

The Trials & Tribulations of Testing Couples Therapy for IPV: The Feasibility of Implementing the Creating Healthy Relationships in Oregon

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Why we need to experiment with novel battering interventions

- ▶ Meta-analysis of batterers' intervention (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004) reduces recidivism by approximately 5%.
- ▶ A cost-benefit analysis examining "return on investment" on Duluth Model men's groups in Washington State (Lee, Aos, & Pennucci, 2015), BIPS cost the state \$6.29 for every dollar spent
 - ▶ For CBT for drug abuse, the state recoups \$189.66
- ▶ Discouraging findings due to one-size-fits all approach?
- ▶ Most typologies can be simplified into two general types of intimate partner abuse

Characterological Violence

- ▶ Is asymmetrical with a clearly identifiable perpetrator and victim.
- ▶ Victim is afraid of partner
- ▶ Is marked by controlling and dominating behavior
- ▶ Perpetrators show little remorse, minimize what they do, and attribute blame to others
- ▶ Perps have borderline or antisocial personality features
- ▶ May abuse drugs & alcohol
- ▶ Victim may seek shelter
- ▶ Perhaps only 20% of all violent couples



Situational Violence

- ▶ Low-level physical violence (pushing, shoving)
- ▶ No intent to control or dominate
- ▶ Mutual: both partners violent
- ▶ Victims rarely seek shelter
- ▶ No fear of each other
- ▶ No personality disorders
- ▶ No drug or alcohol abuse
- ▶ Arises from conflict that gets out of control
- ▶ If police are called, often results in dual arrest or confusion about who is the primary aggressor
- ▶ 33% to 80% of violent couples are situational



Couples Therapy

- ▶ If violence arises from poor conflict resolution in up to 80% cases, why not try couples therapy teaching communication skills?
- ▶ Many states mandate against couples therapy
- ▶ Implies partner partly to blame
- ▶ Risk of retribution
- ▶ May empower the wife, as she witnesses her partner being confronted
- ▶ Only 8 studies of couples therapy for IPV
- ▶ Only 2 controlled study of couples therapy (Dunford, 2000; Bradley & Gottman, 2012)

Triaging Couples into Individual or Couples Groups

- ▶ Maybe a specific subset of IPV offenders may be best treated in a dyadic format that addresses both partners' communication skills.
- ▶ Maybe batterers' interventions have not been highly effective because they have treated only the male partner, which may not be effective for situationally or mutually violent couples.
- ▶ Currently, no distinction is made between characterological and situationally violent men in sentencing.
- ▶ All batterers arrested for IPV are court mandated to attend the same type of battering intervention program

Creating Healthy Relationships Program for Situationally Violent Couples (Bradley & Gottman, 2012)

- ▶ Volunteers from Seattle
- ▶ 22 weeks multi-couple group
- ▶ Start with mock talk show clips
- ▶ Group discussion
- ▶ Skills training education
- ▶ Self-soothing with Em-Wave
- ▶ Exercise to practice skill just learned
- ▶ More group discussion

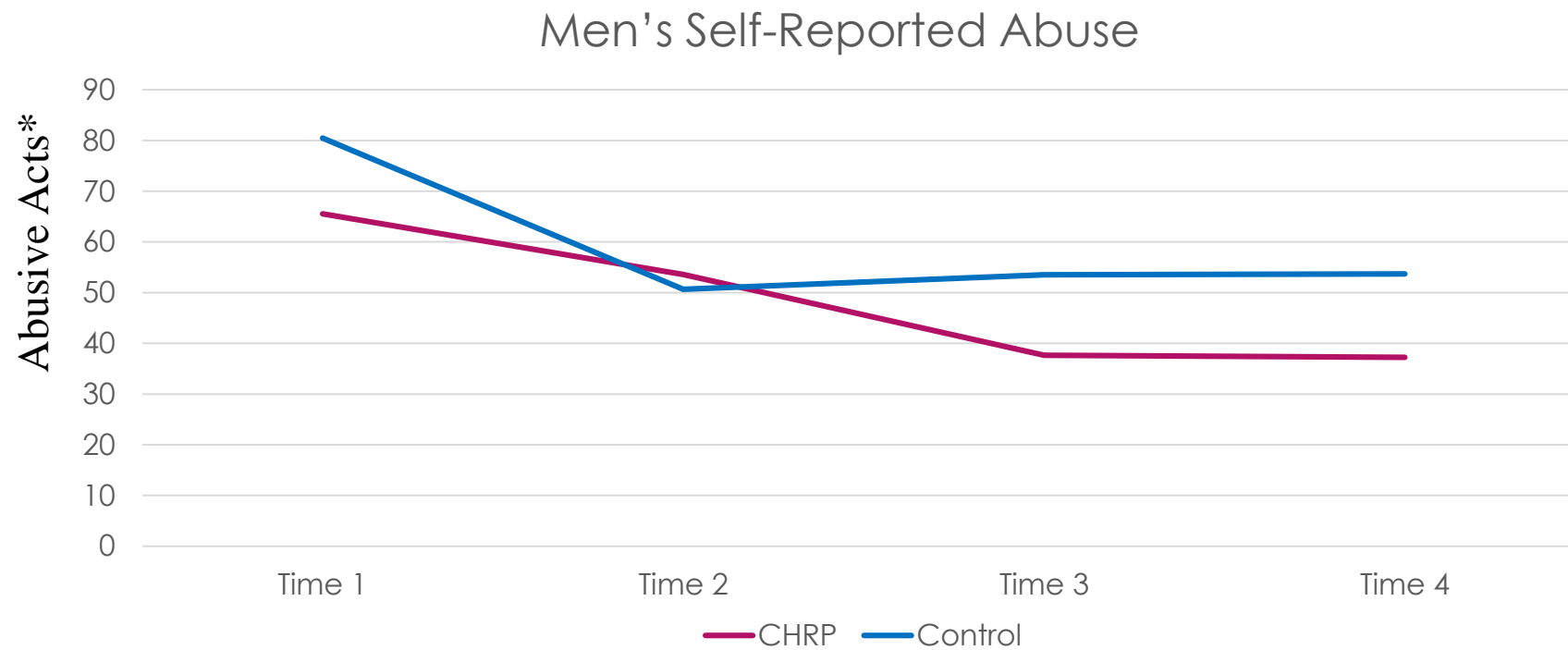
How do we screen for Situational Violence?

- ▶ *Situational Violence Screening Tool* in person to the man, over the phone to the woman
- ▶ Screens out: injurious violence, choking, weapons use, stalkers, terroristic threats, fearful wives, men's Antisocial and Borderline personality, alcohol or drug dependence
- ▶ Block random assignment AFTER couples are screened in

Testing CERP in a Community Sample of 91 Situationally Violent Couples

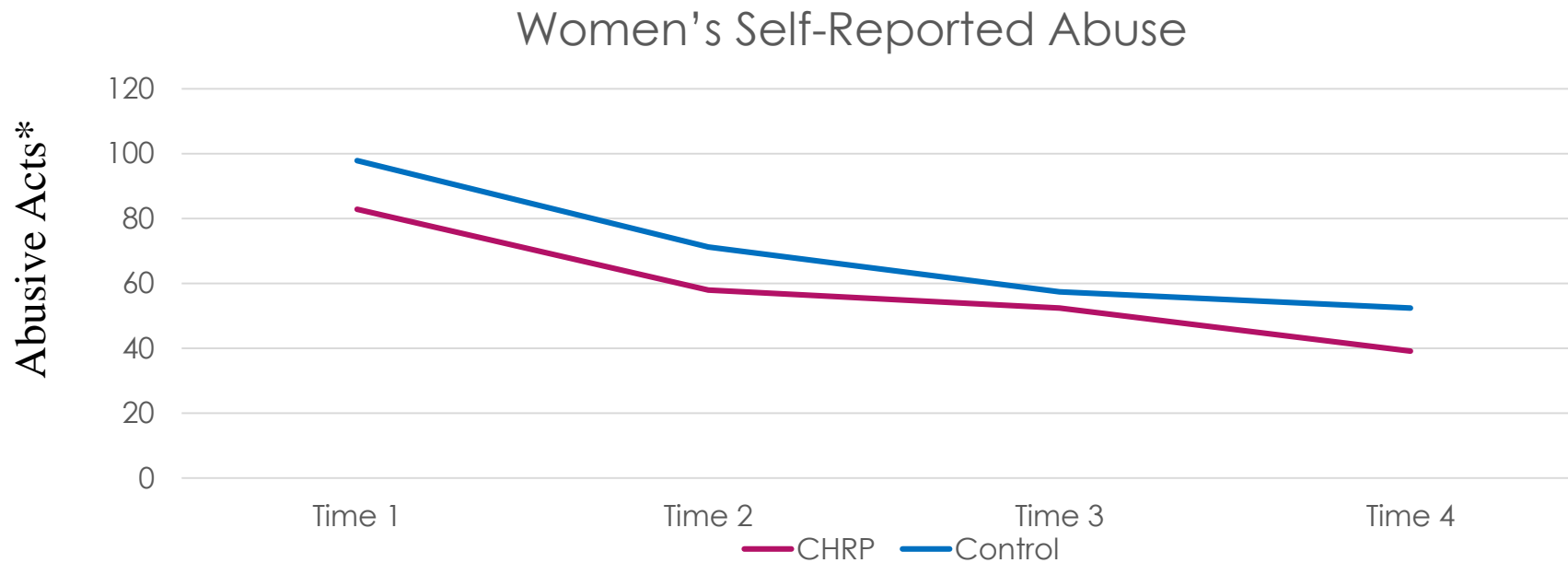
- ▶ CERP couples:
 - ▶ increased relationship satisfaction
 - ▶ Had greater parenting alliance
 - ▶ Men were more successful at self-soothing, better heart rate control
 - ▶ Were less hostile during
 - ▶ Slightly less violent
- ▶ As compared to couples in no treatment condition

Change in Intimate Partner Abuse over time: CHRP vs. Control Group in a Community Sample



*Total number of physical, sexual, psychological, and injurious abusive acts

Change in Intimate Partner Abuse over time: CHRP vs. Control in a Community Sample



*Total number of physical, sexual, psychological, and injurious abusive acts

Who benefited the most from CHRP?

- ▶ The more violent couples
- ▶ The more unhappily married couples
- ▶ The more hostile couples

...did BETTER in CHRP

Testing CERP on a court-mandated sample

- ▶ **Approached by Dr. Patricia Warford in 2013**
- ▶ **Jurisdiction in Yamhill County, Oregon willing to test this couples group**
- ▶ **Presented to judges, agencies, probation departments, victims' advocates, police departments, state senators, etc.**
- ▶ **Received full IRB approval in 2014-present, required annual visits**
- ▶ **Submitted a grant application in 2015**
- ▶ **Received 3 internal grants from the University of Houston (\$9,000)**

What was our plan?

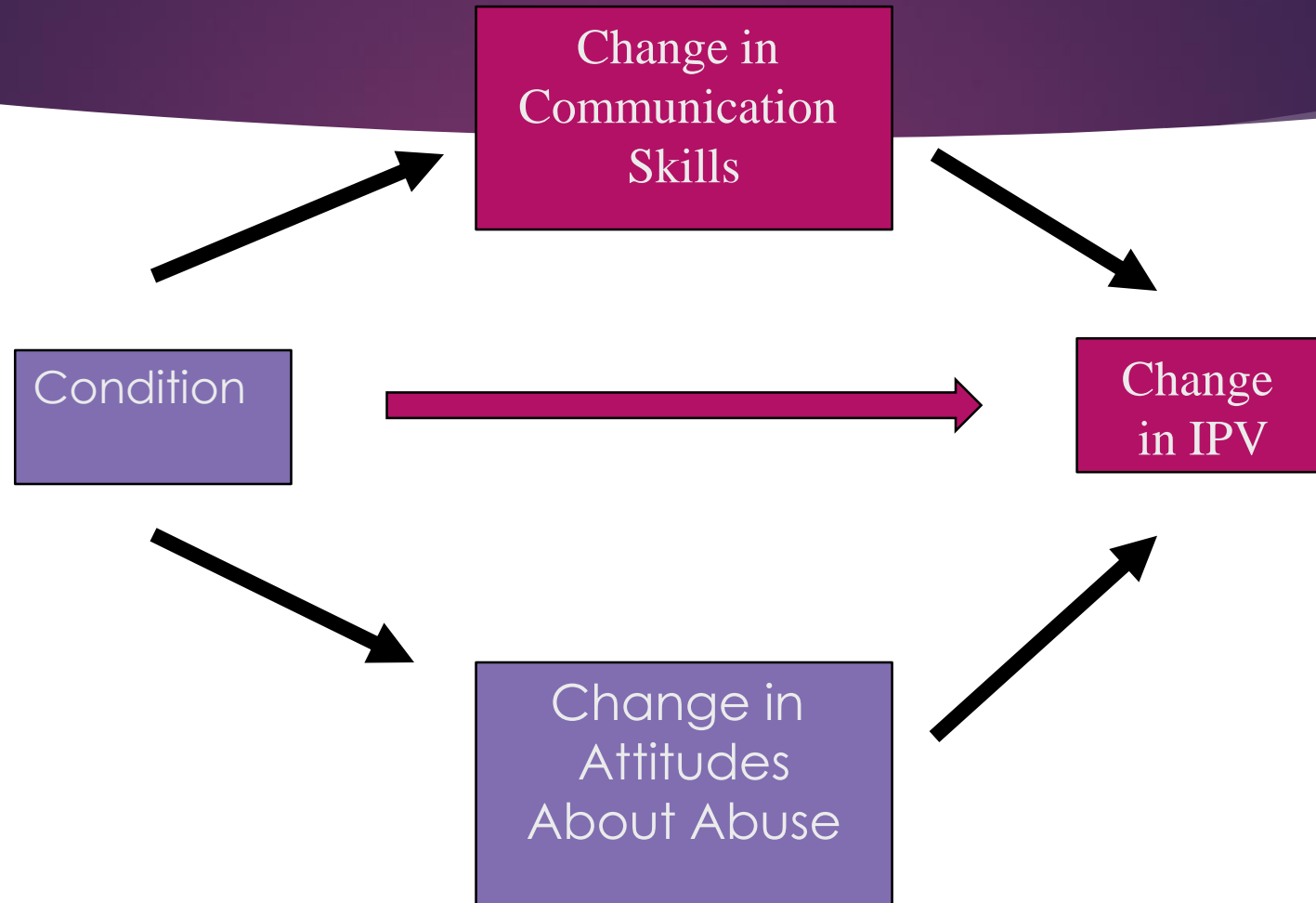
- ▶ Sample of court-mandated batterers screened in for situational violence
- ▶ Test safety and effectiveness of CHRP
- ▶ Test for mechanisms of change
- ▶ Must have willing partner, not fearful, wanting to reconcile
- ▶ Randomly assigned to either:
 - ▶ 14 weeks men's group + 22 weeks CHRP multi-couple group
 - ▶ Or 36 weeks of standard men's group

CHRP OREGON DATA COLLECTION TIME LINE

	TIME 1 Baseline	TIME 2 9 Months	TIME 3 18 Months	TIME 4 27 Months
Marriage/Relationship				
Marital/Relationship Status	MSI	MSI	MSI	MSI
Marital/Relationship Quality	CSI-4	CSI-4	CSI-4	CSI-4
Domestic Violence				
Characterological Violence Screen	SVST			
Physical Abuse	CTS2 & IJS	CTS2 & IJS	CTS2 & IJS	CTS2 & IJS
Emotional Abuse	CTS2 & IJS	CTS2 & IJS	CTS2 & IJS	CTS2 & IJS
Police Calls; Arrests for DV; parole violations				A
Patriarchal Attitudes About Violence and Sexist Beliefs	IBWA	IBWA	IBWA	IBWA
Accountability for Violence	ACC	ACC	ACC	ACC
Personality Disorders Associated with Domestic Violence	PAI	--	--	--

Mechanisms of Change: How does change come about?

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Potential Benefits

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- ▶ May provide evidence for a more effective intervention for some court-involved couples
- ▶ Close the revolving door
- ▶ Save money & lives
- ▶ Teachable add-on to existing BIPPs
- ▶ Couples could be triaged by type of IPV
- ▶ Could change the way we conduct BIPPs worldwide

What Actually Happened

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- ▶ Advisory Committee scrutinized us
- ▶ Few judges would refer into our program
- ▶ Participation limited to one small county
- ▶ Smear campaign lead to decreased enthusiasm among stakeholders
- ▶ NIJ grant application not funded
- ▶ Recruited only 6 couples

Stipulations by Oregon Advisory Committee 7/12/15

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- ▶ Approval for 2 years
- ▶ Must report to stakeholders and committee quarterly
- ▶ Must notify stakeholders that this demonstration project is a change from standard practice
- ▶ Must interview woman in person prior to couples group
- ▶ Change “strangulation” to “choke” in screening tool
- ▶ Limited to Yamhill County

Modifications

- ▶ Added voluntary couples
- ▶ Added police recruitment
- ▶ Added a Spanish-speaking group
- ▶ Loosened the screening criteria on Antisocial Personality Disorder and Alcohol Use
- ▶ Shortened the time period of abuse to 6 months
- ▶ Denied a renewal by the Advisory Committee in January, 2018
- ▶ Support withdrawn from judges in Yamhill County

Despite our negative decision, we sincerely appreciate and thank you and your community partners for your efforts to date to improve batterer intervention in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Oregon Batterer Intervention Program Advisory Committee

Steve Berger
Oregon Association of Community
Corrections Directors

Hon. Audrey Broyles
Marion County Circuit Court

Melissa Erlbaum
Clackamas Women's Services

Chris Huffine
Allies in Change Counseling Center

Hon. Rebecca Orf
Oregon Judicial Department

Jeremiah Stromberg
Oregon Department of Corrections

Vivien Bliss
Solutions Domestic Violence
Intervention Program

Don Chapin
Crossroads Nonviolence Education

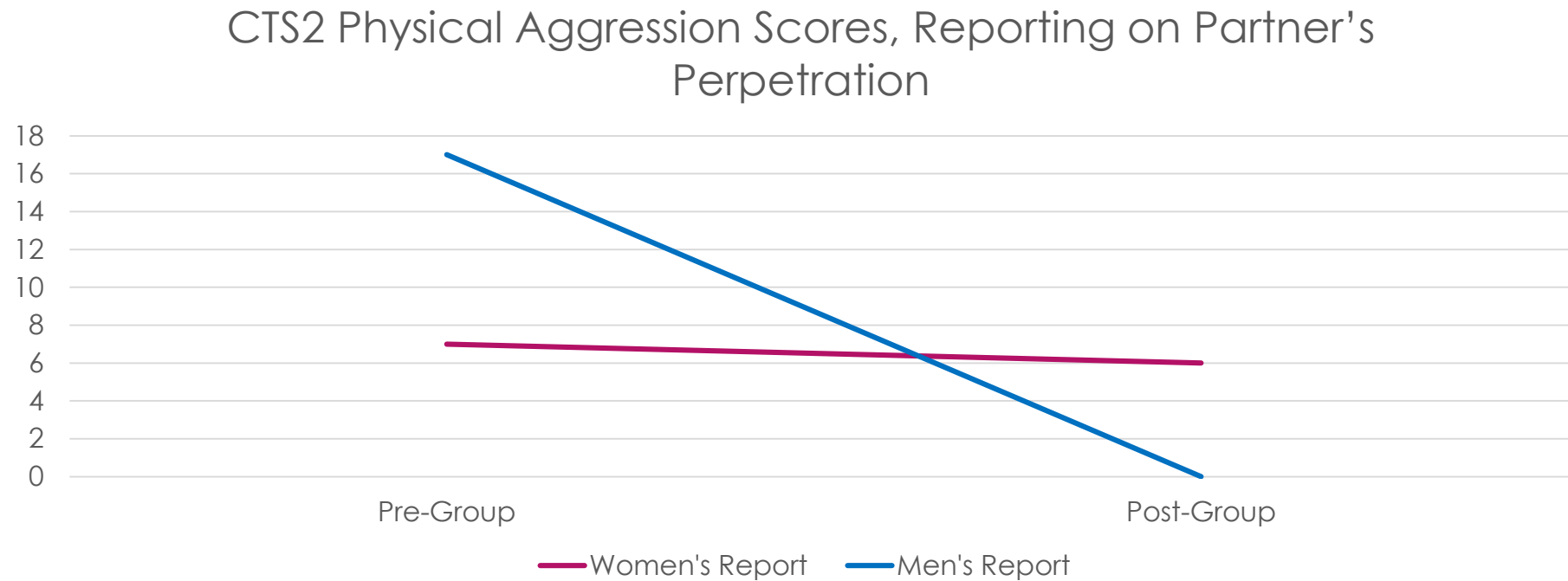
Chris Hoy
Clackamas County Community Corrections

Eric Mankowski
Portland State University

Shannon Sivell
Oregon Department of Justice

Change in Partners' Violence Pre- & Post-CHRP

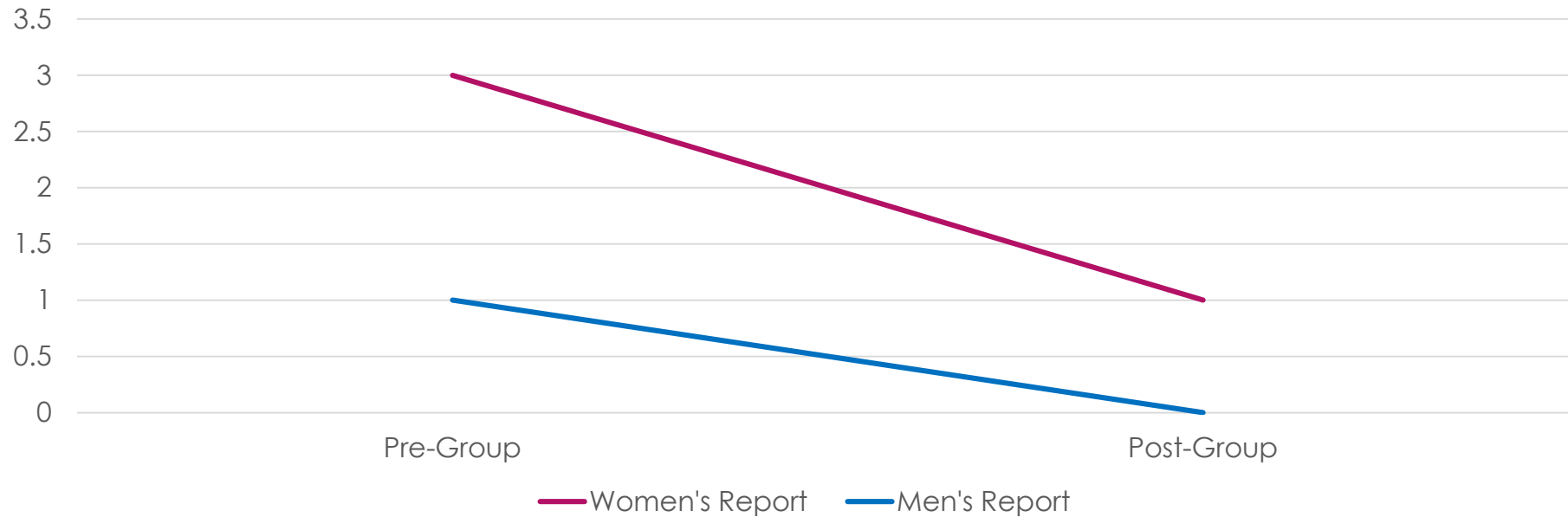
Physical Aggression Frequency



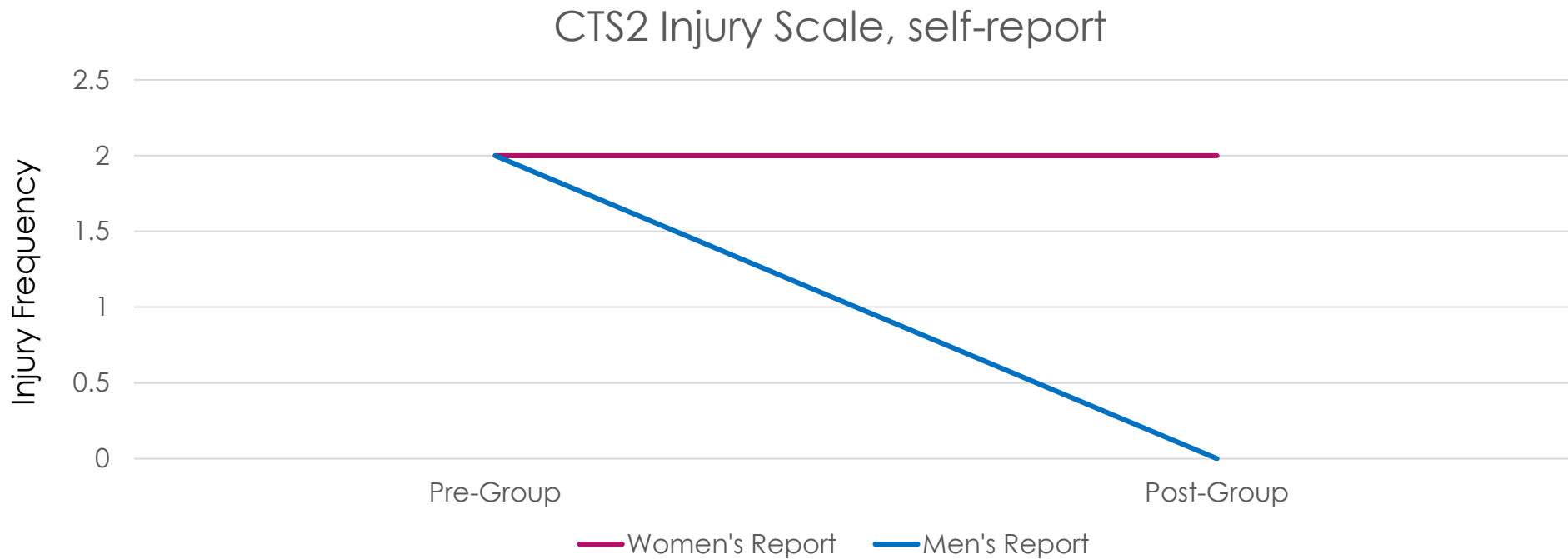
Change in Partners' Severe Violence Pre- & Post-CHRP

Severe Physical Aggression Frequency

CTS2 Severe Physical Aggression Scores



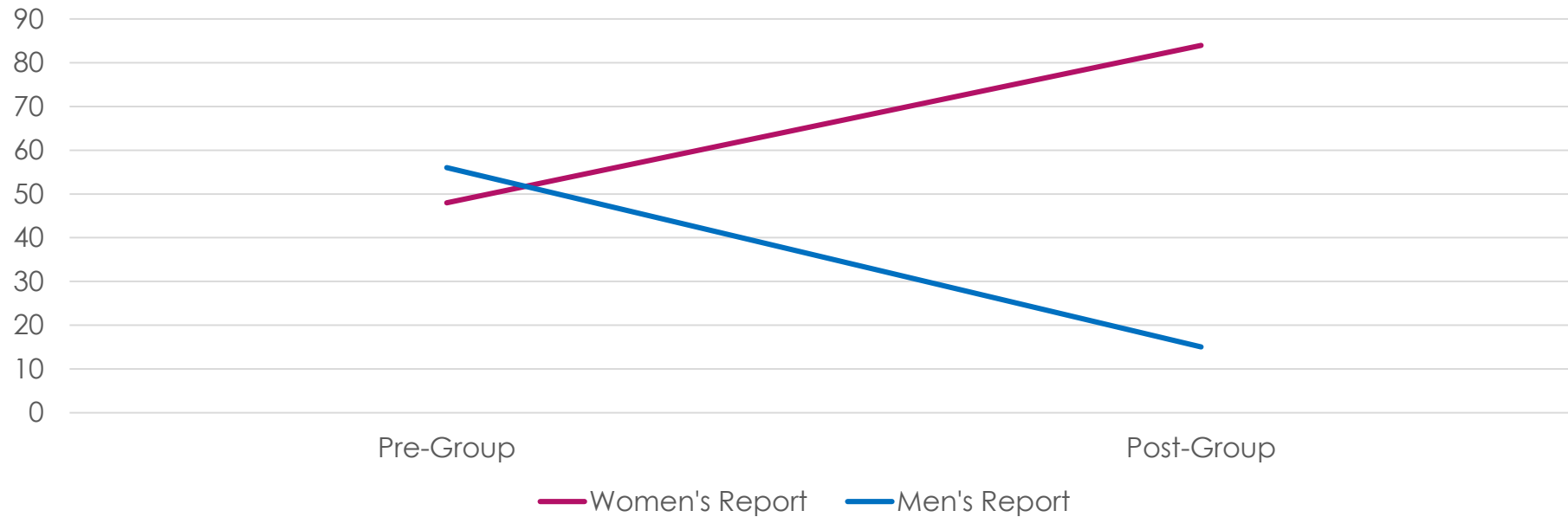
Change in Self-Reported Injury Pre- & Post-CHRP



Change in Partners' Psychological Abuse Pre- and Post CHRP

Psychological Abuse Frequency

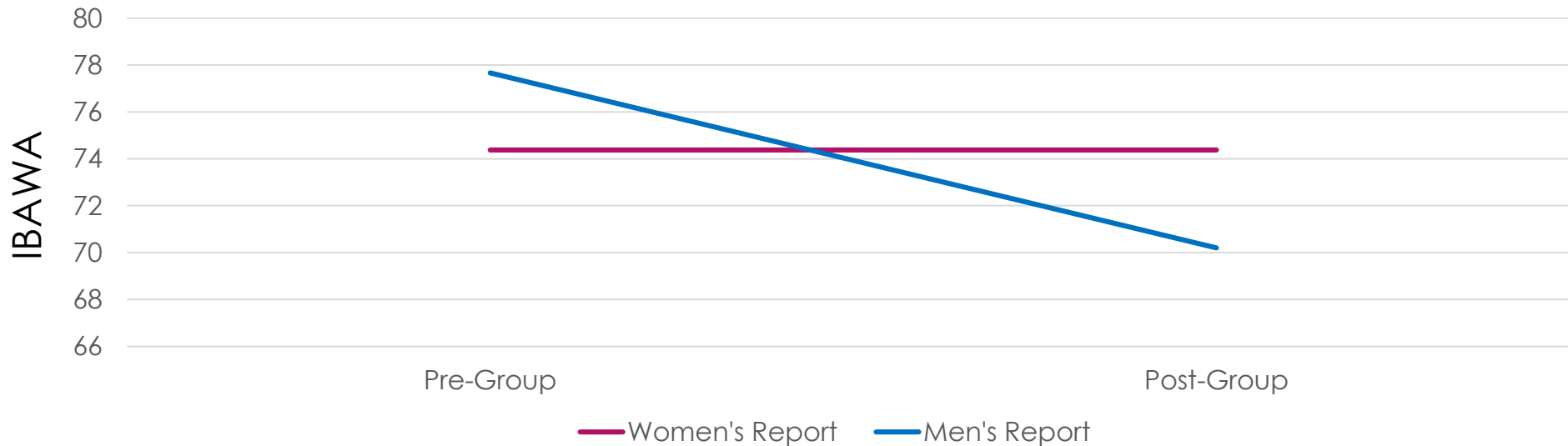
Partner Report of CTS2 Psychological Abuse Frequency



Change in Attitudes about Partner Abuse Pre- and Post CHRP

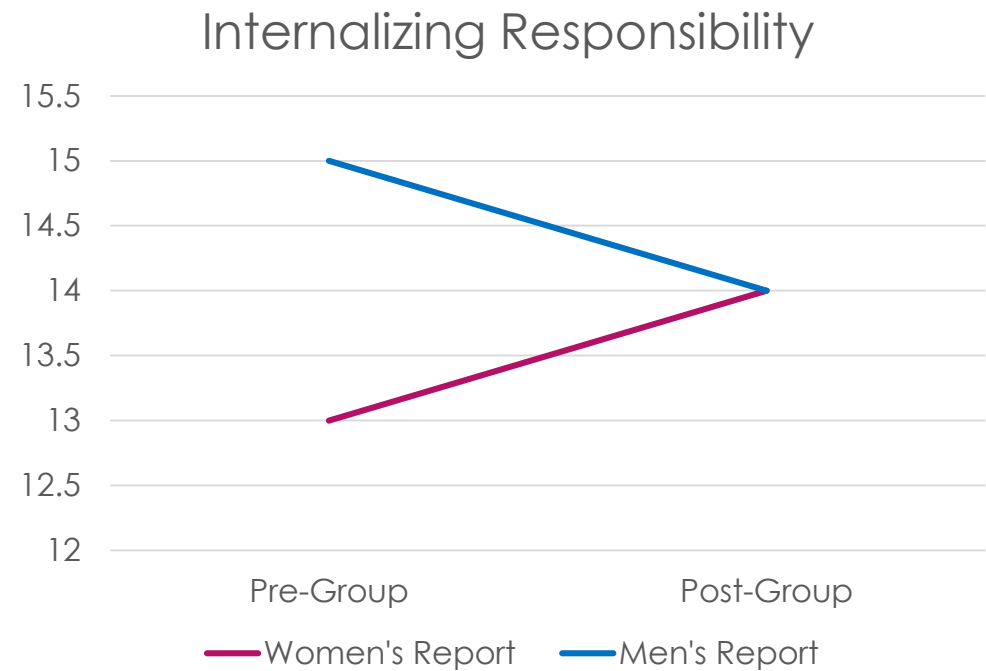
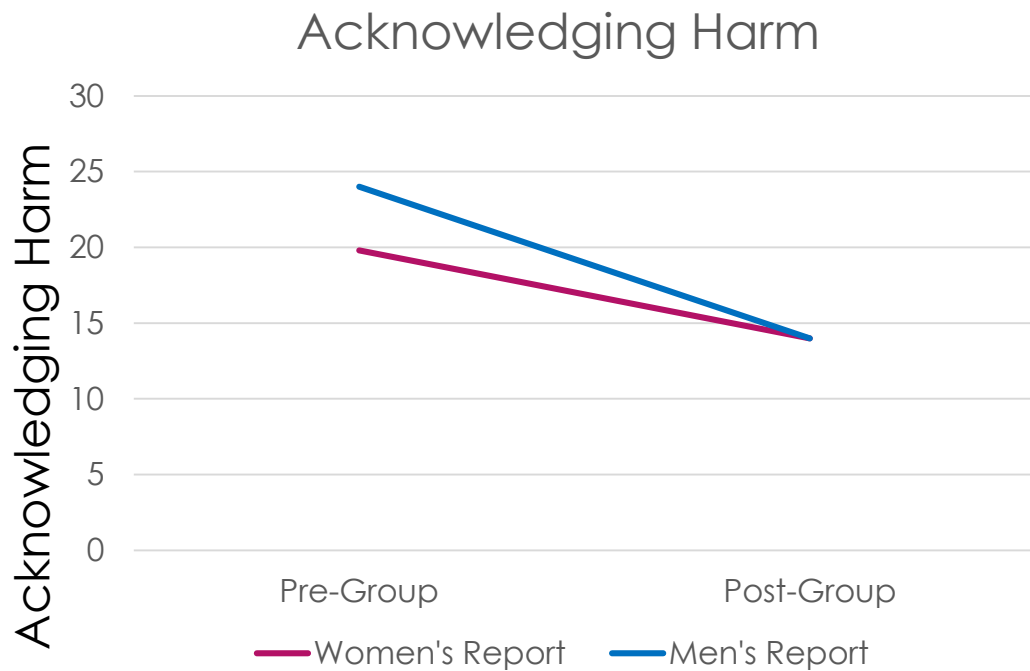
(Saunders, Lynch, Grayson & Linz, 1987)

Inventory of Attitudes about Wife Beating:
Modified to be Gender Neutral



High scores are prosocial, non-violent attitudes

Change in Accountability Scale Pre- and Post CHRP (Costa, Canady & Babcock, 2007)



Criticism of Our Study

- ▶ Anti-BIP or anti-Duluth: Not a personal vendetta. Just the messenger that what we do now doesn't work very well.
- ▶ Misrepresents the research on BIPS: No scientist concludes BIPs work
- ▶ Will shut down BIPs: No, will be an additional alternative treatment for BIP agencies added to men's group
- ▶ Not evidence-based: Best evidence is randomized clinical trials. No experiments show Duluth works. One experiment shows CERP works. Good science requires replication
- ▶ Is unethical; doesn't care about victims' safety

Conclusions from Other Scholars

(Eckhardt, Murphy, Whitaker, Sprunger, Dykstra & Woodard, 2013)

- ▶ “...there is no empirical justifications for agencies, state organizations, judges, mental health professionals or others involved in improving the lives of those impacted by IPV to limit the types of services offered to clients, or to restrict the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of such methods.”

Consciousness raising, criminalization, shaming & blaming are not enough

- ▶ “I worry that the public, or even the domestic violence community who should know better, thinks we have “solved” the issue as long as there are loud calls for strong action against perpetrators. We can all shout at the top of our lungs that we believe domestic violence is wrong, but until we as a society figure out *how to reduce partner violence* our shouts are nothing but wind.”
- ▶ Steven C, Hayes, Ph.D. quoted in *Psychology Today* 2017

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Participant flow can be restricted even if project has “support”
- ▶ Projects can be maligned even when “approved”
- ▶ Researchers need to be installed onsite for both experimental and control conditions
- ▶ My IRB has my back
- ▶ We need for screening tools for judges to triage
- ▶ Novel implementations need support at the State level