Using Assessment Tools to Identify Behavioral Health Needs Among Youth Under Correctional Supervision

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Outline

- Background--areas where screening and assessment are important
  - Mental Health in juvenile Justice
  - Risk in Juvenile Justice
    - →Review of guiding principles and concepts
- Selecting an assessment tool
  - Important qualities of an evidence-based tool
  - Examples of Risk-Needs tools
- Points about implementation
  - What risk assessments do not do
  - Examples of screening tools that may accompany risk assessment
  - Critical steps in implementation

What is the Difference Between Screening and Assessment?

Screening

- Used with <u>every</u> youth at intake

- Identifies youths who <u>might</u> have the characteristic you are screening for (e.g., mental health needs, substance abuse needs, increased risk for recidivism, etc.)

- *Sorts youth into categories*, to…
  – Provide early warning for emergencies
  – Help decide need for a more detailed and individualized assessment

Assessment

- Follow-up on youth "screened in," to make decisions about individualized need for interventions like…

  - mental health: referral to inpatient mental health services for specific types of treatment or planning for MH-SA services later on
  - risk for recidivism: identification of needs, responsivity, and protective factors

- Assessments are used for service delivery and treatment planning—post-disposition and after-care

Types of Mental Health Assessment Tools in Juvenile Justice

- Clinical needs
  - Focusing on special mental health and substance abuse clinical needs

- Educational needs
  - Focusing on learning and skills-building

- Functional/Rehabilitation needs
  - Focusing on problems in social situations and how to reduce them

Examples of Mental Health Assessment Tools

▶ <u>Voice-DISC</u>: Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (self-report)
  ◦ Produces computer-assisted suggested diagnoses

▶ <u>BASC-2</u>: Behavioral Assessment System for Children-Second Edition (self-report)
  ◦ Assesses various symptoms of psychopathology in children and adolescents

▶ <u>PADDI</u>: Practical Adolescent Dual Diagnosis Interview
  ◦ Guided interview procedure to identify suggested diagnoses related to substance use and mental disorders

▶ <u>CBCL/YSR</u>: Child Behavior Checklist/Youth Self-Report
  ◦ Assesses a broad spectrum of behavioral, emotional, and social problems age 11-18 (ASEBA)

What all Problem-Oriented Assessment Tools Claim to Assess (all have in common)

All seek to obtain a more individualized view of youth problems in the following areas….

- Substance use
- Mental health symptoms
(but degree of attention and detail varies greatly)
- Risk of self harm (suicide history, ideation)
- Offense/court history
- Social skills
- Special problems in…
  - School or work
  - Family

What is a Risk Assessment Tool?

- A *risk for reoffending* assessment tool is an instrument developed to help answer the question: "Is this youth at relatively low or relatively high risk for reoffending?"

- Some, but not all, risk assessment tools also address what is causing the youth to be at low or relatively high risk for reoffending (in other words, some identify *crime-producing needs*)
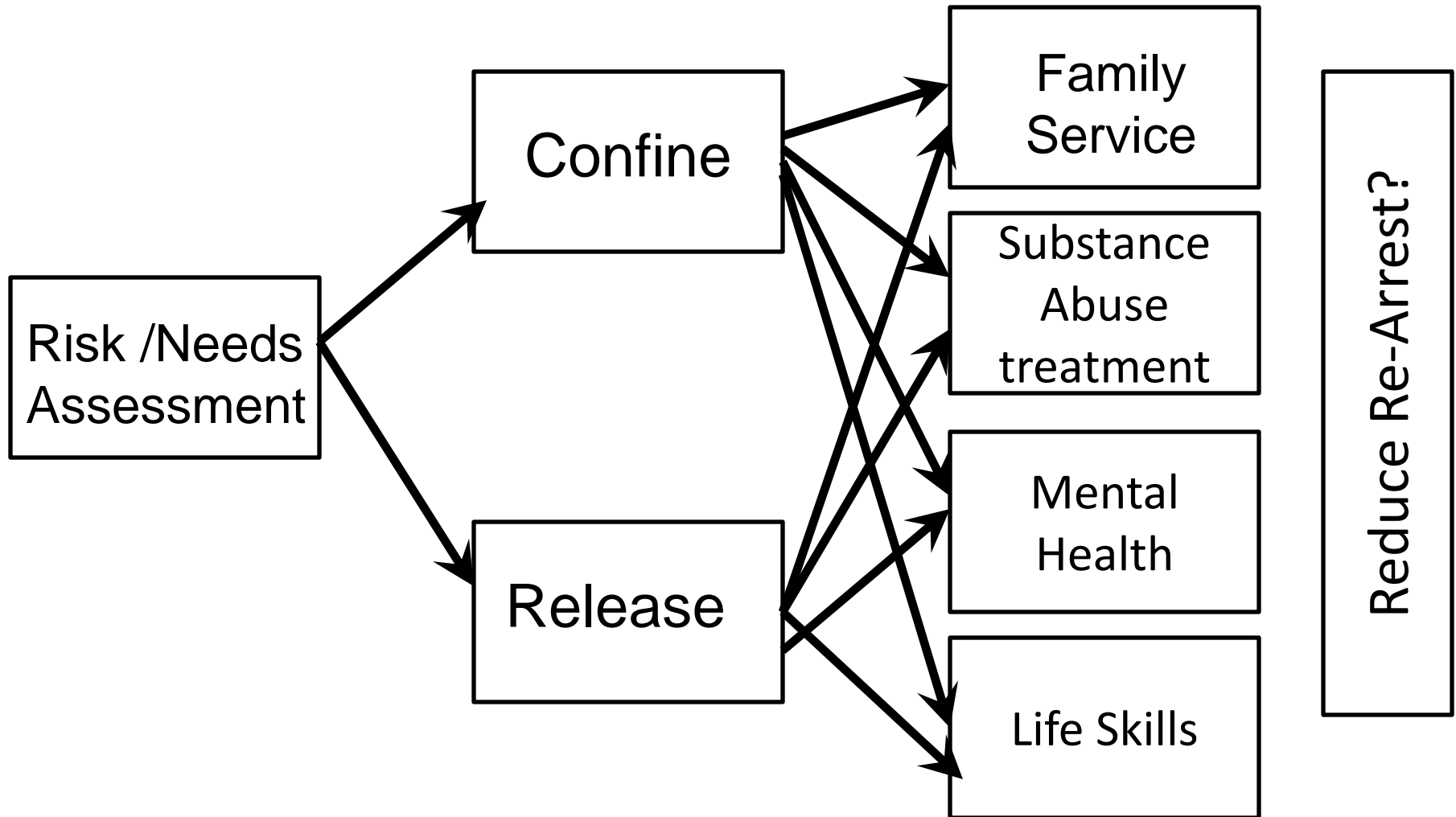
Research Evidence: Guiding Principles

There is emerging consensus on characteristics of effective programming for young offenders:

– Punitive sanctions **do not** have a significant effect on re-offending (Gatti et al., 2009).

– Most low-risk youth are unlikely to re-offend even if there is no intervention (Lipsey, 2009). But mixing them with high risk youth <u>can</u> make them worse.

– When services are **matched** to youth's "crime-producing" (criminogenic) needs, the lower the chance of repeat offending.

– The goal is to have the right services for the right youth.
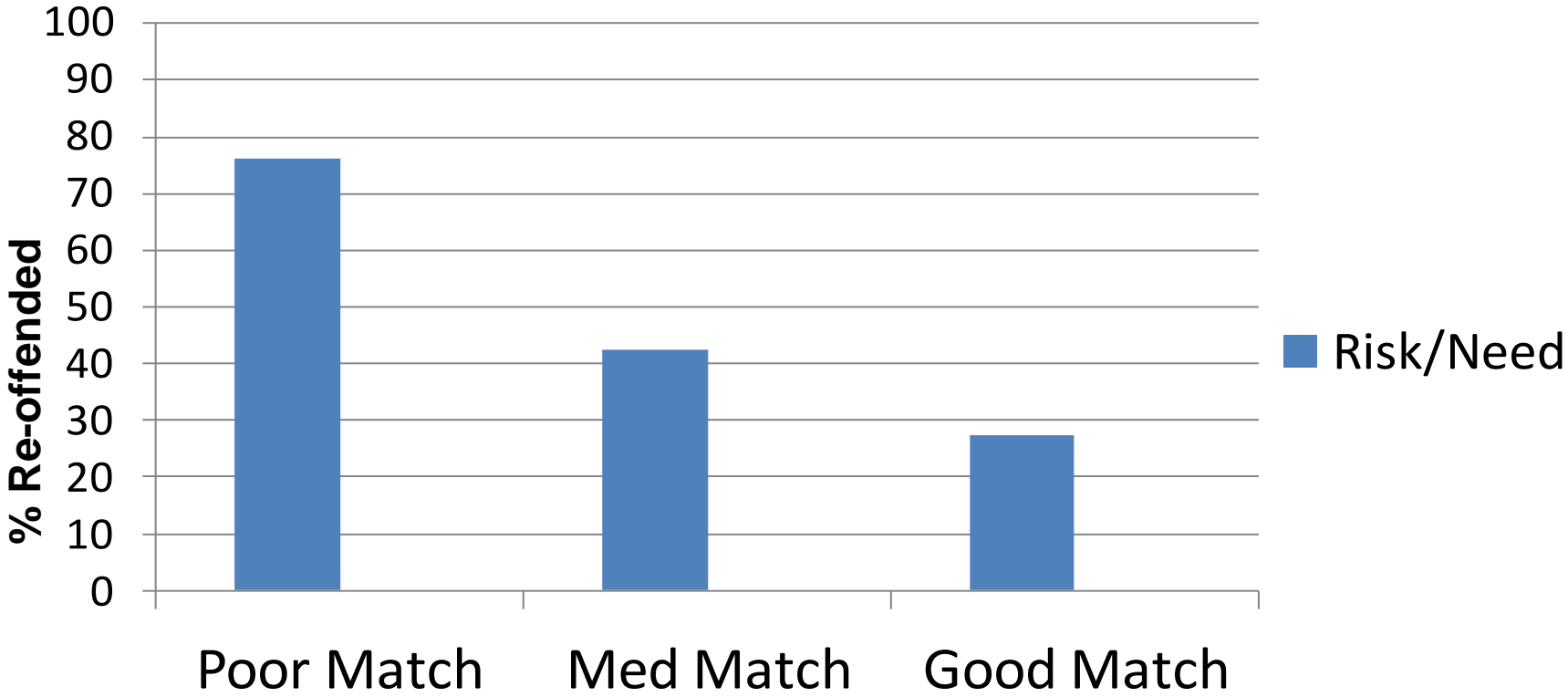
The First Step is Valid Identification

- Risk/needs assessment, if properly implemented, can identify youth at highest risk for re-offending and *guide intervention* efforts (e.g., level of supervision, services received, placement) that could:
  - *Prevent* re-offending
  - *Reduce risk of future harm* among youth who have recently engaged in harmful aggressive behavior
  - *Reduce costs* to victims, service providers, and the juvenile justice system

Matching the Right Youth to the Right Interventions and Services

Potential for Case Management If Assessment is Implemented Properly (Vieira et al., 2009)

Risk Assessment Concepts

Elements of a Comprehensive Risk for Re-Offending Assessment

Evidence-Based Assessment

Static Risk Factors

Dynamic Risk Factors (*criminogenic needs*)

≠

Protective or Responsivity Factors

Well-Being or Non-Criminogenic Needs

Some Important Terms

- **Risk:** likelihood of future offending
- **Risk factor:** anything that increases the probability that a person will re-offend:
  - Static Risk Factors – do not change
  - Dynamic Risk Factors (*criminogenic needs*) – changeable, targets for services and intervention
- **Protective factor or strength:** decreases the potential harmful effect of a risk factor
- **Responsivity factor:** characteristics of the individual that can affect intervention success

Selecting a Tool

Which Tool?

- **What is the question?**
  - likelihood of recidivism? mental health problems? conduct problems?

- **For what purpose?**
  - risk management? placement decision? classification?

- **For what type of youth?**
  - girls? minorities?

- **Using what staff?**
  - clinicians or intake officers?

Evidence-based tools should be…

- **Standardized**
  always done exactly the same way

- **Relevant**
  will assist with making the necessary decisions

- **Reliable**
  Two independent raters would reach similar conclusions—at least 2 studies

- **Valid**
  research-based evidence that it measures what it is supposed to measure—at least 2 studies

The one selected also should be…

- **Feasible**

  meets practical demands of time and staff

- **Population-appropriate**

  developed for, or validated on, juvenile justice youth in the right setting

- **Dynamic**

  permits re-assessment

Examples of Evidence-Based or Promising Risk-Needs Assessment Tools

- **SAVRY** (Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth): Violence and general re-offending for ages 12-17.
- **YLS/CMI** (Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory): General re-offending for ages 12 – 17.
- **RRC** (Risk and Resiliency Checklist, aka SDRRC or LARRC): General re-offending.
- **WSJCA (aka YASI or PACT):** (Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment): General re-offending. Contains a pre-screen and an assessment.

Some Points About Implementation:
Risk of Re-offending vs. Mental Health

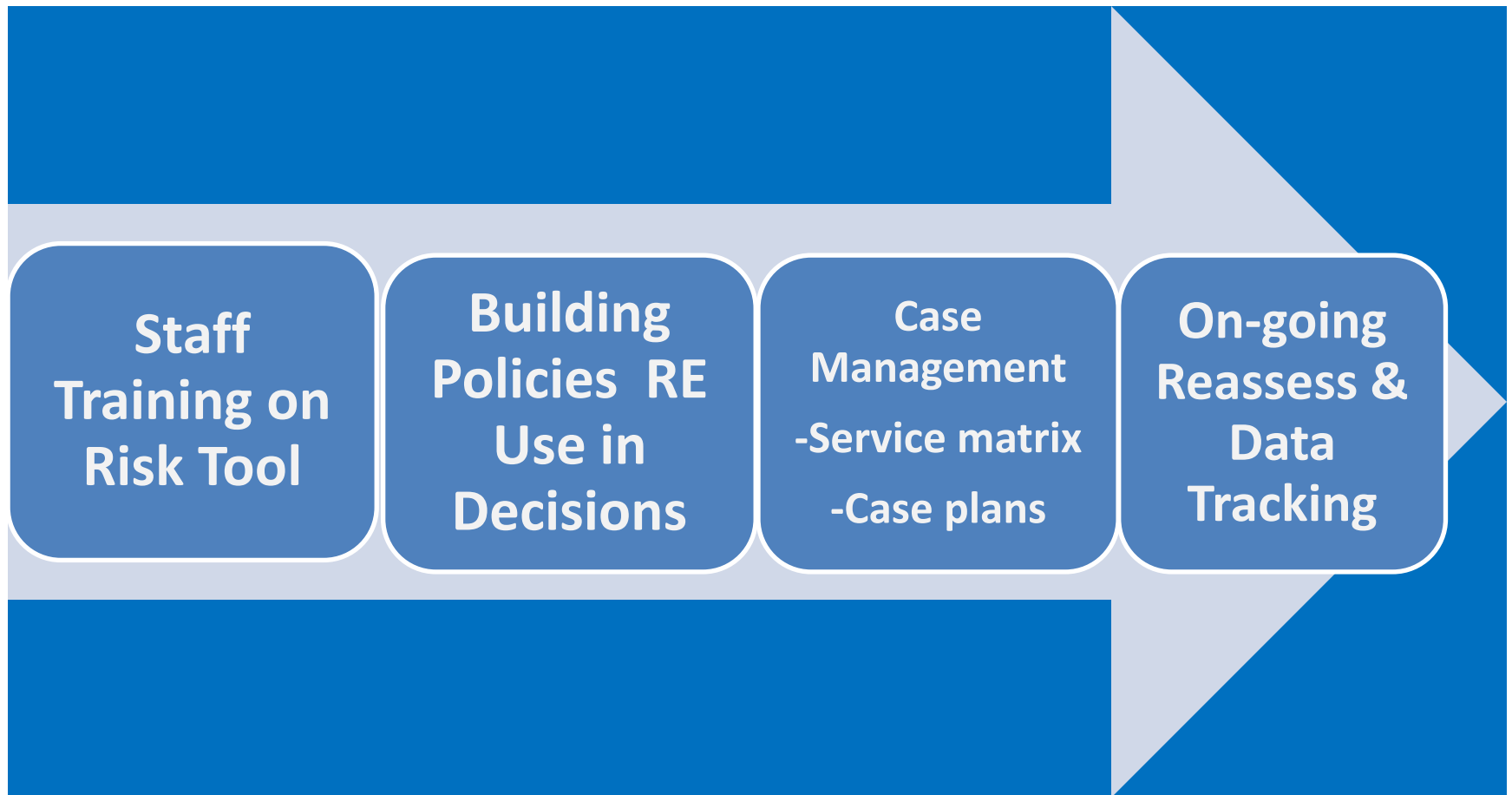# What Risk Assessments Do NOT Do

- NOT prescriptive
- NOT appropriate for identifying risk for sexual offending
- NOT mental health assessments
  - They also do not identify <u>potential</u> mental health problems in need of an assessment
- Typically do NOT include **items** that are unrelated to future offending, like "well-being needs" (e.g., special education, depression, trauma)
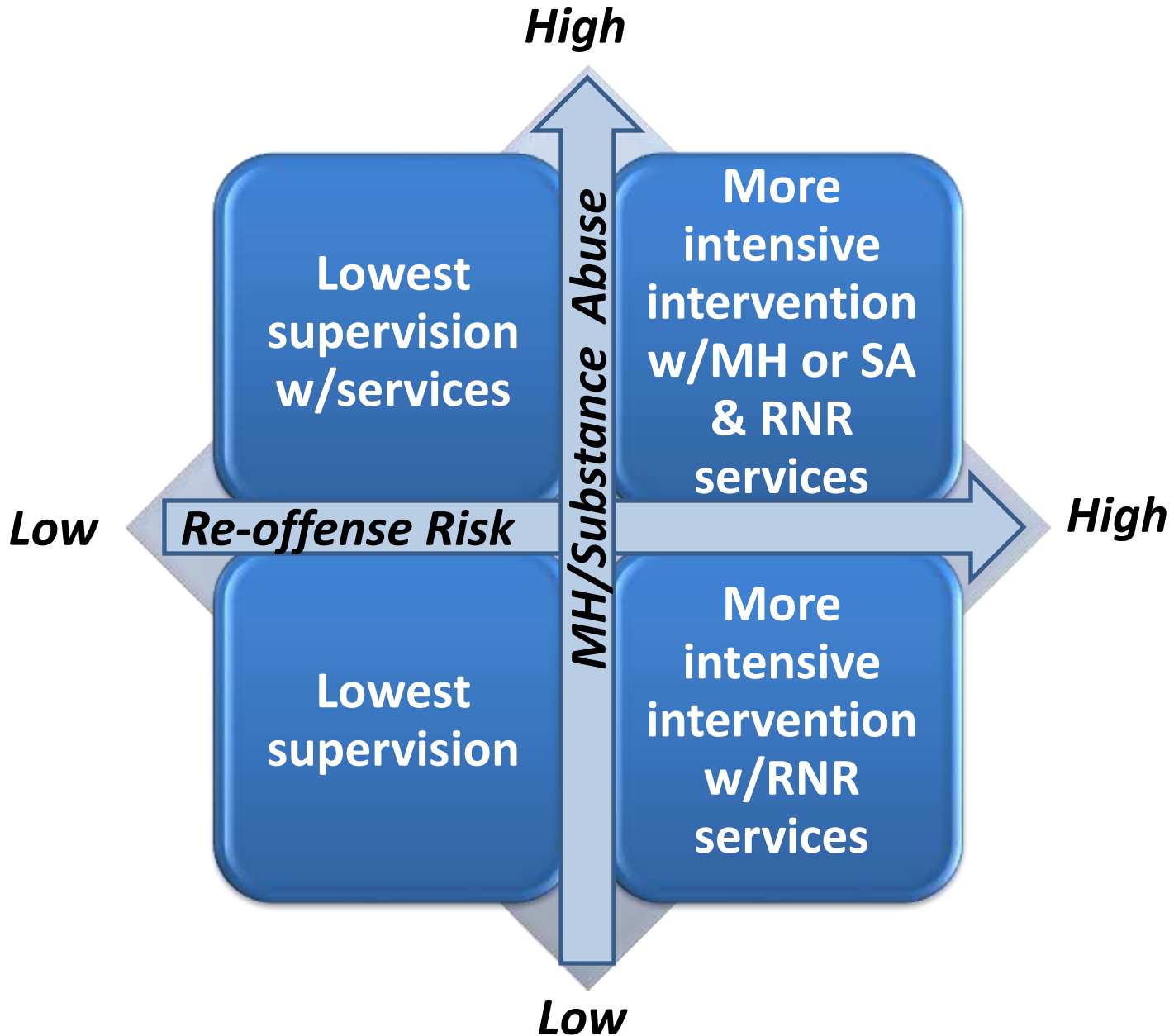
Therefore, should be supplemented with other screening and/or assessment tools

Examples of Screening Tools that May Accompany Risk Assessment

- Mental Health Screening
  - MAYSI-2
- Trauma
  - TSCC
  - UCLA PTSD
- Substance Abuse Screening
  - GAIN-SS   — CRAFFT
  - SASSI
- Needs Screening (well-being needs)
  - JIFF

The Implementation Process is CRUCIAL

Staff Training on Risk Tool → **Building Policies RE Use in Decisions** → **Case Management**
-Service matrix
-Case plans → **On-going Reassess & Data Tracking**

Risk-Needs Assessment
Take-Home Messages

- Is key for selecting the right services/ programming for the right youth

  - Matching services to criminogenic needs can reduce reoffending and save resources

  - May be helpful for release decisions to the extent these are based on public safety

- Must be reliable and valid

- Should be accompanied by mental health screening and other tools as needed

- Must have quality implementation with concrete policies RE its use in decision-making in order to be effective