Positive Youth Development:
From Theory to Practice

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Effective Youth Justice Intervention

Dual Focus:

- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors

Maximum Use of:

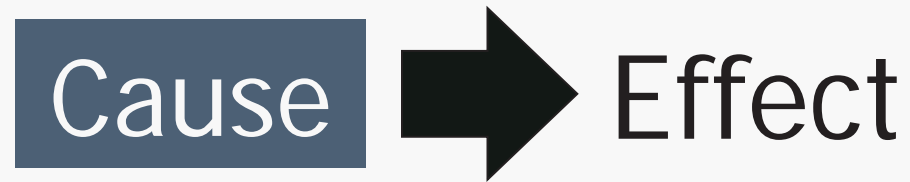- Family Resources
- Community Partners

Designed to:

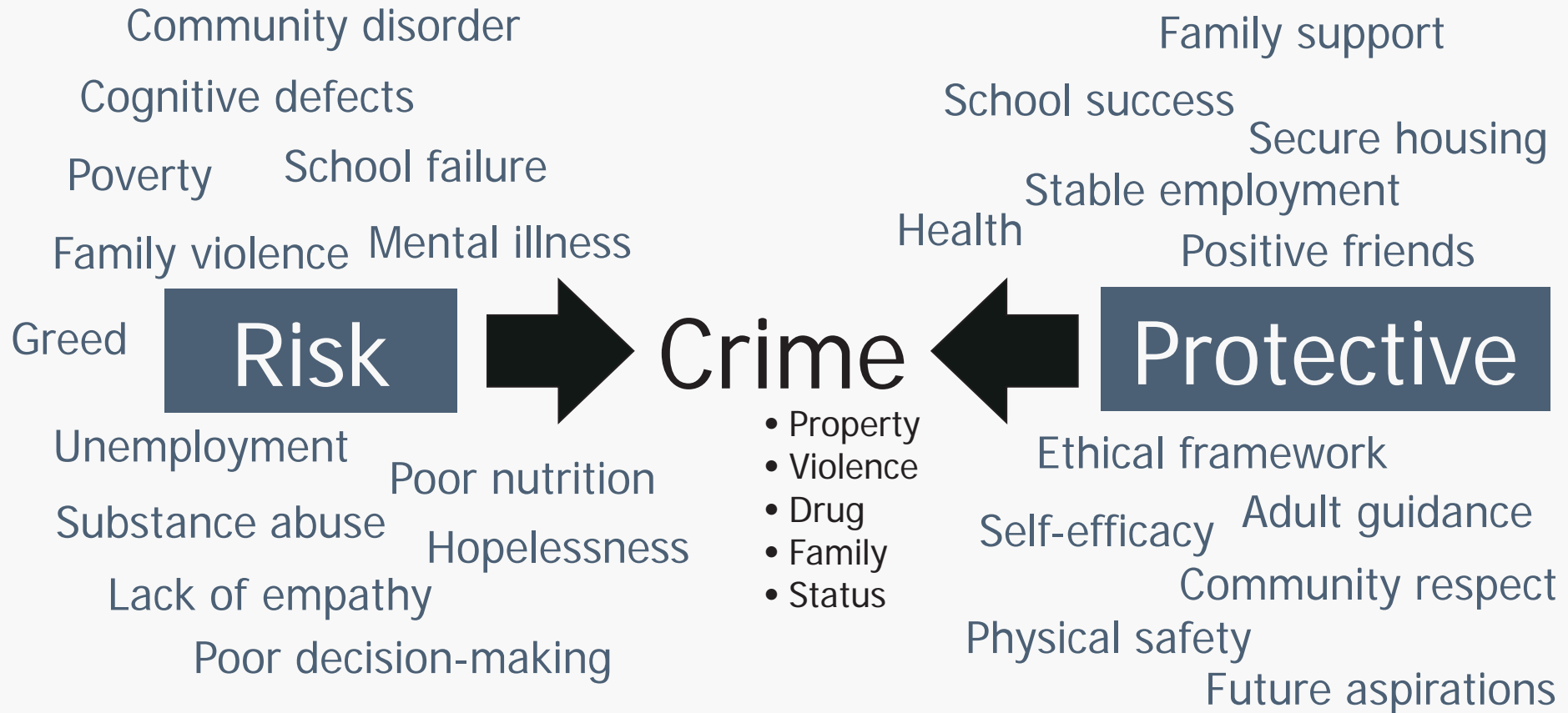- Generate Evidence of Impact
- Facilitate Successful Replication

Effective Youth Justice Intervention

- Most youth justice policy and practice focuses on RISK FACTORS

- How do we improve our impact on PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

What's Your Theory?

Cause ➡ Effect

What's Your Theory?

Community disorder

Cognitive defects

Poverty School failure

Family violence Mental illness

Greed

Family support

School success

Secure housing

Stable employment

Health Positive friends

Risk ➡ Crime ⬅ **Protective**

Unemployment

Poor nutrition

Substance abuse Hopelessness

Lack of empathy

Poor decision-making

- Property
- Violence
- Drug
- Family
- Status

Ethical framework

Self-efficacy Adult guidance

Community respect

Physical safety

Future aspirations

How Do We Focus Intervention?

Positive Youth Development

- Strengths and assets

- Attachment, engagement, and socialization

- Usefulness and belonging

- Broad system of community-based supports

- Allow <u>all youth</u> to experience opportunities and activities that youth in wealthy communities take for granted:

  - Supportive relationships
  - Rewards for work
  - Skill development
  - Success in learning

  - Physical activity and sports
  - Music and the arts
  - Civic engagement
  - Community/political involvement

Positive Youth Development

- Centuries old — basically common sense

- Traces are found in the work of Jane Addams etc. (empowerment, belonging, arts, civic engagement)

- 1970s: researchers started to advance particular models for justice-involved youth

> Kenneth Polk and Solomon Kobrin (1972). *Delinquency Prevention Through Youth Development.* Washington, DC: Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration.

- 1990s: A wide range of models influential in education, prevention and community-based services

Community Network for Youth Development San Francisco

JGC JOHN W. GARDNER CENTER *for Youth and Their Communities*

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

National Research Council

AMERICA'S PROMISE THE ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH

the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT *moving ideas to impact*

...elopmental Assets

Institute for Research Dev...

Putting Positive Youth Development Into Practice

N*A*TIONAL COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH *An Affinity Group of the National Human Services Assembly*

PEPNet

Promising and Effective Practices National Youth Employment Coalition

...ase ...outh

AED Academy for Educational Development Connecting People · Creating Change

Y D S I Youth Development Strategies, Inc.

Youth Development Framework

Not Adapted for Youth Offenders

Positive Youth Development

Evidence-based — **NOT YET**

Interventions that have been proven by rigorous evaluations to be effective in meeting their stated goals at high levels of statistical confidence.

Science-based

Interventions that address specific factors shown by social science research to be associated with the extent and severity of anti-social behavior among youth.

Long-term Goal
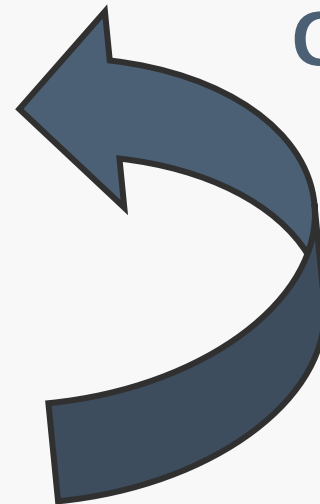
Focusing on Protective Factors

There are good reasons to believe that using positive youth development to focus on protective factors will help to reduce youth crime.

Research on Comprehensive Models

Supports the potential of a youth development approach to juvenile justice interventions

Hawkins and Weis
"The Social Development Model: An Integrated Approach to Delinquency Prevention."
Journal of Primary Prevention

1985

Survey of Youth Assets (Univ. of OK)

Youth with more assets are less likely to report that they have carried a weapon

Youth with particular asset	Rate of weapon carrying compared to other youth
Positive peer role model	55% as likely
Positive non-parental adult role model	63%
Involved in community activities	48%
Report future aspirations	53%
Able to exercise responsible choices	63%
Report good family communication	59%

* 14% of sample reported some weapon carrying

Aspy et al. (2004), *Journal of Counseling and Development*

Survey of Youth Assets (Univ. of OK)

Youth with more assets are less likely to report that they have previously used drugs/alcohol

Youth with particular asset	Rate of drug/alcohol use compared to other youth
Positive peer role model	33% as likely
Positive non-parental adult role model	50%
Involved in community activities	50%
Involved in groups/sports	63%
Cumulative Effect: All 9 Assets	19%

- Oman et al. (2004). *American Journal of Public Health*

Search-Institute.org

Percentage of 6th- to 12th-Grade Youth Reporting Selected High-Risk Behaviors, by Level of Developmental Assets

High-Risk Behaviors	0–10 Assets	11–20 Assets	21–30 Assets	31–40 Assets
Problem alcohol use—Has used alcohol three or more times in the past month or got drunk once in the past two weeks.	45%	26%	11%	3%
Violence—Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the past year.	62%	38%	18%	6%
School Problems—Has skipped school two or more days in the past month and/or has below a C average.	44%	23%	10%	4%

* Data based on aggregate Search Institute sample of 148,189 students across the United States surveyed in 2003.

Other Research Findings

Sense of
"social belonging"
  or
"social membership"
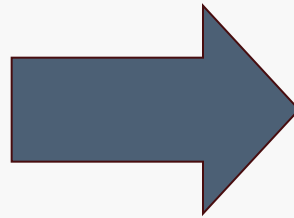
- Academic achievement

- Lower substance abuse

- Lower delinquency

- Barber and Olsen (1997), *Journal of Adolescent Research*
- Battistich and Horn (1997), *American Journal of Public Health*
- Eccles et al. (1997), *Journal of Adolescent Research*

Other Research Findings

Participation in school-based and community activities ➡ A range of positive educational outcomes
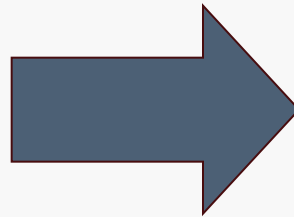
- Barber, Eccles and Stone (2001), *Journal of Adolescent Research*
- Larson (2000), *American Psychologist*
- Morrissey and Werner-Wilson (2005), *Adolescence*
- Roth et al. (1998), *Journal of Research on Adolescence*

Other Research Findings

Participation in community service → Sense of social responsibility and civic engagement
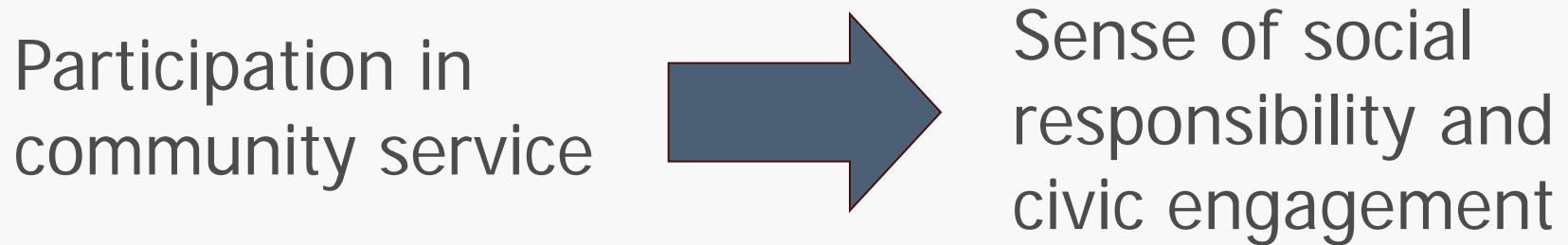
• Youniss and Yates (1997), University of Chicago Press

Other Research Findings

Participation in organized activities of various kinds

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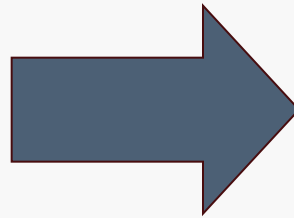
- Educational aspirations

- Leadership qualities

- Ability to overcome adversity

- Scales, Benson, Leffert and Blyth (2000), Applied Developmental Science

Protective Factors Matter

- Youth with stronger and more varied social assets are less likely to be involved with crime, violence and drugs … but

- How do we deliver social assets ??

Protective Factors Matter

First, We Must Acknowledge That Risk-Based Interventions Are Not Enough

Two Primary Examples:

- Mental Health Services

- Substance Abuse Services

More Than Mental Health Treatment

- Even a perfect mental health treatment system would not <u>eliminate</u> juvenile crime and recidivism

- The overlap between crime and mental health is misunderstood (and often misused)

Prevalence of Mental Health Problems

All U.S. Adolescents	Juvenile Assessment Center Population (diversion)	Probation Intake Population	Secure Detention Population
21%	29%	46%	69%
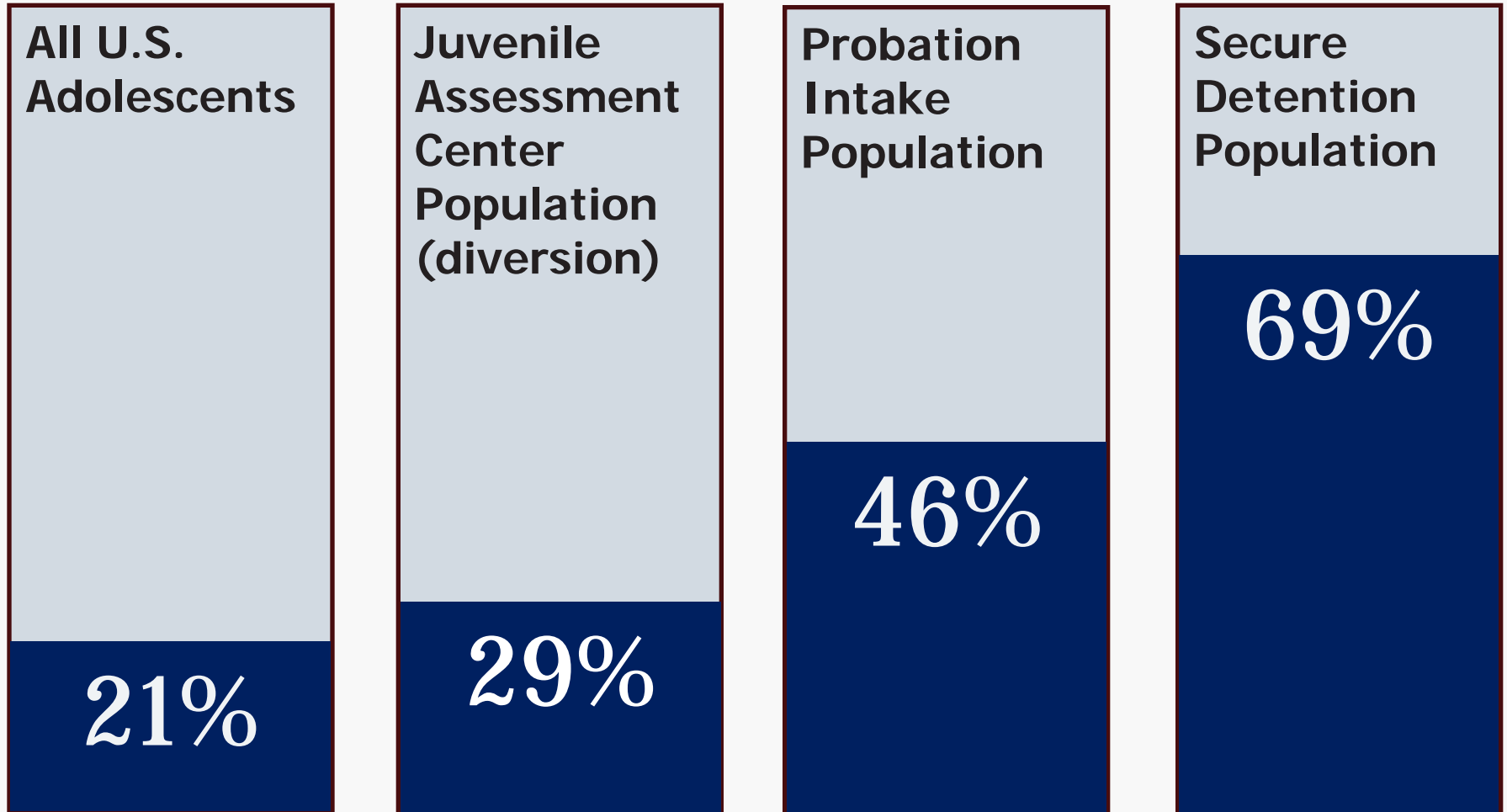
What Does This Mean?

Cause or Correlation ?

- The deeper we look into the juvenile justice process, the more mental health problems we see...

- Is this because mental health issues cause crime?

- Or is it because the justice process holds on longer to offenders with mental health problems – i.e., is less likely to divert them and more likely to charge, adjudicate, etc?

Prevalence of Mental Health Problems

Social and Economic Disadvantages

Justice System Contact

?

Mental Health Diagnoses

Offenders with Mental Health Problems
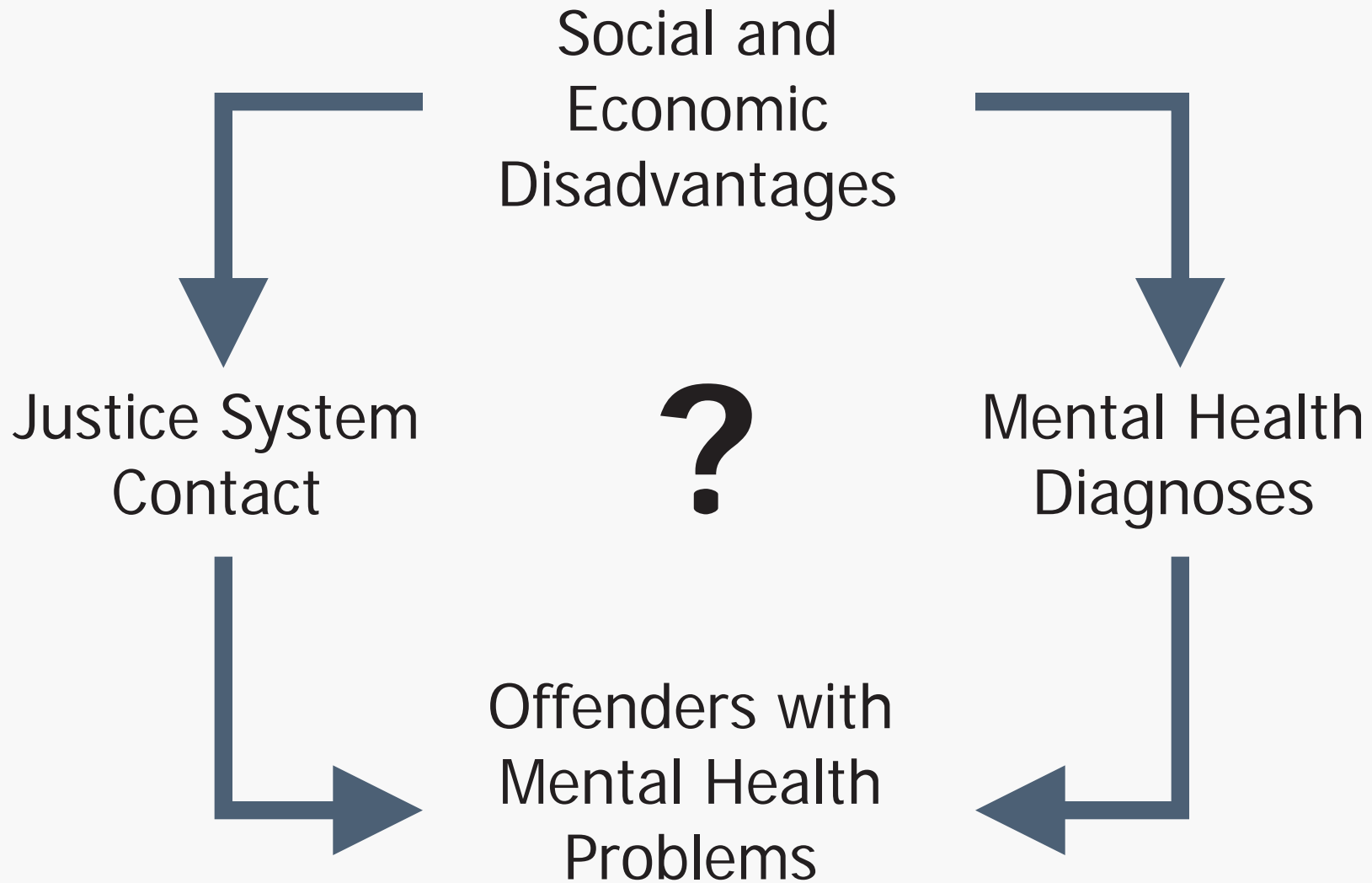
Are Rates of Mental Disorders Among Young Offenders Partly a Reflection of Their Social-Economic Status?

Amazingly, there are no good studies on adolescents…

… but we do know some things from studies of adults.

"Major Depressive Episode" in Past Year (Adults)
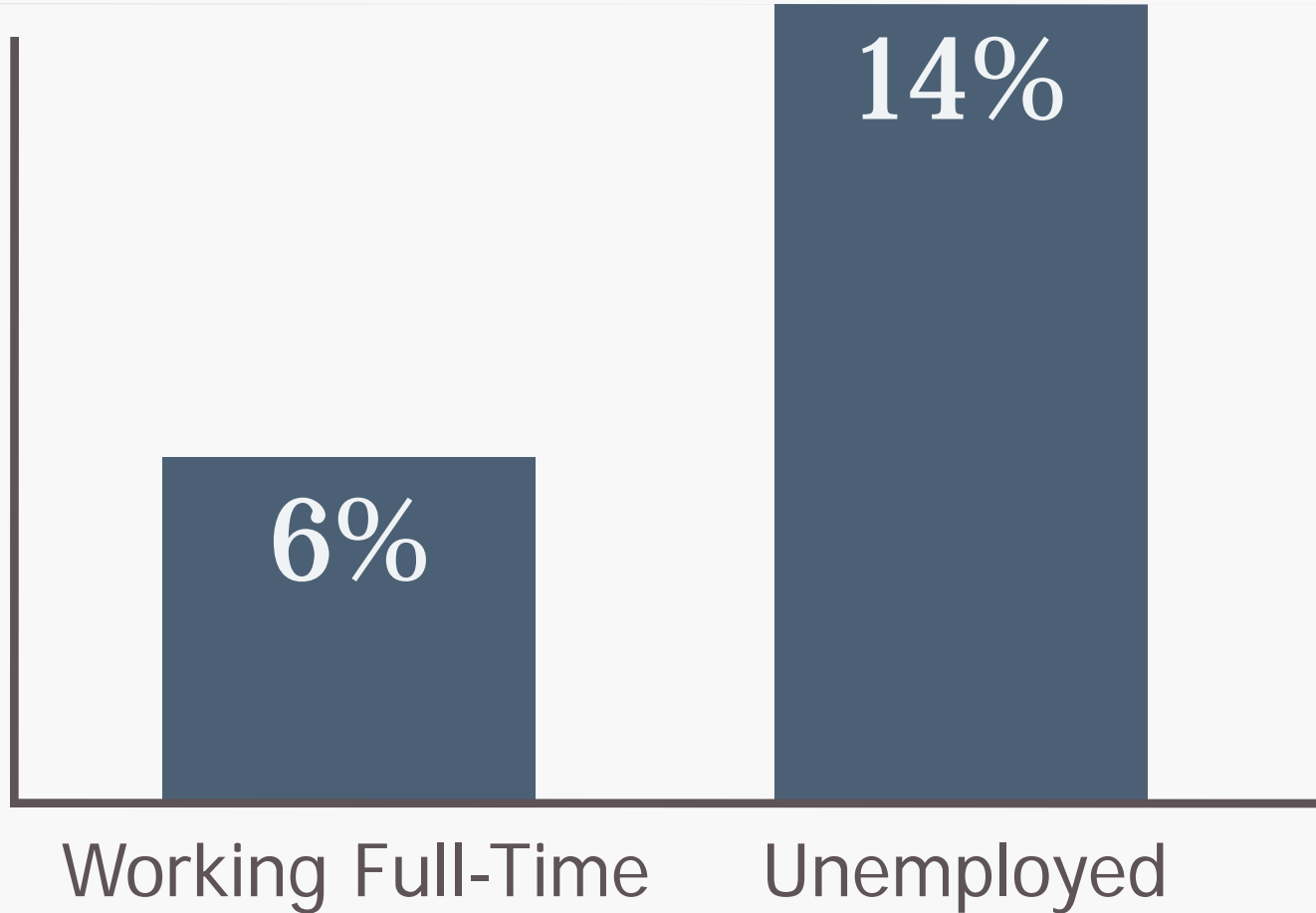
National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA (2006)

"Any Mood Disorder" in Adults Under 40

		13.6%
7.4%	7.5%	
Some College	High School	Less Than High School
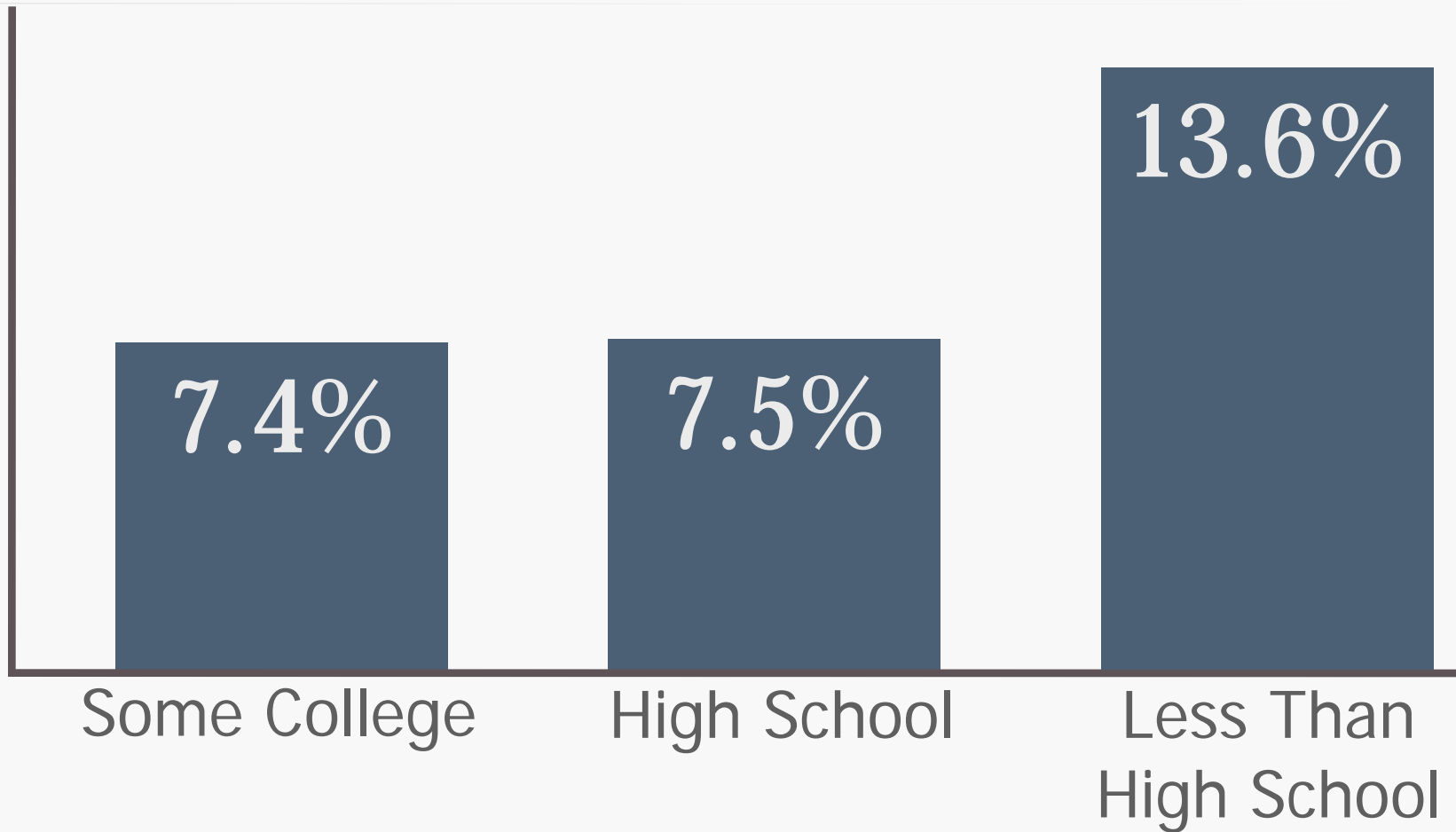
National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (III), reported in Jonas et al. (2006)

"Any Mood Disorder" in Adults Under 40
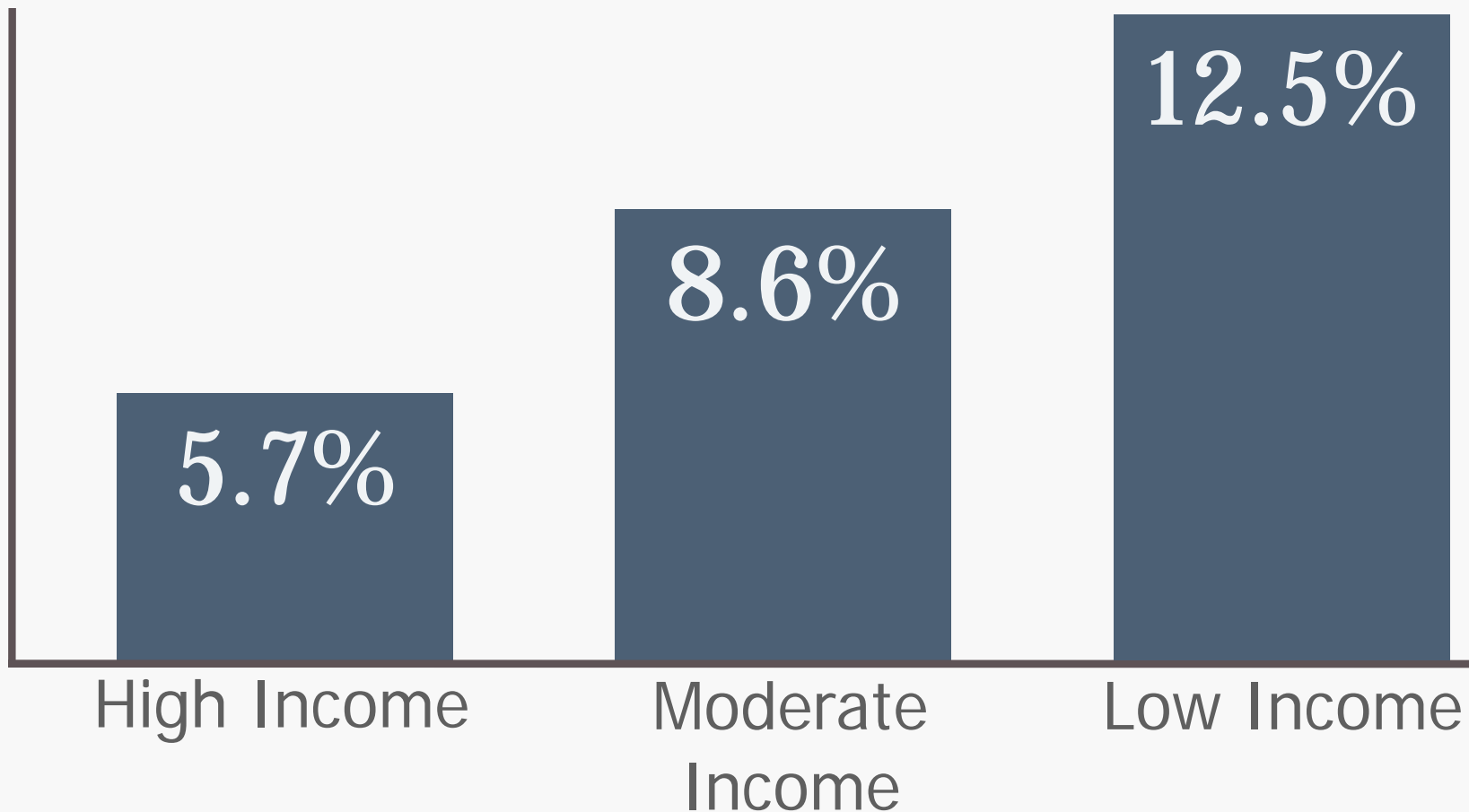
High Income — 5.7%
Moderate Income — 8.6%
Low Income — 12.5%

National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (III), reported in Jonas et al. (2006)

"Dysthymia" in Adults Under 40

Bar chart:
- Some College: 1.9%
- High School: 4.6%
- Less Than High School: 11.7%

National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (III), reported in Jonas et al. (2006)

"Dysthymia" in Adults Under 40

Bar chart showing dysthymia rates by income level: High Income 0.9%, Moderate Income 5.0%, Low Income 8.9%.
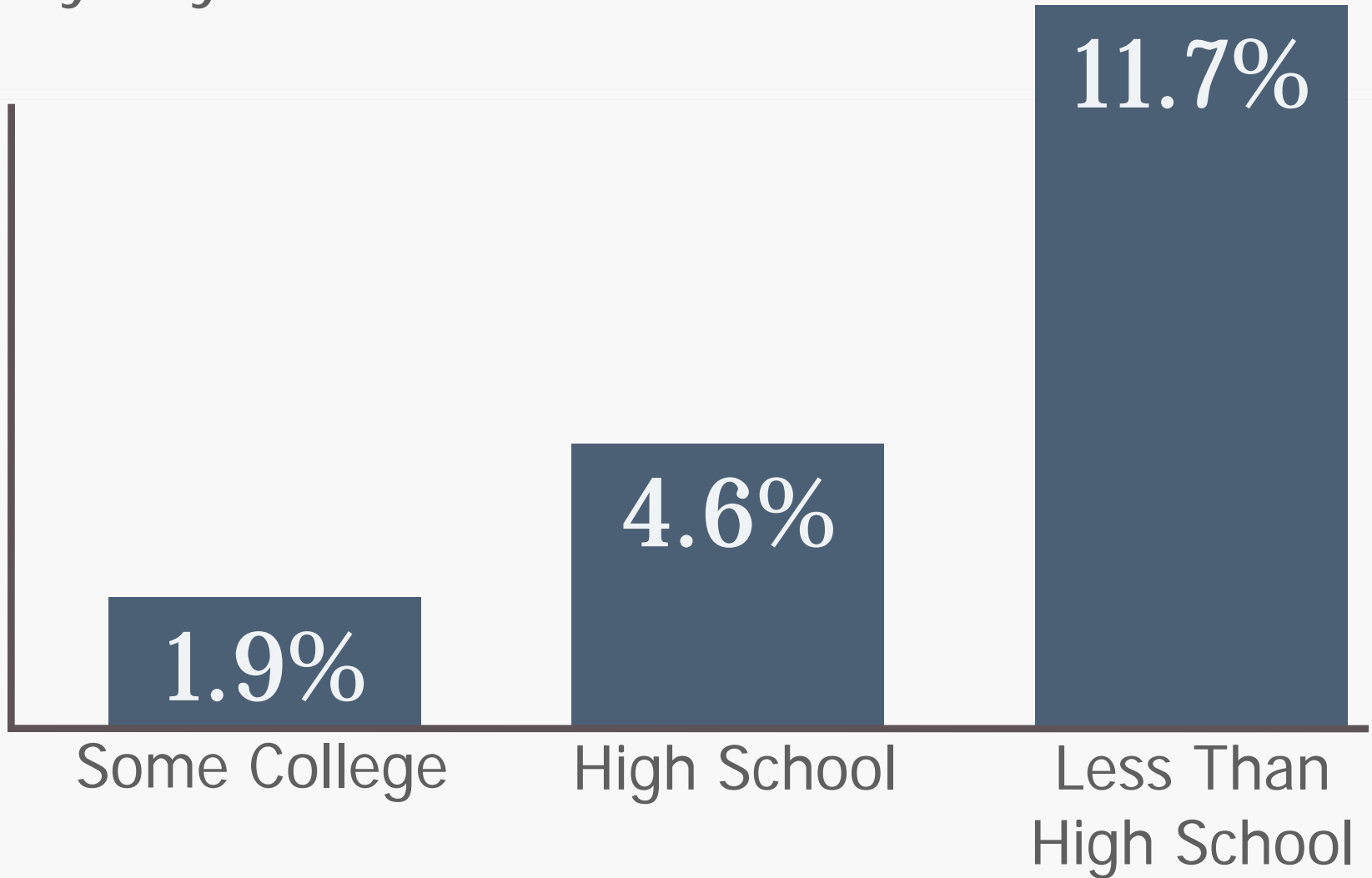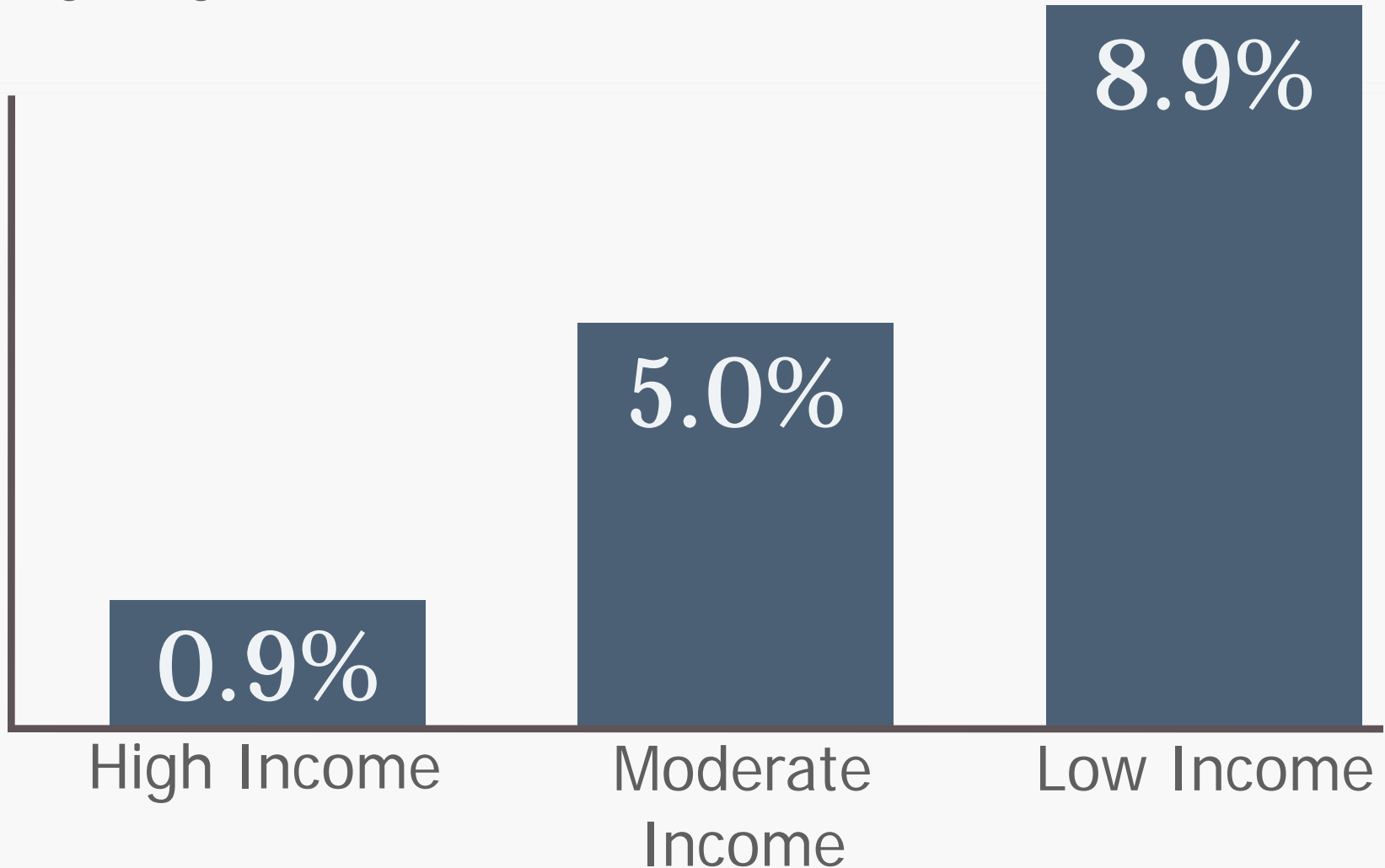
National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (III), reported in Jonas et al. (2006)

Key Question

■ Do youth become involved in persistent criminal behavior <u>because</u> of mental health problems?

or,

■ Are mental health problems more common among youth that tend to be more deeply involved in the justice system?

**Very Different Implications for
Service Delivery and Crime Reduction Policy**

Substance Abuse

Just like mental health problems...

Drug problems are more common the deeper one looks into the juvenile justice process, from arrest, to referral, adjudication.

Substance Abuse

If we combine prevalence data with national statistics about the volume of juvenile justice cases, we see something else interesting...

100%

Rate of substance use disorders among all U.S. 12-17 year-olds.

- SAMHSA (2006)

8%

11%

Youth at a Juvenile Assessment Center

What proportion have a substance use disorder?

- McReynolds et al. (2008)

100%

About half of all
arrested youth are
referred to juvenile
court authorities.

- Juvenile Court Statistics, OJJDP

50%

Of these, what
proportion have a
substance use disorder?

- Wasserman et al. (2005)

11%

25%

Youth at a
Juvenile
Assessment
Center

Youth
Referred to
Juvenile
Probation

100%

About 20 percent of all court referred youth are held in secure detention at some point.

- Juvenile Court Statistics, OJJDP

20%

Of these, what proportion have a substance use disorder?

- Teplin et al. (2002)

11%

25%

49%

Youth at a Juvenile Assessment Center

Youth Referred to Juvenile Probation

Youth Held in Secure Detention

100%

When they first enter the juvenile system, the prevalence of substance abuse among young offenders is similar to other teens.

Substance-abusing offenders, however, may be more likely to be retained through to the more restrictive stages of justice processing.

The preponderance of drug-abusing youth in the deep end of the justice system could be partly a function of how case decisions are made if drug-abusing youth are treated more coercively.

Drug-using youth would be a larger subgroup by the end of the process; not because drugs cause crime but because drugs prompt more aggressive action by justice authorities.

11%

25%

49%

Youth at a Juvenile Assessment Center

Youth Referred to Juvenile Probation

Youth Held in Secure Detention

Substance Use Disorders

Among Youth Referred to a Juvenile Assessment Center		
Abuse Disorders		
Alcohol	2%	
Marijuana	4%	
Other drug	1%	
Dependence Disorders		
Alcohol	1%	
Marijuana	5%	
Other drug	1%	
No Disorder	89%	

Among Youth Referred to Juvenile Probation Intake		
Abuse Disorders		
Alcohol		7%
Marijuana		10%
Other drug		3%
Dependence Disorders		
Alcohol		3%
Marijuana		13%
Other drug		4%
No Disorder		75%

Source: McReynolds et al. (2008)

Source: Wasserman et al. (2005)

Substance Use Disorders

- Approximately 10% to 25% of young offenders have substance use issues that could be called "problematic" – either abuse or dependence

- Most of these substance use issues involve alcohol and marijuana (80% to 90%)

- Few youth (5% ?) have addiction or dependence problems involving serious, illegal drugs

Why the Confusion?

Why do we hear so much about the mental health and substance abuse needs of young offenders ?

- MH and SA problems were overlooked and under-diagnosed for years

- The science related to these issues has improved

- Interest group politics and public relations

Distracted by Advocacy

Youth justice policy has become distracted by an over-emphasis on mental health and drug abuse issues...

- both are important

- but, they are not sufficient as the principal focus of policy or practice in youth justice

New Model of Intervention

We need a strong, evidence-based approach that is:

- Suitable for youth <u>not</u> primarily affected by mental health or substance abuse issues

- Designed to support behavior change and not simply deterrence

- Focused on protective factors, not just risk

JJ Systems Turning to PYD

Washington, DC — DYRS
Massachusetts — DYS
New York — OCFS

Roxbury, MA — "Youth Advocacy Program"
Iowa – Statewide Collaboration
Eugene, OR — County-wide planning

**Where Do Practitioners
Go for Guidance?**

Some Models Might be **Too General**

The 5Cs Model of Positive Youth Development

Competence — Enhancing participants' social, academic, cognitive, and vocational competencies.

Confidence — Improving adolescents' self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, identity, and belief in the future.

Connections — Building and strengthening adolescents' relationships with other people and institutions, such as school.

Character — Increasing self-control, decreasing engagement in health-compromising (problem) behaviors, developing respect for cultural or societal rules and standards, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and spirituality.

Caring and Compassion — Improving youths' empathy and identification with others.

Source: Adapted from Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000).

Some Models Might be **Too Specific**

Some Models Might be **Too Specific**

External Assets

Support
1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment
7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries & Expectations
11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time
17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Some Models Might be **Too Specific**

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning
21. **Achievement Motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values
26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty**—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies
32. **Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity
37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Some Models Might be **Too Specific**

Focusing Youth Justice on PYD

How do we transform youth justice systems to focus on practical ways of attaching youth to assets and facilitating positive youth development?

Very Different Perspectives

	Traditional Justice	**Positive Youth Justice**
Target	Youth deficits	Youth strengths
Goal	Control	Attachment
Strategy	Deter and provide treatment	Connect and engage
Tactics	▪ Sanctions ▪ Supervision ▪ Services	▪ Re-establish youth bonds with community ▪ Connect youth and family with pro-social activities ▪ Build on youth assets and interests

Our Model: *Positive Youth Justice*

	ASSETS	
	Learning/Doing	**Attaching/Belonging**
Work	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
Education	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
DOMAINS Relationships	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
Community	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
Health	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes
Creativity	• Activities • Outcomes	• Activities • Outcomes

Youth Development Approach May be an Evidence-Based Model Some Day

Requires an accumulation of findings from numerous, high-quality studies.

Depends on sustained investment by service providers, researchers, and funding sources.

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