

# Understanding Areas of Risk & Need Among Female Offenders: Translating Research to Practice

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# Outline

- Women in the Criminal Justice System
  - Trends in Female Offending
  - Research Findings on Female Offenders
  - Introduction to the Risk Needs Responsivity Model
- Moving Research to Practice
  - Assessing Risk and Needs
  - Applying Findings to Treatment Plan Development

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## To Get Started...

- Does your program currently use a risk/needs assessment tool?
  - If yes, what tool?
  - When is the tool administered?

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# Group Discussion

What are some of the challenges that you/your agency have identified when working with female offenders?

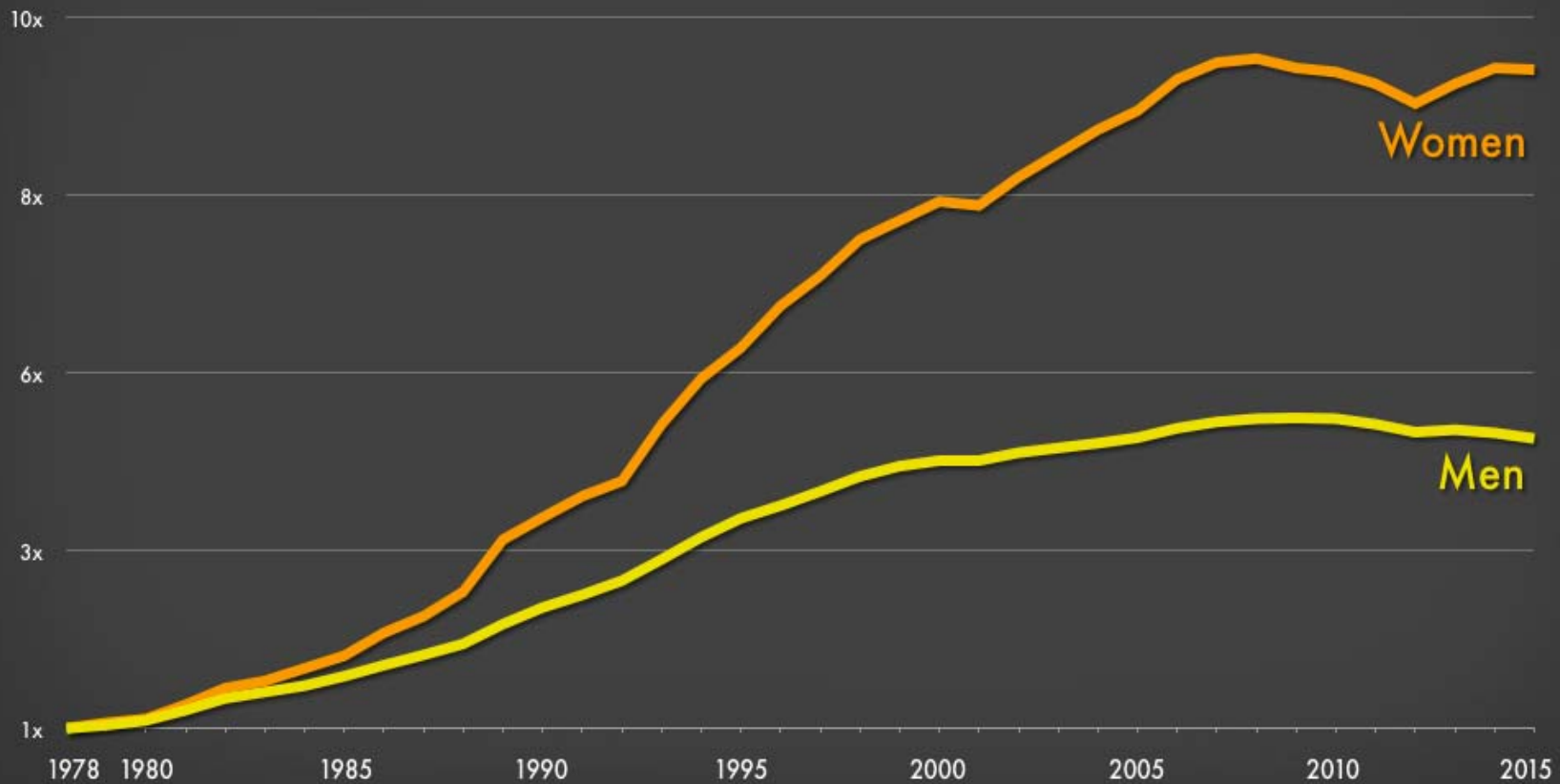
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# Research Examining Female Offending

- Research finds women:
  - commit different types of crime
  - commit crime for different reasons
  - varying life experiences
- 1970s → focus on women/girl criminal offending began
- Pathways Model
  - Sequence of life events that shape choices/behaviors
  - Most common pathway → survival and substance abuse

# Women's state prison populations have grown faster than men's

Growth measured in terms of number of times greater than 1978 baseline population

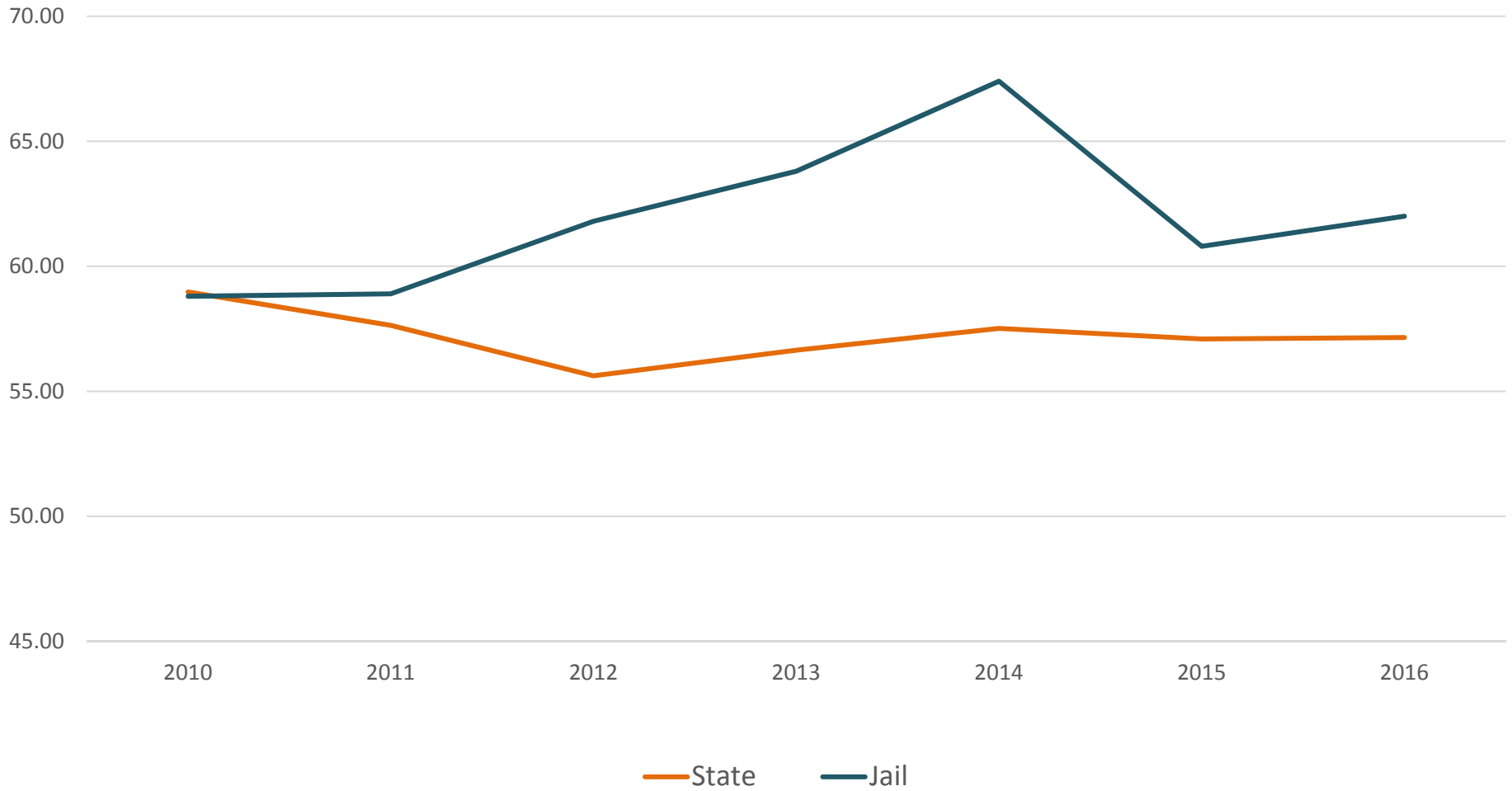


For source details, see: [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/women\\_overtime.html](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/women_overtime.html)

**PRISON**  
POLICY INITIATIVE

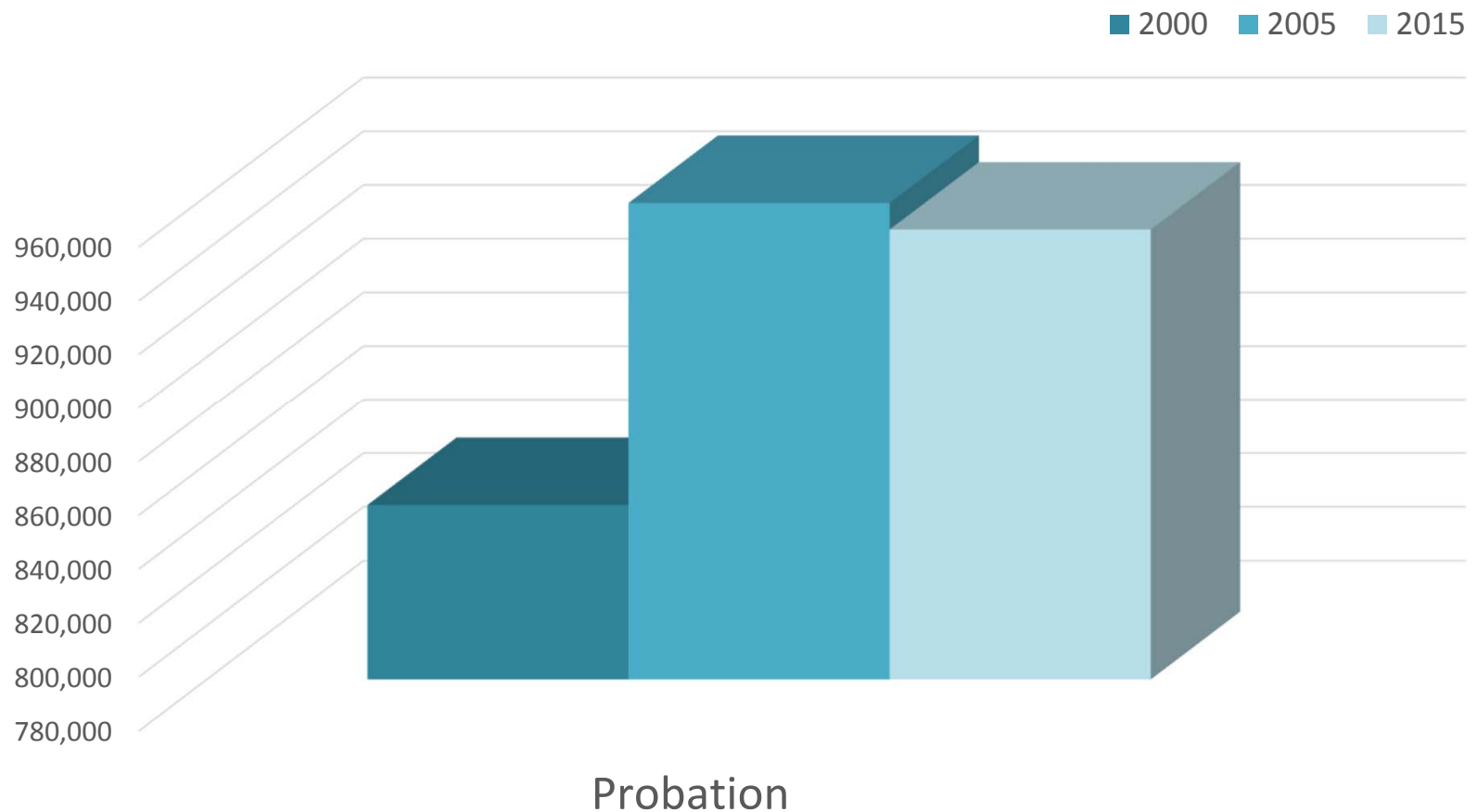
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# Female Rate of Incarceration in State Prison and Jail in the United States, 2010-2016, per 100,000



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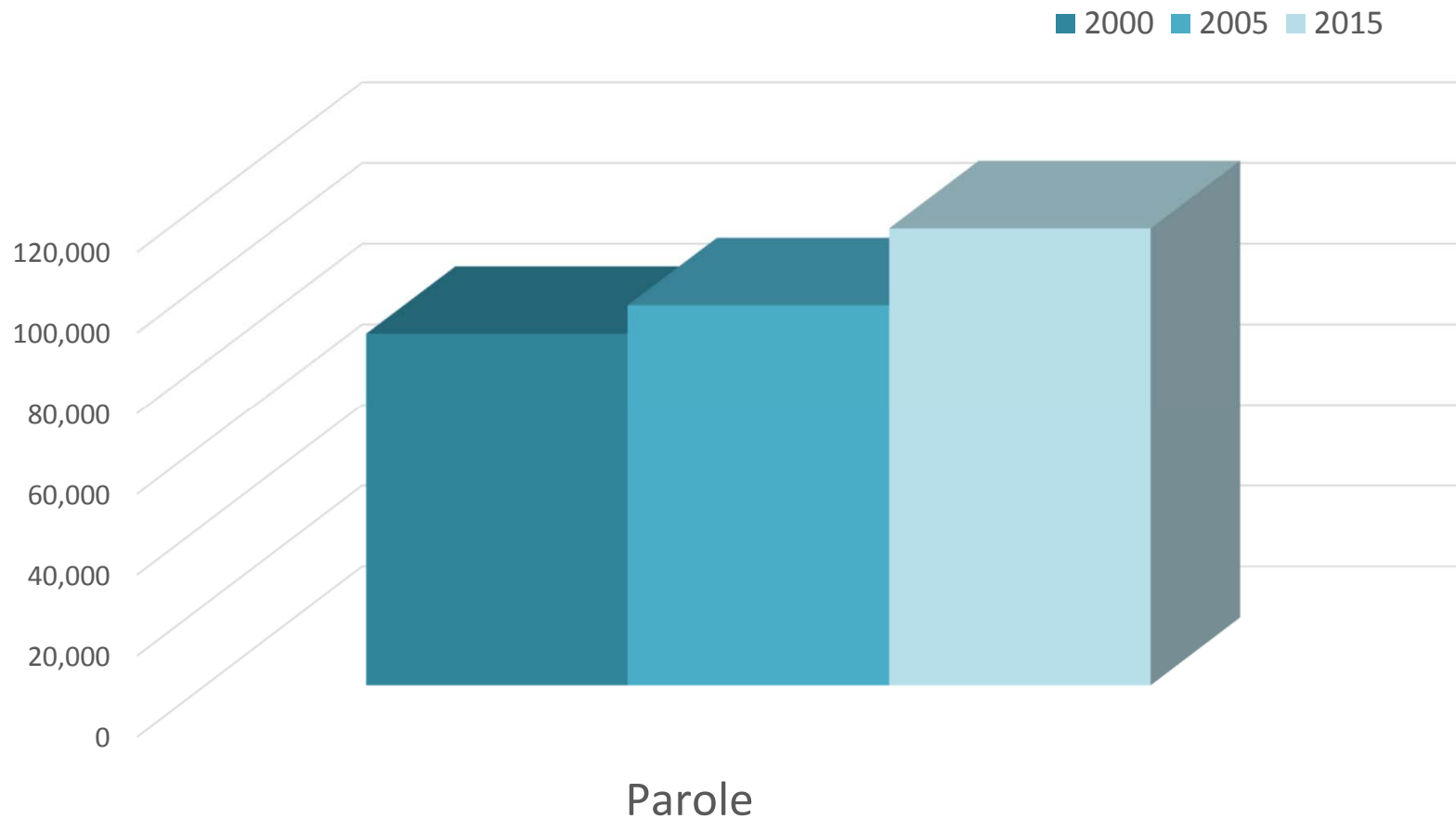
# Number of females on Probation 2000, 2005, 2015





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# Number of Females on Parole 2000, 2005, 2015



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# “National Profile of Women Offenders”

- Disproportionately women of color
- In their early to mids-30s
- Most likely to have been convicted of a drug-related offense
- From fragmented families, also in CJS
- Survivors of physical and/or sexual abuse as children and adults
- Significant substance abuse problems
- Multiple physical & mental health problems
- Unmarried mothers of minor children
- Have HS/GED but limited vocational training and sporadic work histories

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# History of Risk Assessment

## **First Generation**

- Reliance on professional judgment

## **Second Generation**

- Use of evidence-based risk tools
  - + Distinguish between high/low risk offenders
  - Atheoretical
  - Don't distinguish between static & dynamic risk factors (e.g., criminal history)

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# History of Risk Assessment

## Third Generation

- Retained criminal history items (static)
- Introduced dynamic risk factors
  - Examples include: present employment, peer group, nature of family relationships
- Identified areas of need
  - Focus of programming/interventions
  - As needs change, programming can (and should) too!
- Some were based on theoretical model (E.g., LSI-R)
- Re-assess individuals

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# History of Risk Assessment

## Fourth Generation

- Systematic intervention & monitoring
- Broad range of risk factors & other factors important to treatment
- E.g., Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI)
  
- Re-assess individuals

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# Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

**Risk** → “who” should be treated?

- Assess level of risk (to re-offend)
- Match risk level to appropriate level of treatment

**Need** → “what” should be treated?

- Criminogenic needs

**Responsivity** → “how” to treat the identified needs?


- Cognitive behavioral interventions/programming
  - Need to consider:
    - Learning style, motivation, abilities, & strengths
    - Gender, race, culture, etc.
- Importance of therapist-client relationship
  - Empathic, empowering, firm, & fair

# Dynamic Risk/Need Factors

Domains		Minor Needs	What is Unique for Women?	What are we trying to reduce?
BIG 4 CENTRAL 8	Antisocial Personality traits	Self-esteem		R E C I D I V I S M
	Criminal thinking/attitudes	Vague feelings of personal distress	<b>Mental illness</b>	
	Criminal peers		<b>Trauma</b>	
	Substance Abuse	Major MH disorder	<b>Parental stress</b>	
	Family/marital relationships		<b>Poverty</b>	
	Employment/education	Physical Health	<b>Unhealthy relationships</b>	
	Leisure/recreation activities			
		Housing		

\* Criminal history is also a risk area (& one of the “big 4”) -> but static in nature.

## Risk Factors by Correctional Setting (Van Voorhis)

Prisons <sup>a</sup>	Pre-Release <sup>b</sup>	Probation <sup>c</sup>
<b>Risk Factors that are Similar for Men &amp; Women</b>		
Criminal history	Criminal history	Criminal history
	Employment/financial	Employment/financial
Antisocial friends	Antisocial friends	Antisocial friends
Substance abuse	Substance abuse	Substance abuse
<b>Gender-Responsive Risk Factors, Predictive for Women</b>		
Anger	Anger	Anger
Depression	Depression	
	Housing safety	Housing Safety
Psychosis	Psychosis	
Abuse	Abuse	Abuse
Unhealthy relationships	Unhealthy Relationships	
	Parental Stress	Parental stress
<b>Gender-Responsive Strengths</b>		
Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy
	Family support	Family support
		Educational assets
		Parental involvement
<small><sup>a</sup> factors predictive of serious prison misconducts. <sup>b</sup> factors predictive of arrests/failures on parole. <sup>c</sup> factors predictive of arrest/failures on probation.</small>		
		



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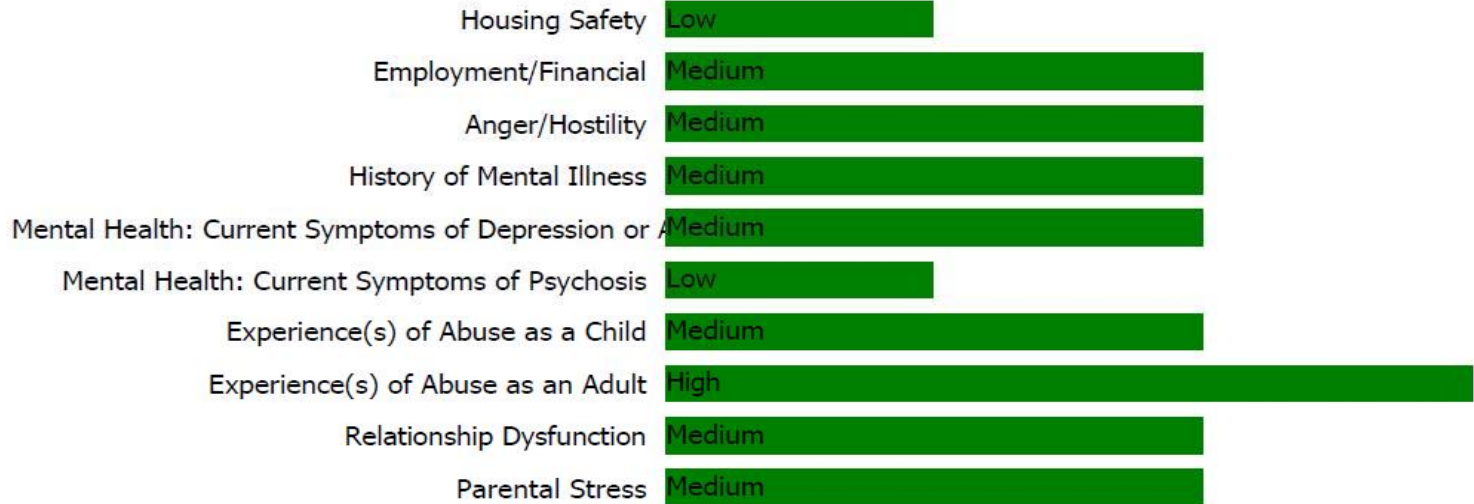
# RNR Tools

- COMPAS
  - “gender-responsive, culturally sensitive assessment approach tailored to the risks and needs of women”

Residential Instability Unlikely

### Criminogenic Need Scales

#### Women's COMPAS



#### Women's COMPAS Strength Scales



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# RNR Tools

- COMPAS
  - “gender-responsive, culturally sensitive assessment approach tailored to the risks and needs of women”
- Women’s Risk/Needs Assessment (WRNA)
  - “risk/need assessments for adult, women offenders”
- Service Planning Instrument for Women (SPIn-W)
  - “gender responsive assessment and case planning tool”

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# Using Risk Tools...What's the Benefit?

## Individual Level

- Program eligibility
- Supervision level → intensity
- Supervision elements
  - Requirements
  - Dosage
- Priority areas

**Keep in Mind:**  
Responsiveness to  
the changing  
needs of target  
population.

## Organizational Level

- Staffing needs
- Intentional sequencing of programming

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# Programming: Linking to Supervision Plan

## What to consider...

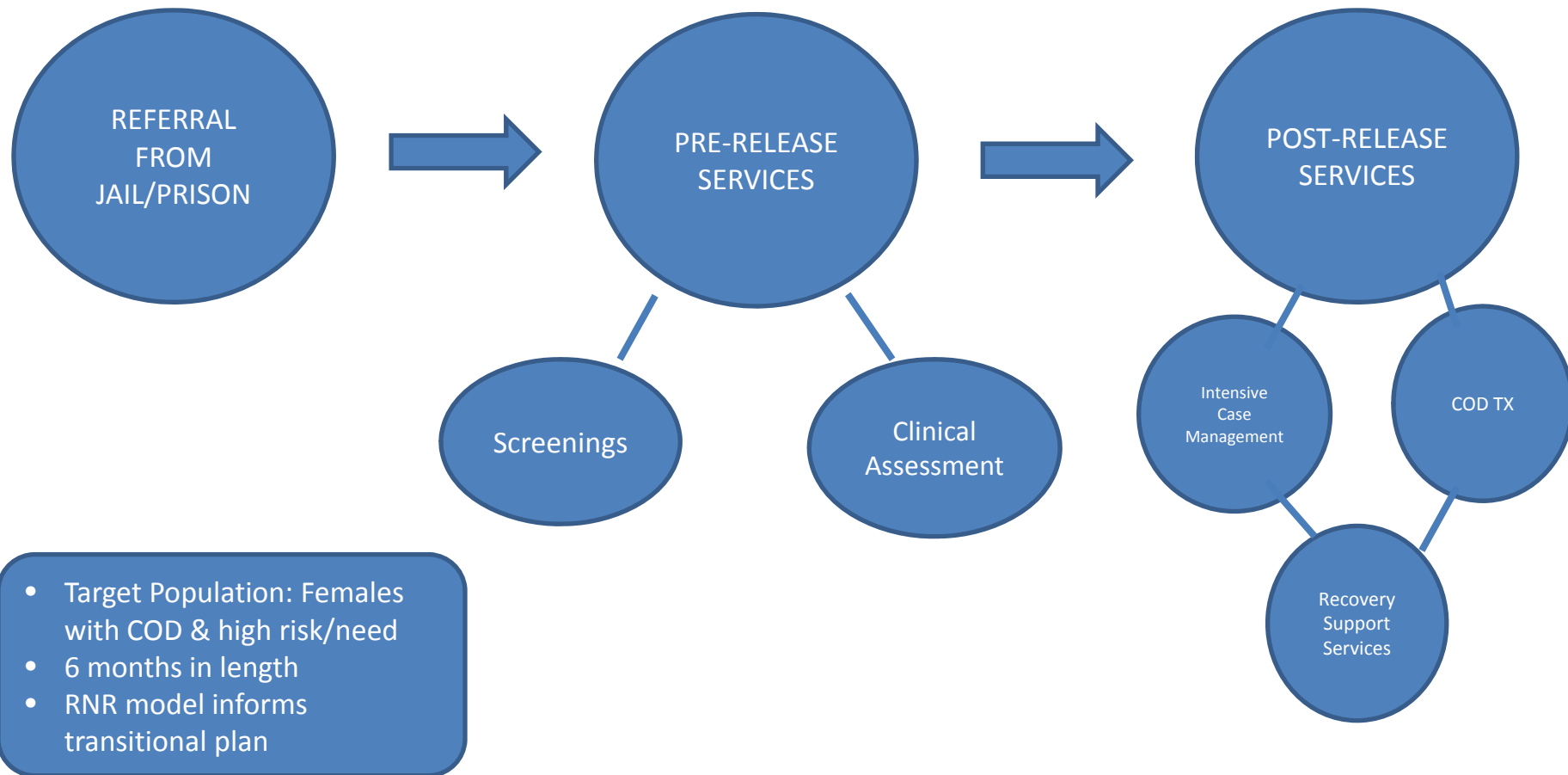
### Clinical

- Substance abuse TX
- Psychiatric assessment & MH services
- Family & couples therapy
- Medical care & family planning

### Ancillary

- Food, clothing, & shelter
- Transportation (to TX)
- Childcare (during TX)
- Job counseling & training
- Literacy training/education skills
- Legal assistance
- Parenting skills training
- Social support services
- Assertiveness training

# Re-Entry Systems for Effective Treatment (RESET) Program



## Demographic Characteristics by Disposition Type for RESET Participants with a Valid Exit (n=68)

	Graduate/Successful (n=29)	Unsuccessful (n=39)
Average age entry	33.8	32.0
Race		
White	82.8%	74.4%
Black	17.2%	23.1%
AI/AN	--	--
Hispanic	--	2.6%
Multi	--	--
Marital Status		
Single	62.1%	59.0%
Married	10.3%	20.5%
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	27.6%	20.5%
Dependents		
0	51.7%	30.8%
1 to 2	27.5%	35.9%
3 to 7	20.8%	33.3%

## Demographic Characteristics by Disposition Type for RESET Participants with a Valid Exit (n=68)

	Graduate/Successful (n=29)	Unsuccessful (n=39)
Education at RESET Entry		
Less than high school/no GED	31.0%	30.8%
High School Diploma /GED	17.2%	30.8%
More than High School Diploma/GED	51.7%	38.5%
Employment at RESET Entry		
Employed/Student	3.4%	15.4%
Disability	3.4%	10.3%
Unemployed	93.1%	74.4%
Housing Status at RESET Entry		
Drug Tx Facility	3.4%	2.6%
Halfway House	6.9%	7.7%
Homeless	79.3%	48.7%
Own Home	3.4%	5.1%
Rent	--	10.3%
Staying with Friends/Family	3.4%	25.6%
Other Facility	3.4%	--



## Pre-Program Risk Factors by Disposition Type for RESET Participants with a Valid Exit (n=68)

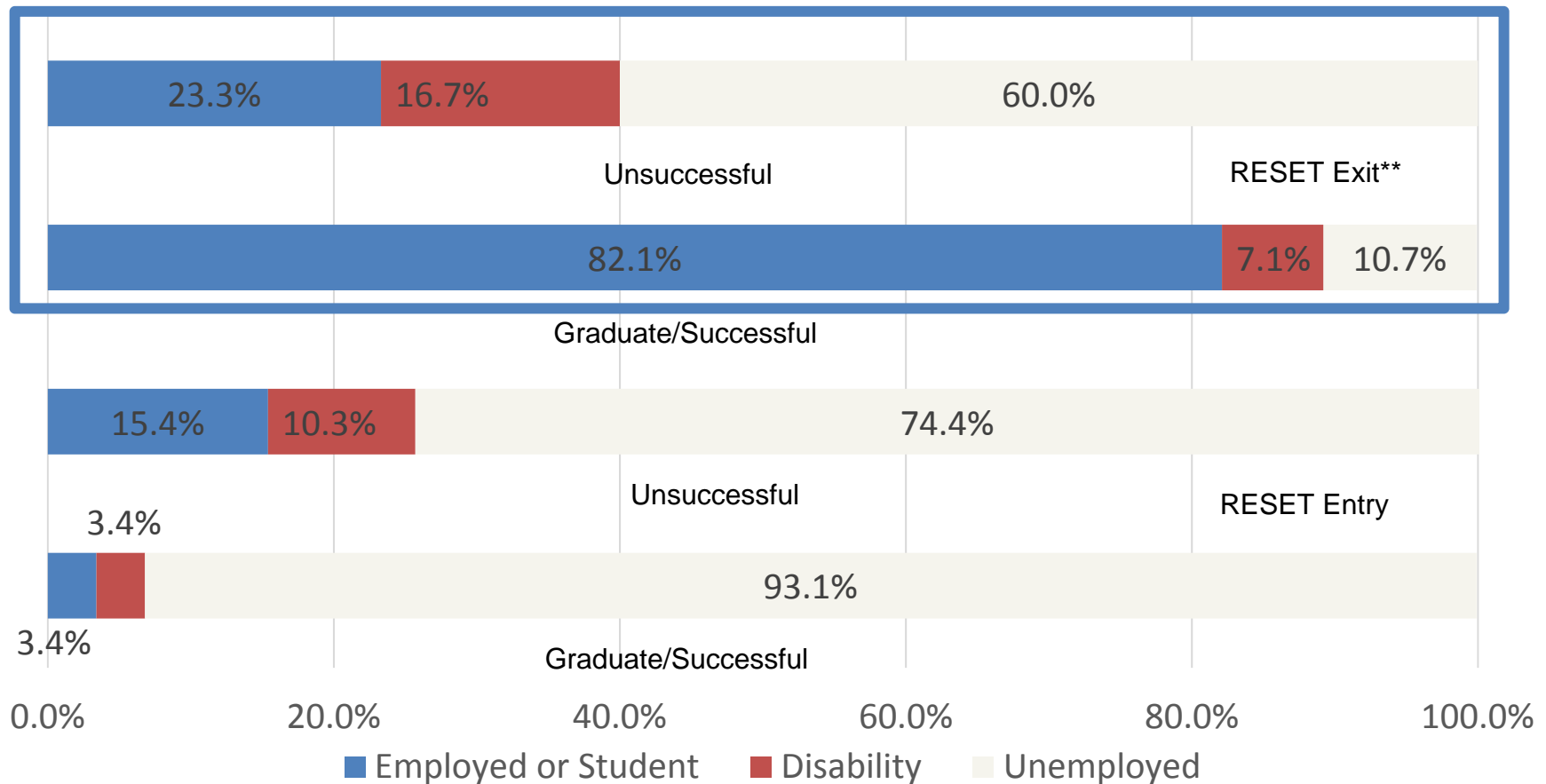
	Graduate/Successful	Unsuccessful
Average Age at First Arrest	20.5	20.3
Average Age Onset Drugs	14.1	16.1
Average Age Onset Alcohol	16.0	15.3
Average # of Previous Misdemeanors*	7.1	4.4
Average # of Previous Felonies	3.0	2.2
Heroin/Opiate as DOC	55.2%	56.4%

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## Pre-Program Screening Measures by Disposition Type for RESET Participants with a Valid Exit (n=68)

- RANT → over 92% in both groups identified as high risk & high need
- TCU-V → 93.1% graduates & 97.2% unsuccessful deemed severe
- CMHS-W → 65.5% graduates & 76.9% unsuccessful classified as urgent
- Previous substance use episodes/treatment → 100%/93.1% graduates & 100%/76.9% unsuccessful
- Previous mental health episodes/treatment → 98.7%/79.3% graduates & 100%/89.7% unsuccessful

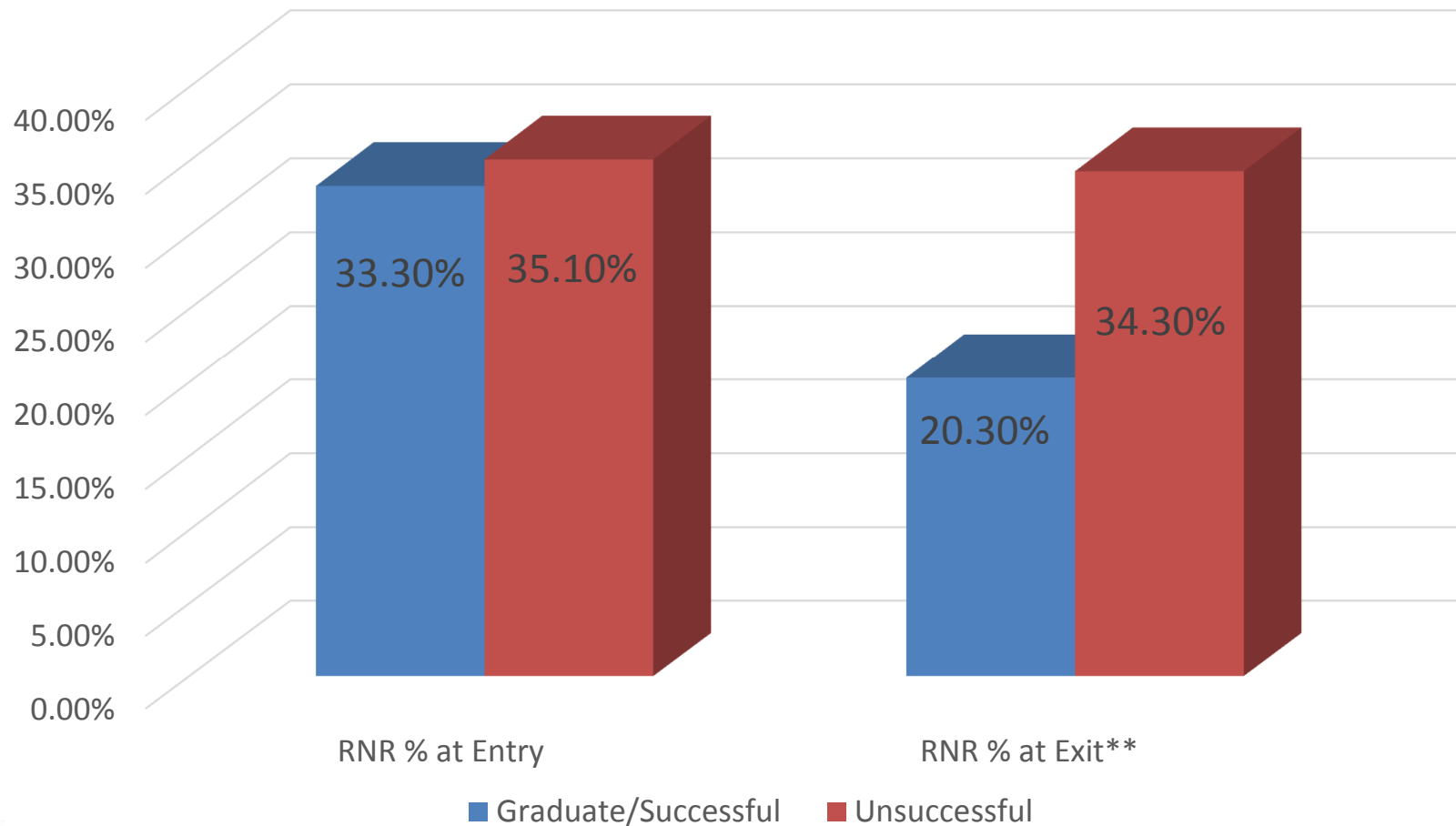
## Employment Status at RESET Entry and Exit by Disposition Type (n=68/58)



## Housing Status by Disposition Type at Program Entry and Program Exit (n=68)

	RESET Entry		RESET Exit**	
	Graduate/Successful	Unsuccessful	Graduate/Successful	Unsuccessful
Drug Tx Facility	3.4%	2.6%	--	6.5%
Halfway House	6.9%	7.7%	60.7%	9.7%
Homeless	79.3%	48.7%	--	22.6%
Own Home	3.4%	5.1%	7.1%	6.5%
Rent	--	10.3%	7.1%	3.2%
Staying with friends/family	3.4%	25.6%	25.0%	51.6%
Other Facility	3.4%	--	--	--

## Average Risk of Recidivism based on RNR Simulation Tool by Disposition Status (n=68)



## Recidivism Measures by Disposition Status (n=68)

	All Participants	Graduate/Successful	Unsuccessful
Any Arrest			
Yes	29.9%	20.7%	36.8%
No	70.1%	79.3%	63.2%
Any Conviction			
Yes	14.9%	10.3%	18.4%
No	85.1%	89.7%	81.6%

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## Your Turn....Translating Research Into Practice

In small groups, discuss the following:

1. How will you integrate the information presented today into your practice?
2. What specific service gaps exist within your jurisdiction?
  - Who might be able to provide the needed services?
3. Do you have any questions regarding the information presented?

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# THANK YOU!

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