

MONITORING & EVALUATING SPECIALTY TREATMENT COURTS

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(founded as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals)

Outline

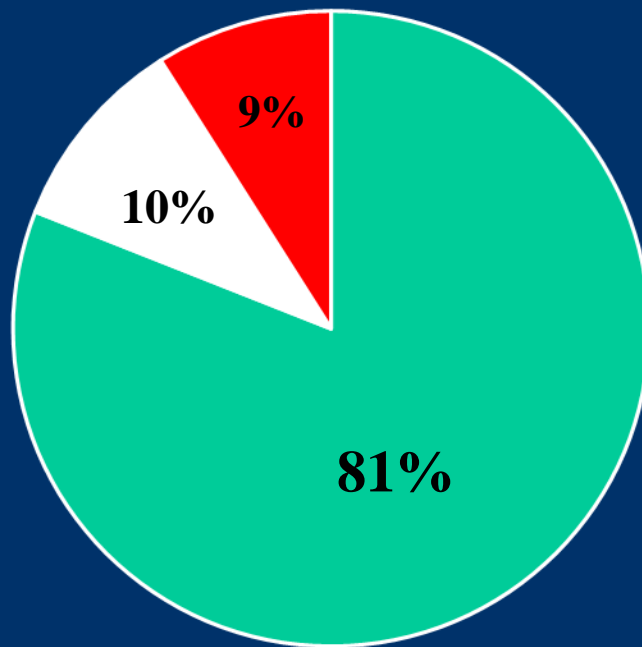
- I. Why should we monitor program performance and evaluate participant outcomes?
- II. What should we measure, why should it be measured, and how can we do this affordably and easily?
- III. Recommended core datasets of key performance indicators (KPIs) and open-source tools
- IV. Examining sociocultural equity and inclusion
- V. Establishing causality of program effects
- VI. Selecting competent and objective evaluators
- VII. Staff training and accountability mechanisms (funding)

Average Effects of Drug Courts

Study	Methodology	No. Drug Courts	Crime Reduction
Lipsey (2019)	Meta-analysis	53	12%
Mitchell et al. (2012)	Meta-analysis	92	12%
Carey et al. (2012)	Multisite study	69	32%
Rossman et al. (2011)	Multisite study	23	13%
U.S. Govt. Accountability Office (2011)	Systematic review	32	6% - 26%
Shaffer (2006)	Meta-analysis	76	9%
Wilson et al. (2006)	Meta-analysis	55	14%
Latimer et al. (2006)	Meta-analysis	66	9%
Aos et al. (2006)	Meta-analysis	57	8%
Lowenkamp et al. (2005)	Meta-analysis	22	8%

Variability of Drug Court Effects

Effects on Crime



■ Decreased crime ■ No effect on crime
■ Increased crime

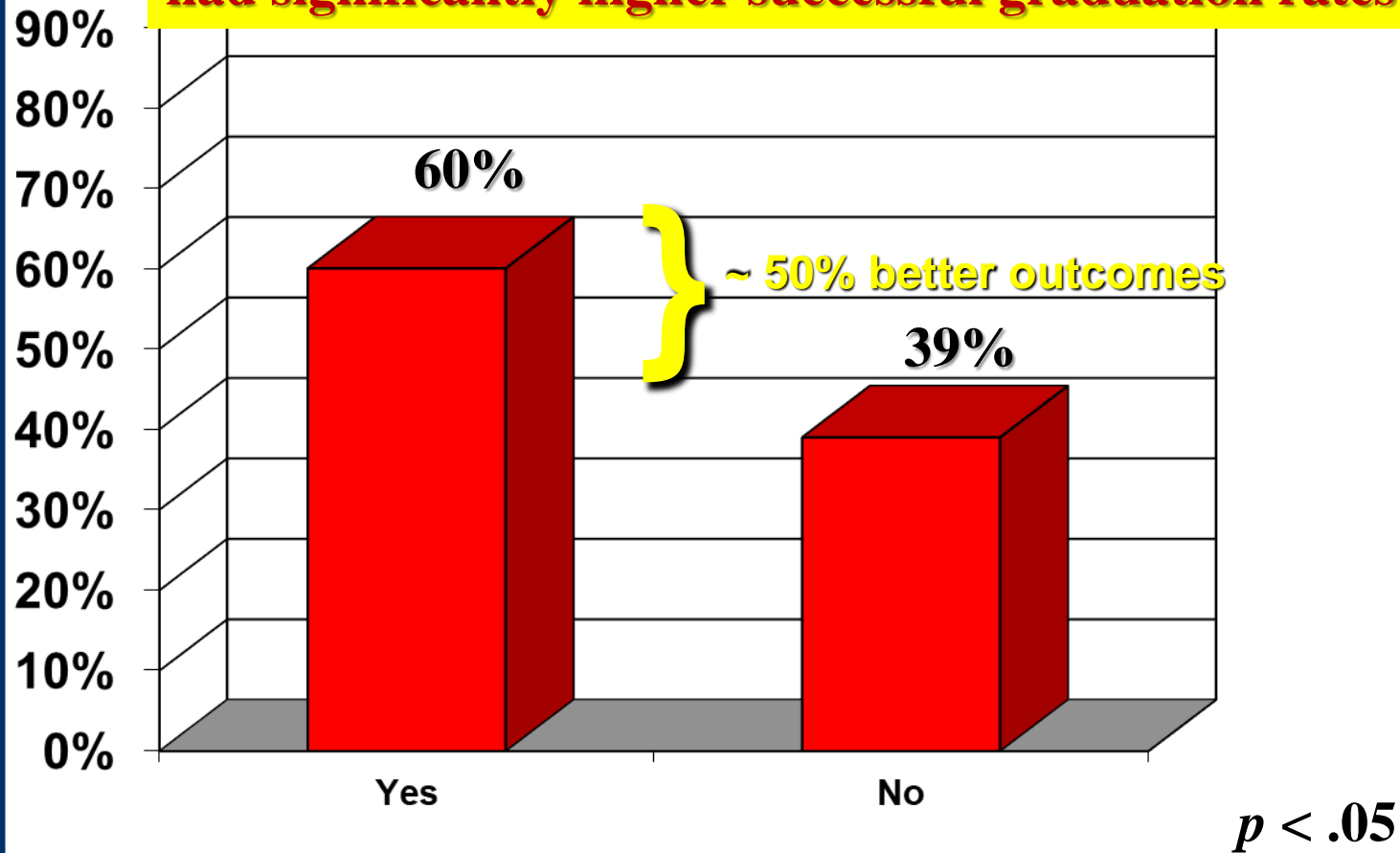
- Effects ranged from an 80% decrease in crime to a 34% increase in crime

Best Practices

- ❑ Distinguish effective from ineffective and harmful programs
- ❑ Associated with 50% to 100% better outcomes

Monitoring Improves Outcomes

Drug courts that reviewed their data annually had significantly higher successful graduation rates



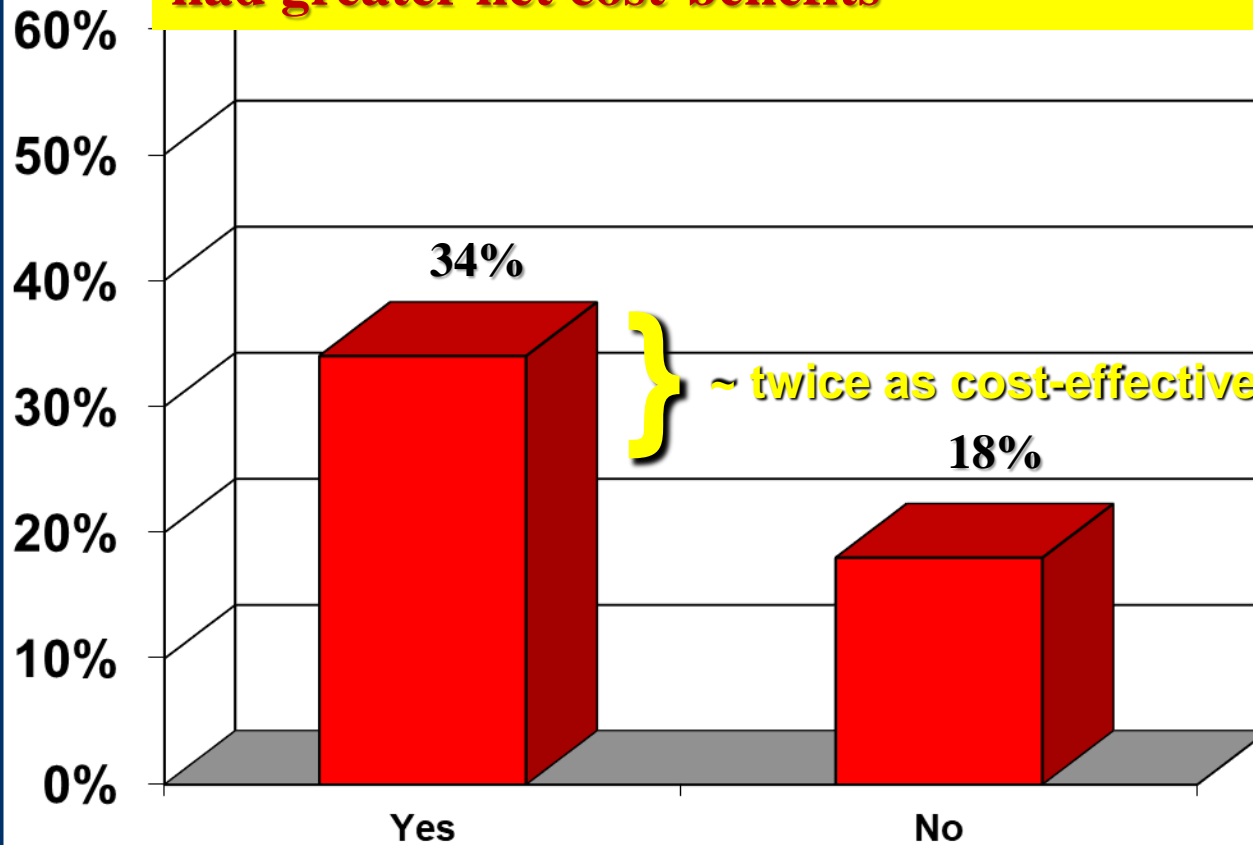
Graduation Rate

Carey et al. (2008, 2012)

Evaluation Improves Savings

Drug courts that underwent program evaluations had greater net cost-benefits

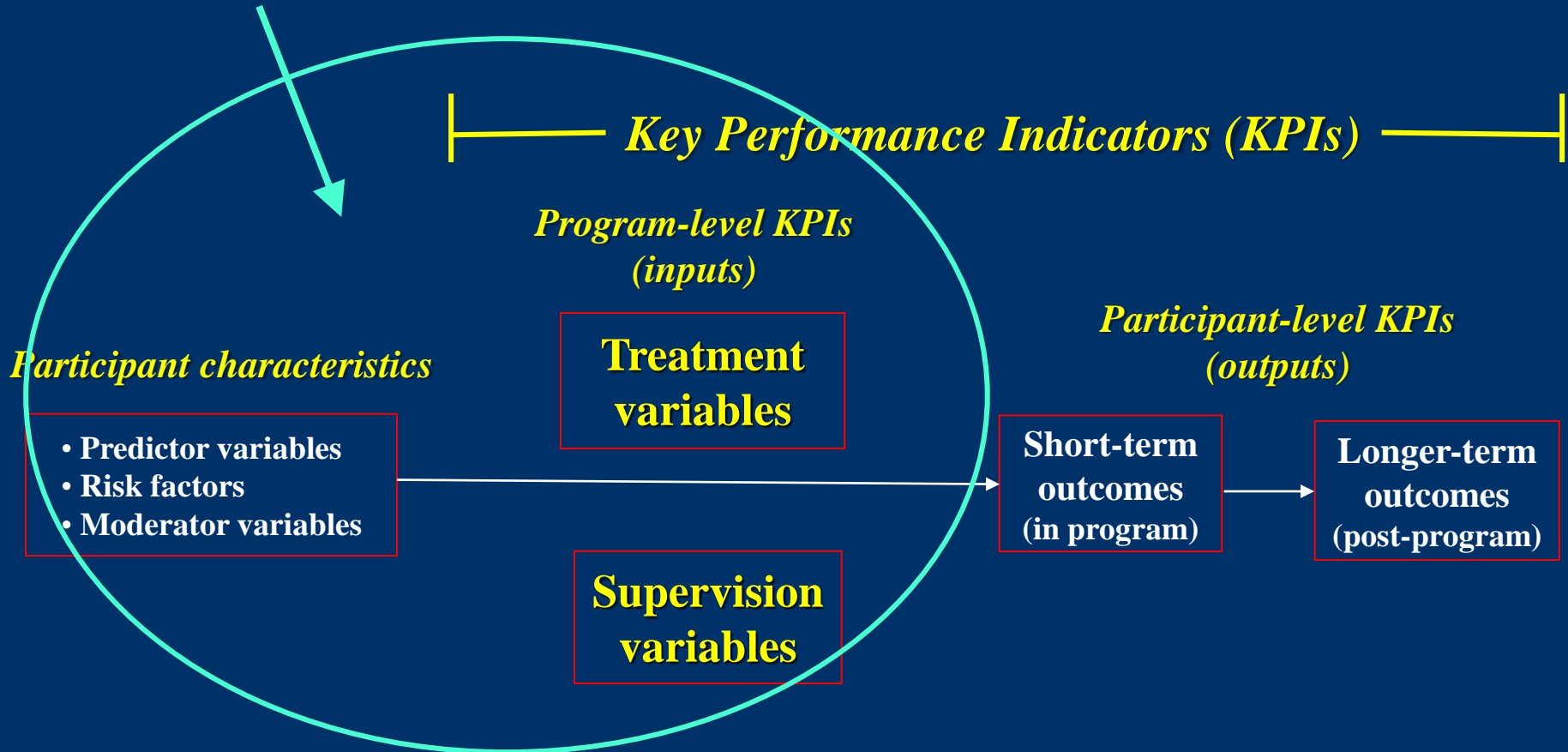
Net cost-benefit



Carey et al. (2008, 2012)

Logic Model

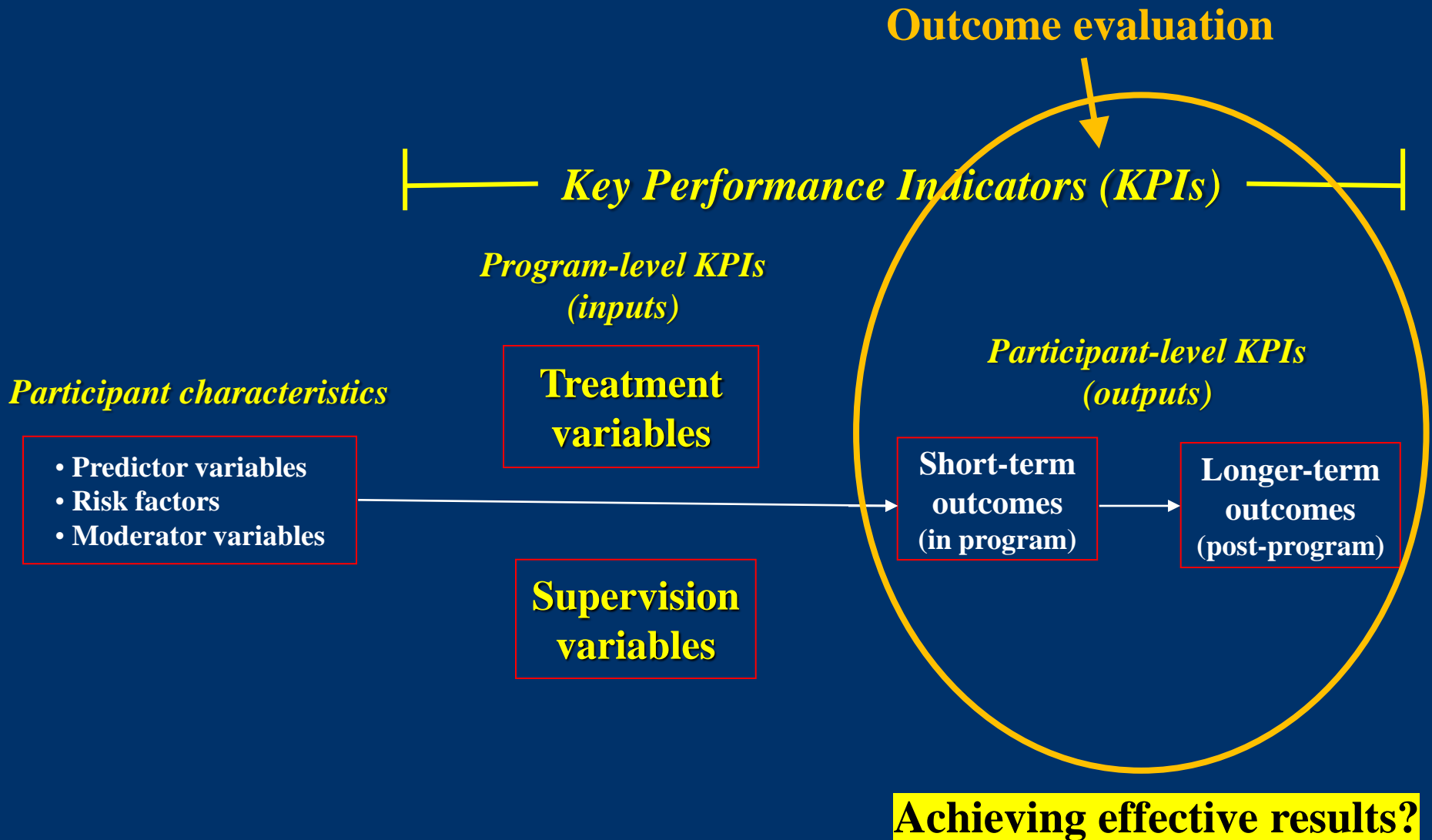
Process evaluation and program monitoring



Serving the right people?

Delivering the right services?

Logic Model



What Variables to Measure?

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Program-level KPIs
(inputs)

Participant-level KPIs
(outputs)

Participant characteristics

- Predictor variables
- Risk factors
- Moderator variables

**Treatment
variables**

**Supervision
variables**

**Short-term
outcomes
(in program)**

**Longer-term
outcomes
(post-program)**

Importance of matching:

High risk → intensive supervision

High need → intensive treatment

... and vice versa!

What Variables to Measure?

* Working alliance

* Procedural fairness / justice

* Sociocultural equity

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Program-level KPIs
(inputs)

Participant-level KPIs
(outputs)

Participant characteristics

- Predictor variables
- Risk factors
- Moderator variables

Treatment variables

Supervision variables

Short-term outcomes
(in program)

Longer-term outcomes
(post-program)

* Court hearings

* Drug & alcohol tests

* Probation sessions

* Probation field visits

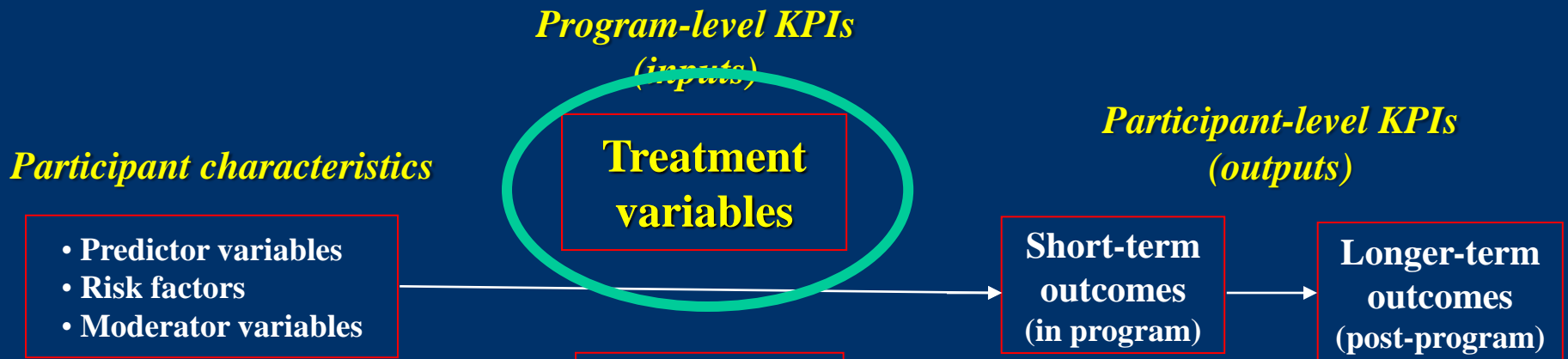
* Electronic monitoring

* Rewards & sanctions

What Variables to Measure?

- * Treatment days or sessions
- * Restorative justice services
- * Complementary treatment and social services

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)



- * Therapeutic alliance
- * Sociocultural equity
- Medication for addiction treatment (MAT) or psychiatric medication

What Variables to Measure?

* Housing

* Recovery capital / psychosocial problems

* Employment

* Drug-free babies

* Education

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

*Program-level KPIs
(inputs)*

*Participant-level KPIs
(outputs)*

Participant characteristics

- Predictor variables
- Risk factors
- Moderator variables

**Treatment
variables**

**Supervision
variables**

**Short-term
outcomes
(in program)**

**Longer-term
outcomes
(post-program)**

* New incarcerations

* New arrests

* Length of stay

* Graduation

* Abstinence

* Technical violations

What Variables to Measure?

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Program-level KPIs (inputs)

Participant-level KPIs (outputs)

Participant characteristics

- Predictor variables
- Risk factors
- Moderator variables

**Treatment
variables**

**Supervision
variables**

**Short-term
outcomes
(in program)**

**Longer-term
outcomes
(post-program)**

* **Quality of life (QoL)**

* **Employment, education, etc., etc.**

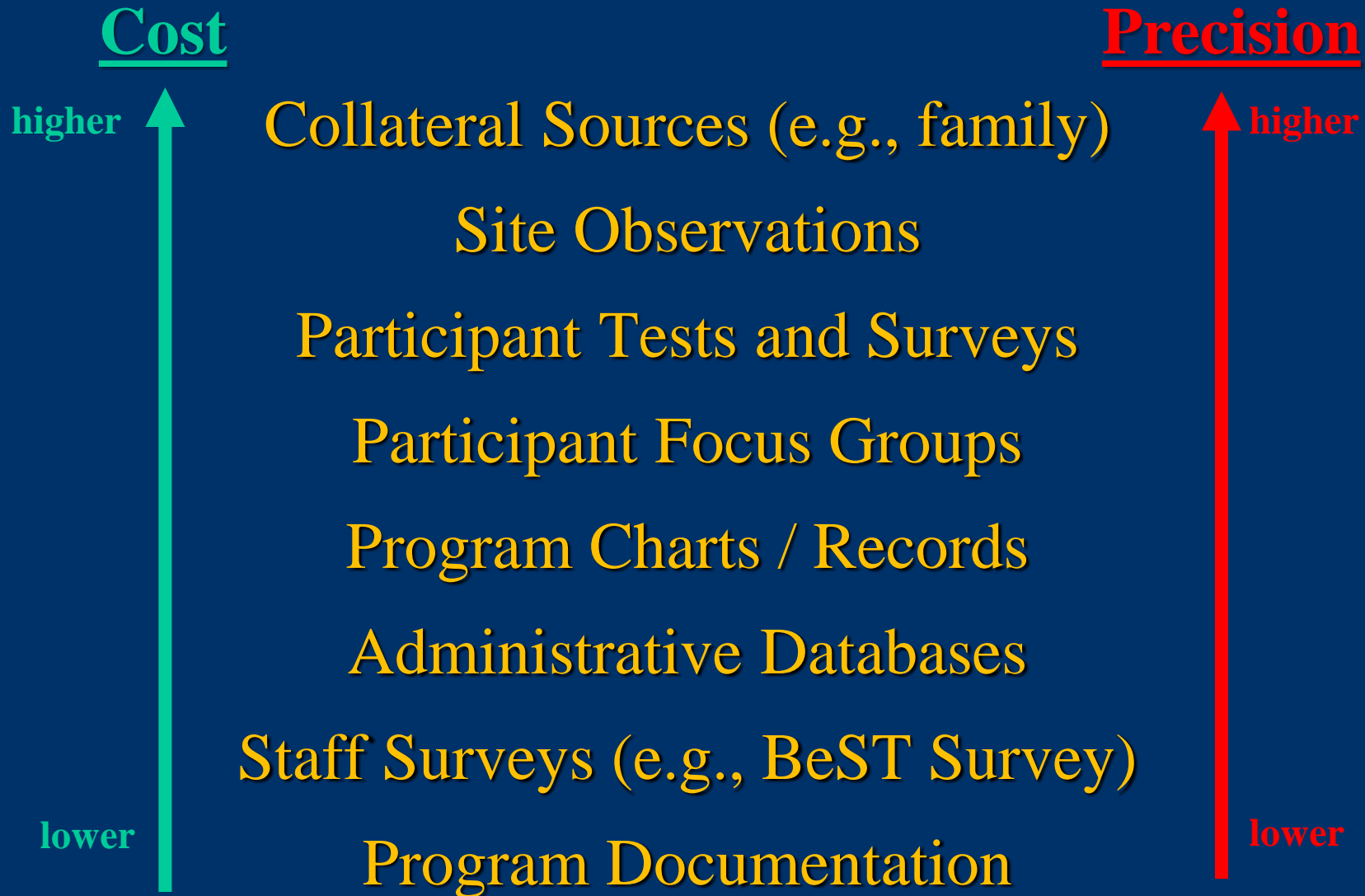
- **Healthcare and social service utilization (crisis vs. non-crisis)**

* **New arrests**

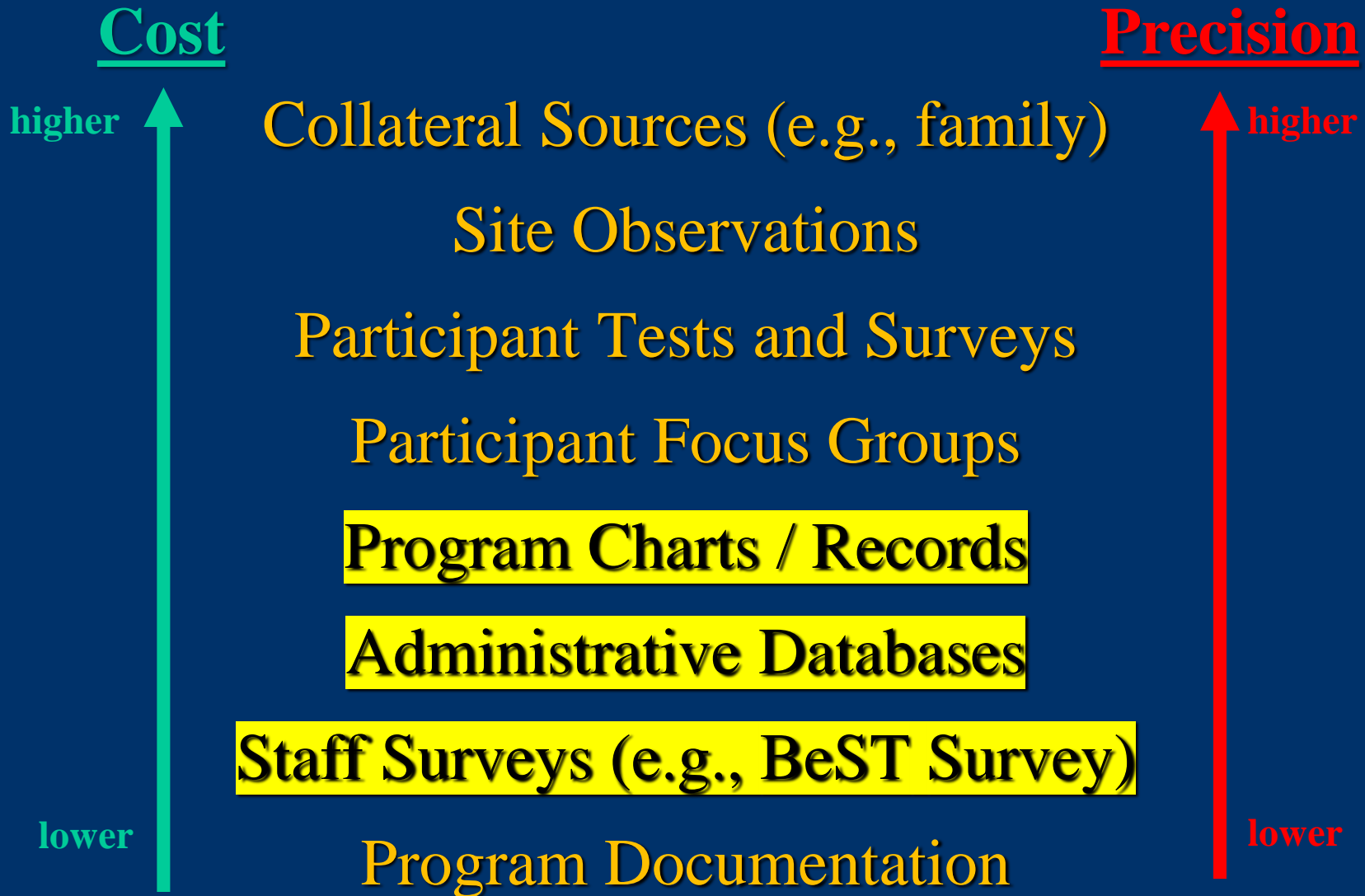
* **New convictions**

* **New incarcerations**

Sources of Information



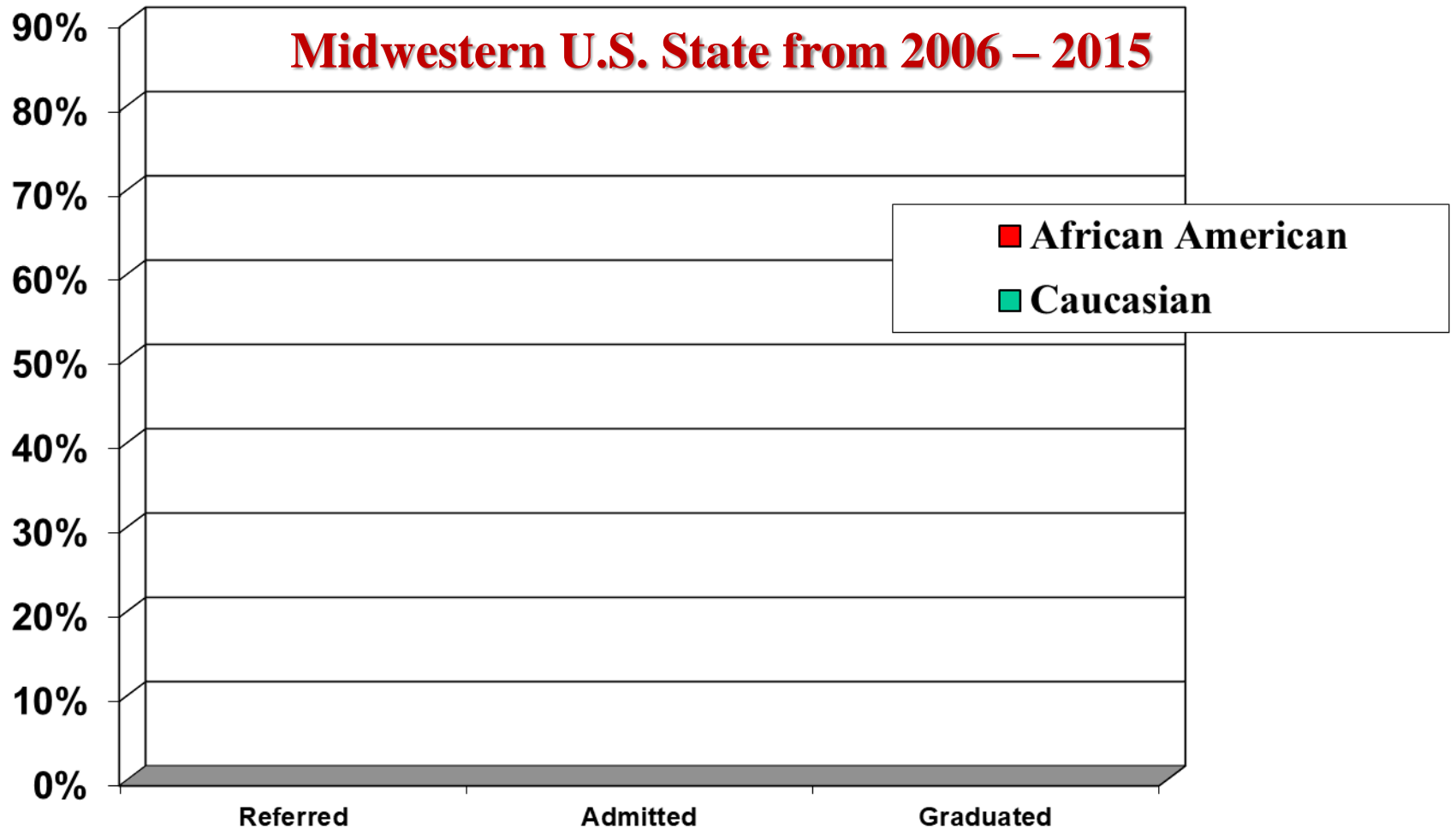
Sources of Information



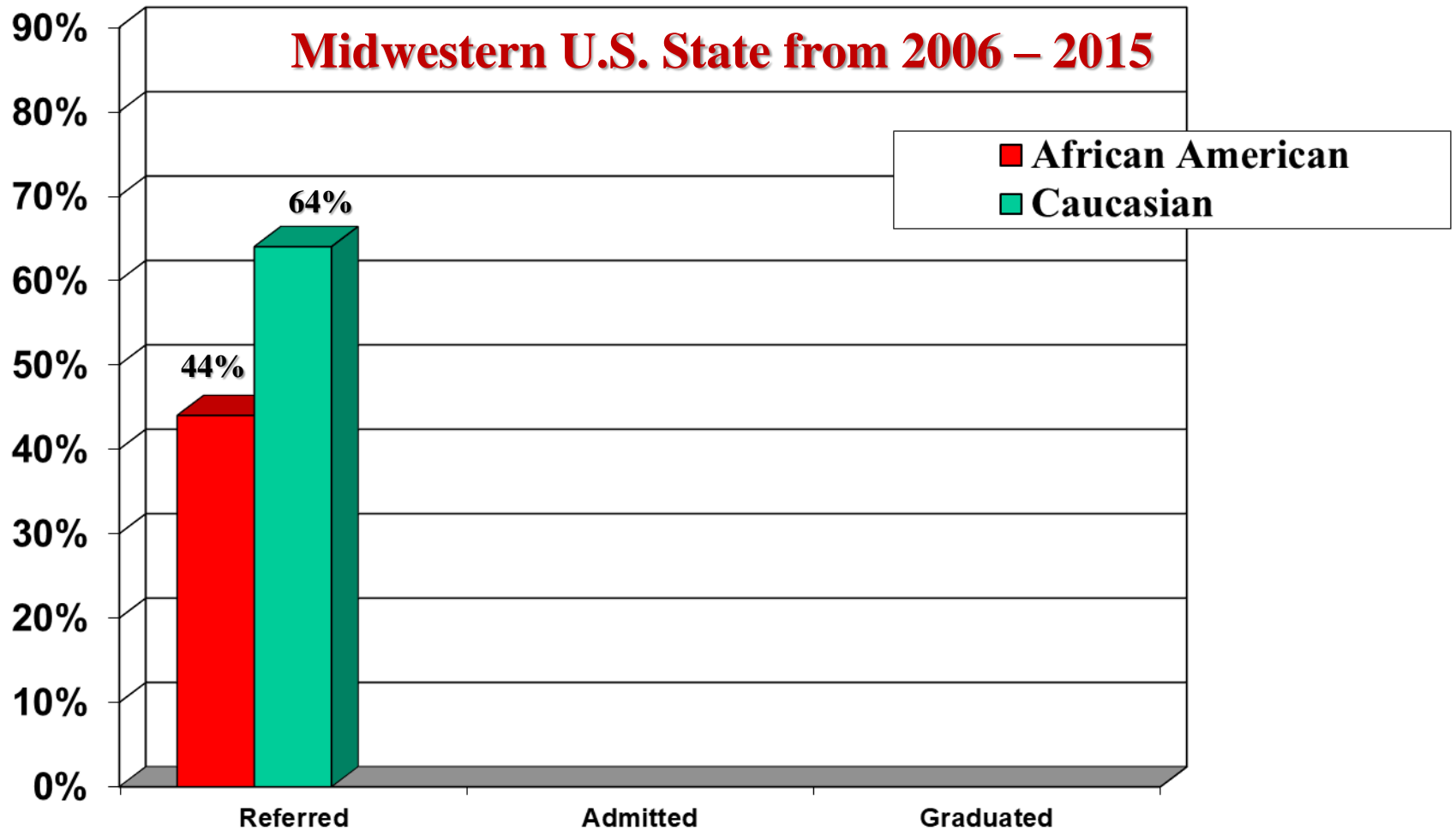
Key Performance Indicators

1. Easy and inexpensive to measure
2. Benchmarks produce 50 – 100% better outcomes
3. Program-level KPIs reflect distinguishing components across treatment court models (e.g., court hearings)
4. Participant-level KPIs reflect in-program performance that strongly predicts long-term outcomes, including recidivism, psychosocial functioning, and cost-effectiveness
5. Equivalently measured, so can be compared against benchmarks and between programs and populations
6. Core dataset from All Rise (handout, $N < 20$)

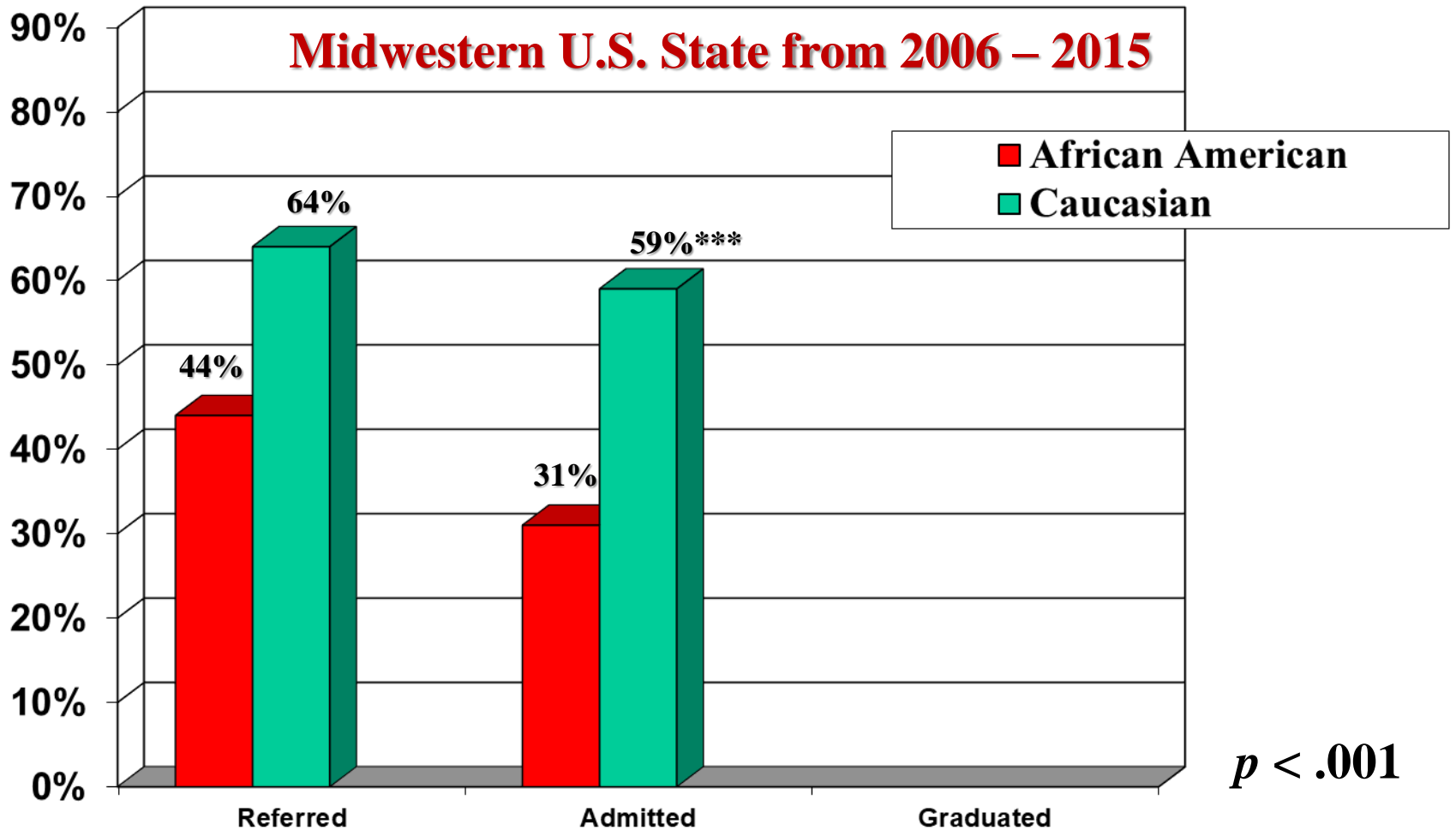
Equity & Inclusion



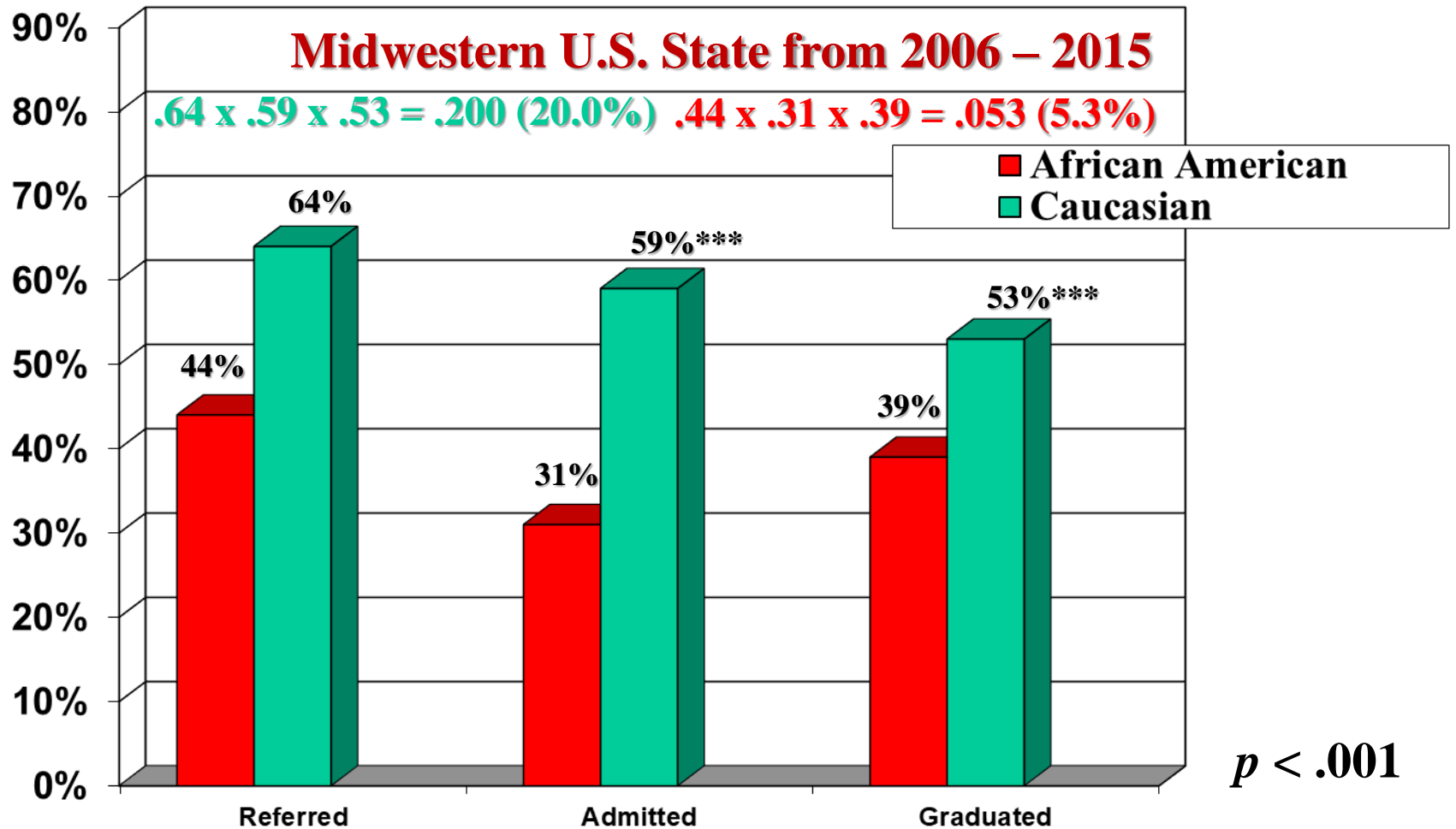
Equity & Inclusion



Equity & Inclusion



Equity & Inclusion



Equity Analyses

- Compare staff reports of program practices and KPIs between sociocultural groups represented in the program
- Confidential surveys of sociocultural identification
- Review findings at least annually and evaluate the effects of corrective efforts
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities Program Assessment Tool (RED) assesses staff reports <https://redtool.org/>
- Equity and Inclusion Assessment Tool (EIAT) assesses KPIs of access and completion <https://allrise.org/publications/equity-and-inclusion-assessment-tool/>

Comparison Groups

- **Pre/Post**
 - highly subject to experimental bias
- **Experimental (random assignment)**
 - can be costly and difficult
 - may raise ethical or practical objections
- **Quasi-experimental (e.g., waitlist, historical comparison group, neighboring county)**
 - group membership unlikely to influence outcomes
- **Matched comparison (e.g., probation database)**
 - matched on variables likely to influence outcomes

Invalid Comparison Groups

- Declined to enter
- Were denied entry related to risk or need
- Withdrew prematurely
- Were discharged prematurely
- Analyses must be intent-to-treat
 - Secondary analyses of graduates are permissible only if the intent-to-treat analyses were significant
 - Include only completers in the comparison group

Follow-Up Windows

- **Adequate time for events to transpire**
 - e.g., technical violations vs. arrests vs. convictions
 - Stable estimates of recidivism ~ 3 to 5 years
- **Starting the clock**
 - Same for treatment court and comparison groups
 - Typically program entry (and precipitating event)
- **Time at risk & time at liberty**
 - Same length of time
 - Account for restrictive placements

Accountability Mechanisms

- Annual reports to AOC and legislature, if applicable, on:
 - achievement of performance benchmarks and equity analyses for KPI dataset
 - confidential staff surveys on adherence to all best practices (e.g., BeST, RED)
 - remedial plan to address deficiencies and effects of past remedial efforts
- Designated grant or certification program manager (typically a statewide coordinator within the AOC)
- Routine data-entry within 24 - 48 hours of events or services is a consequential condition of staff and program performance reviews
- Analyzable statistical spreadsheet (e.g., Excel, Access) or database
 - All Rise or other consultants can assist in identifying suitable systems
- Designated trained person oversees data collection and reporting
 - evaluator, trained coordinator, or graduate student with faculty supervision
- Causal outcome evaluation at 3 years, and \leq every 5 years thereafter

Funding Requirements

- Reasonable funding is required for staff training and boosters
- All staff trained on rationale for best practices and data collection
 - Annual booster training required to avoid “downward drift”
 - Trainings available from All Rise, BJA discretionary grant program, and others
- Data coordinator/manager trained on data-entry procedures and KPI calculations (if skilled evaluator or graduate student is unavailable)
- Causal outcome evaluations require skilled expertise and will require separate funding if an evaluator or graduate student is unavailable
- Greater funding may be required to purchase a proprietary system
 - Training and T.A. to select data systems available from All Rise and other consultants or organizations
 - Proprietary systems have higher costs but far better streamlined features

Questions?

