



Bringing Sense and Sensitivity to Corrections: From Programs to "Fix" Offenders to Services for Supporting Desistance

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The KEY QUESTIONS ?

Are the Evidence-Based practices we pursue as evidence-based as we think?

What are the central themes and findings in the desistance literature that might challenge us to take another look at how we design our programs and service delivery pathways for offenders?

What are some key implications for an integrated correctional practice framework that can emphasize 'sense and sensitivity' in how we might support offenders towards desistance?

Evidence Based Programs Worldwide!



Thinking for A
Change

ETS



ETS



ETS

Breaking
With
Crime

MRT

Counter
Point
(AAA)

THINK
FIRST



THINK
FIRST



THINK
FIRST

R&R



R&R



R&R



R&R



R&R

CONSTRUCTS

ART

ART

ART

ART

CALM



CALM



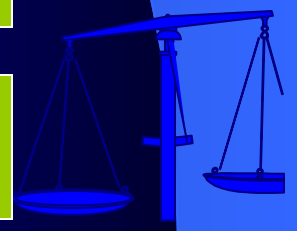
CALM



CALM



CALM



What Works In Adult Corrections Programs

Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006

Program Type

Recidivism Impact

Intensive Treatment-Oriented Community Supervision

-19.0%

Drug Treatment in the Community

-10.9%

Drug Courts

-9.4%

Vocational Education in Prison

-12.4%

C-B-T Programs

-8.1

Correctional Industries Programs

-7.7

In Prison TC with Community Aftercare

-7.7

Prison Basic Adult Education Programs

-5.0



Archbishop Martino said The Times

I think, therefore I am ... still a criminal

Richard Ford
• London

TEACHING prisoners how to think, and giving them social skills, has failed to stop them returning to a life of crime, according to British Home Office research.

The Prison Service has invested £200 million (\$496 million) in the courses, which aim to cut reconviction rates.

Prisoners who attended the courses were just as likely to re-offend as inmates who did not attend. Among medium to high-risk offenders, the reconviction rate was actually higher.

The programs, intended to improve "thinking skills", have been adopted in more than 100 jails in England and Wales. But the research found no difference between

The Home Office researchers admitted the results were unexpected because an earlier study had shown the courses to be successful. They insisted that their findings "should not be taken as evidence that these programs are ineffective".

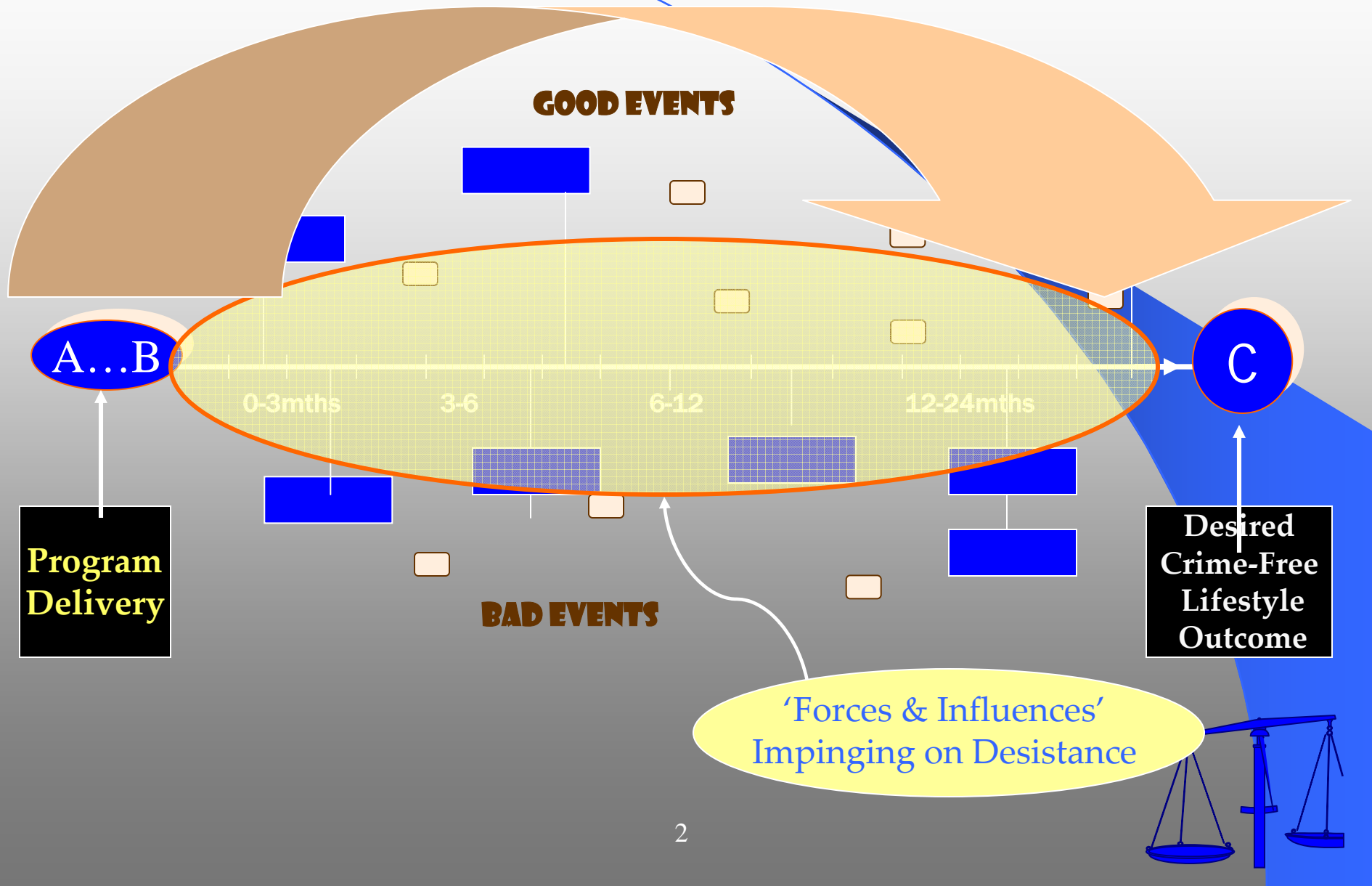
Enver Solomon, of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "This research must be deeply disappointing, given that the Prison Service has invested so much in the cognitive skills program."

He said the findings raised the question of whether the programs had been sufficiently evaluated before being widely adopted.

The courses, which cost an estimated £2000 to £7000 per place, aim to control "impulsivity, develop greater empathy with others and improve

CO/30/50

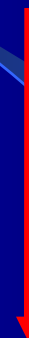
FIGURE 4: THE DESISTANCE TIME-LINE



Evidence-Based INTERVENTIONS applied to offenders: Constraints & Obstacles



Traits & Dispositions
Goals & Strategies
Identity & Self-Efficacy



SOFT Power To Influence

**Is it possible?
Could it Be?
Negotiating Behavior
Change Over Time!**

VS.

HARD Power To Change

**Assess & Target
Enforce Attendance
Time-Limited Treatments

Teach, Tell & Run!**

The 'Sociogenic' View of Desistance

- “Although some offenders may seek to ‘make good’ or engage in ‘up-front work’ to better their lives, we believe that most offenders desist in response to structurally-induced turning points that serve as a catalyst for sustaining long-term behavioral change”

(Laub & Sampson, 2003)



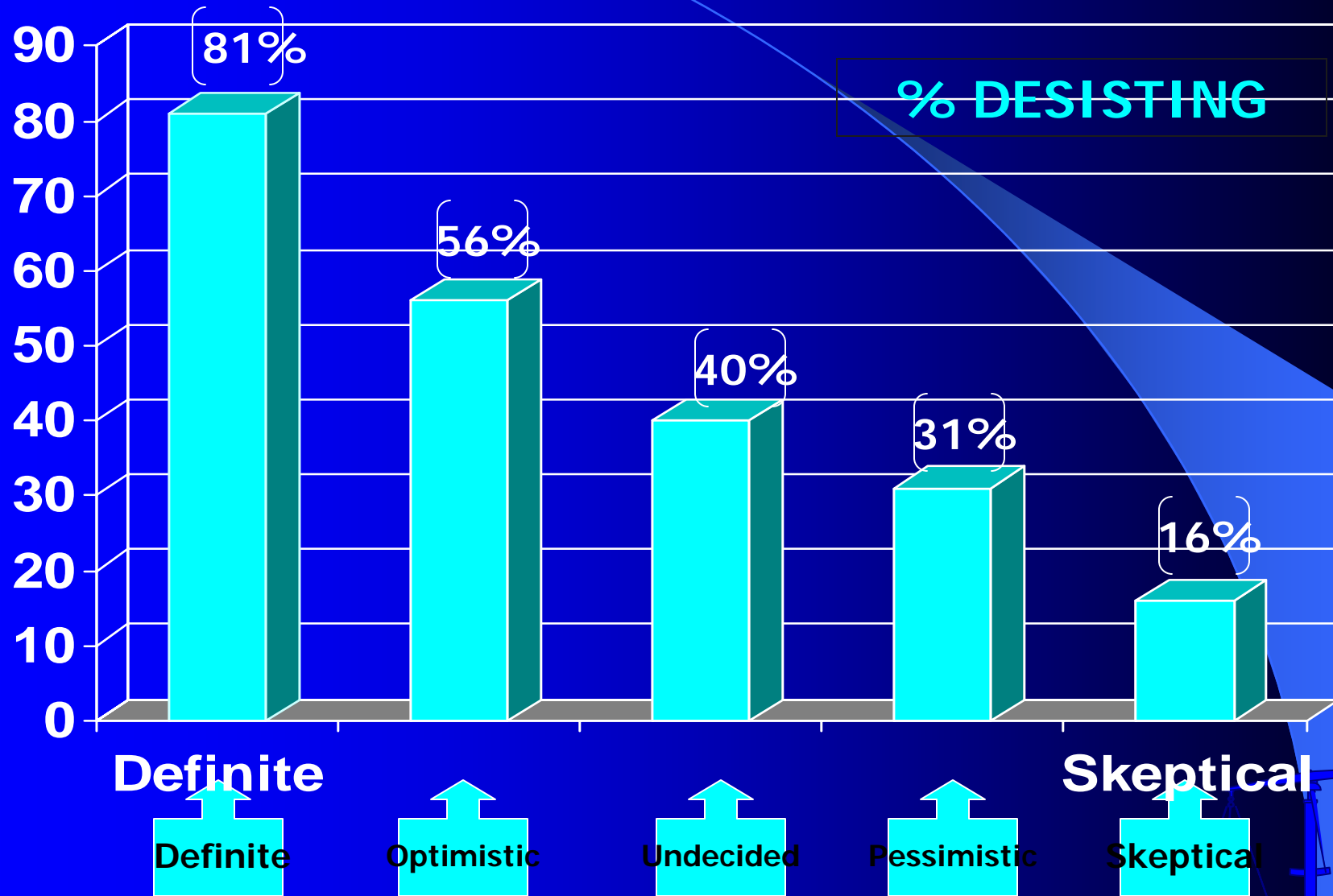
Evidence From The 'Desistance' Paradigm

1. Offenders can accurately assess their intent to desist ... and it predicts re-offending!
2. The control that offenders experience (**AGENCY**) in managing their obstacles to desistance may be as important as the control we impose (**STRUCTURE & CONDITIONS**);
3. The concerns of early 'desisters' may be qualitatively different from those of later 'desisters';
4. Desistance is a **PROCESS** with Zigs and Zags ... and lapses should be expected



Offender's Pre-Release Desistance Optimism And Actual Post Release Outcomes

(Taken from Ros Burnett, 2004)



Definite

Definite

Optimistic

Undecided

Pessimistic

Skeptical

Skeptical

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The Early 'Desistance' Mindset

- ✓ Not just a rational 'choice' ... but an emotionally felt 'crystallization of discontent';
- ✓ Perhaps triggered by some 'turning point' (relationship, birth of child, rewarding employment ... etc.)
- ✓ Supported by early 'active' resolution of social obstacles;
- ✓ Focussed on practical and 'ordinary' concerns;



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Evidence From The 'Desistance' Paradigm

1. Offenders can accurately assess their intent to desist ... and it predicts re-offending!
2. The control that offenders exercise over their obstacles to desistance may affect their choice of desistance
(STRUCTURE & CONDITIONS)
3. The concerns of early 'desisters' are different from those of later 'desisters';
4. Desistance is a **PROCESS** with Zigs and Zags ... and lapses should be expected

“Desistance ...involves reversals of decisions, indecision, compromise and lapses”
(Burnett, 2004; p.169)



Working Effectively With Offenders:

Contending With The Zig-Zag Towards Desistance

Support & Assist
Monitor Emotional State
↑ Self Efficacy
Skills/Opportunities
Keep on Track

DESISTANCE

DESISTANCE

We Work In The Motivational Gap !

PERSISTANCE

PERSISTANCE

Enforce Conditions
Challenging Motivationally
Create Dissonance
Build On Transitions



Realizing 'Desistance'

Sustaining Hope

... An overriding and optimistic sense of 'agency' (locus of control shift) that internalizes ultimate responsibility for the present and future;

Maintaining Self-Efficacy

... An enabling sense that one has personal and/or social resources to manage obstacles and concerns, emotions and worries that might arise;

Experiencing Adaptive Shame

... Re-alignment with pro-social values (but not at expense of a changed or degraded core self); some neutralization and/or excuse or rationalization for past as self-protective;

Re-Defined Sense of Self

... Able to accept 'who I was' but preferring 'who I am becoming' ... adopting new roles/identities and differentiating oneself from criminal others (I'm not like them)



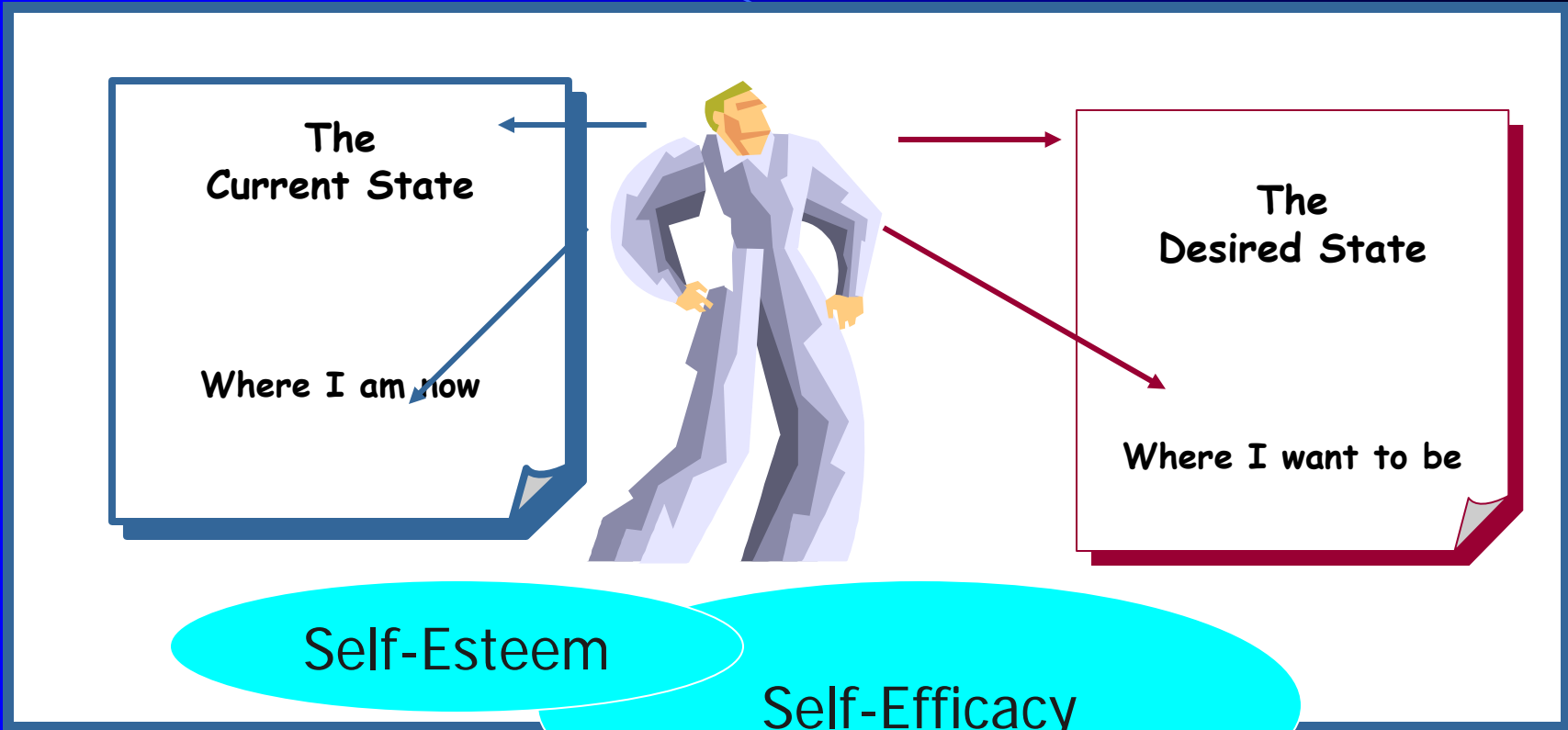
Identity Motives Affecting Human Behavior

We Strive Towards Future Selves ...

- Are personally valued and socially valued within the interpersonal and socio-cultural contexts we inhabit (*Self-Esteem Enhancing Motive*);
 - Where we can feel competent and capable in impinging on the circumstances of our lives (*Self-Efficacy Motive*);
 - That bring some clear and coherent meaning to our lives (*Meaning Motive*); and
- Where our current 'self' is essentially maintained ... although not necessarily unchanged (*Continuity Motive*);



Identity Motives Affecting Human Behavior



Self-Esteem

Self-Efficacy

Meaning

Continuity



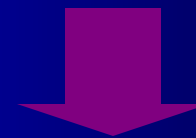
Decisional Balance

Not To Change

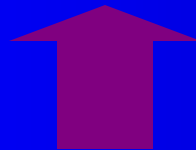
Benefits

To Change

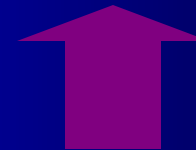
**Concerns
(OBSTACLES)**



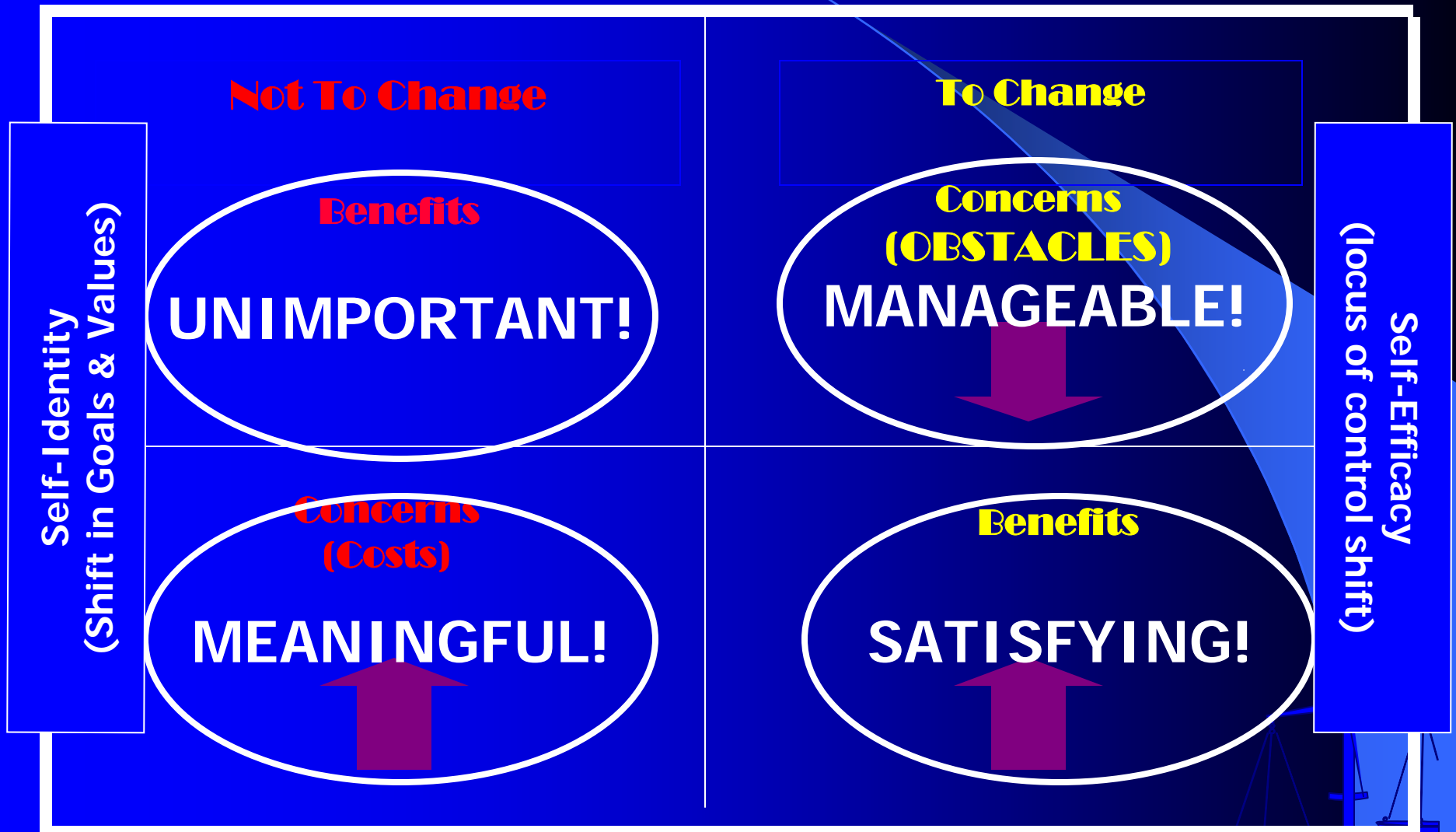
**Concerns
(COSTS)**



Benefits

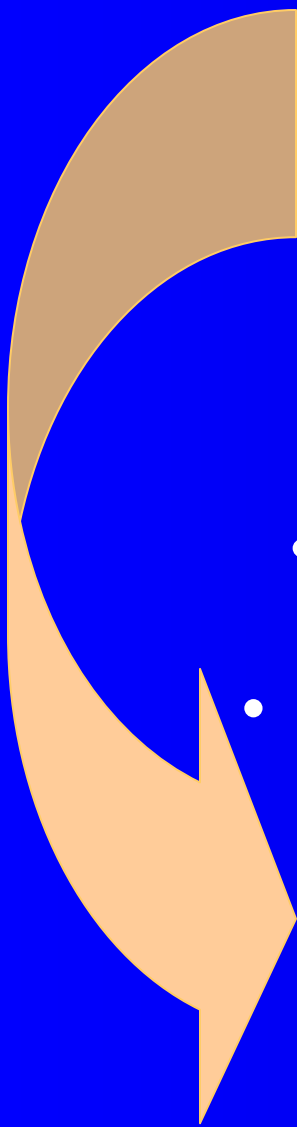


Decisional Balance: The “Desistance Shift”



Natural Process of 'Problem Management'

Taken from Gerard Egan 'The Skilled Helper'

- 
- **Initial Awareness**
 - **Developing Urgency**
 - **Initial Search for Remedies**
 - **Preliminary Estimation of Costs**
 - **More Serious Weighing of Choices**
 - **Rational Decision**
 - **Emotional Commitment**



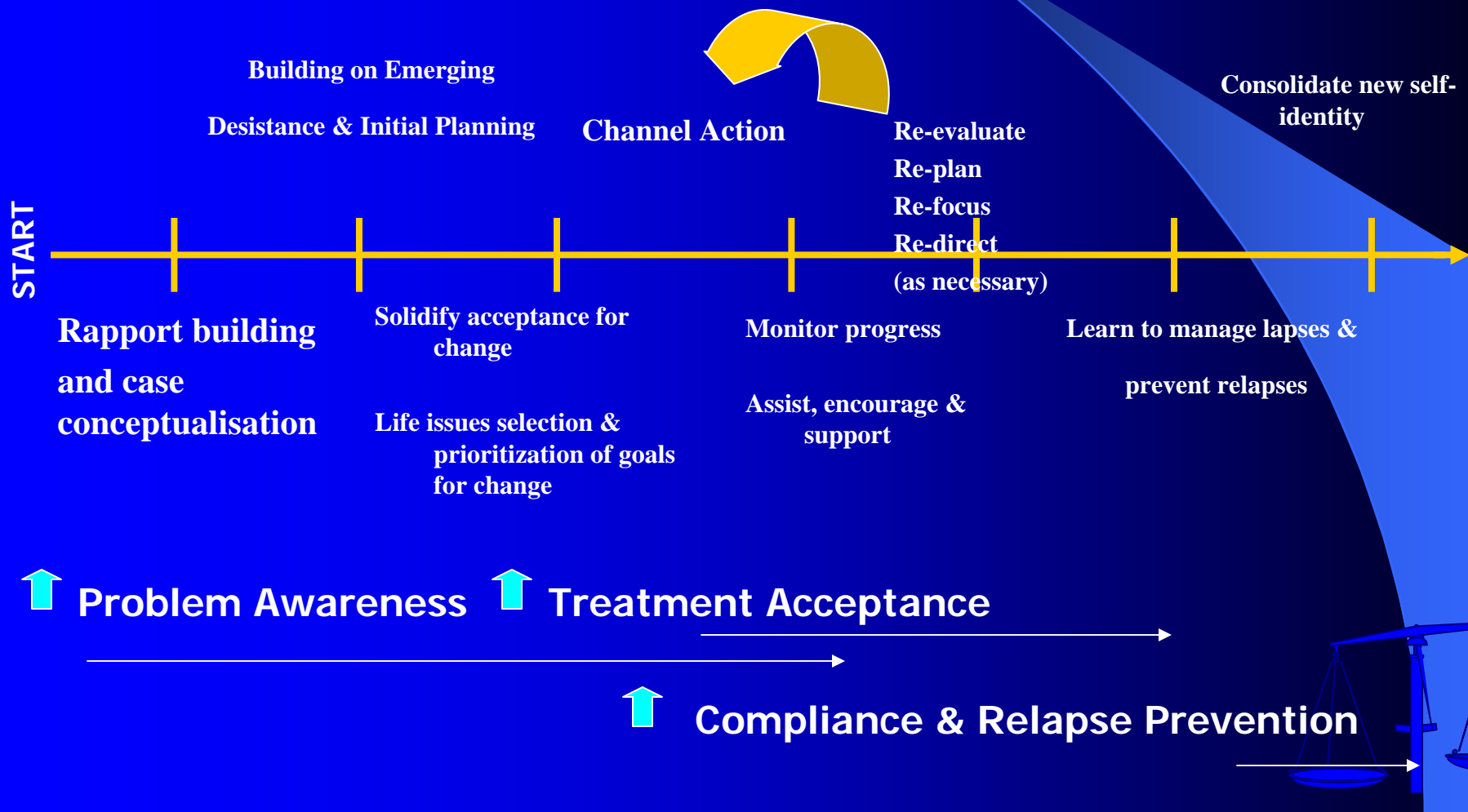
Initiating and Maintaining Desistance

Involves Finding ...

- **Motive** (some reasons to begin considering desistance)
 - **Method** (strategies and remedies to address obstacles)
 - **Experience** (of success and satisfaction)
- **Acceptance** (by respected and significant others)

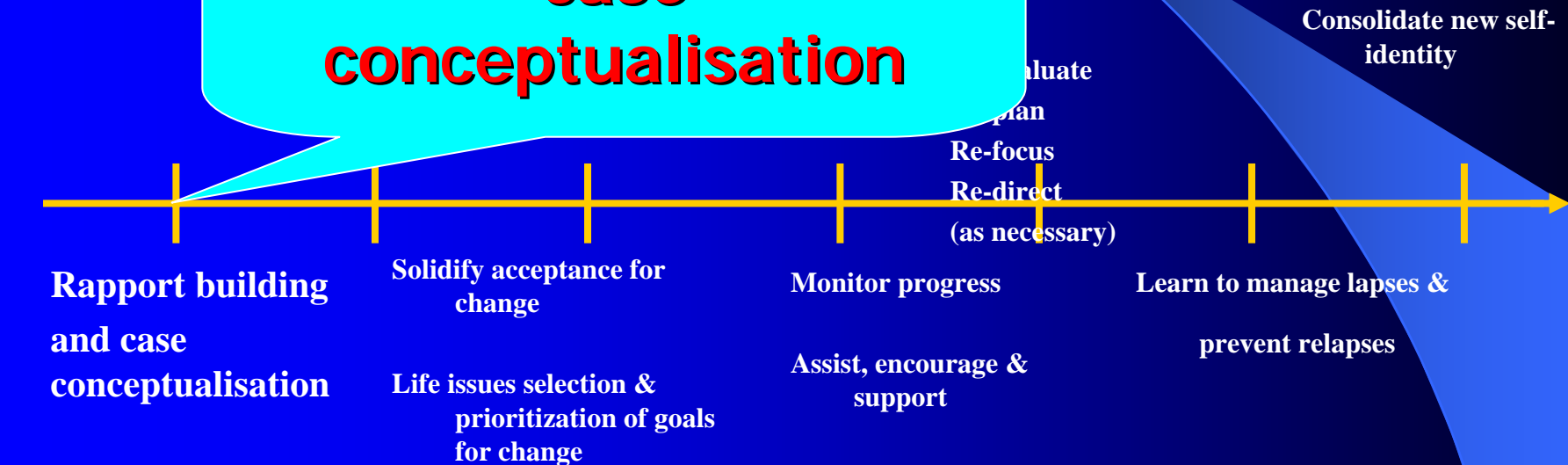


Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Towards Desistance



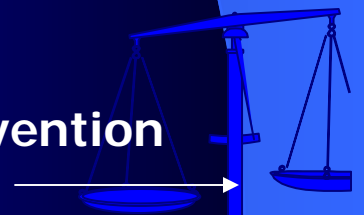
Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Towards Desistance

Rapport building and case conceptualisation



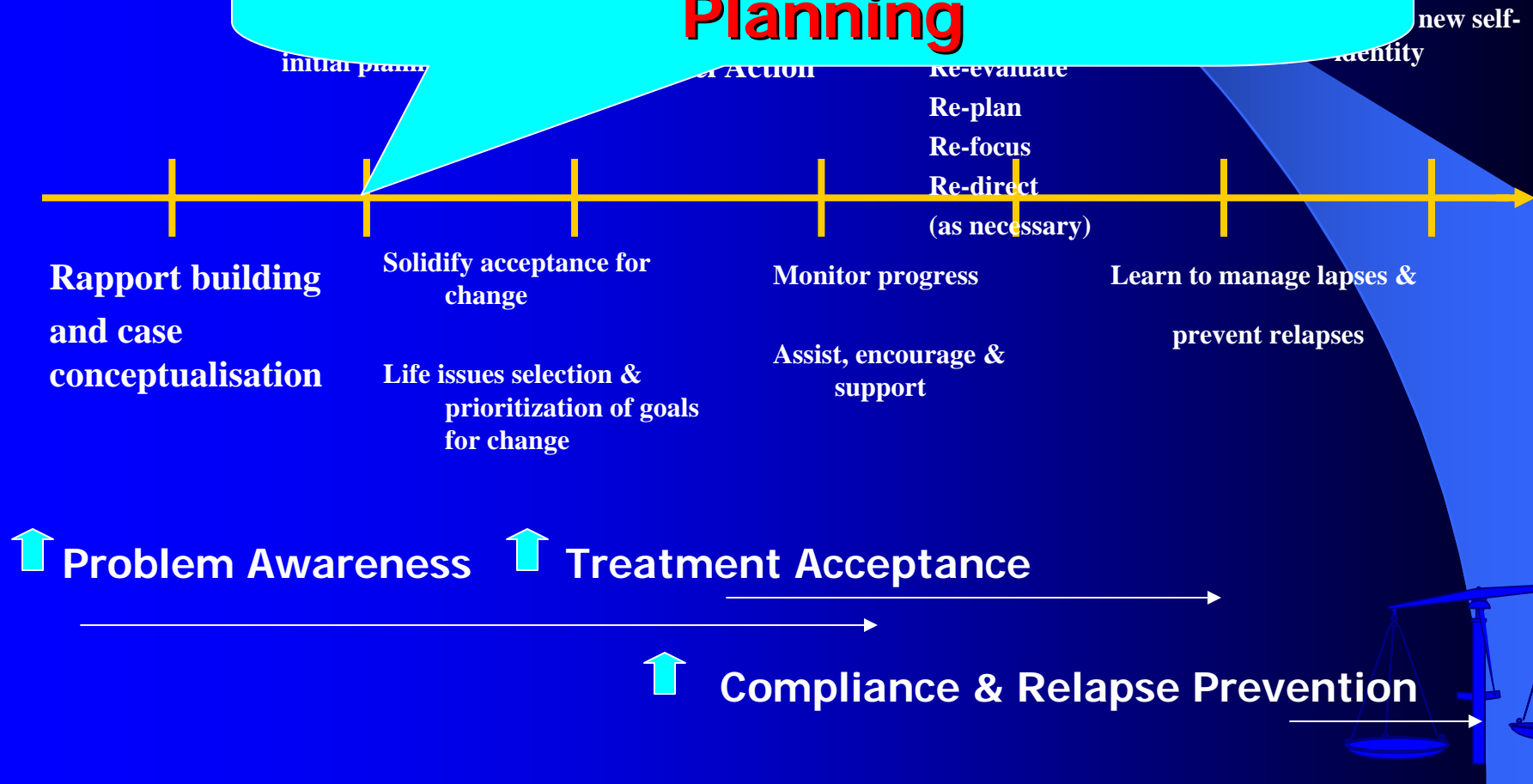
↑ Problem Awareness ↑ Treatment Acceptance

↑ Compliance & Relapse Prevention



Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Towards Desistance

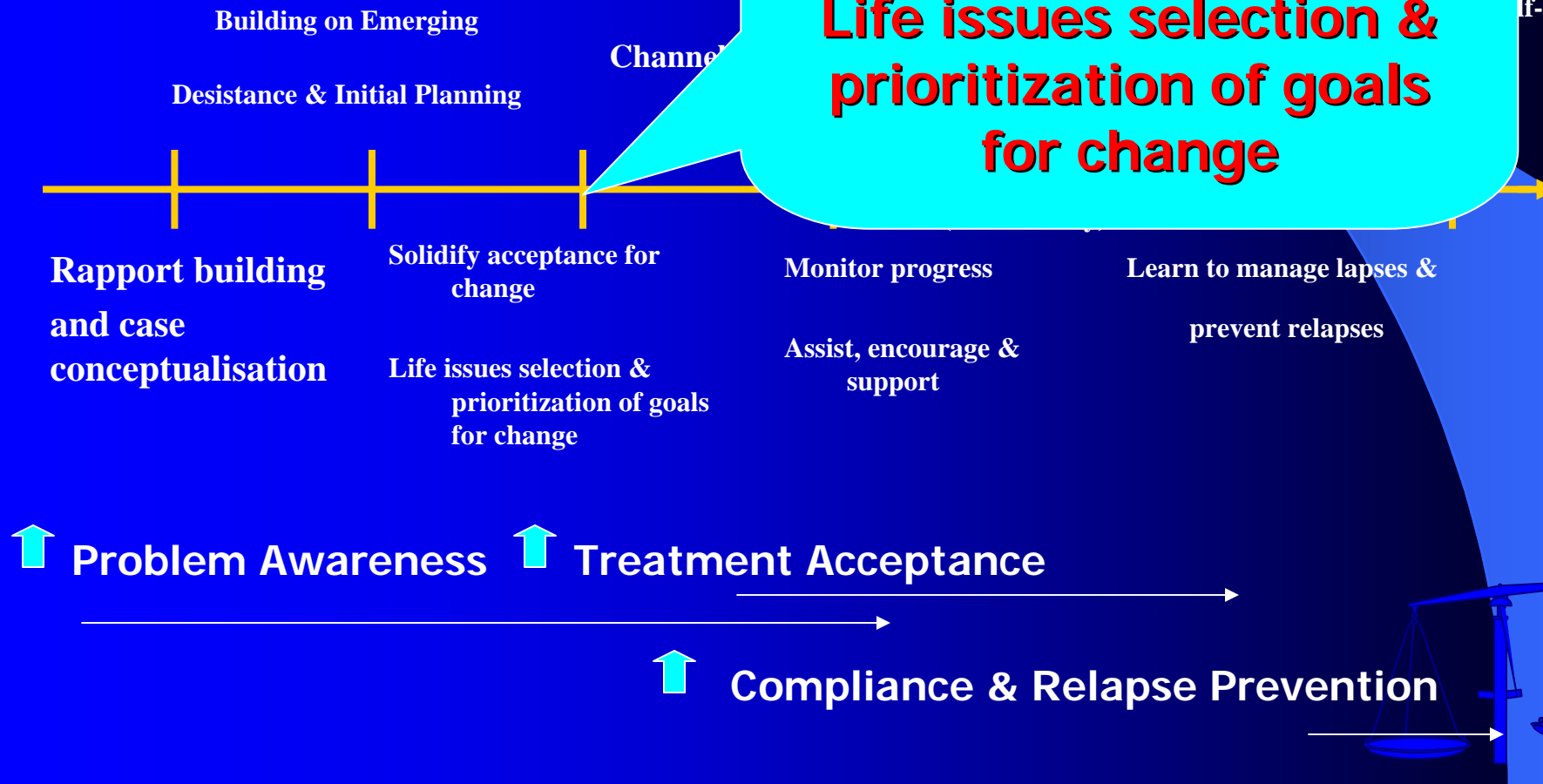
Build on Emerging 'Desistance' Thinking & Help Focus Initial Planning



Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Towards Desistance

Solidifying acceptance for change

Life issues selection & prioritization of goals for change



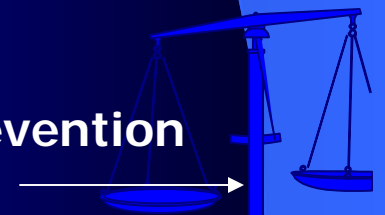
Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Towards Desistance

Help channel action



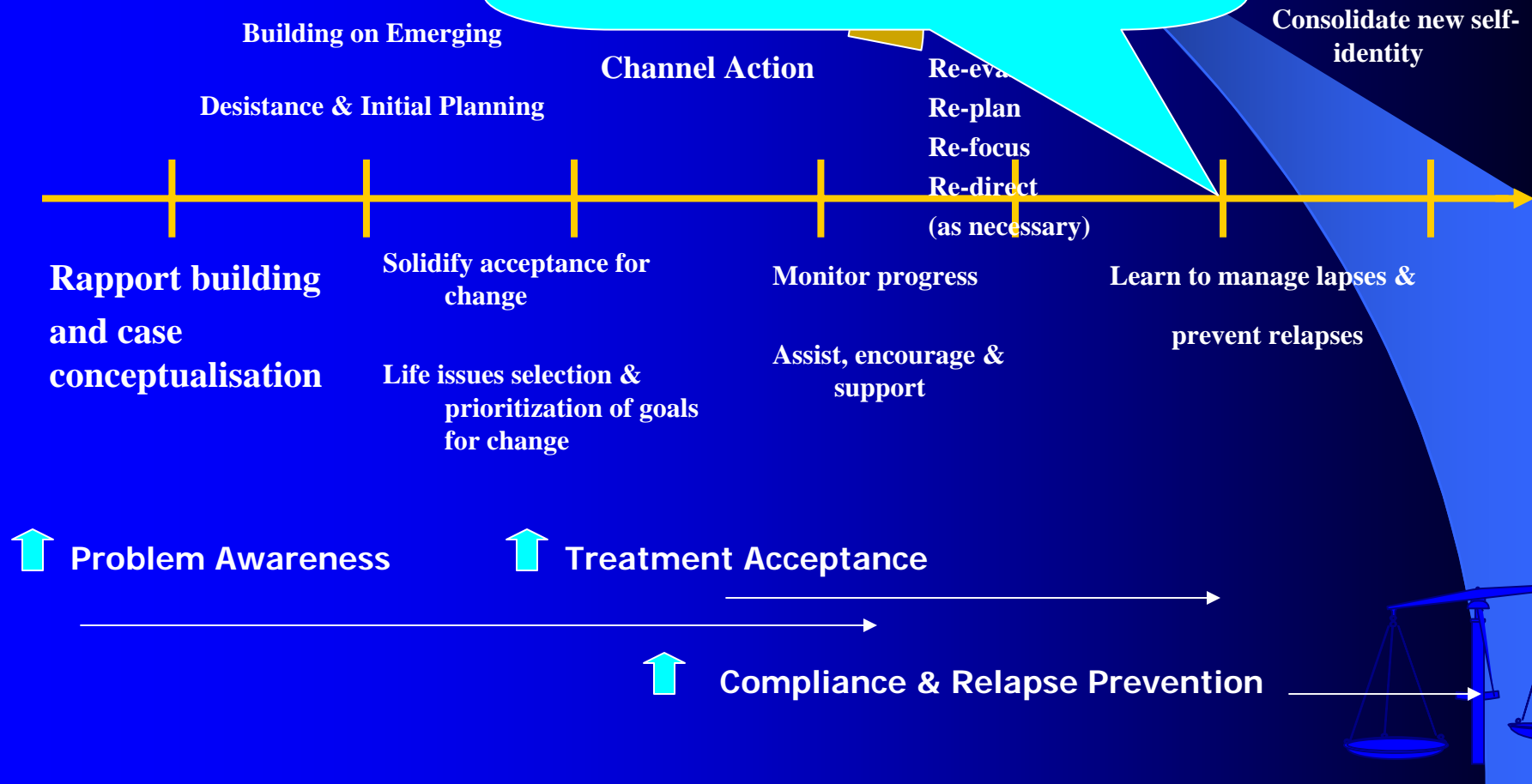
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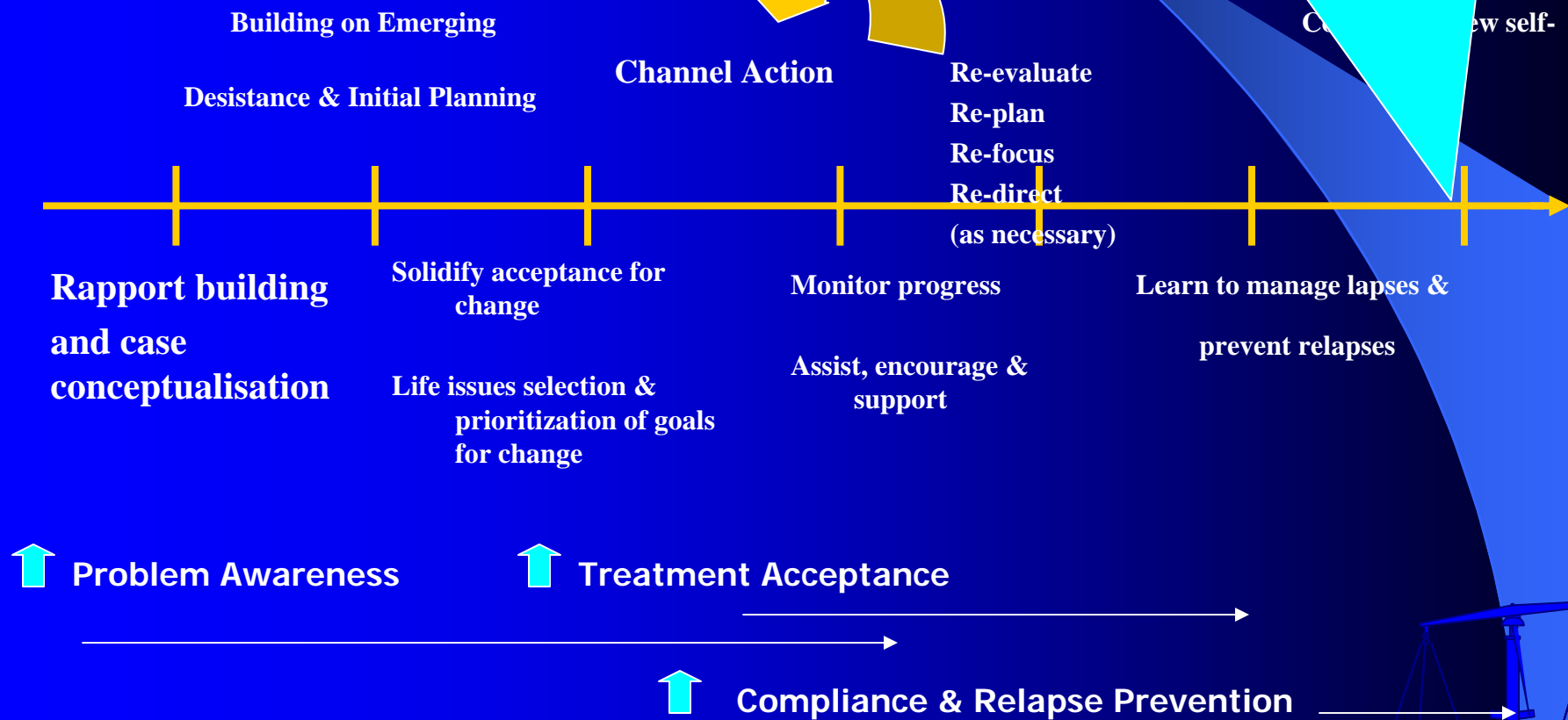
Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Towards Desistance

Manage lapses & prevent relapses



Timeline for Orchestrating Momentum Toward Recovery

Consolidate new self-identity



What Works In Probation Practice ... That Makes For Desistance!

- Focuses on encouraging offenders to arrive at sensible and reasonable conclusions (through analysis of their own decisions/thinking)
- Provides “critical” and “problem-solving” advice when it seems welcomed ... but grounded in a “demonstrated understanding of the offender’s situation”



What Works In Probation Practice ... That Makes For Desistance!

- A demeanour that shows sensitivity and understanding of the offender's viewpoints (without collusion)
- An ability to negotiate *active* participation
- An attuned sense of how offenders may tend to react to and/or reject what is proposed to them



What Works In Probation Practice ... That Makes For Desistance!

- **Can talk convincingly about the consequences of and alternatives to offending**
- **Provides encouragement that is perceived as genuine ... coming from a desire for “wishing you make a success of your life”**
- **Attends to promoting self-determination ... and change in the offender’s “self-identity and sense of maturity and responsibility”**





What Holds Us Back From Finding 'What Could Work Better'!

- Program 'Fetishism' ... looking for the best fix.
- Case Work 'Managerialism' ...
- Compliance on Demand Syndrome ...

**Collude to Distract Us From Developing
A True 'Evidence-Based' Practice**



What Holds 'What C

Do you have an evidence-based program
that really works?

- Program 'Fetishism' ... looking for the best fix.
- Case Work 'Managerialism' ...
- Compliance on Demand Syndrome ...

**Collude to Distract Us From Developing
A True 'Evidence-Based' Practice**



What Holds Us Back From Finding 'What Could Work Better'!

- Program 'Fetishism' ... look

Our job isn't to counsel offenders ... you isolate what the problem might be ... and make a referral. That's it!

American Probation Officer (circa 2008)

- Case Work 'Managerialism' ..

- Compliance on Demand Syndrome ...

**Collude to Distract Us From Developing
A True 'Evidence-Based' Practice**



What Holds Us Back From Finding 'What Could Work Better'!

- Program 'Fetishism'
- Case Work 'Managerialism'
- Compliance on Demand Syndrome ...

I'm sick and tired of not being able to do my job and having to work everyday with offenders who don't want to change!

Canadian Parole Officer (circa 2006)

**Collude to Distract Us From Developing
A True 'Evidence-Based' Practice**



A Desistance Paradigm For Community Corrections

- Learn to TALK to offenders ... about the right things ... in the right way;
- Engage in 'responsive' Case Work ... not just 'intrusive' Case Management;



A Desistance Paradigm For Community Corrections

- Works on Developing A Service Delivery *Process* That Converges on Dealing With Motivational Dynamics, Personal Risk Factors and Social Obstacles ... !
- Understands the Offender and his/her Offending Before Prescribing Programs as Solutions;
- Doesn't Just Deliver Programs ... Attends to the Context;



A Desistance Paradigm For Community Corrections

- Attends to 'Agency' ... By Providing Some Choice and Variety for the Pro-Social Learning Experience;
- Learns As The Process Is Failing ... not Just from When it Succeeds

