Evidence-Based Practices and Programs

Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Regional Forum
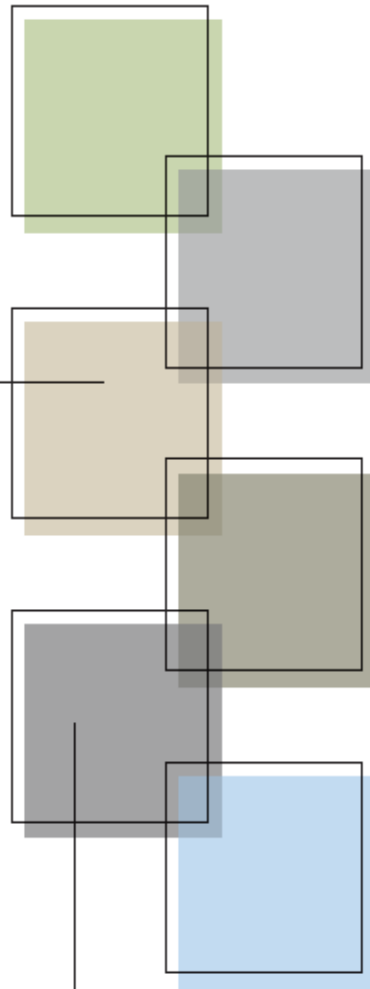
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What Works

Effective Recidivism Reduction and
Risk-Focused Prevention Programs

A Compendium of Evidence-Based
Options for Preventing New and
Persistent Criminal Behavior

Prepared for the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice

RKC Group
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Evidence-Based

- Practices and programs that are…
    - Based on sound theory;
    - Deemed to be effective based on rigorous scientific evaluation.
- Decision-making approach that relies on the best available evidence about what does and does not work.

Questions I Will Attempt to Answer

1. Why are EBPs important?

2. What does it mean to be evidence-based?
   - What constitutes credible evidence?
   - What approaches can be used to be more evidence-based?

3. Based on the evidence, what can be said with a high degree of confidence about what works?
   - In policing, corrections, juvenile justice, delinquency prevention and other areas.

4. What else do we need to know and do to ensure EBPs have the desired impact?

Why are EBPs Important?

- Evidence-based movement is one of the most significant developments to occur in criminal and juvenile justice in recent years.
  - Use of incentives/mandates for EBPs by funders are increasing.
- Dominant crime control approaches of past 50 years are no longer tenable/affordable.
- EBPs are effective at preventing/reducing crime and they provide a sound return on taxpayer investment.

What Constitutes Credible Evidence?

- Quality and consistency of the evidence must be considered.

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses produce the most trustworthy evidence.
  - They consider a large body of research;
  - They rely on the most rigorous studies;
  - They reduce bias and distortions found in many individual studies.

Evidence-Based Approaches

- Develop and use trustworthy "local" evidence:
  - Rigorous evaluation of Georgia programs.
- Rely on evidence produced by others:
  - Use "certified" brand-name programs (i.e., MRT, ART)
    - Must deliver with fidelity to program model
  - Use effective generic interventions (i.e., drug court, mentoring, cognitive behavioral therapy)
    - Incorporate key program elements
  - Use practice guidelines/principles derived from science.

Becoming More Evidence-Based:
Issues to Keep in Mind

- Evidence base has limitations:
  - Effective interventions have not been identified for every crime problem confronting our communities;
  - Both the quantity and quality of the evidence that is available remains uneven.

- Evidence that a particular actor or agency can draw on to address a particular crime problem will vary.

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"Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge."

Carl Sagan

Impact of Incarceration on Crime

- Relationship is complex:
  - Impact on crime rate uneven across time and place;
  - Other factors responsible for 2/3rds or more of crime drop.

Incarceration may impact crime in 3 ways

Incapacitation • Specific Deterrence • General Deterrence

- Incapacitation does prevent some crime from occurring.
- Harsher sanctions do not reduce recidivism.
- Little evidence of a general deterrent effect.

Certainty of punishment is a far greater deterrent than severity of punishment – key role of the police

Evidence on Policing

- Evidence on the impact of more police officers suggests more police can reduce crime.

  – Greater presence, less crime; but key is to increase probability of apprehension.

- What the police do matters most (deployment strategies)?

  – Proactive, highly-focused deployment strategies are far more effective than reactive strategies.

Evidence on Policing Strategies

- Little evidence that "broken windows" policing is effective.
- Evidence on community policing is inconclusive.
  - Does improve relationship with the public.
  - Important because lawful behavior is influenced by public perception about the fairness of law enforcement.
- Problem-oriented policing works.
  - Focus on problems rather than incidents.
  - Can be successfully applied to a diverse group of problems and situations.

Evidence on Policing Strategies

- Hot spots policing works:
  - Focus on high activity crime places.
  - Utilizes crime mapping technology.
  - Reductions in violent, property, drug and disorder crimes; diffusion of benefits more likely than displacement.
- SMART policing (**S**trategically **M**anaged, **A**nalysis and **R**esearch driven, **T**echnology-based):
  - Builds on place- and offender-based concepts.
  - Philadelphia study: offender focus areas successful in reducing violent crime 22% compared to control areas.

Evidence on Policing Strategies

- Drug markets can be disrupted with problem-oriented approaches and community partnerships.
  - Collaborative partnerships that use tailored approaches (including civil remedies) to address criminogenic conditions.
  - Key elements of effective MJTFs have been identified.
  - Measures of disruption/dismantling of trafficking organizations may be key for documenting MJTF impact.

Evidence on Recidivism/Desistance

- Harsher sanctions do not reduce recidivism.
- Supervision alone does not reduce recidivism; supervision integrated with treatment does.
- Time period immediately following release from prison is riskiest.
- Work, marriage, reduced consumption of drugs are important factors in desistance.
  - People who desist are those who are better integrated into pro-social roles in family, workplace and community.
- Desistance is a process, not an event…
  - Often characterized by ambivalence.

Recidivism can be Reduced

- Research refutes "nothing works" thesis; therapeutic interventions can and do work.

- Small reductions in recidivism rates can translate into substantial public safety benefits.

- Effective interventions share common features.
  - Principles of effective correctional intervention.

Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs

Enhance Intrinsic Motivation

Target Interventions

Skill Train With Directed Practice

Increase Positive Reinforcement

Engage On-going Support in the Community

Measure Processes/Practices

Provide Feedback

Principles of Effective Intervention

- **RISK PRINCIPLE**: Focus on higher-risk offenders.

- **NEED PRINCIPLE**: Target multiple criminogenic needs.

  - Assess risk and need using valid, actuarial instrument.

- Use intensive, behavioral interventions.

Use Intensive, Behavioral Interventions

- **Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions**
  - Used in a variety of settings with variety of offenders
- Several manualized programs are in use in the criminal justice system:
  - Each of the following has been rigorously evaluated and found to be effective:
    - Aggression Replacement Training ®
    - Moral Reconation Therapy ®
    - Reasoning and Rehabilitation
    - Relapse Prevention Therapy
    - Thinking for a Change (T4C)

Principles of Effective Intervention

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- **NEED PRINCIPLE**: Target multiple criminogenic needs.
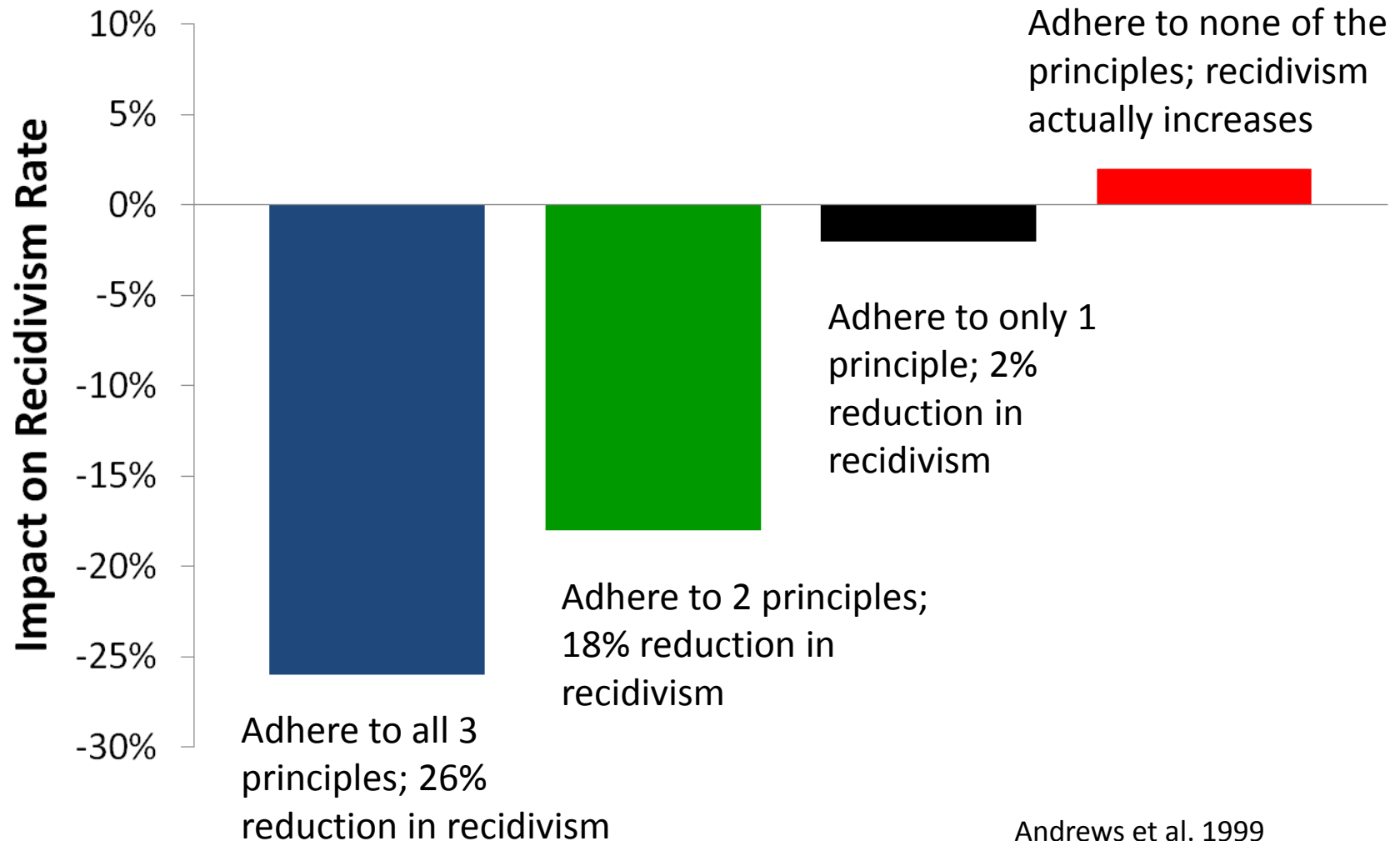 - Assess risk and need using valid, actuarial instrument.

- **RESPONSIVITY PRINCIPLE**: Match style and mode of intervention to the offender's learning style and abilities.

Impact of Adhering to the Risk, Need, and Responsivity (RNR) Principles

Adhere to none of the principles; recidivism actually increases

Adhere to only 1 principle; 2% reduction in recidivism

Adhere to 2 principles; 18% reduction in recidivism

Adhere to all 3 principles; 26% reduction in recidivism

Andrews et al. 1999

Interactions With Offenders Matter

- Interactions between supervising officer and offender are as important as content of programming.

- Enhance offender motivation to change:
  - Motivational Interviewing (MI) is an effective technique to elicit and strengthen motivation to change.

- Use positive reinforcement:
  - Four positives for every one negative is optimal for long-term behavior change.

Desistance is a <u>process</u> often characterized by ambivalence

<u>Stages of Change</u>

Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change Model

80% of people are in Stage 1 or 2

1. **PRECONTEMPLATION**
   A person is not seeing a need for a lifestyle behavior change.

2. **CONTEMPLATION**
   A person is considering making a change but has not decided yet.

3. **PREPARATION**
   A person has decided to make changes and is considering how to make them.

4. **ACTION**
   A person is actively doing something to change.

5. **MAINTENANCE**
   A person is working to maintain the change or new lifestyle, possibly with some temptations to return to the former behavior or small lapses.

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Nature of Interactions and Positive Reinforcement Affect Offender Outcomes

- Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS)
  - Probation officer training + coaching on RNR interaction skills produced higher quality interactions with offenders, lower offender recidivism rates.
- Study of Wyoming DOC ISP program:
  - Use of both sanctions and rewards;
  - 4 to 1 reward to punishment ratio produced the best program outcomes.
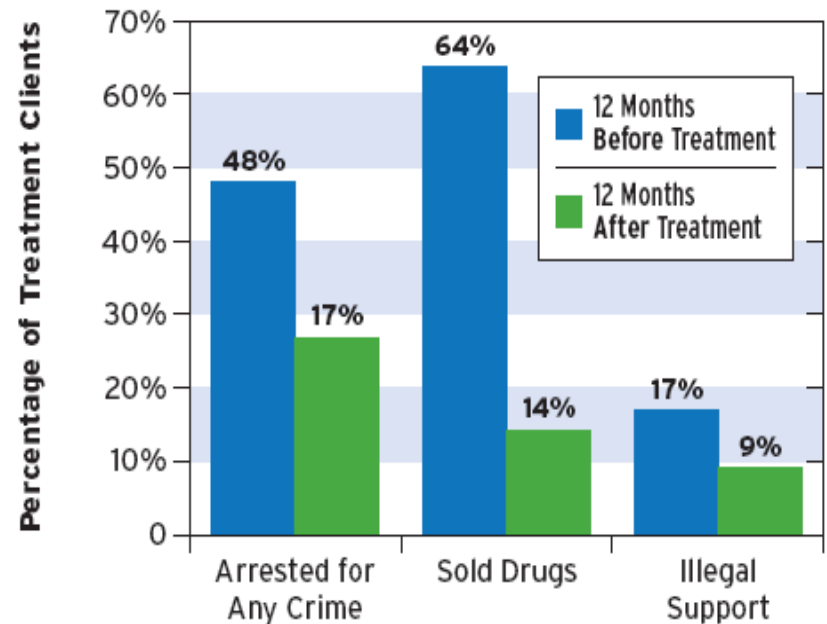
What Works to Reduce Recidivism
Education and Vocational Training

- Education, employment and crime are linked.
  - One of the most important conditions that leads to less offending is a strong tie to work.
- Basic education, secondary/GED, PSE and vocational training all work…
  - They increase employment, reduce recidivism and provide a positive return on investment;
  - Content and timing of vocational training is key.

What Works to Reduce Recidivism Substance Abuse Treatment

- Treatment is effective:
  - Reduces substance abuse and crime;
  - Cognitive-behavioral approaches and therapeutic communities are particularly effective.

- Drug courts work:
  - Key elements of adult and juvenile drug courts have been identified.

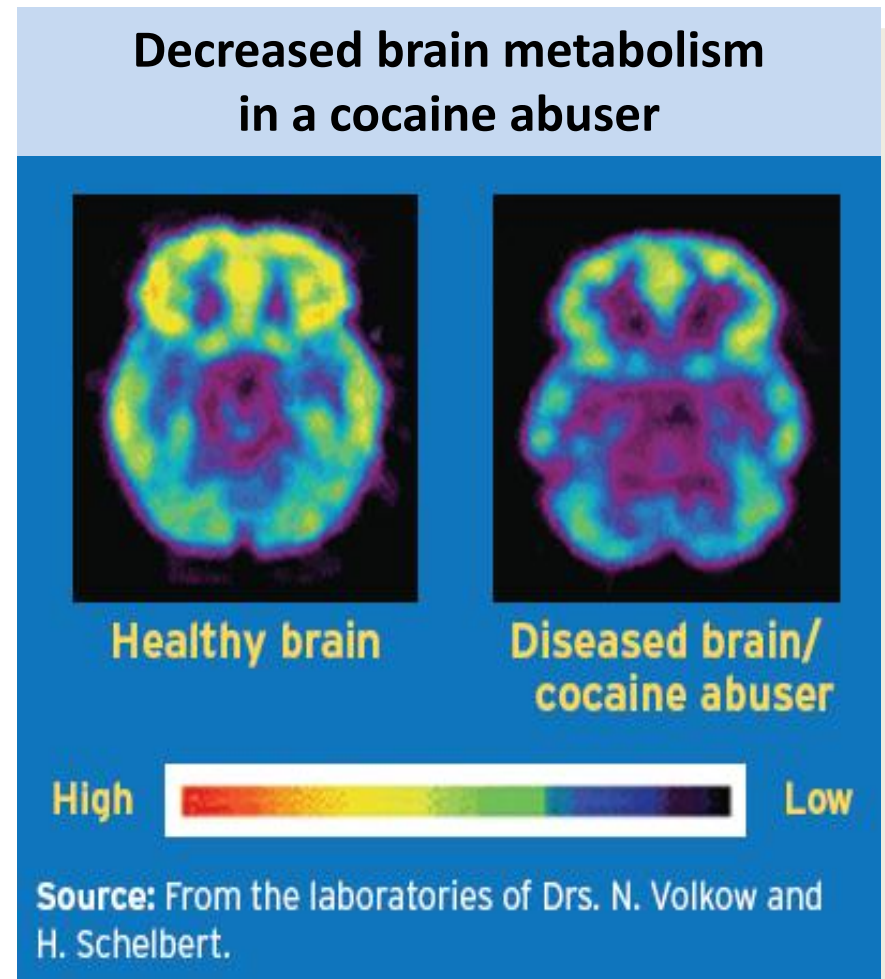Changes in Criminal Activity Before vs. After Treatment

Source: National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Survey, Gerstein et al. (1997).

Science of Addiction

- Must recognize that addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease.

- Repeated use of addictive drugs affects inhibition and reward centers in the brain.

  - The addict's ability to exert control and make sound decisions is impaired because the brain is impaired.

- Like other chronic diseases, relapse is common; cannot view treatment as a one-time chance.

Decreased brain metabolism in a cocaine abuser

Healthy brain

Diseased brain/ cocaine abuser

High ───────────────── Low

Source: From the laboratories of Drs. N. Volkow and H. Schelbert.

Substance Abuse Treatment is Not a Slam Dunk

- Time in treatment matters.
  - Program completion and longer retention times are associated with better outcomes.
- Aftercare is important for long term results.
  - Process for linking offenders with appropriate aftercare services is often not well defined.
- NIDA's 13 principles for treatment of criminal justice populations.
  - Standardized assessment tools, tailored treatment plan, adequate duration, systems integration, drug testing and incentives, continuity or care.

Offenders With Mental Illness

- A large number of offenders in the criminal justice system suffer from mental illness.

  – Unemployment and homelessness are common, many have co-occurring substance abuse disorders.

- Diversion, treatment and aftercare are all needed.

- Treatment is highly effective.

- Effective interventions include crisis intervention training, assertive community treatment, supportive employment and housing, and modified TCs for co-occurring disorders.

What Works to Reduce Recidivism
Programs for Juveniles

- Several interventions already discussed are effective with juveniles.

- Family-based programs for juveniles that target multiple causes of delinquency are effective:
  - Functional Family Therapy
  - Multi-Systemic Therapy
  - Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

- Quality mentoring and restorative justice programs also are effective.

What Works to Reduce Recidivism
Programs for Juveniles

- Lipsey's practice guidelines for juvenile intervention:
  - Focus resources on high-risk cases;
  - Use interventions with therapeutic orientation; avoid those with deterrence or discipline philosophy;
  - Provide adequate amount of service (dose/duration);
  - Ensure quality implementation.

Victim Services

- Evidence-base is limited.
- EBPs include:
  - Trauma informed practice
  - Guidelines for child and sexual abuse treatment
  - Victim impact classes for offenders

What Works to Prevent Delinquency
Early Prevention Programs

- Risk factors for delinquency are known.
  - They help explain differences in long term criminal potential.
- Risk-focused crime prevention.
  - Counteracts risk factors.
- There are effective programs for every stage of a child's development.

What Works to Prevent Delinquency
Early Prevention Programs

- Nurse visitation during infancy
- Preschool intellectual enrichment
- Parent management training
- School-based programs that focus on the school environment or self-control and social competency
- High-quality mentoring and after school programs
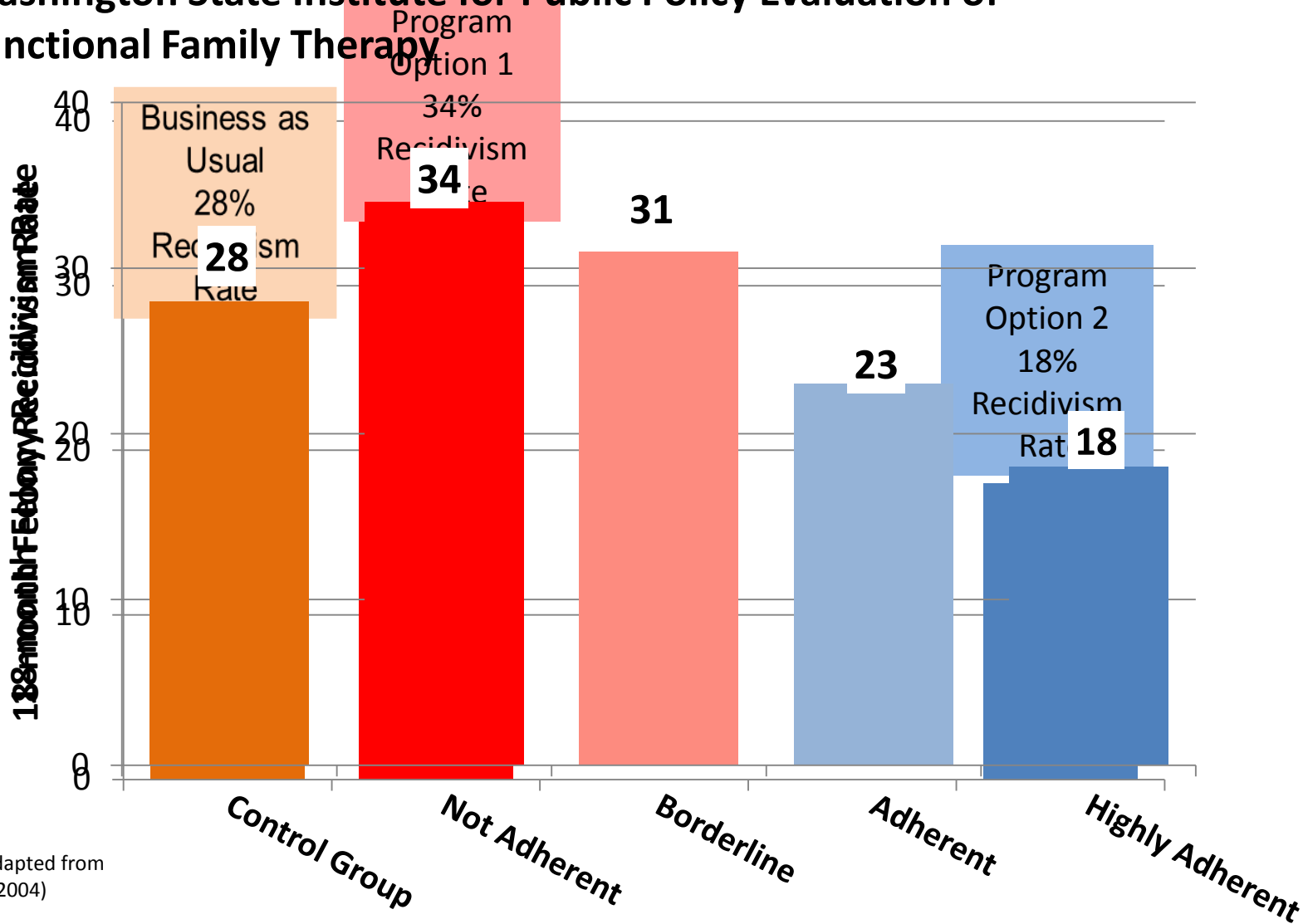 - Boys and Girls Clubs

What Else Do We Need to Know?
Importance of Implementation Fidelity
Juvenile Offender Intervention Recidivism Outcomes

Washington State Institute for Public Policy Evaluation of Functional Family Therapy

Business as Usual 28% Recidivism Rate

Program Option 1 34% Recidivism Rate

Program Option 2 18% Recidivism Rate

18 month Felony Recidivism Rate

- Control Group: 28
- Not Adherent: 34
- Borderline: 31
- Adherent: 23
- Highly Adherent: 18

Source: Adapted from Barnoski (2004)

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What Else Do We Need to Know?

EB programs must be implemented with fidelity to be successful.

- Adaptation can degrade program effectiveness;

- EB programs and practices don't implement themselves;

- Implementation science can provide guidance.

Implementation Science

- Based on work of Fixsen, Blasé, Campbell and others affiliated with the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN).

- Regional and global implementation groups:
  - Colorado, California and North Carolina in the U.S.

- Implementation is a process, not an event.

- Used alone, none of the following are sufficient: diffusion/dissemination of information; passing laws, using mandates; providing funding, using incentives; training; organizational development.

Stages of Implementation

Fixsen et al. (2005)

(6) Sustainment

(5) Innovation

(4) Full Operation:
New learning becomes integrated into practitioner, organizational, and community practices, policies, and procedures. Full staffing and client loads. The innovation becomes accepted practice.

(3) Initial implementation:
Initial change in practice; many forces at play, including resistance, push-back

(2) Installation: Active preparation, behind the scene tasks

(1) Exploration and adoption: Awareness, acquisition of information

Implementation Drivers

Fixsen et al. (2005) have identified core components that build and support high-fidelity implementation.

Develop staff competence

- Recruitment and selection
- Training
- Coaching
- Staff performance evaluation

Provide organizational and system supports

- Administrative supports
  - Data
- Fidelity assessments
- Practice/policy feedback mechanisms

Dynamic, Interactive, Integrated and Compensatory

Provide Leadership