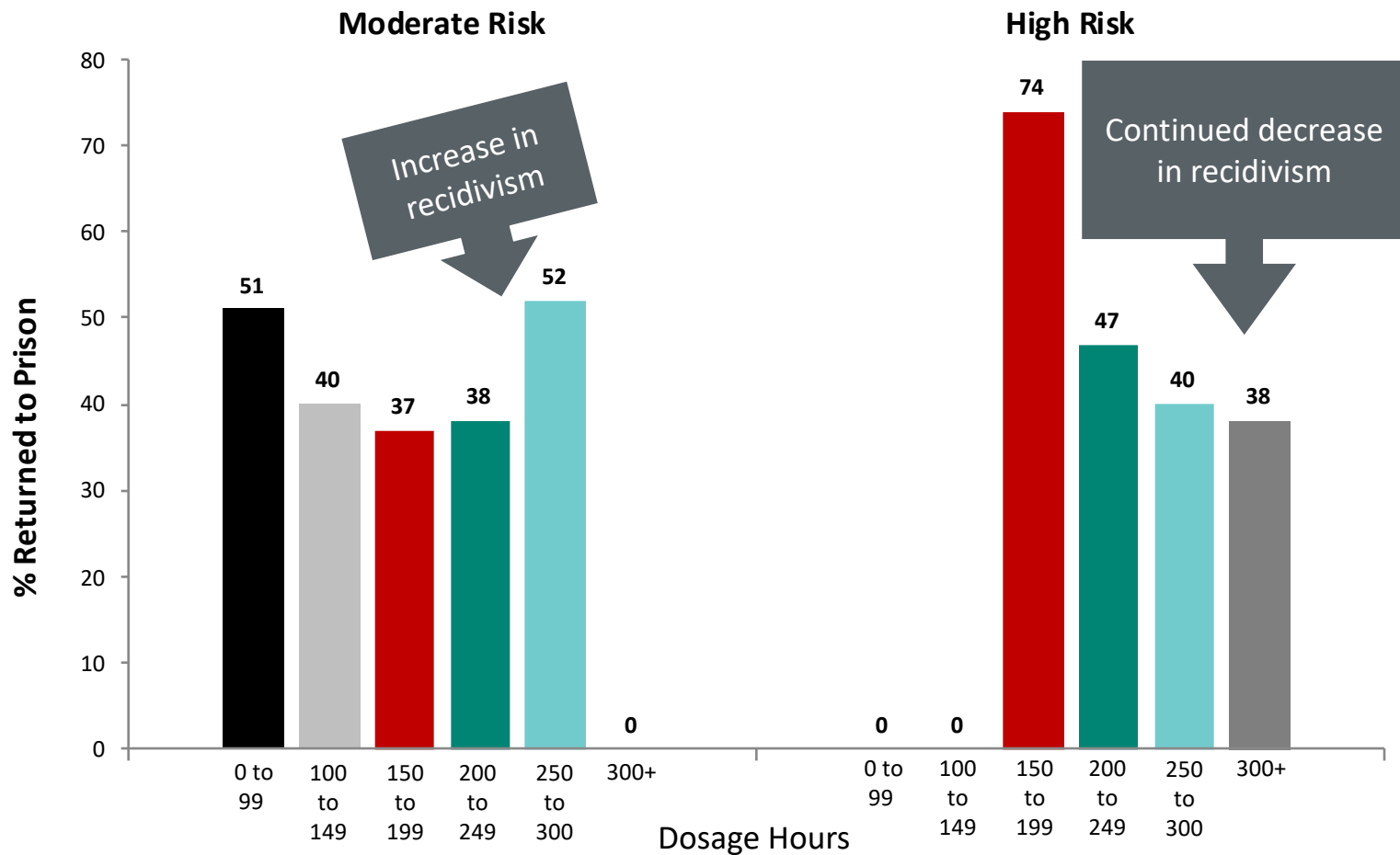
- Most studies show that the longer someone is in treatment the greater the effects, however;
 - Effects tend to diminish if treatment goes too long

Dosage Research



Latessa, E., Sperber, K., & Makarios, M. (2013). Examining the Interaction between Level of Risk and Dosage of Treatment. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 40(3).

Dosage Research





Lesson 8

Everyone thinks they are an expert in criminal behavior

Andrews & Bonta's Major Set of Risk/Need Factors

1. Antisocial/procriminal attitudes, values, beliefs & cognitive emotional states
2. Procriminal associates & isolation from anticriminal others
3. Temperamental and anti social personality patterns conducive to criminal activity including:
 - Weak socialization
 - Impulsivity
 - Adventurous
 - Restless/aggressive
 - Egocentrism
 - A taste for risk
 - Weak problem-solving/self-regulation & coping skills
4. A history of antisocial behavior

Andrews & Bonta's Major Set of Risk/Need Factors

5. Familial factors that include criminality and a variety of psychological problems in the family of origin including Low levels of affection, caring, and cohesiveness, poor parental supervision and discipline and outright neglect and abuse.
6. Low levels of personal, educational, vocational, or financial achievement
7. Low levels of involvement in prosocial leisure activities
8. Substance Abuse




Lesson 9

Some things get in the way



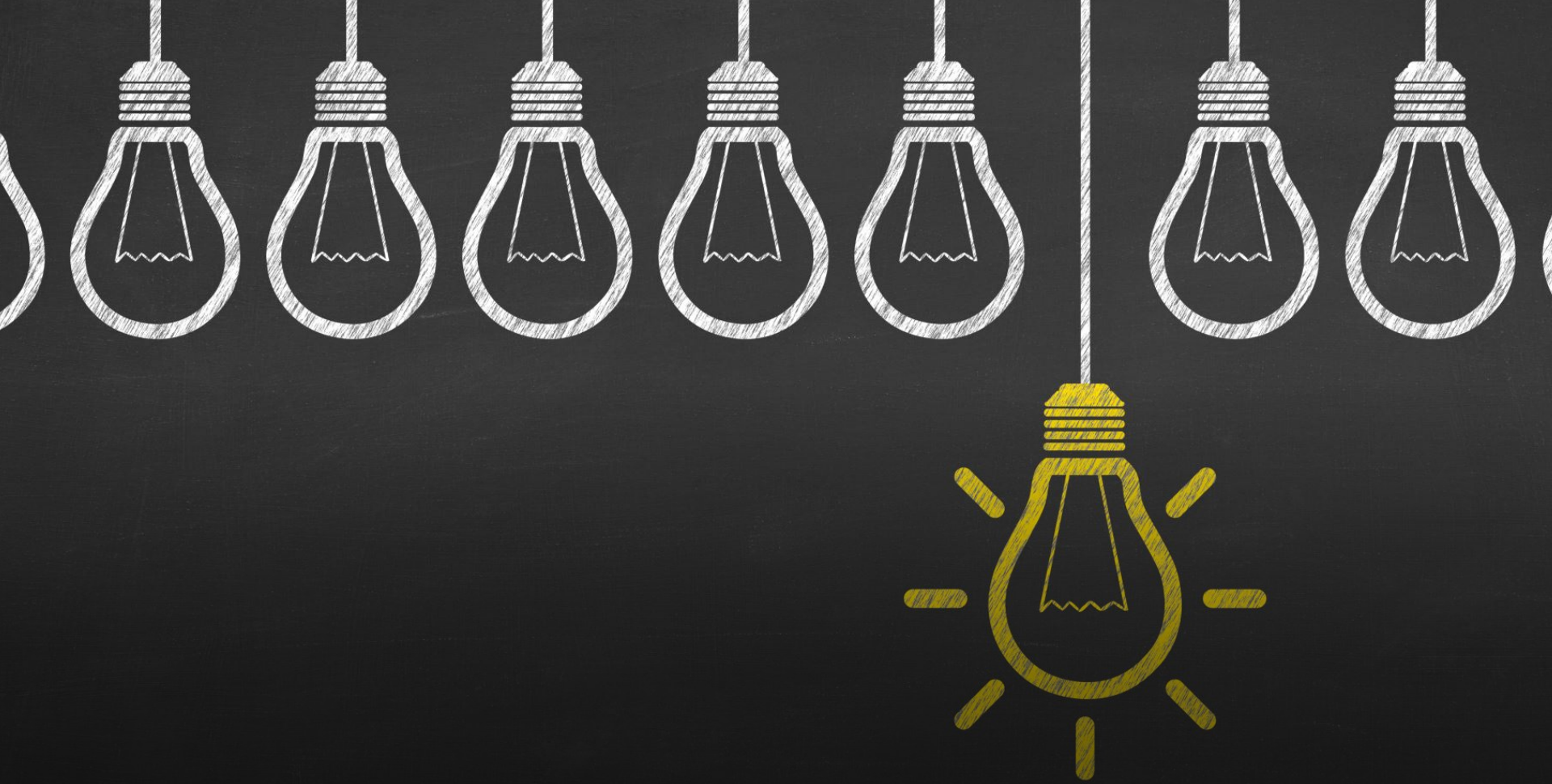
Transportation
Child Care
Homelessness
Financial
Physical and Health
Limitations
System-Created Barriers





Motivation
Mental Illness
Trauma
Gender Identity
Age
Maturity
Ethnicity
Culture
Cognitive Skills

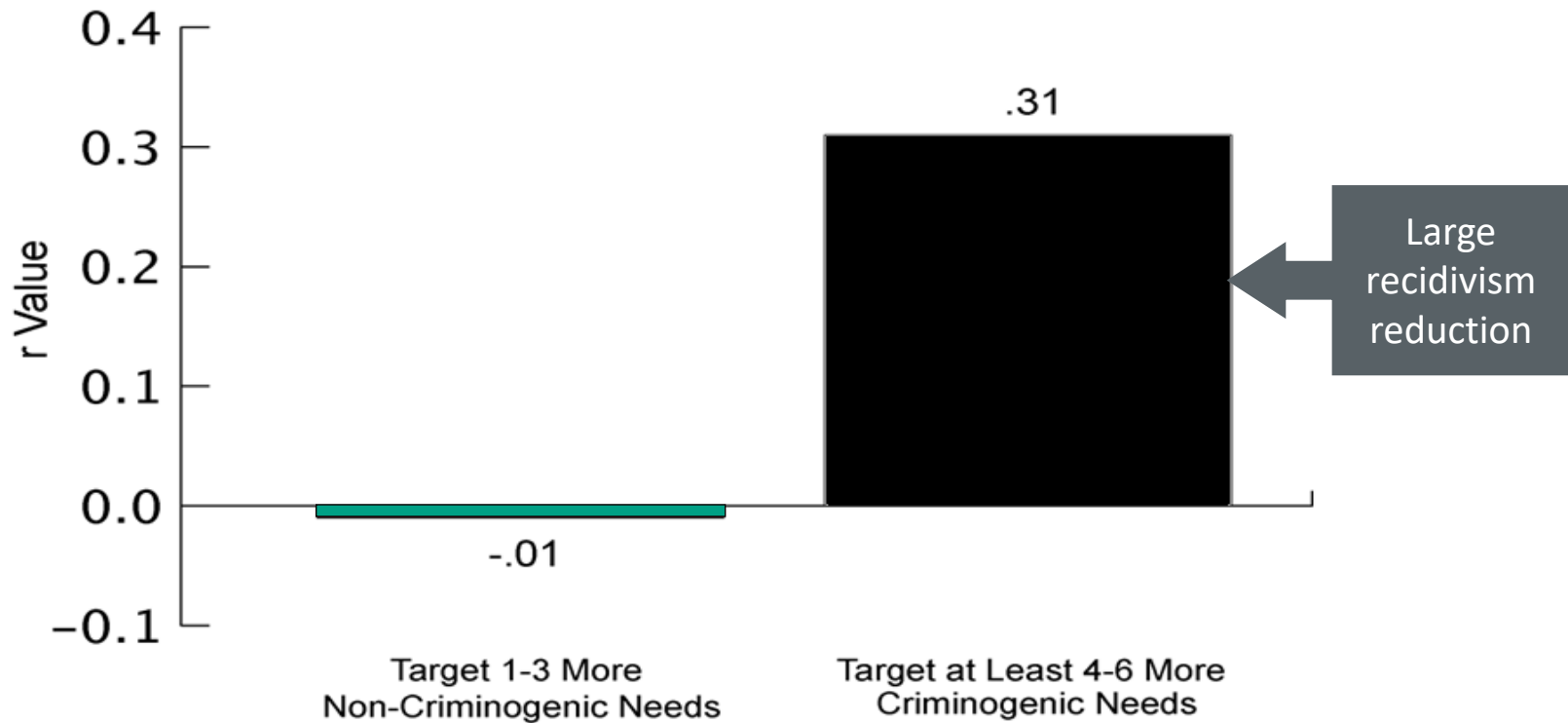




Lesson 10

People are not usually higher risk because they have a risk factor...
they have multiple risk factors

Need Principle: Outcomes





Lesson 11

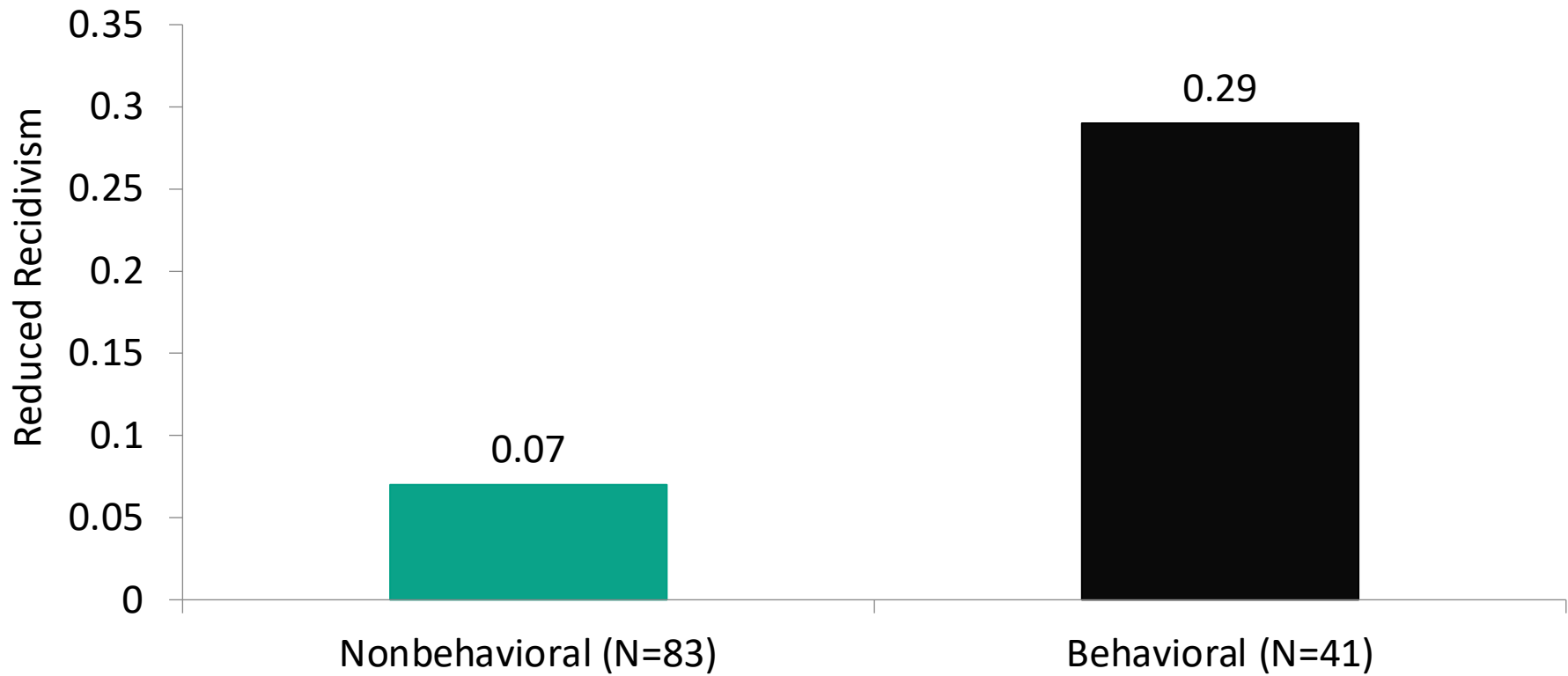
We can help change behavior; we just have to go about it the right way.



Effective Interventions

- Use behavioral approaches: Structured social learning with cognitive behavioral treatment
- Focus on current risk factors
- Action oriented
- Staff follow core behavioral practices

Behavioral Practice



Andrews, D.A. (1994). An Overview of Treatment Effectiveness. Research and Clinical Principles, Department of Psychology, Carleton University. The N refers to the number of studies.

Most Effective Behavioral Models

Structured social learning where new skills and behaviors are modeled

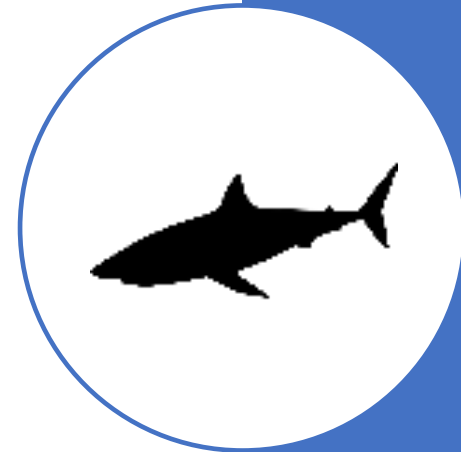
Family based approaches that train family on appropriate techniques

Cognitive behavioral approaches that target criminogenic risk factors

Social Learning

“Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling from others.”

-Albert Bandura



Cognitive-Behavioral

Thinking affects behavior.

Antisocial thinking can lead to antisocial behavior.

Thinking can be influenced and changed.

We can change how we feel and act by changing our thinking.

Core Correctional Practice (CCP)

Quality Interpersonal Relationships

Effective Reinforcement

Effective Disapproval

Effective Use of Authority

Effective Modeling

Cognitive Restructuring

Structured Learning

Problem Solving

Accountability Courts

- Over the years the United States has fought many wars, but none as long & hard as the “war” on drugs.
- By the late 1980s many were tired of the revolving door that seemed to epitomize our attempts to deal with drug offenders.
- Unique - for the first time the court, corrections, treatment, & even the prosecutor came together to try and solve a problem.
- In the years since we have seen a multitude of other problem solving courts emerge.

Accountability Courts

Accountability courts differ from traditional courts in several ways:

- Manage cases quickly and start treatment as soon as possible
- Collaborative rather than adversarial approach
- Judges actively involved in cases – regular status hearings
- Focus on providing treatment rather than just sanctions

Summary

- Accountability drug courts can reduce recidivism and save taxpayers money, but there is no panacea
- Most results are promising but need to follow the research