

Spring 2015 Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 Training Event

June 4, 2015, 9:00am-12:00pm

Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI

**Use of Structured Risk/Need
Assessments to Improve
Outcomes for Juvenile Offenders**

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Presentation Overview

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Overview of risk/need assessment approaches
- ▶ Selecting a risk/need assessment tool
- ▶ Using risk/need assessments to improve outcomes





Introduction to Risk/Need Assessment in Juvenile Offenders

Risk/Need Assessment

- ▶ Process of conducting comprehensive evaluation to estimate *and* manage likelihood of future outcome(s)
 - ▶ Incompletely understood
 - ▶ Probabilities change across time
 - ▶ Interaction between characteristics & situations



Risk/Need Assessment

- ▶ Distinct from assessment of one risk factor or one need factor
- ▶ Examples
 - ▶ Substance use
 - ▶ Mental health
 - ▶ Psychopathy



Risk/Need Assessment

- ▶ Different strategies
 - ▶ Unstructured
 - ▶ Structured
 - ▶ Mechanical
 - ▶ Allow for professional judgment

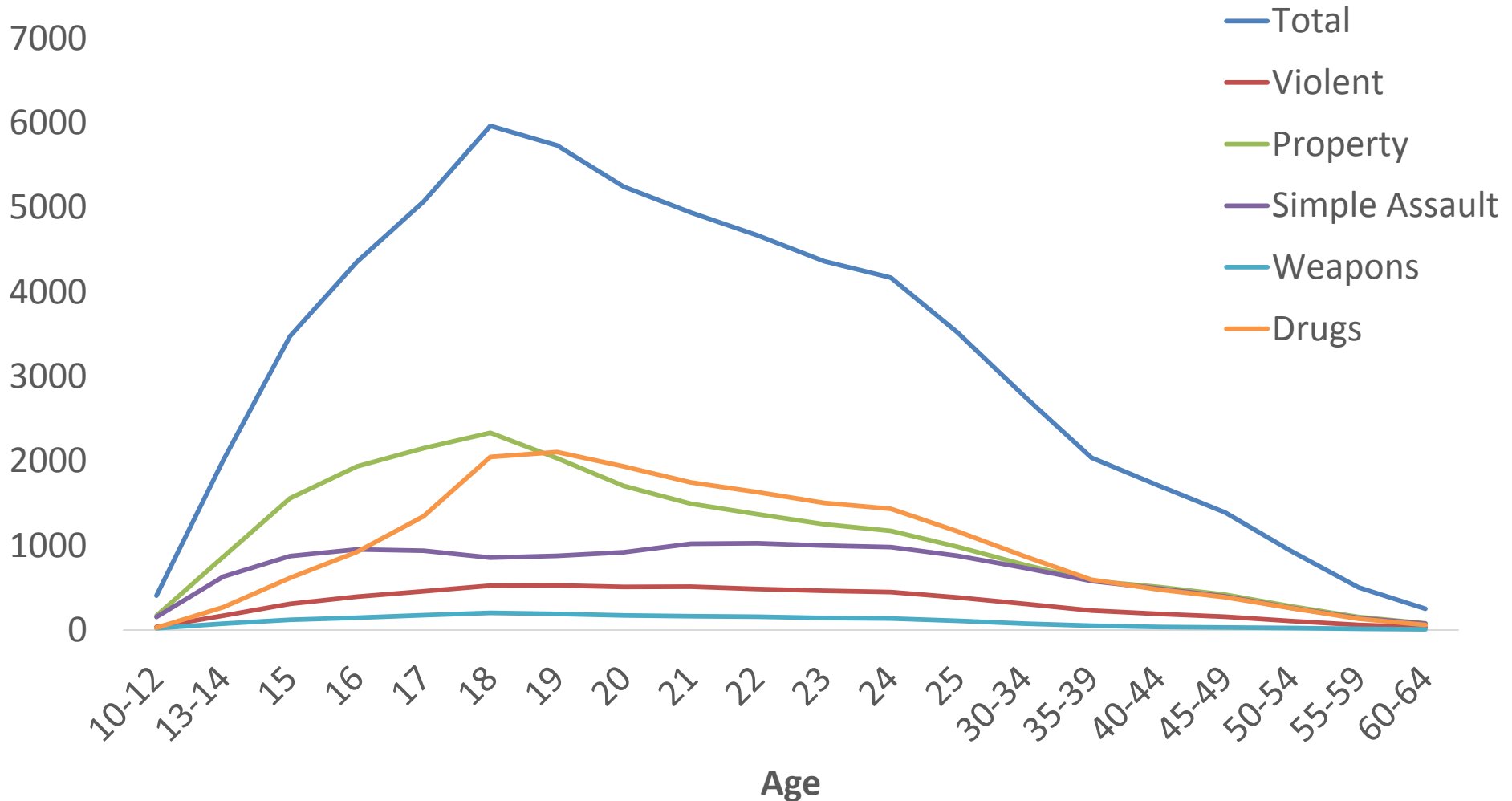


Assessment of Juvenile Offenders

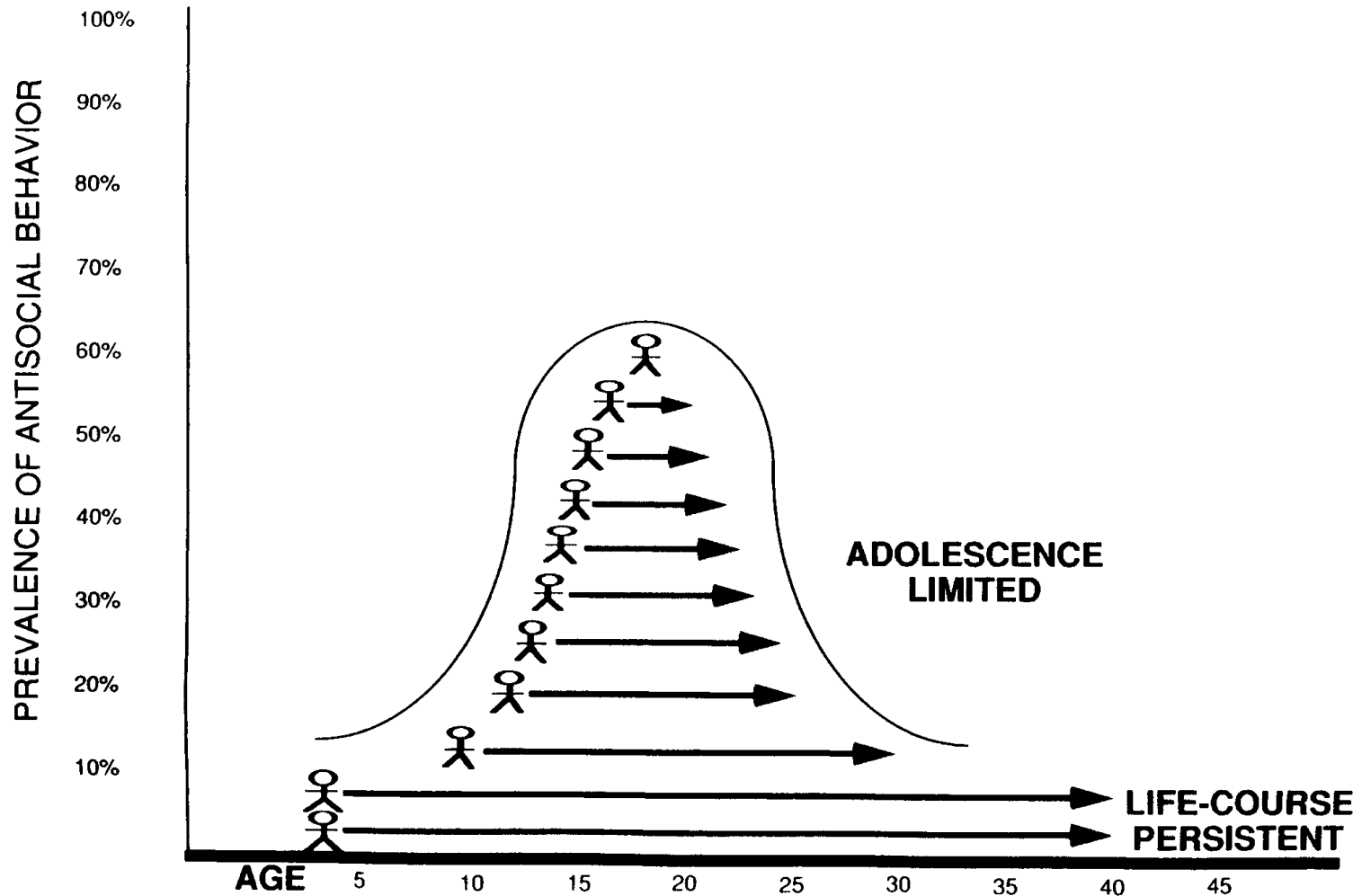
- ▶ Special attention and consideration of:
 - ▶ Developmental stage and change

Age-Specific Arrest Rates

2011 Arrests per 100,000 Population



Developmental Trajectories



► Moffitt (1993) Figure 3.

Assessment of Juvenile Offenders

- ▶ Special attention and consideration of:
 - ▶ Developmental stage and change
 - ▶ Protective factors

Protective Factors

- ▶ Any characteristic that reduces the risk of adverse outcome
 - ▶ More than the absence of a risk or need factor
- ▶ 5 reasons to integrate into risk/need assessment:
 - I. Balanced view of juvenile offender

Protective Factors

GOOD



Protective Factors

- ▶ Any characteristic that reduces the risk of adverse outcome
 - ▶ More than the absence of a risk or need factor
- ▶ **5 reasons to integrate into risk/need assessment:**
 1. Balanced view of juvenile offender
 2. Predictive validity
 3. Incremental validity
 4. Youth (& caregiver) engagement
 5. Professional mandate

Protective Factors

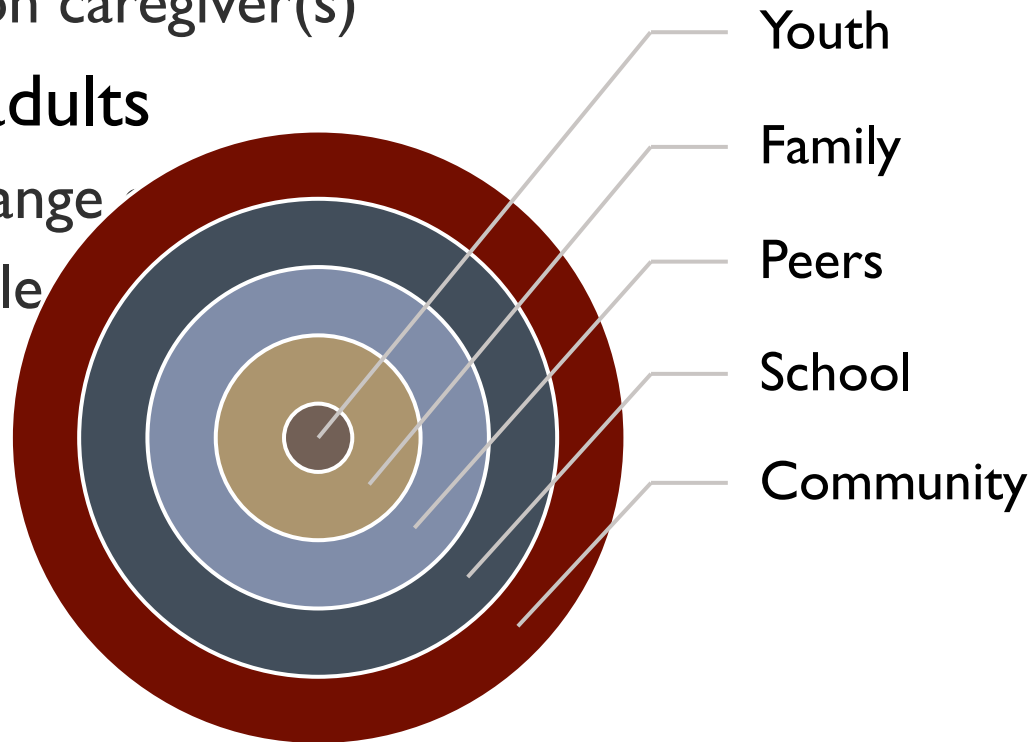
“Treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best.”

Assessment of Juvenile Offenders

- ▶ Special attention and consideration of:
 - ▶ Developmental stage and change
 - ▶ Protective factors
 - ▶ Context

Context

- ▶ **Juvenile offenders are:**
 - ▶ Embedded in multiple systems
 - ▶ Dependent upon caregiver(s)
- ▶ **Compared to adults**
 - ▶ Less able to change
 - ▶ More susceptible

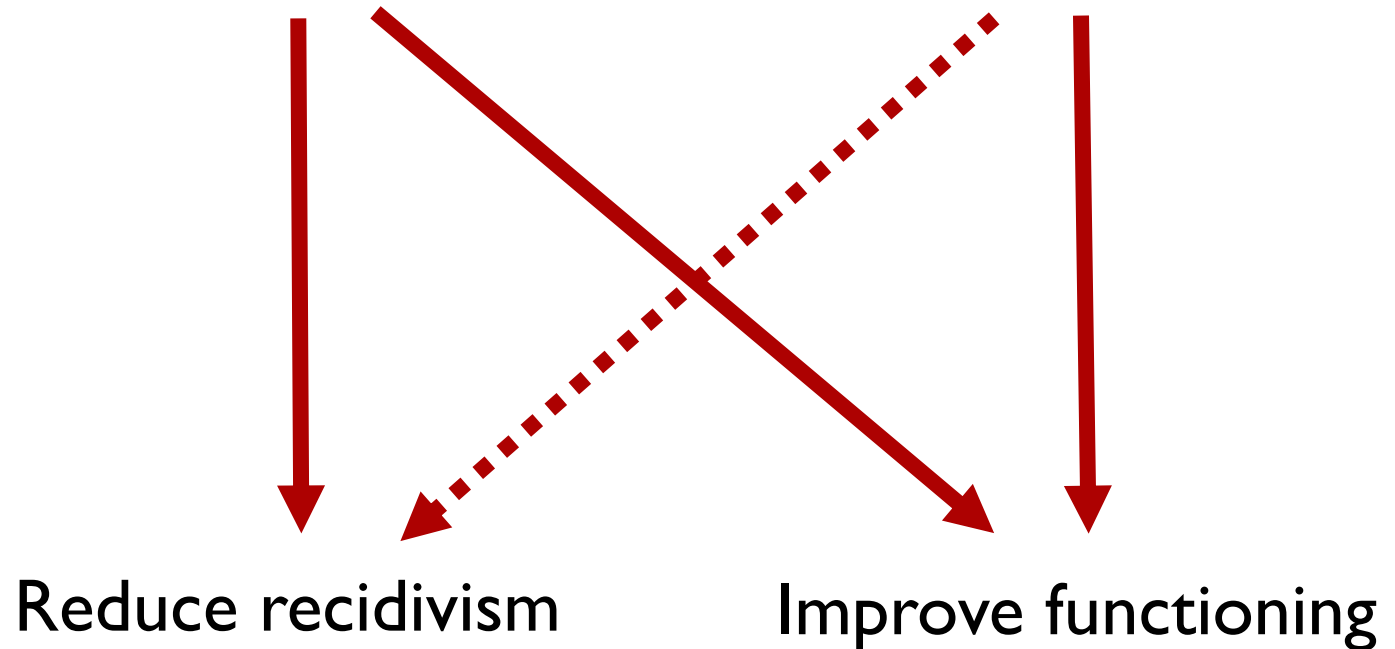


Assessment of Juvenile Offenders

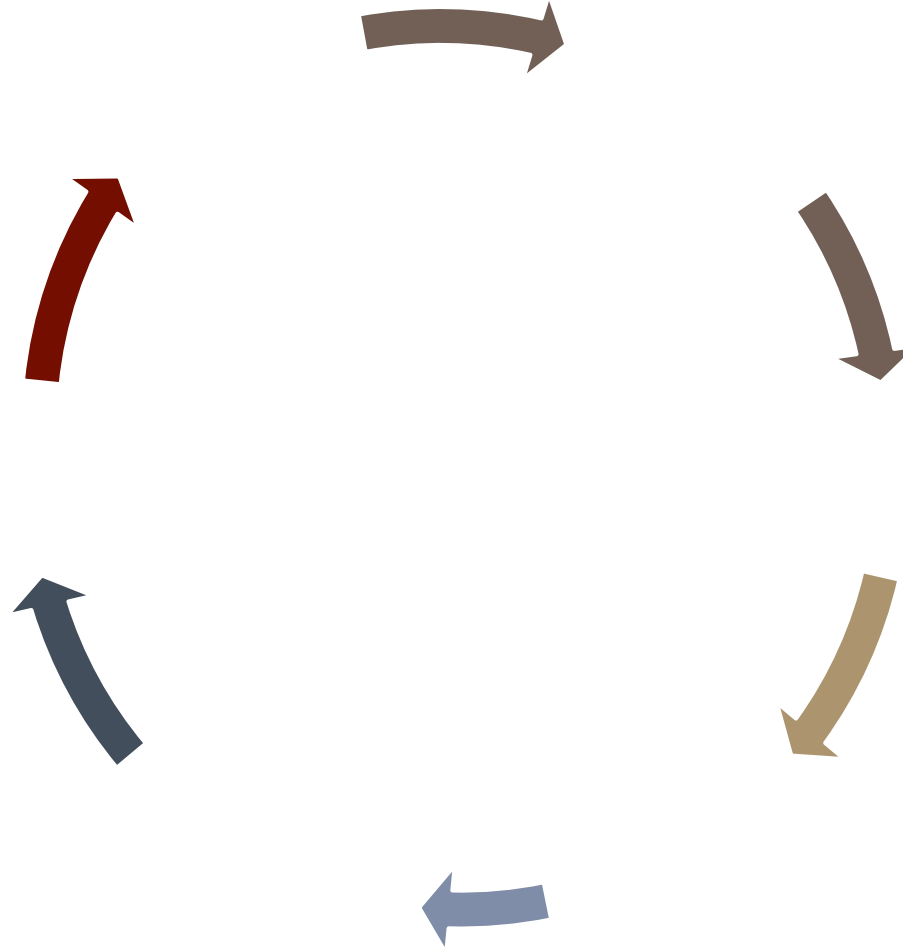
- ▶ **Special attention and consideration of:**
 - ▶ Developmental stage and change
 - ▶ Protective factors
 - ▶ Context
 - ▶ Treatment

Treatment of Juvenile Offenders

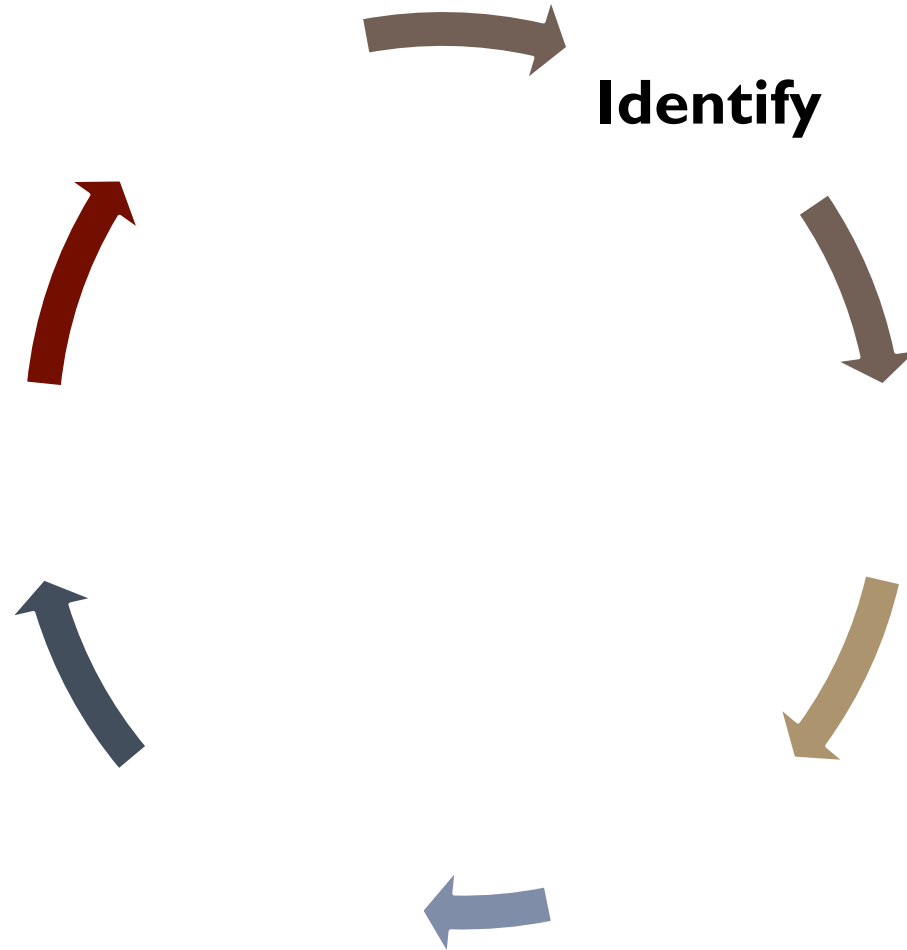
- ▶ Address **criminogenic** needs and **treatment** needs



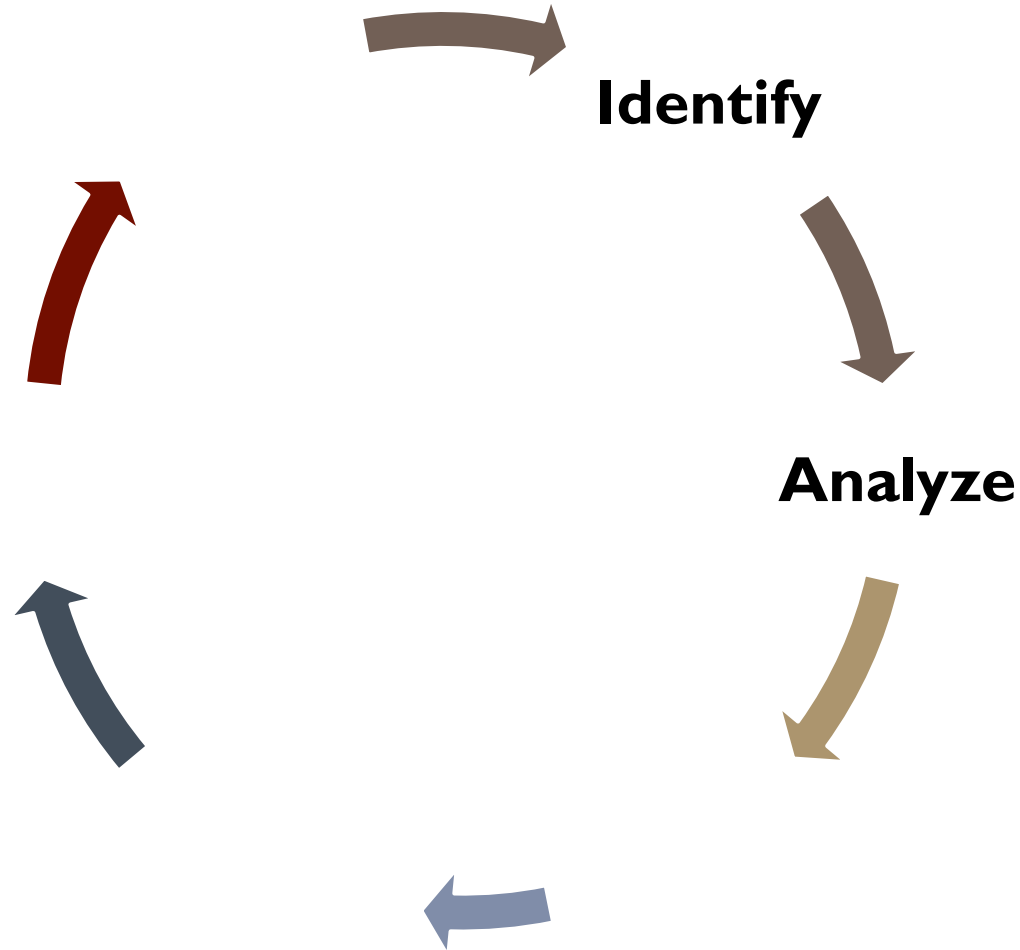
Process of Risk/Need Assessment



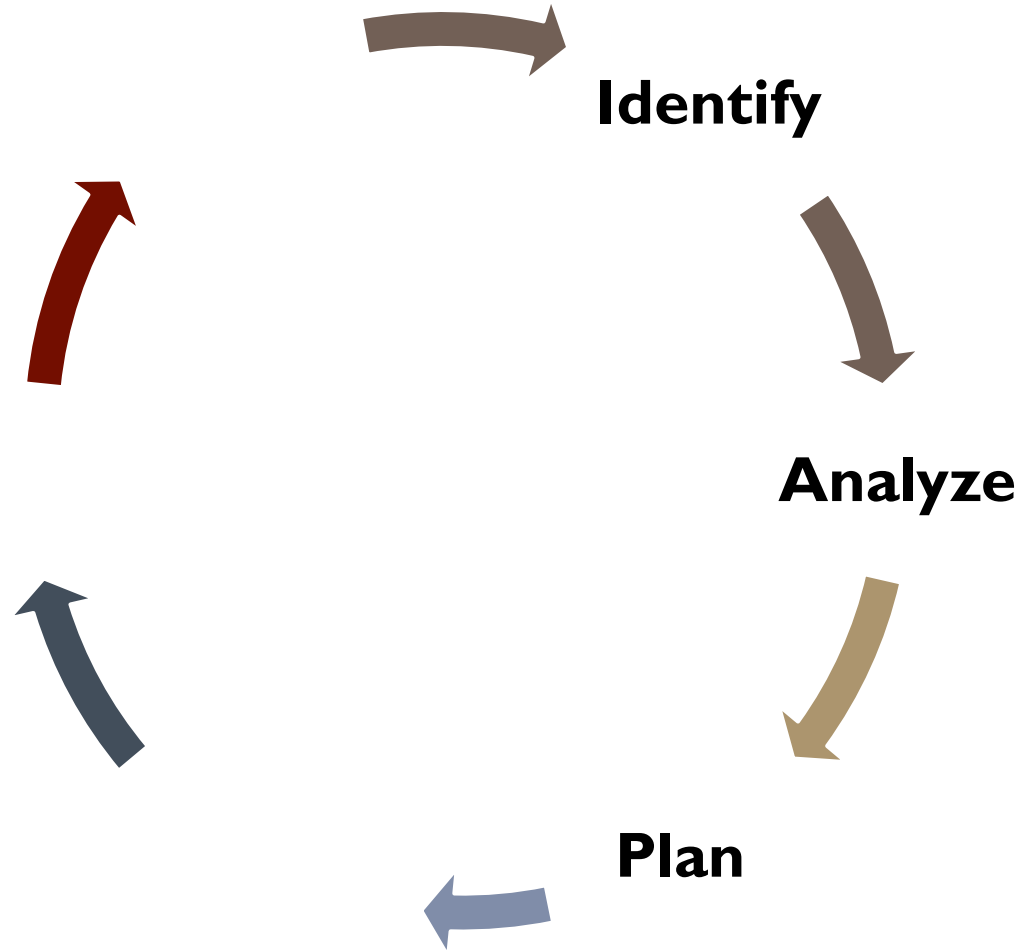
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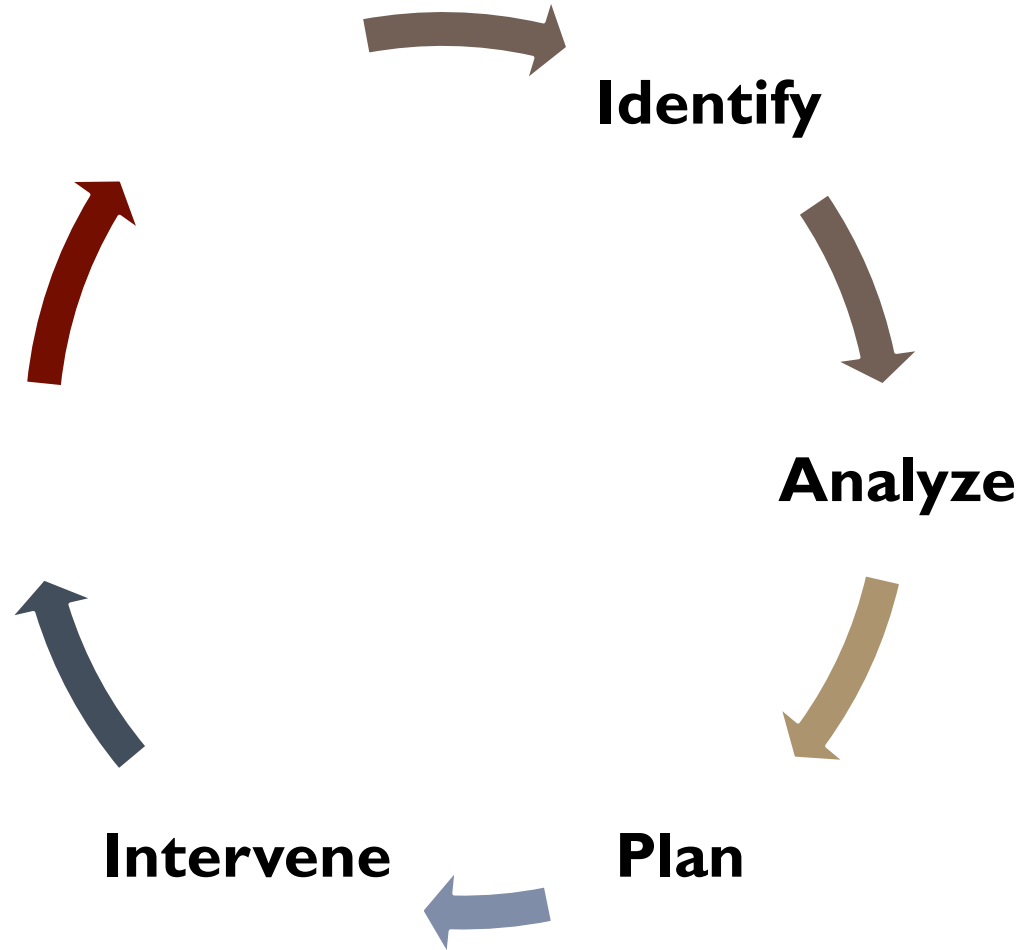
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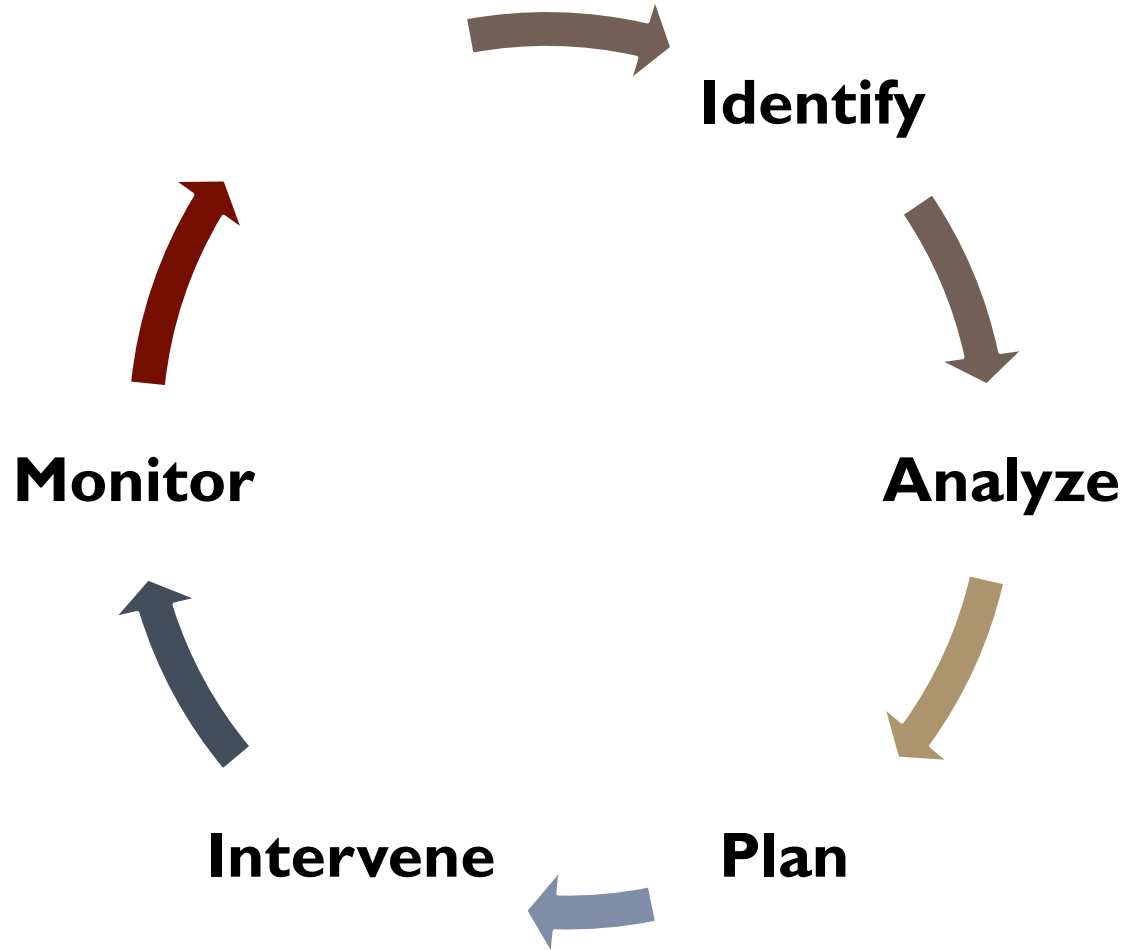
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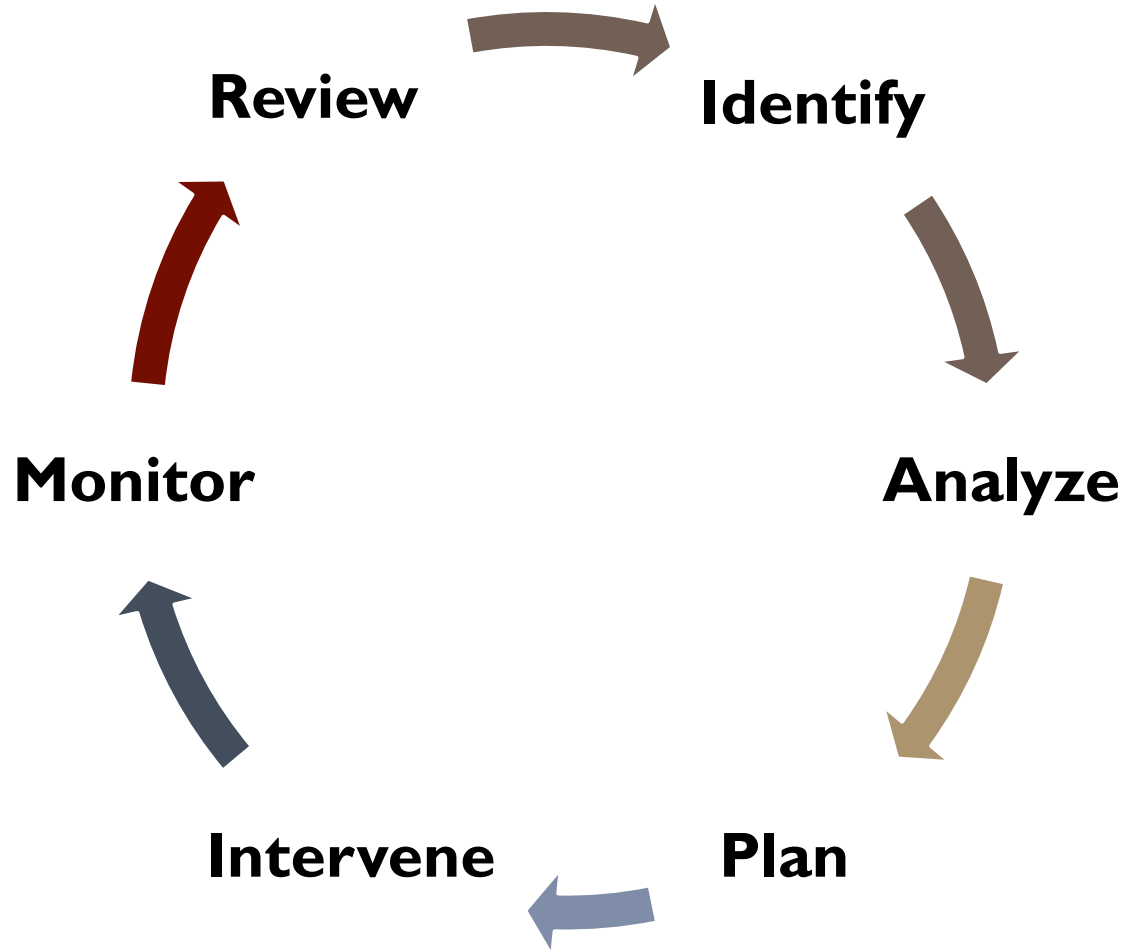
Process of Risk/Need Assessment



Process of Risk/Need Assessment



Process of Risk/Need Assessment



Process of Risk/Need Assessment





Overview of Risk/Need Assessment Approaches

Evolution of Risk/Need Assessment

First Generation

Unstructured professional judgment

1st Generation

- ▶ Unstructured professional judgment
- ▶ Advantages
 - ▶ Convenient, flexible
 - ▶ Inexpensive
 - ▶ Widely accepted
 - ▶ Able to inform treatment and management



1st Generation

- ▶ Unstructured professional judgment
- ▶ Disadvantages
 - ▶ Training and expertise
 - ▶ Lack of transparency
 - ▶ Highly susceptible to biases
 - ▶ Lack of consistency
 - ▶ Accuracy no better than chance

“Flipping Coins in the Courtroom”

Evolution of Risk/Need Assessment

First Generation

Unstructured professional judgment



Second Generation

Focus on static factors



2nd Generation

- ▶ Empirically-based, comprised of static risk factors
- ▶ Advantages
 - ▶ Transparent and objective
 - ▶ Good reliability and predictive accuracy
 - ▶ (Relatively) quick and easy



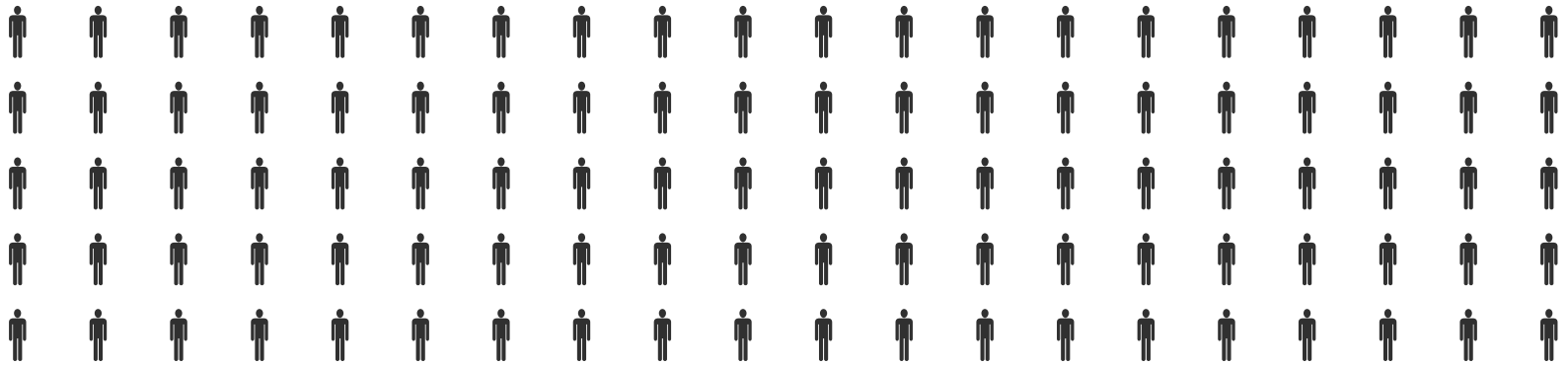
2nd Generation

- ▶ Empirically-based, comprised of static risk factors
- ▶ **Disadvantages**
 - ▶ Atheoretical
 - ▶ Do not allow for change over time
 - ▶ Limited identification of treatment targets
 - ▶ Limited integration of intervention
 - ▶ Decisions based on group norms



The Problem with Group Norms

- ▶ Example: A group of 100 juvenile offenders and 50 recidivate within 5 years.
- ▶ Does this mean that every member of group had a 50% likelihood of recidivism?

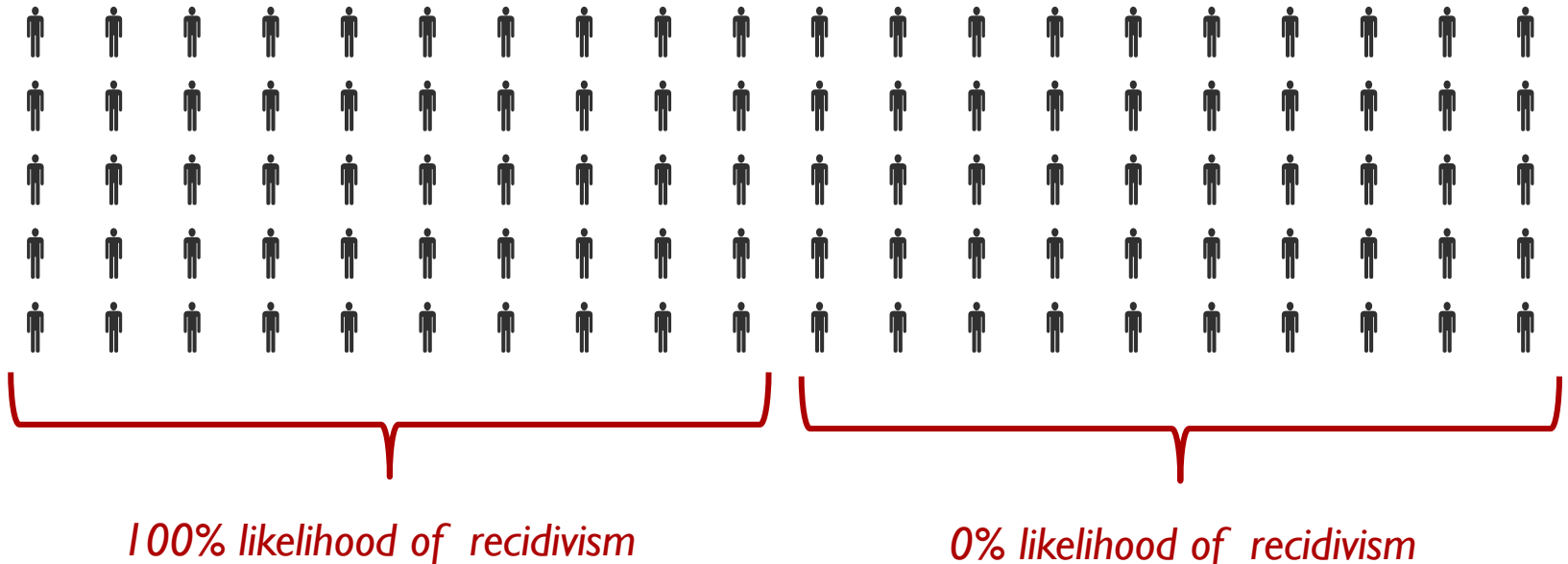


50% likelihood of recidivism



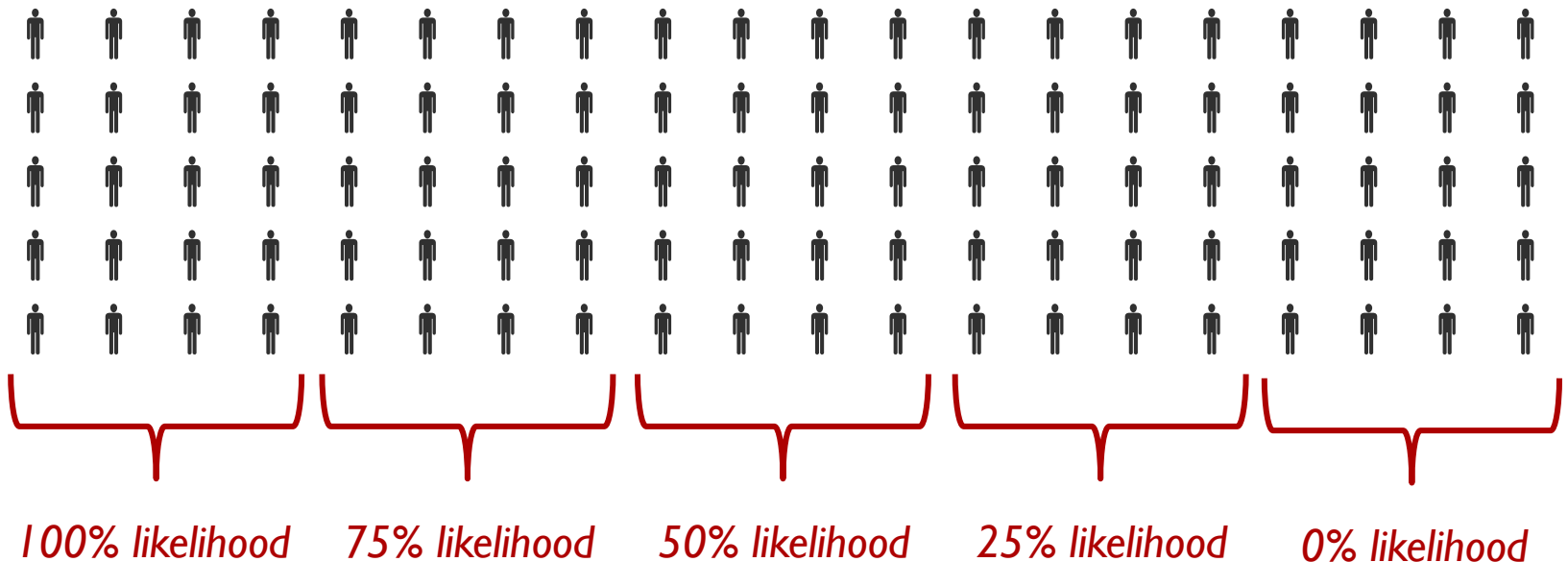
The Problem with Group Norms

- ▶ Example: A group of 100 juvenile offenders and 50 recidivate within 5 years.
- ▶ Or that half had a 100% and half had a 0% likelihood of recidivism?



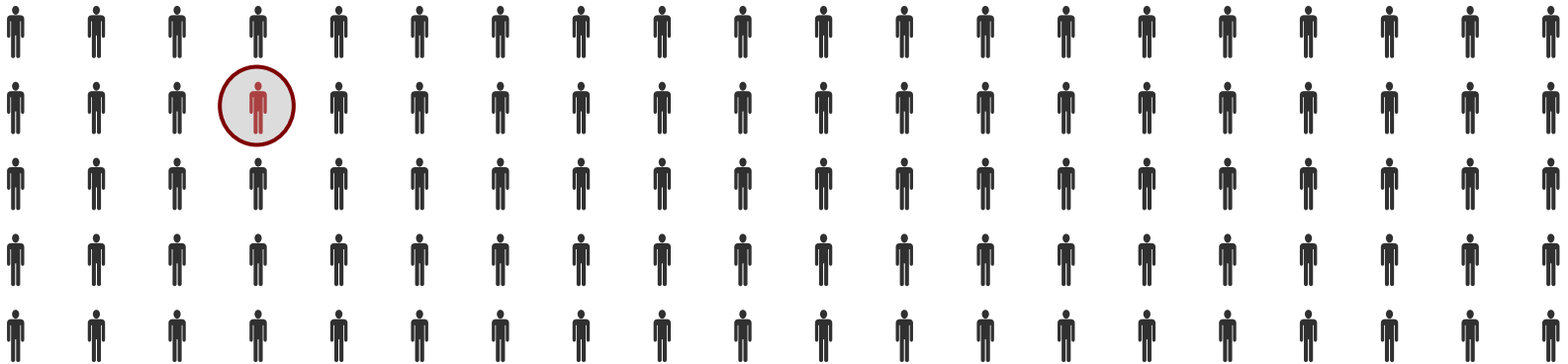
The Problem with Group Norms

- ▶ Example: A group of 100 juvenile offenders and 50 recidivate within 5 years.
- ▶ Or that 20 had a 100%, 20 had a 75%, 20 had a 50% and 20 had a 25%, and 20 had a 0% likelihood of recidivism?



The Problem with Group Norms

- ▶ Example: A group of 100 juvenile offenders and 50 recidivate within 5 years.
- ▶ We do not know where *this* juvenile offender falls within group of juvenile offenders who received given score.



Evolution of Risk/Need Assessment

First Generation

Unstructured professional judgment



Second Generation

Focus on static factors



Third Generation

Consideration of dynamic factors & criminogenic needs



3rd Generation

- ▶ Empirically-based and include wider variety of factors
 - ▶ Dynamic risk factors and criminogenic needs



“Central Eight”

Risk Factor	Criminogenic Need
History of criminal behavior	Build alternative behaviors
Antisocial personality pattern	Problem solving skills, anger management
Antisocial cognition	Develop less risky thinking, increase prosocial thinking
Antisocial peers	Reduce association with criminal others, increase prosocial peers
Family and/or marital discord	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships
Poor school and/work performance	Enhance performance, rewards
Few leisure or recreation activities	Enhance outside involvement
Substance abuse	Reduce alcohol and drug use

► *Tarnes (2013) Table 3, developed based on Andrews (2006)*

3rd Generation

- ▶ Empirically-based and include wider variety of factors
 - ▶ Dynamic risk factors and criminogenic needs
- ▶ **Advantages**
 - ▶ Transparent
 - ▶ Sensitive to change over time
 - ▶ Good reliability and predictive accuracy
 - ▶ Theoretically sound
 - ▶ Identification of treatment targets



3rd Generation

- ▶ Empirically-based and include wider variety of factors
 - ▶ Dynamic risk factors and criminogenic needs
- ▶ **Disadvantages**
 - ▶ Repeated administration required to detect change
 - ▶ Potentially shorter shelf life
 - ▶ More time consuming
 - ▶ Decisions based on group norms
 - ▶ Limited integration of intervention



Evolution of Risk/Need Assessment

First Generation

Unstructured professional judgment



Second Generation

Focus on static factors



Third Generation

Consideration of dynamic factors & criminogenic needs



Fourth Generation

Integration of case management

4th Generation

- ▶ Integration of risk management, treatment targets and modalities, and assessment of progress
- ▶ Advantages
 - ▶ Transparent
 - ▶ Sensitive to change over time
 - ▶ Good reliability and predictive accuracy
 - ▶ Theoretically sound
 - ▶ Allow for professional judgment
 - ▶ Incorporates intervention



4th Generation

- ▶ Integration of risk management, treatment targets and modalities, and assessment of progress
- ▶ **Disadvantages**
 - ▶ Repeated administration required to detect change
 - ▶ Potentially shorter shelf life
 - ▶ More time consuming
 - ▶ More training and expertise
 - ▶ Smaller research base



Risk/Need Assessment in the U.S.

- ▶ Increased requirement and use of structured risk/need assessment in U.S.
- ▶ Many different tools available
- ▶ Varying in:
 - ▶ Evidence
 - ▶ Intended population
 - ▶ Intended outcome
 - ▶ Content
 - ▶ Approach
 - ▶ Length
 - ▶ Cost



Selecting a Risk/Need Assessment Tool

Selecting a Risk/Need Assessment Tool

- ▶ Answer the following questions:
 1. What is the evidence?
 2. What is your outcome of interest?
 3. What is your population?
 4. What is your setting?
 5. What are the costs?

1. What is the evidence?

- ▶ No one instrument produces *most* reliable and *most* accurate risk/need assessments
- ▶ Some evidence of superiority as a function of:
 - ▶ Subgroup
 - ▶ Age
 - ▶ Sex/gender
 - ▶ Race/ethnicity
 - ▶ Outcome
 - ▶ Delinquency vs offending vs violations
 - ▶ Type of offending (any, violent, sexual)
 - ▶ Timing (adolescent, early adult, adult)

Additional Considerations

- ▶ **Generalizability of research studies to use in practice**
 - ▶ Research assistants \neq professionals
 - ▶ Time
 - ▶ Resources
 - ▶ Training
- ▶ **Allegiance effects**
 - ▶ Better performance in studies conducted by tool author
- ▶ **Fidelity**
 - ▶ Use of tool as designed and intended

2. What is your outcome of interest?

- ▶ Some instruments designed for and perform better in assessing likelihood of particular outcomes
 - ▶ General vs specific form of adverse outcome
 - ▶ Context or setting of behavior
 - ▶ Timing of behavior
- ▶ Some instruments more/less relevant to intervention
 - ▶ Prediction vs. management
 - ▶ Item content and composition



Item Content & Composition

- ▶ Static vs. dynamic factors
 - ▶ Historical vs. static factors
 - ▶ Stable dynamic vs. acute dynamic factors
- ▶ Criminogenic vs. treatment needs
- ▶ Distal vs. proximal factors
- ▶ Risk vs. protective factors



3. What is your population?

- ▶ Some instruments developed for specific populations
 - ▶ Youth on probation
 - ▶ Youth in secure settings
 - ▶ At-risk youth
- ▶ Some instruments perform better for some subgroups
- ▶ Limited evidence of predictive validity for other subgroups



4. What is your setting?

- ▶ Information and time available to complete assessment
- ▶ Staff training and background
- ▶ Assessment and prediction time frame
- ▶ Evidence supporting use of tool in that setting

5. What are the costs?

- ▶ Costs associated with
 - ▶ Training
 - ▶ Materials
 - ▶ License
 - ▶ Integration with existing records or IT system
- ▶ One-time and/or ongoing

Using Risk/Need Assessments to Improve Outcomes

Ultimate Goal

- ▶ Improve outcomes for juvenile offenders through:
 - ▶ Increased standardization, consistency, and transparency of risk/need assessment
 - ▶ Better match between juvenile offenders' individual needs and intervention
 - ▶ Reduced risks associated with over- or under-intervening
 - ▶ Better communication within and between agencies
 - ▶ Monitoring of juvenile offenders' individual progress
 - ▶ Promotion of youth and caregiver involvement
 - ▶ Population surveillance



Improving Outcomes

- ▶ Accurate and reliable risk/need assessments do not improve outcomes
- ▶ Must be:
 - ▶ implemented with fidelity



Successful Implementation

- ▶ Steps to successful implementation in practice:
 1. Prepare
 2. Establish stakeholder and staff buy-in
 3. Select and prepare the risk assessment tool
 4. Prepare policies and essential documents
 5. Training
 6. Implement pilot test
 7. Full implementation
 8. Ongoing tasks for sustainability

Successful Implementation

- ▶ **Tasks for sustainability**
 - ▶ Staff, organizational, and legislative level accountability
 - ▶ Booster training every six months
 - ▶ Data monitoring for use of risk/need assessments in decision-making and outcomes
 - ▶ Regular assessment of fidelity, inter-rater reliability, and validity

Improving Outcomes

- ▶ Accurate and reliable risk/need assessments do not improve outcomes
- ▶ **Must be:**
 - ▶ implemented with fidelity
 - ▶ communicated to others



Communicating Assessment Results

- ▶ **Completing the form and/or report \neq communication**
 - ▶ Must be communicated within and between agencies
- ▶ **Opportunities for stakeholder engagement**
 - ▶ Youth
 - ▶ Caregivers
 - ▶ Practitioners
 - ▶ Probation staff and supervisors
 - ▶ Judges and attorneys
 - ▶ Etc.



Communicating Assessment Results

- ▶ Recommended practices
 - ▶ Be explicit
 - ▶ Know your target audience
 - ▶ Qualify limitations of assessment
 - ▶ Contextualize the risks and needs
 - ▶ Describe plausible scenarios and contingencies



Risk Communication

“Improper risk communication can render a risk assessment that was otherwise well-conducted completely useless or even worse, if it gives consumers the wrong impression.”



Improving Outcomes

- ▶ Accurate and reliable risk/need assessments do not improve outcomes
- ▶ **Must be:**
 - ▶ implemented with fidelity
 - ▶ communicated to others
 - ▶ integrated with case management



Integration with Case Management

- ▶ Risk-Need-Responsivity Model
 - ▶ Best practice for assessing and treating offenders
 - ▶ Framework for linking risk assessment with case management
- ▶ Improved outcomes with adherence to:
 1. Risk principle
 2. Need principle
 3. Responsivity principle

Risk Principle

- Match level of risk
 - Higher risk → more resources
 - Lower risk → fewer resources
- Over-intervening → increase adverse outcomes
 - Increase risk factors, criminogenic needs, and treatment needs
 - Reduce protective factors



Need Principle

- ▶ Address individual risk factors and criminogenic needs factors relevant to risk of target outcome*
- ▶ Examples
 - ▶ Substance use
 - ▶ Mood
 - ▶ Attitudes

**With juvenile offenders, also attend to treatment needs.*



Responsivity Principle

- ▶ Take into account factors that can affect intervention outcomes
 - ▶ Examples
 - ▶ Intellectual functioning
 - ▶ Developmental stage, maturity
 - ▶ Mental health symptoms
 - ▶ Learning style
 - ▶ Motivation
 - ▶ Gender
- ▶ Build upon individual strengths



Case Management

- ▶ Consider all components of the risk assessment
- ▶ Identify and balance short-term and long-term goals
 - ▶ Those of the court, system, assessor, youth, caregiver
- ▶ Use stepwise, integrated approach that targets and prioritizes individual risks and needs
 - ▶ Step 1 – Stability
 - ▶ Focus on (critical) treatment needs
 - ▶ Step 2 – Improve functioning and reduce risk
 - ▶ Focus on risk factors and criminogenic needs



Additional Considerations

- ▶ Given his/her level of functioning (cognitive and mental health), maturity, and motivation:
 - ▶ What structures and supports need to be in place?
 - ▶ What are the urgent/critical issues?
 - ▶ What do we work on now to provide the foundation for future progress?
 - ▶ How do we measure:
 - ▶ improvements or success?
 - ▶ setbacks or failure?



Improving Outcomes

- ▶ Accurate and reliable risk/need assessments do not improve outcomes
- ▶ **Must be:**
 - ▶ implemented with fidelity
 - ▶ communicated to others
 - ▶ integrated with case management
 - ▶ reviewed and amended over time



Review and Amendment

- ▶ Both the assessment and plan have a shelf-life
- ▶ Identify and implement mechanism and timeline for review
 - ▶ Modify as necessary
- ▶ Not necessary to start from scratch
 - ▶ What has changed (for better or worse)?
 - ▶ What is the same?
 - ▶ What do we need to do differently?



Thank you!

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