

*How to Prevent Prisoner Reentry
Programs from Failing: Insights From
Evidence Based Corrections*

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Evidence Based – What does it mean?

There are different forms of evidence:

- The lowest form is antidotal evidence, but it makes us feel good
- The highest form is empirical evidence – results from controlled studies, but it doesn't make us feel good

What does the Research tell us?

There is often a Misapplication of Research: “XXX Study Says”

- the problem is if you believe every study we wouldn't eat anything (but we would drink a lot of red wine!)

- **Looking at one study can be a mistake**
- **Need to examine a body of research**
- **So, what does the body of knowledge about correctional interventions tell us?**

FROM THE EARLIEST REVIEWS:

- Not a single reviewer of studies of the effects of official punishment (custody, mandatory arrests, increased surveillance, etc.) has found consistent evidence of reduced recidivism.
- At least 40% and up to 60% of the studies of correctional treatment services reported reduced recidivism rates relative to various comparison conditions, in every published review.

People Who Appear to be Resistant to Punishment

- Psychopathic risk takers
- Those under the influence of a substance
- Those with a history of being punished

Most researchers who study correctional interventions have concluded:

- Without some form of human intervention or services there is unlikely to be much effect on recidivism from punishment alone

The body of knowledge about correctional treatment has resulted in the identification of some principles which can help you develop more effective programs

Principles of Effective Intervention

- Risk Principle – target higher risk offenders (WHO)
- Need Principle – target criminogenic risk/need factors (WHAT)
- Treatment Principle – use behavioral approaches (HOW)
- Fidelity Principle – implement program as designed (HOW WELL)

Risk and Needs

- To understand the risk and need principle you have to know what the major risk factors correlated with criminal conduct

Major Set of Risk/Need Factors

- 1. Antisocial/procriminal attitudes, values, beliefs & cognitive-emotional states**
 - Negative expression about the law
 - Denial of responsibility
 - Negative expression about conventional institutions, values, rules, authority
 - Denial of the victim
 - Denial injury

- 2. Procriminal associates & isolation from anticriminal others**

- 3. Temperamental & personality factors conducive to criminal activity including:**
 - Weak Socialization
 - Impulsivity
 - Restless Aggressive Energy
 - Egocentrism
 - Below Average Verbal intelligence
 - A Taste For Risk
 - Weak Problem-Solving, Coping, & Self-Regulation Skills

Major Set of Risk/Need Factors

- 4. A history of antisocial behavior:**
 - Evident from a young age
 - In a variety of settings
 - Involving a number and variety of different acts

- 5. Family 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 practices
 - Out right neglect and abuse

- 6. Low levels of personal educational, vocational or financial achievement.**

Need Principle

By assessing and targeting criminogenic needs for change, agencies can reduce the probability of recidivism

Criminogenic

- Anti social attitudes
- Anti social friends
- Substance abuse
- Lack of empathy
- Impulsive behavior

Non-Criminogenic

- Anxiety
- Low self esteem
- Creative abilities
- Medical needs
- Physical conditioning

Recent study of parole violators in Pennsylvania found a number of criminogenic factors related to failure*

*Conducted by Pennsylvania Dept. of Corrections

Pennsylvania Parole Study
Social Network and Living Arrangements
Violators Were:

- More likely to hang around with individuals with criminal backgrounds
- Less likely to live with a spouse
- Less likely to be in a stable supportive relationship
- Less likely to identify someone in their life who served in a mentoring capacity

Pennsylvania Parole Study
Employment & Financial Situation
Violators were:

- Slightly more likely to report having difficulty getting a job
- Less likely to have job stability
- Less likely to be satisfied with employment
- Less likely to take low end jobs and work up
- More likely to have negative attitudes toward employment & unrealistic job expectations
- Less likely to have a bank account
- More likely to report that they were “barely making it” (yet success group reported over double median debt)

Pennsylvania Parole Study
Alcohol or Drug Use
Violators were:

- More likely to report use of alcohol or drugs while on parole (but no difference in prior assessment of dependency problem)
- Poor management of stress was a primary contributing factor to relapse

Pennsylvania Parole Study

Life on Parole

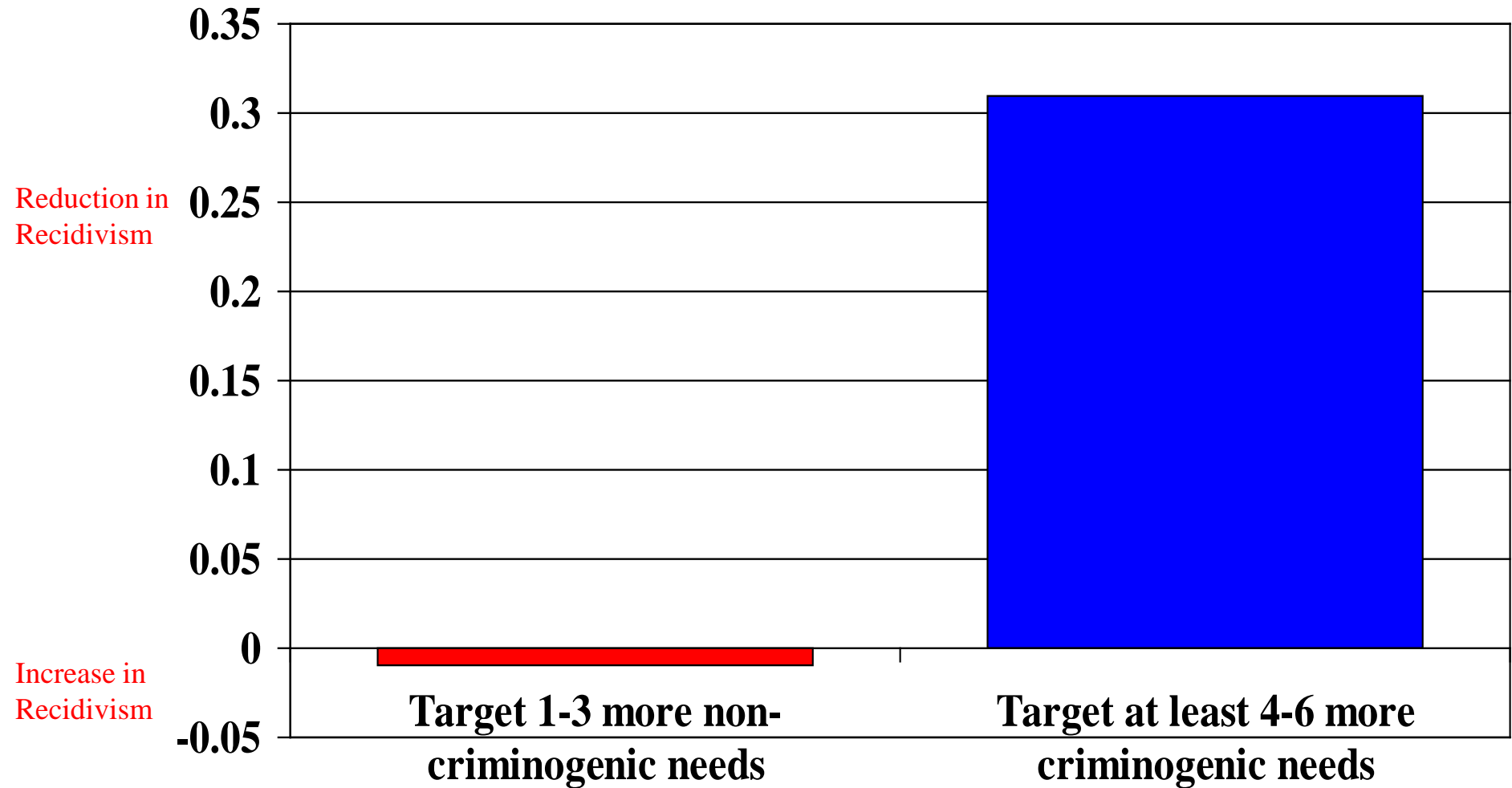
Violators were:

- Had unrealistic expectations about what life would be like outside of prison
- Had poor problem solving or coping skills
 - Did not anticipate long term consequences of behavior
- Failed to utilize resources to help them
 - Acted impulsively to immediate situations
 - Felt they were not in control
- More likely to maintain anti-social attitudes
 - Viewed violations as an acceptable option to situation
 - Maintained general lack of empathy
 - Shifted blame or denied responsibility

Pennsylvania Parole Violator Study:

- Successes and failures did not differ in difficulty in finding a place to live after release
- Successes & failures equally likely to report eventually obtaining a job

Targeting Criminogenic Need: Results from Meta-Analyses



Source: Gendreau, P., French, S.A., and A.Taylor (2002). What Works (What Doesn't Work) Revised 2002. Invited Submission to the International Community Corrections Association Monograph Series Project

Major Risk and/or Need Factor and Promising Intermediate Targets for Reduced Recidivism

Factor	Risk	Dynamic Need
History of Antisocial Behavior	Early & continued involvement in a number antisocial acts	Build noncriminal alternative behaviors in risky situations
Antisocial personality	Adventurous, pleasure seeking, weak self control, restlessly aggressive	Build problem-solving, self-management, anger mgt & coping skills
Antisocial cognition	Attitudes, values, beliefs & rationalizations supportive of crime, cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment, & defiance	Reduce antisocial cognition, recognize risky thinking & feelings, build up alternative less risky thinking & feelings Adopt a reform and/or anticriminal identity
Antisocial associates	Close association with criminals & relative isolation from prosocial people	Reduce association w/ criminals, enhance association w/ prosocial people

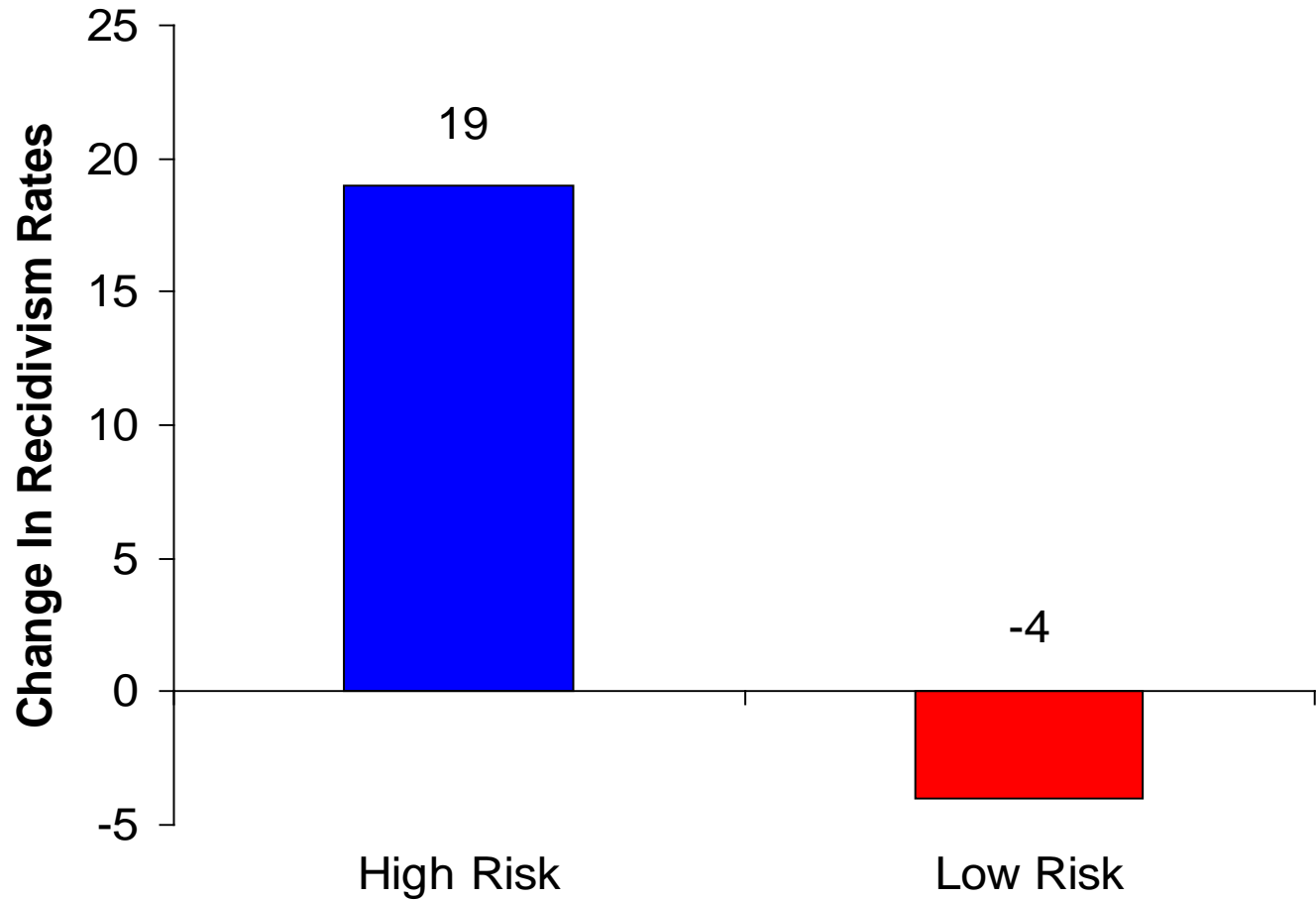
Major Risk and/or Need Factor and Promising Intermediate Targets for Reduced Recidivism

Factor	Risk	Dynamic Need
Family and/or marital	Two key elements are nurturance and/or caring better monitoring and/or supervision	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, communication, enhance monitoring & supervision
School and/or work	Low levels of performance & satisfaction	Enhance performance, rewards, & satisfaction
Leisure and/or recreation	Low levels of involvement & satisfaction in anti-criminal leisure activities	Enhancement involvement & satisfaction in prosocial activities
Substance Abuse	Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs	Reduce SA, reduce the personal & interpersonal supports for SA behavior, enhance alternatives to SA

Risk Principle

- Provide most intensive treatment to higher risk offenders
- Target those offender with higher probability of recidivism
- Intensive treatment for lower risk offender can increase recidivism

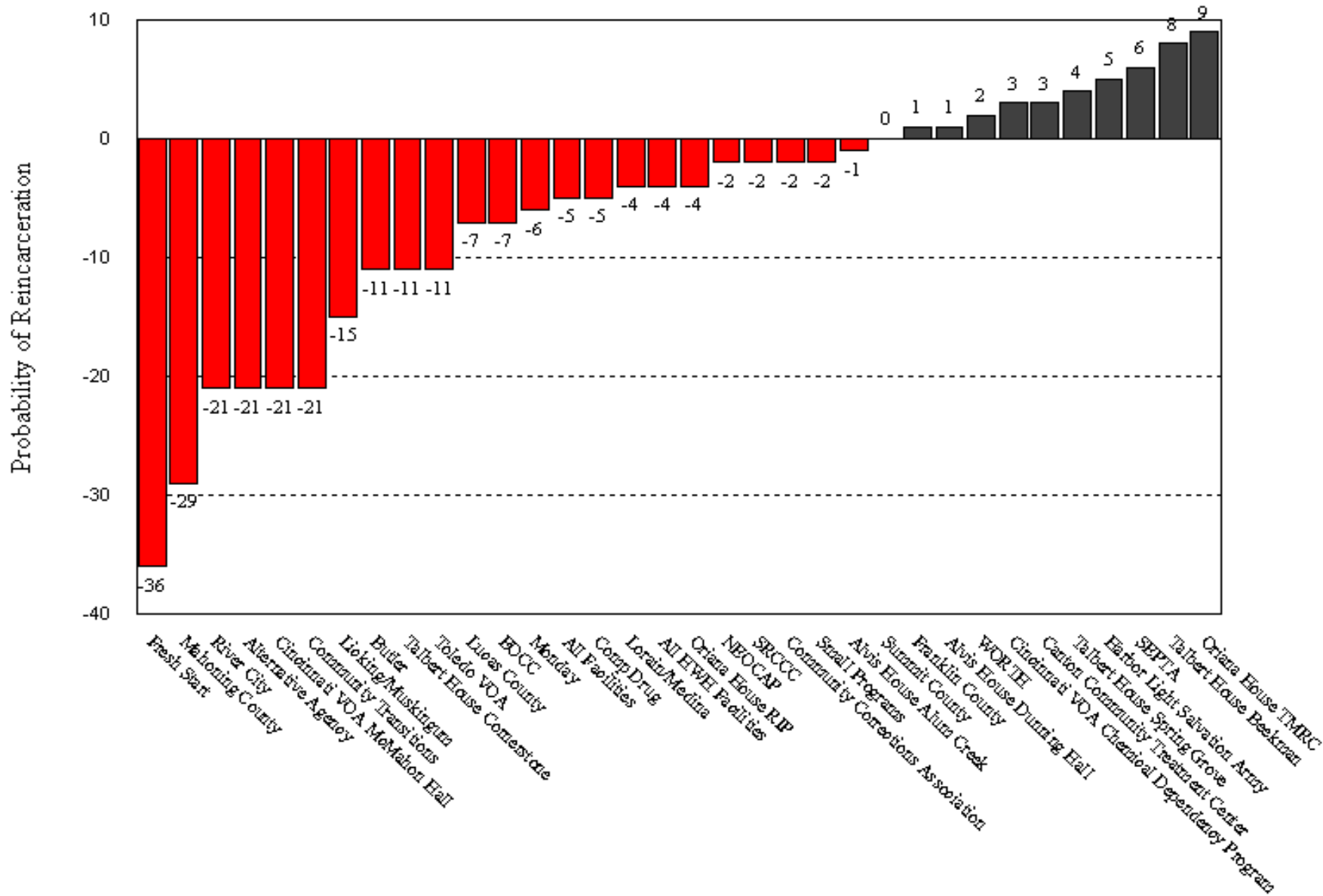
The Risk Principle & Correctional Intervention Results from Meta Analysis



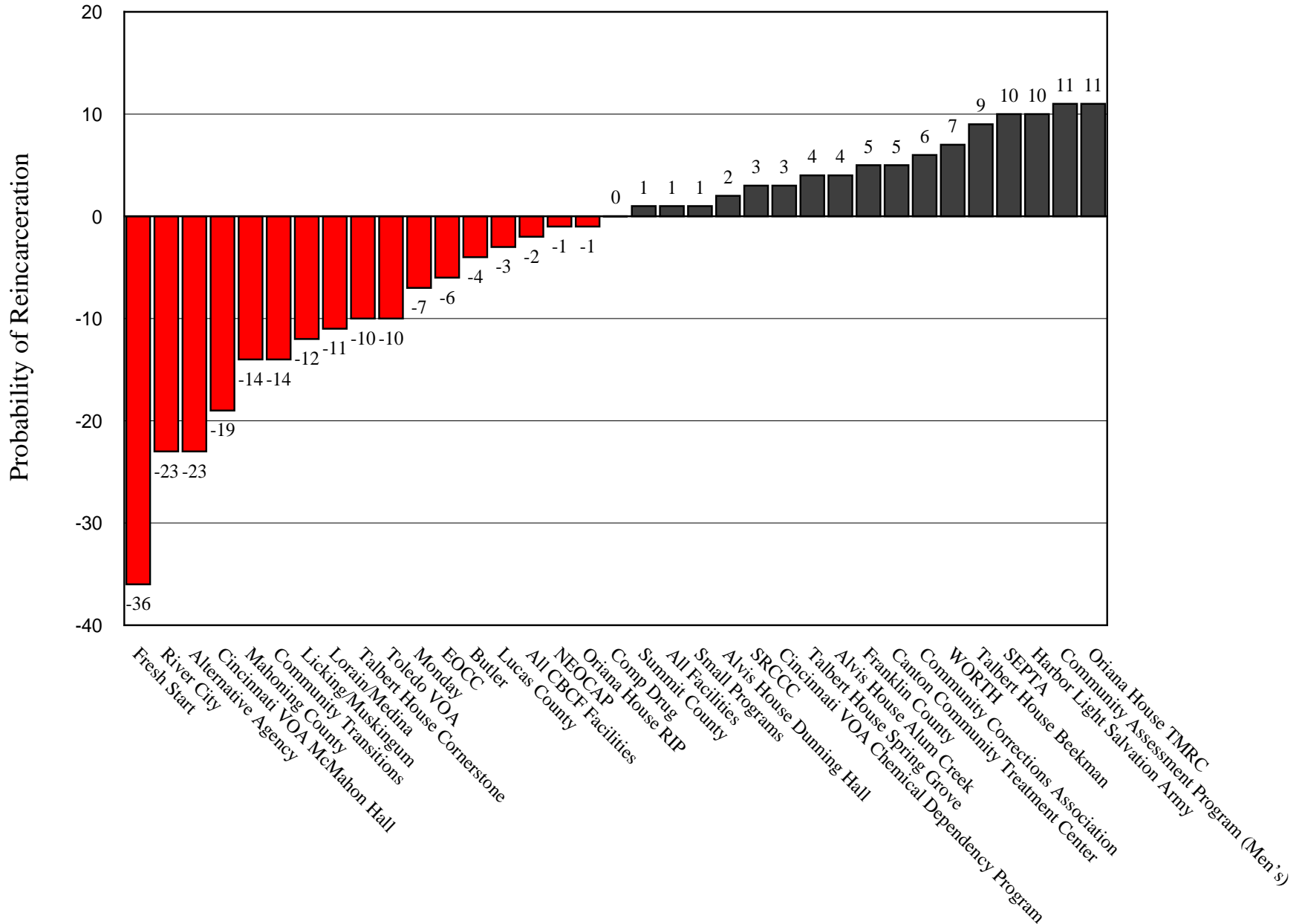
RECENT STUDY OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS IN OHIO

- **Largest study of community based correctional treatment facilities ever done**
- **Total of 13,221 offenders – 37 Halfway Houses and 15 Community Based Correctional Facilities were included in the study.**

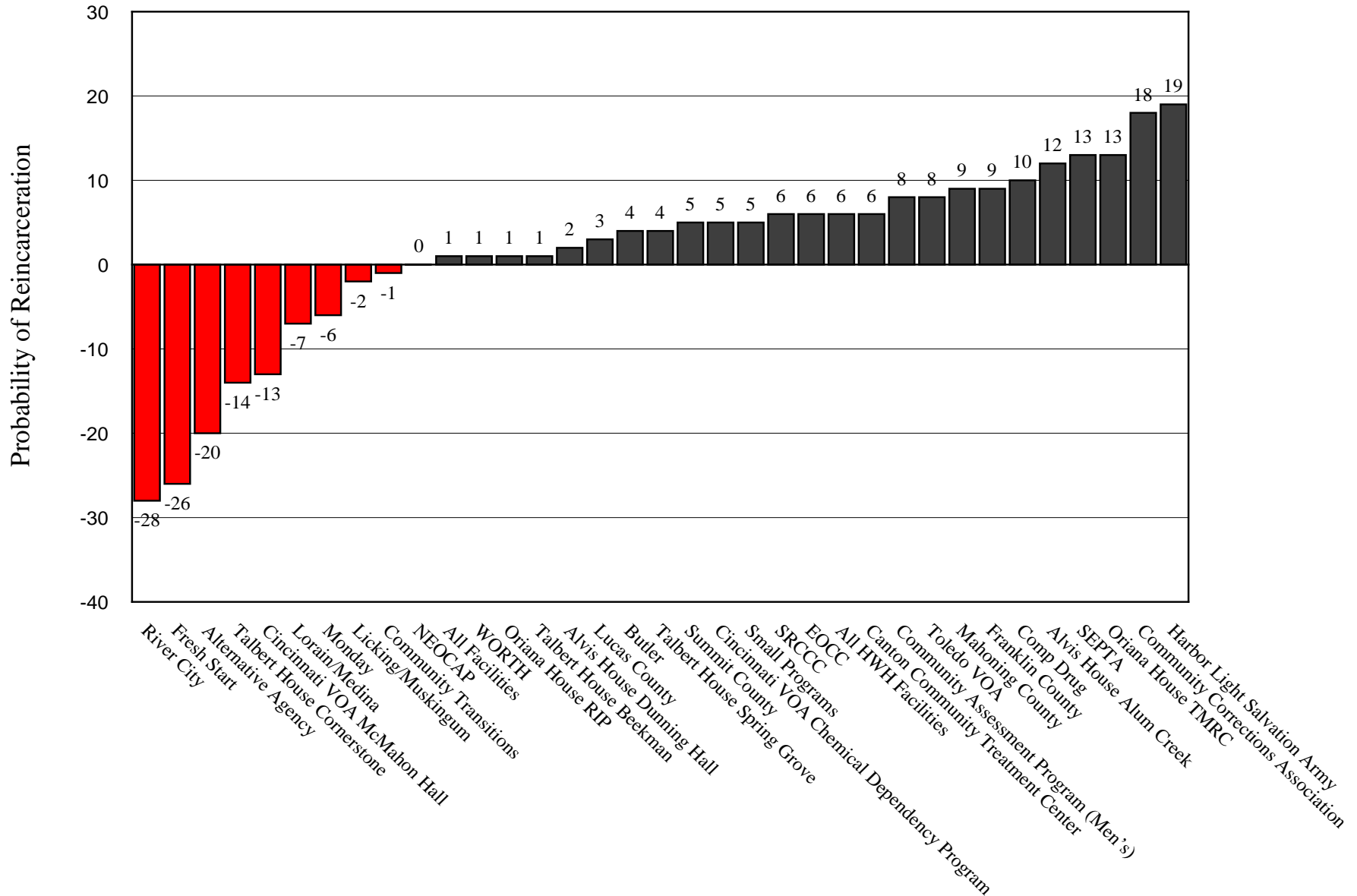
Treatment Effects for Low Risk Offenders



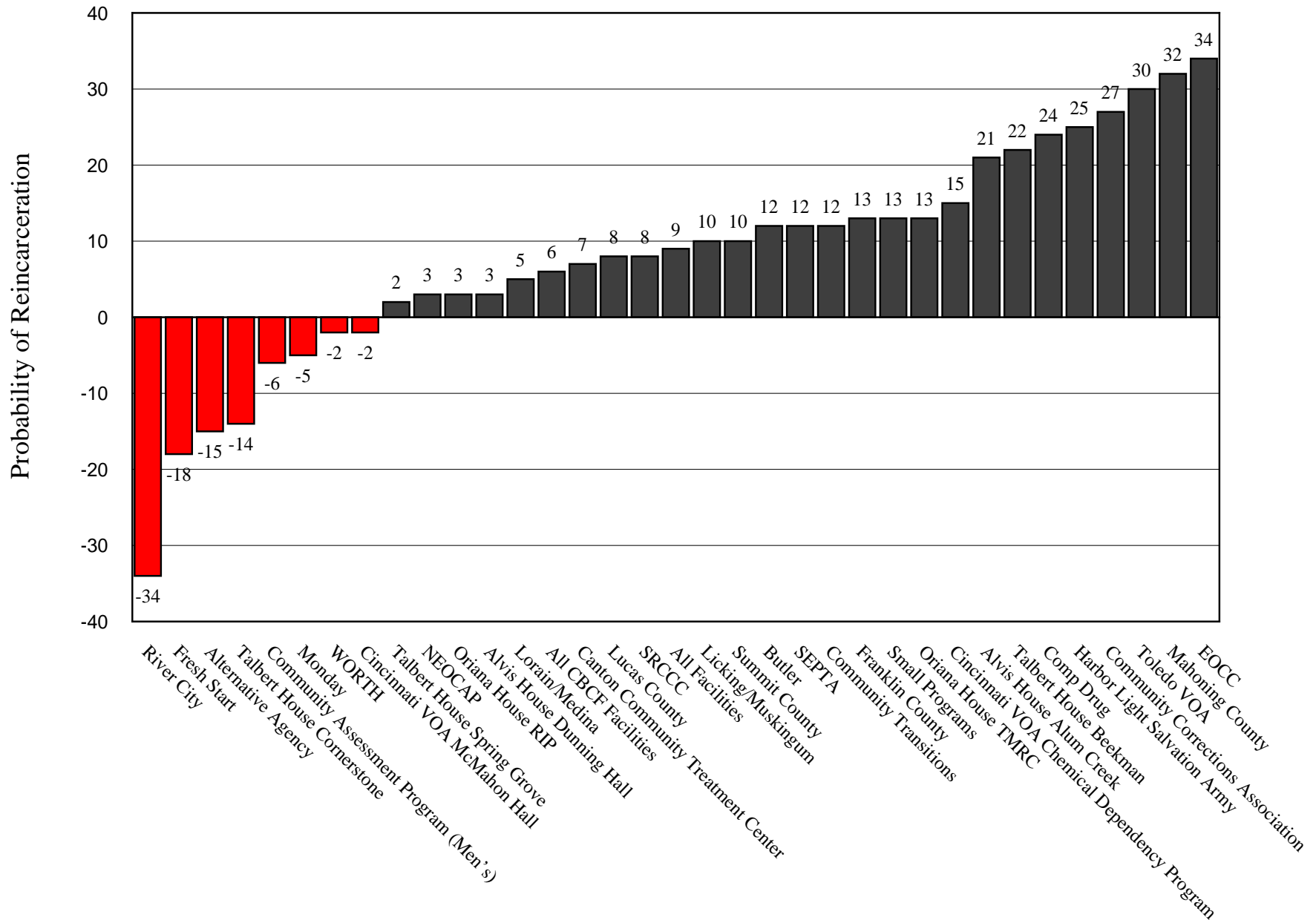
Treatment Effects for Low/Moderate Risk Offenders



Treatment Effects for Moderate Risk Offenders



Treatment Effects For High Risk Offenders



Not all Treatment is Effective

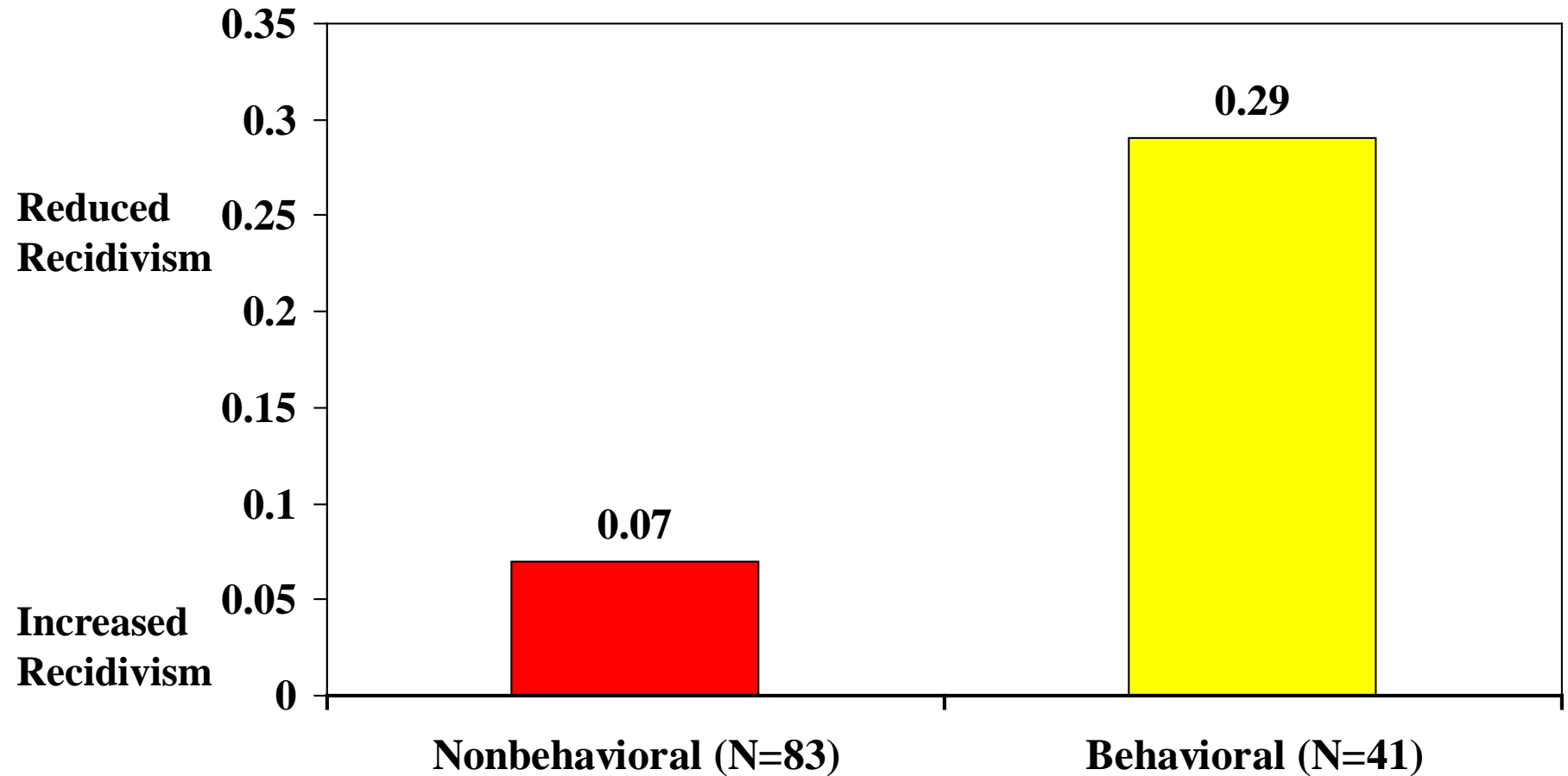
- The Evidence Indicates that Treatment can be Effective in Reducing Recidivism – But Not All Treatment Programs Are Equally Effective

Treatment Principle

The most effective interventions are behavioral:

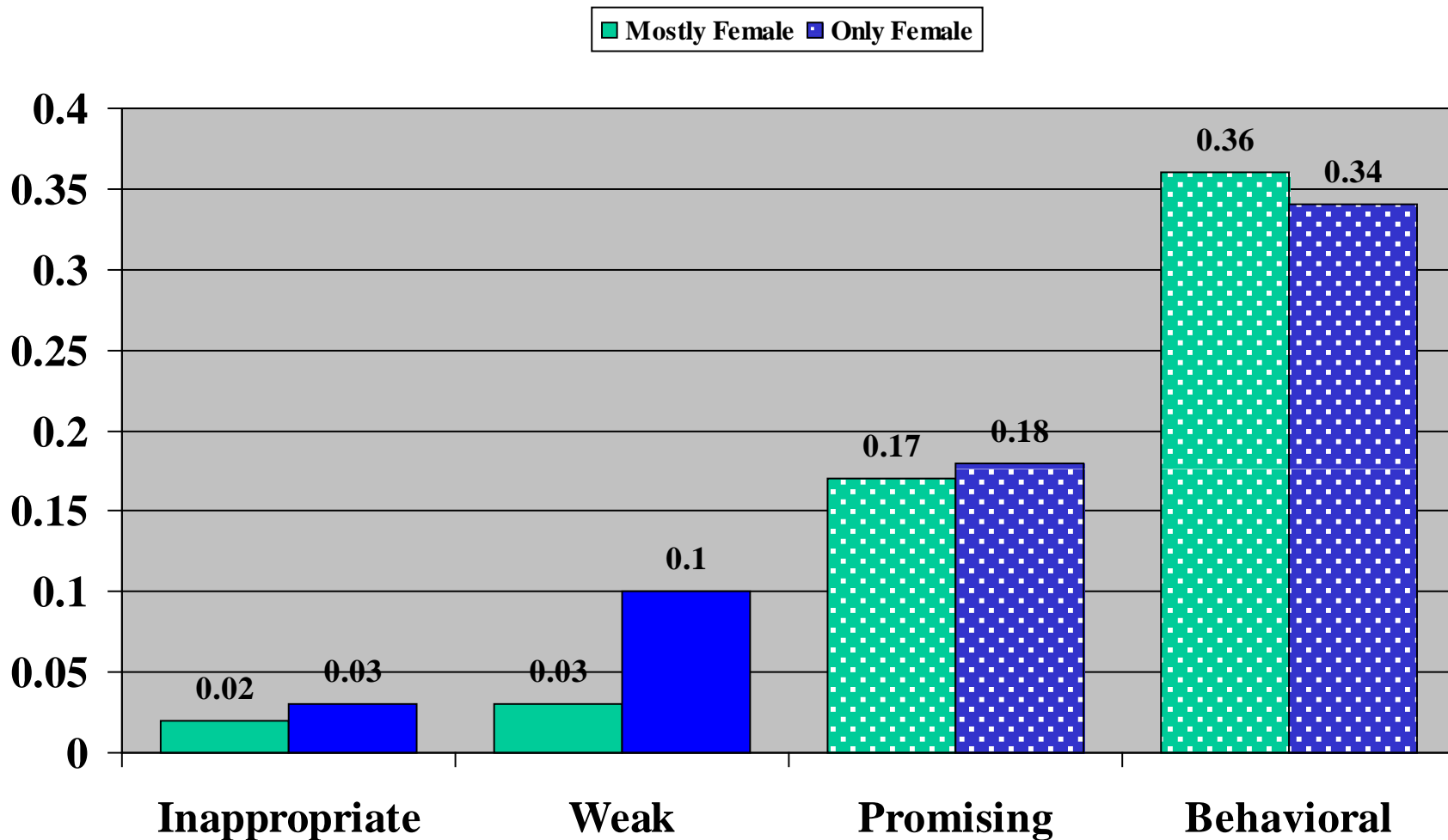
- Focus on current factors that influence behavior
- Action oriented

Behavioral vs. NonBehavioral



Meta-Analysis of Treatment for Females

by Dowden and Andrews



Most Effective Behavioral Models

- Structured social learning where new skills and behavioral are modeled
- Cognitive behavioral approaches that target criminogenic risk factors
- Family based approaches that train family on appropriate techniques



Social Learning

Refers to several processes through which individuals acquire attitudes, behavior, or knowledge from the persons around them. Both modeling and instrumental conditioning appear to play a role in such learning

The Four Principles of Cognitive Intervention

- 1. Thinking affects behavior**
- 2. Antisocial, distorted, unproductive irrational thinking causes antisocial and unproductive behavior**
- 3. Thinking can be influenced**
- 4. We can change how we feel and behave by changing what we think**

Reasons that CBT can be Effective in Reducing Recidivism

1. Based on scientific evidence (cognitive & behavioral theories)
2. Based on active learning (not talk therapy)
3. Focus on the *present* (how offenders currently think and behave)
4. Based on learning (most crime is learned)
5. Target major criminogenic needs (e.g. attitudes, values, beliefs)
6. Provides structure to groups and programs (manualized treatment)

Reasons that CBT is Popular in Corrections

- Can be done in any setting
- Existing staff can be trained on CBT
- Relatively cheap to deliver
- Wide range of curriculums are available

Recent Meta-Analysis of Cognitive Behavioral Treatment for Offenders by Landenberger & Lipsey (2004)*

- Reviewed 79 studies:
 - 26 random samples
 - 27 matched samples
 - 26 convenience samples
- Found that on average CBT reduced recidivism by 35%

Factors Not significant:

- Setting - prison versus community
- Juvenile versus adult
- Minorities or females
- Total hours
- Brand name of curriculum used

Significant Findings (effects were stronger if):

- At least 2 sessions per week (.25)
- Smaller groups (.20)
- Implementation monitored (.25)
- Staff trained on CBT (.27)
- Higher proportion of treatment completers (.25)
- Higher risk offenders (.38)

Family Based Interventions

- Designed to train family on behavioral approaches
 - Functional Family Therapy
 - Multi-Systemic Therapy
 - Teaching Family Model

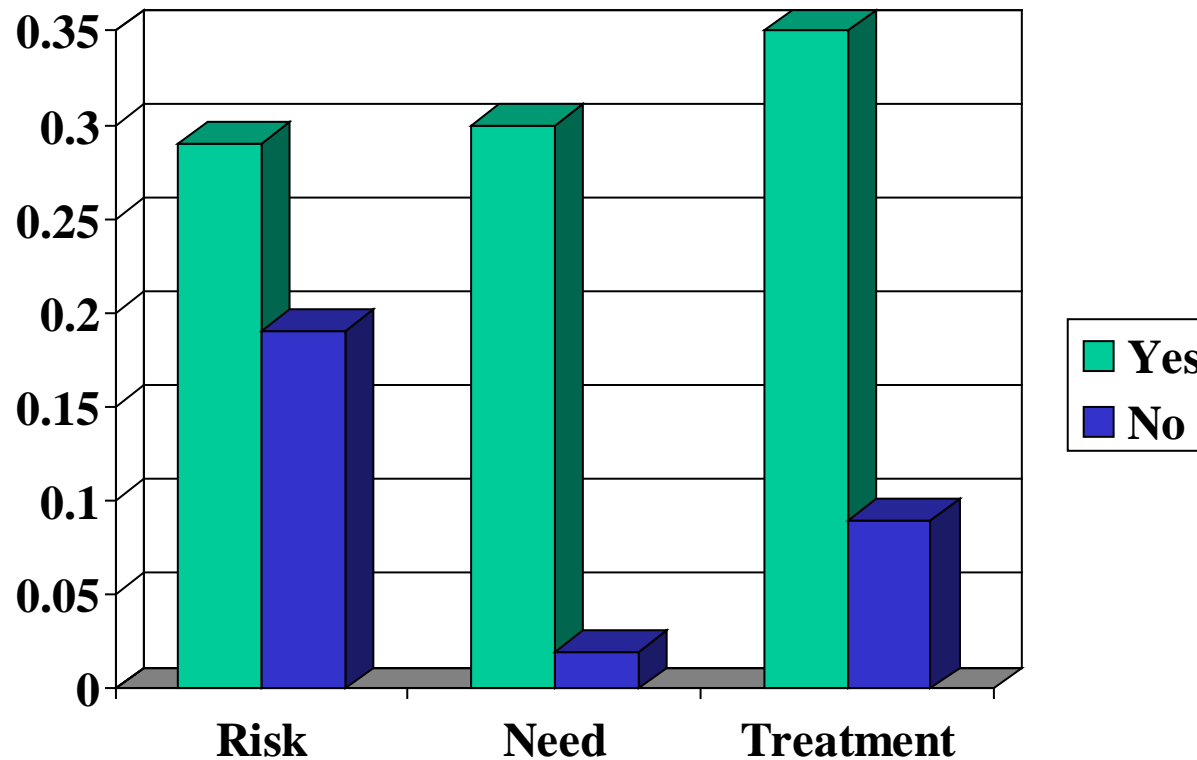
Effectiveness of Family Based Intervention: Results from Meta Analysis

- 38 primary studies with 53 effect tests
- Treatment Group Recidivism= 39.5%
- Control Group Recidivism= 60.5%
- ES= +.21

However, much variability was present
(-0.17 - +0.83)

Dowden & Andrews, 2003

Mean Effect Sizes: Whether or not the family intervention adheres to the principles

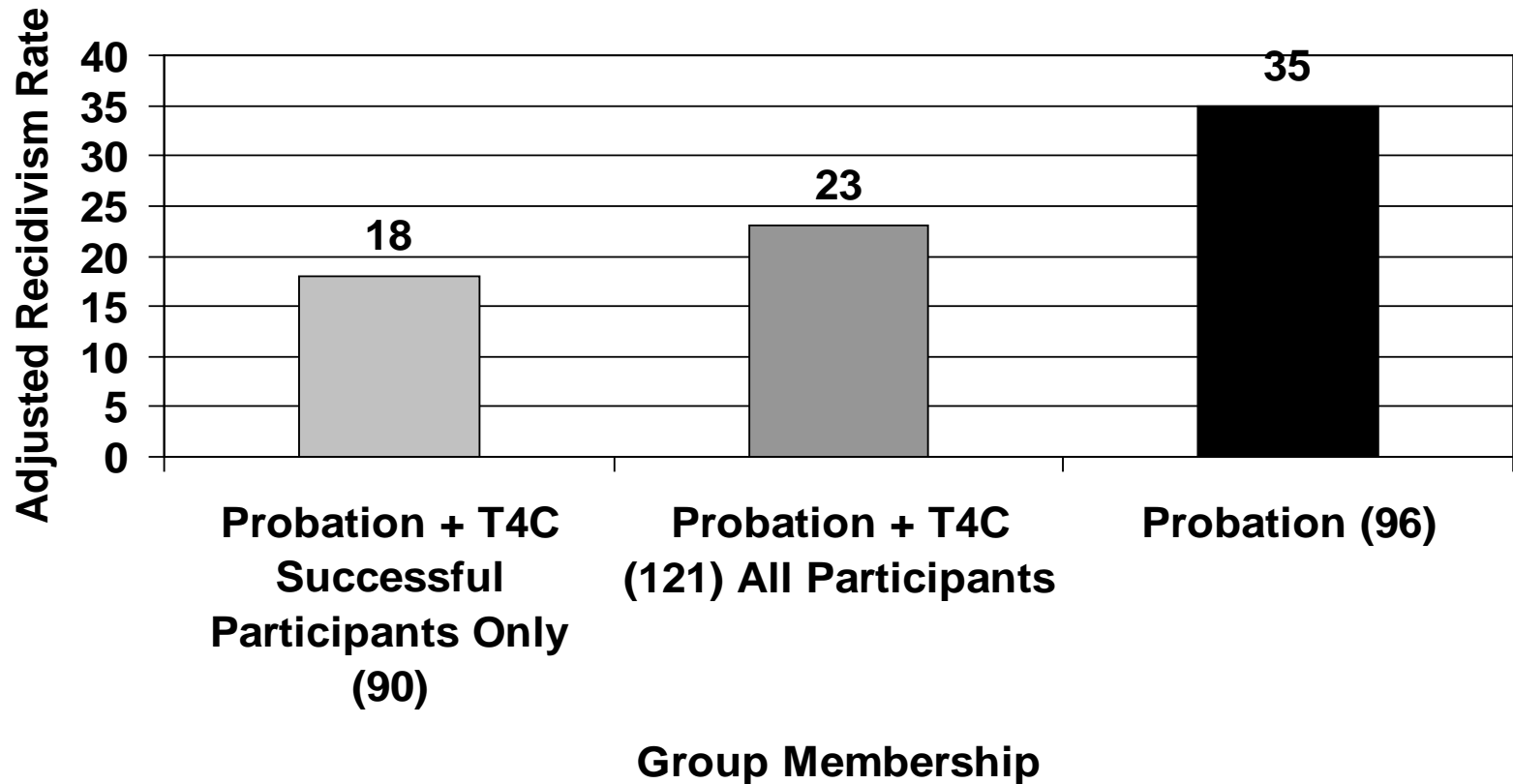


Evaluation of Thinking for a Change

Lowenkamp and Latessa (2006)

- Tippecanoe County Indiana
- Probation +T4C vs. Probation
- 136 Treatment cases
- 97 Comparison cases
- Variable follow up (range 6 to 64 months; average 26)
- Outcome—arrest for new criminal behavior

Adjusted Recidivism Rates Comparing T4C Participants to Comparison Group



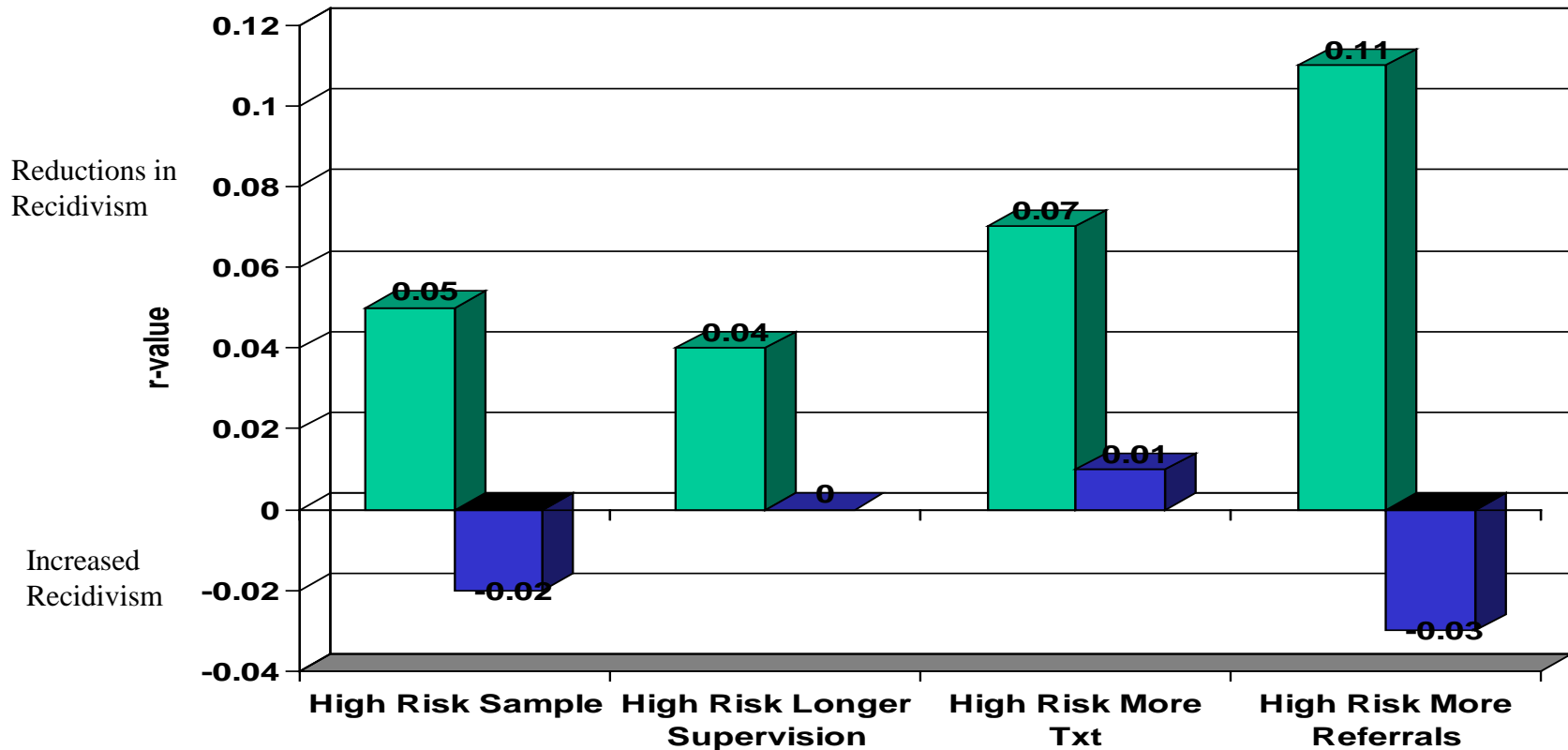
Recent Study of Non-Residential Community Correctional Programs in Ohio involving over 13,000 Offenders

- Included both misdemeanants and felons under community supervision
- Programs included day reporting centers, work release, ISP, and electronic monitoring programs

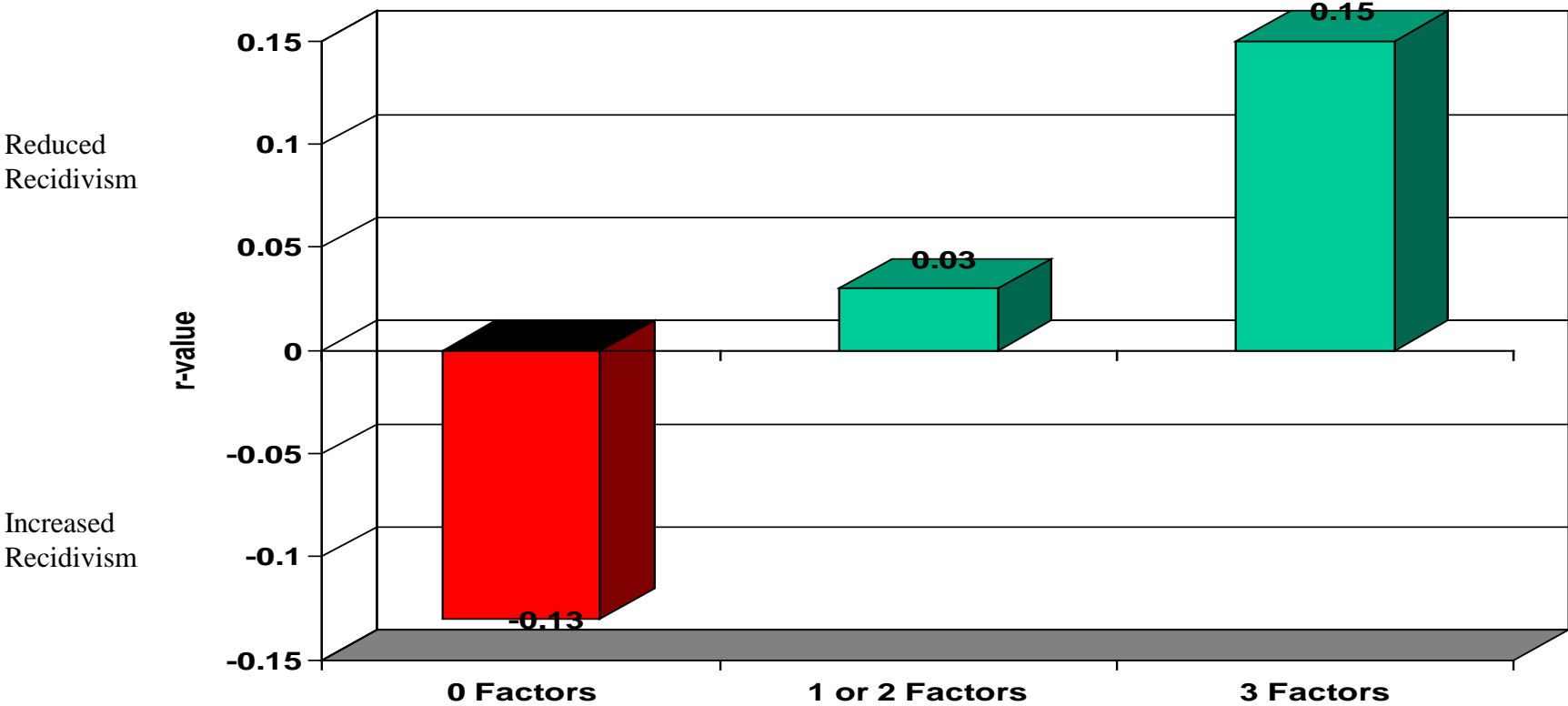
FOUR FACTORS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO OUTCOME

- Proportion of higher risk offenders in program (at least 75% of offenders in programs were moderate or high risk)
- Level of supervision for higher risk offenders (high risk offenders averaged longer periods of supervision than low risk)
- More treatment for higher risk offenders (at least 50% more time spent in treatment)
- More referrals for services for higher risk offenders (at least 3 referrals for every 1 received by low risk)

Changes in Recidivism by Program Factors for Probation Programs



Change in Recidivism by 4 Point Factor Score for Probation Programs



What doesn't work?

Ineffective Approaches

- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals
- Shaming offenders
- Drug education programs
- Non-directive, client centered approaches
- Bibliotherapy
- Talking cures
- Self-Help programs
- Vague unstructured rehabilitation programs
- Medical model
- “Punishing smarter” (boot camps, scared straight, etc.)

Program Fidelity

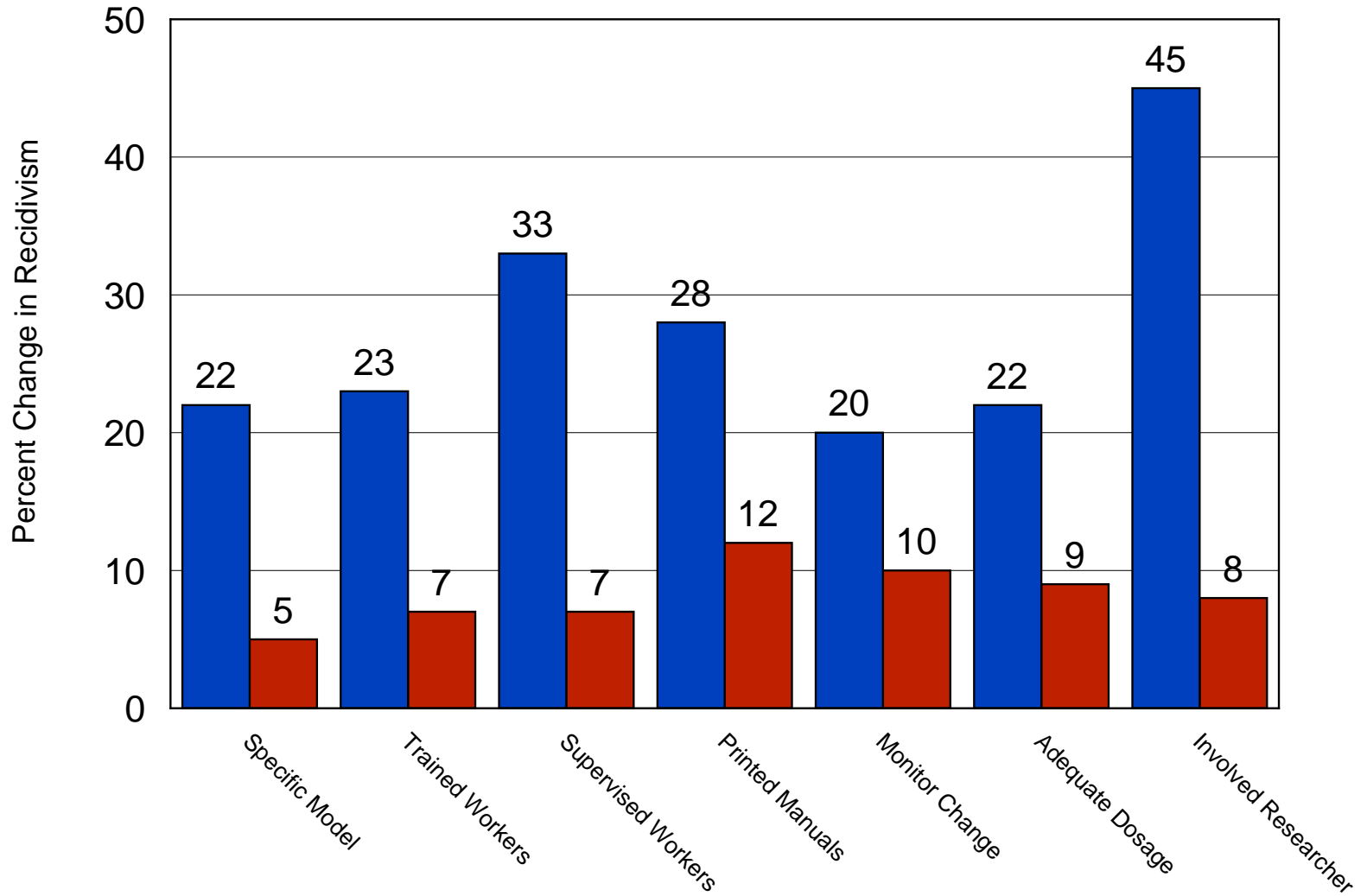
- Even evidenced-based programs will not work if program integrity is lacking
- Make sure the programs you are offering are delivered as designed

Effective programs evaluate what they do:

- Quality assurance processes (both internal & external)
- Assess offenders in meeting target behaviors
- Track offender recidivism
- Have an evaluator working with the program

Effect of Program Integrity on Recidivism: Results from Meta Analysis

Andrews and Dowden 1999



Lessons Learned

- Who you put in a program is important – pay attention to risk
- What you target is important – pay attention to criminogenic needs
- How you target offender for change is important – use behavioral approaches

Important Considerations

➤ Offender assessment is the engine that drives effective programs

helps you know who & what to target

➤ Design programs around empirical research

helps you know how to target offenders

➤ Program Integrity make a difference

Service delivery, disruption of criminal networks, training/supervision of staff, support for program, QA, evaluation