

A Game Of Chance: A Life Of Risk

***A Close Look at Problem Gambling, Juvenile
Justice, Youth Pathology and the
40 Developmental Assets.***

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The Facts

In Florida, the mean age for gambling initiation among youth is **12.5 years**.

Early involvement in gambling now precedes the expected onset for use of **cigarettes, hard liquor and marijuana**.

Youth who exhibit problem gambling behavior are more likely to report **illegal activities, problems with the law, poorer school performance and more truancy**.

Gambling and Problem Gambling Prevalence Among Adolescents in Florida, A Report to the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., University of Florida, December 2002.

Florida Youth Risk Survey

- 14.9% had arguments with family or friends due to gambling
- Problem gamblers are:
 - More likely to use alcohol and drugs in past 30 days
 - Twice as likely to be drunk or high at school within past year

Gambling among Florida Middle and High School Students, A Report to the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Drs. Lieberman and Cuadrado, June 2006.

Florida Youth Risk Survey

Problem gamblers are:

- Six (6) times more likely to carry a gun to school within past year
- Far more likely to do poorer in school, skip class for six (6) or more days
- Nearly three (3) times more likely to attack someone and more than three (3) times more likely to have been arrested

Gambling among Florida Middle and High School Students, A Report to the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Drs. Lieberman and Cuadrado, June 2006.

Adolescents Incarcerated In Florida DJJ Facilities

- Sample of 569 incarcerated adolescents
 - 17% attributed institutionalization in part to gambling
 - 51% in need of help for a gambling problem
 - Significant findings because many systems do not screen
- Told needed treatment for gambling (12.5% past year)
- In DJJ system due to gambling (16.9% past year)
- Arrested or detained because of gambling (9.4% past year)
- Over 80% of those who gambled in year prior to institutionalization had at least one negative consequence
 - Translates to 63% of entire residential population
 - Few reported receiving any help for gambling despite problems experienced.

Gambling Education and Prevention Needs Assessment for Juveniles in Residential Detention Centers of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, 2002.

Unique Challenges of Incarcerated Juveniles

- **Feeling trapped** (System, neighborhood, family, reputation, failure)
- **Low self esteem** (Lack of confidence with limited skills, feeling trapped, and slim hope for a successful future)
- **Desire for control/acceptance** (Depend on their self developed sets of rules/doctrine replacing inconsistent or unfavorable system used by caregivers, society)
- **Lack of empathy:** (Oversight/Limited insight of victim impact such as debt, emotions, security, time loss, recovery, future worry of repeated victimization)
- **Male ego development / boosting** (Putting other peers down to feel better about self, Strong reactions such as: *staff versus youth, weak versus strong, winner versus loser*)

Example: Strong Desire for Control/Acceptance: ADHD

- Feeling rejected by society, unable to sit compliantly in class, constantly disciplined by adults, youth begins to generalize that society does not accept him/her. Youth seeks control and comfort by rejecting society's rules and implementing more realistic set that accept unruliness that accompanies his/her ADHD. Youth's new set of rules are forgiving, accepting, and better than society's

Unique Challenges of Incarcerated Juveniles

- **Lack of extra curricular activities;** *(Grew up absent of extra curricular activities - YMCA, sports programs, Boy Scouts, church groups, etc.)*
- **Self seeking** *(Pleasure focused; Developed out of fear, not having needs met)*
- **High sensitivity** *(Resistant to feedback. Objectiveness interpreted as personal attacks)*
- **Lack of interdependence** *(Limited mutual trust among others. Strong misunderstandings of strength and weakness, “being soft”)*
- **Few interpersonal skills** *(best to be alone, coping skill leads to avoidance behaviors therefore skills are never practiced)*
- **Inclusion deficits:** *(Little to no acceptance / appreciation of differences viewed as a threat)*

Criminogenic Factors

Attributes of juvenile offenders that, when changed, influence probability of recidivism.

- The following slide shows the most common factors according to DJJ. The more risk factors present, the greater the risk for committing criminal acts.

Criminogenic Factors

- 51% Anger problem
- 50% Inadequate parental supervision
- 47% Used drugs (Only 18% were identified as having a drug problem)
- 33% Used alcohol (Only 18% were identified as having a alcohol problem)
- 31% Committed offense in impulse
- 23% Committed offense because of peers
- 15% Committed offense for the money
- 8% Committed the offense for thrill

Criminogenic Factors

These factors fall into one of the following categories and a change in any category can affect the probability of recidivism.

- Anti Social Companions
- Dysfunctional Family Relations
- Alcohol and Drug Problems
- Low Self Control
- Antisocial Attitudes
- Callous Personality

Treatment Adjustments

- **Emphasize choices** (Encourages youth to internalize responsibility, builds healthy self concept/esteem, and is respectful of youth's autonomy. Conversely helps alleviate perception of being trapped, without control, and unworthy)
- **Integrate life skills** (Problem solving, analytical thinking, coping skills, career interest, money management, social skills, teambuilding etc.)
- **Anticipate resistance** (Many youth will reject help from adults. Roll with resistance and build education, awareness, and application of control.)

Example:

Youth Internalization of Control

- *“The fact is, we can’t control everything that happens to us. We can’t control the color of our skin, who will win the NBA Finals, where we were born, who our parents are, how much tuition will be next fall or how others might treat us. But there is one thing we can control: how we respond to what happens to us. And that is what counts! This is why we need stop worrying about things we can’t control and start worrying about things we can.”*
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens

Treatment Adjustments

- **Assess and refer** (ego/self concept, sensation seeking, trauma, grief, etc. Identify underlying causes of impulsive and hurtful actions)
- **Look for justification and coping skills** (Keep the upper hand with youth manipulation. Strive for balance between confronting manipulation and being sensitive to history of rejection, abandonment, & detachment.)
- **Adapt teaching approaches:** (Visuals and practice techniques are effective teaching tools)

Life Skills: Problem Solving

- *Teaching a life skill, such as the system of problem solving, helps a youth to incorporate a healthy habit of resisting the impulse to act until a process of thought is utilized. Learning this systematic approach encourages not only consideration of choices and consequences but also emotional management, development of personal goals, and identification of facts from opinions. Focusing on a successful step by step system help diffuses the frustration of past failed attempts at addressing problems, while building confidence in a personal skill.*

Life Skills: Problem Solving

- *(Cont.) Youth adding a step of self evaluation can introduce the value of failure as a strength and not an accurate reflection of negative identity, which is normally seen as a threat. Embracing mistakes as an asset and not a devaluing of worth is necessary for the positive development of juvenile self image. Reducing the intimidation of differences and failure encourages youth to explore strong emotional reactions, instead of hiding from them. Youth therefore, can learn to embrace emotions instead of hiding from them, previously used as a coping skill. This new life skill can lead to increases in victim empathy and steps towards the reestablishment of intimacy and trust with others.*

What are the Developmental Assets?

Developmental Assets are the 40 key building blocks that young people need to grow up to be caring, competent, and productive adults.

The Categories of Developmental Assets

- External Assets

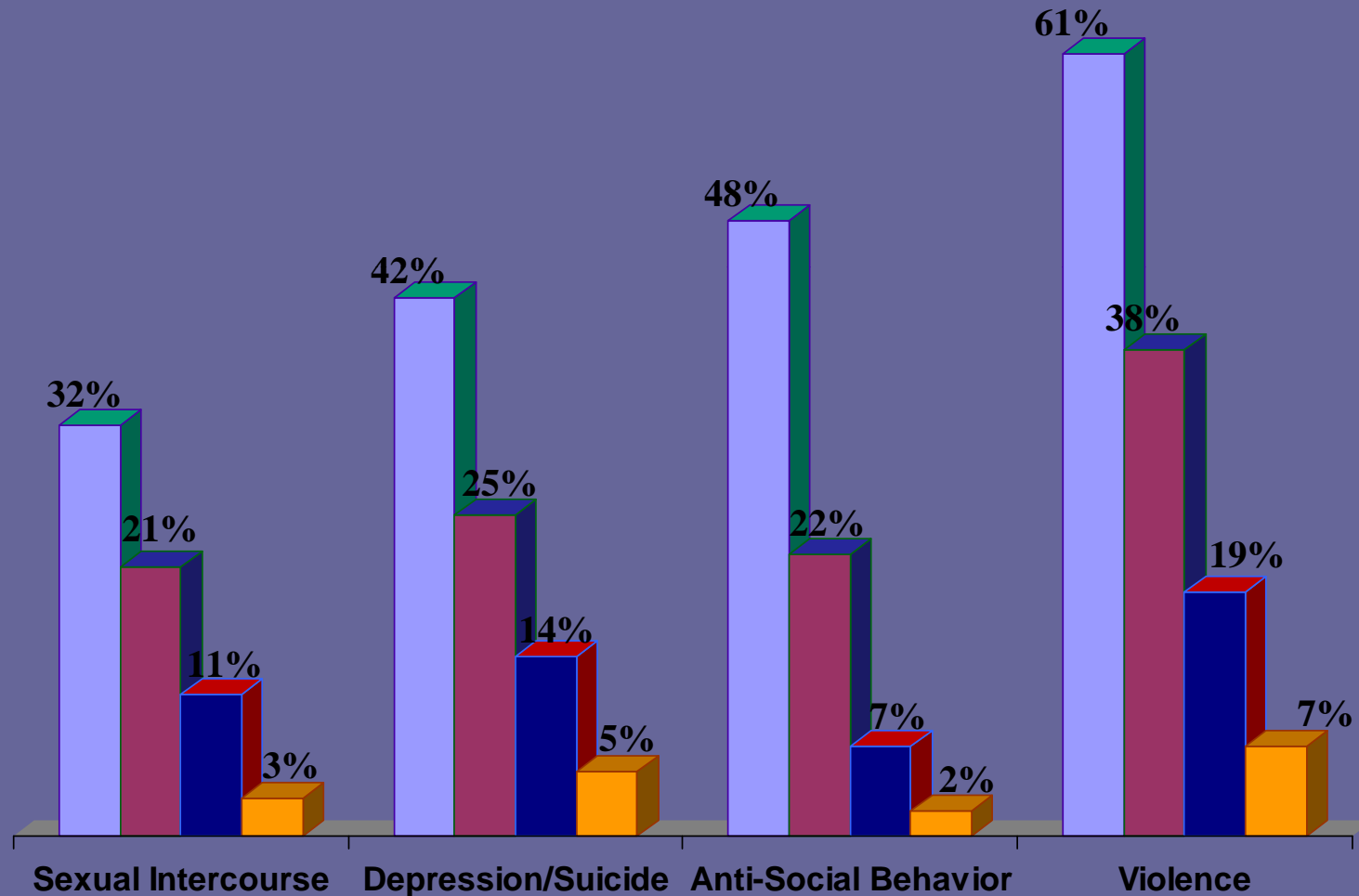
- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Constructive Use of Time

- Internal Assets

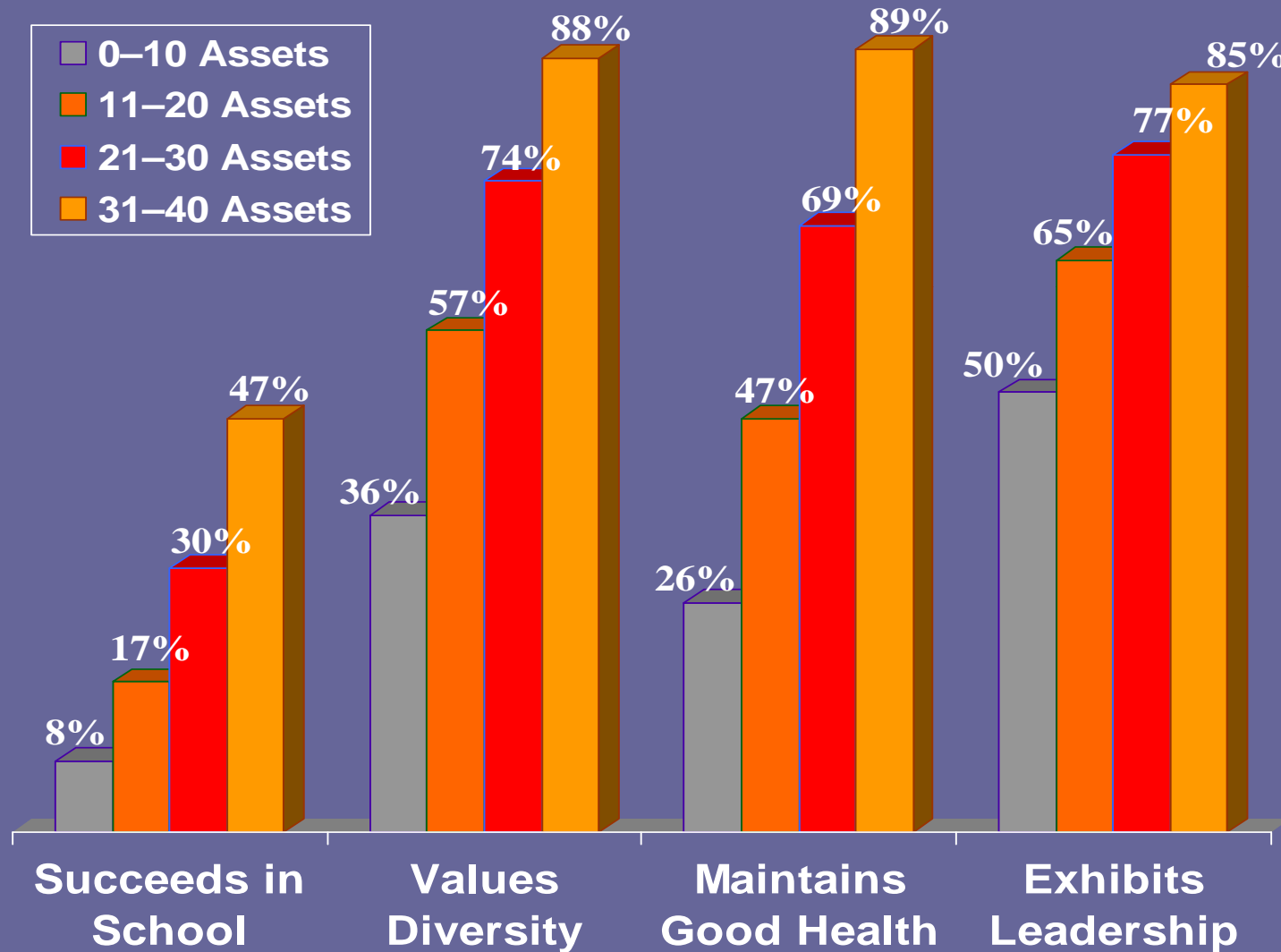
- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

The Power of Assets to Protect

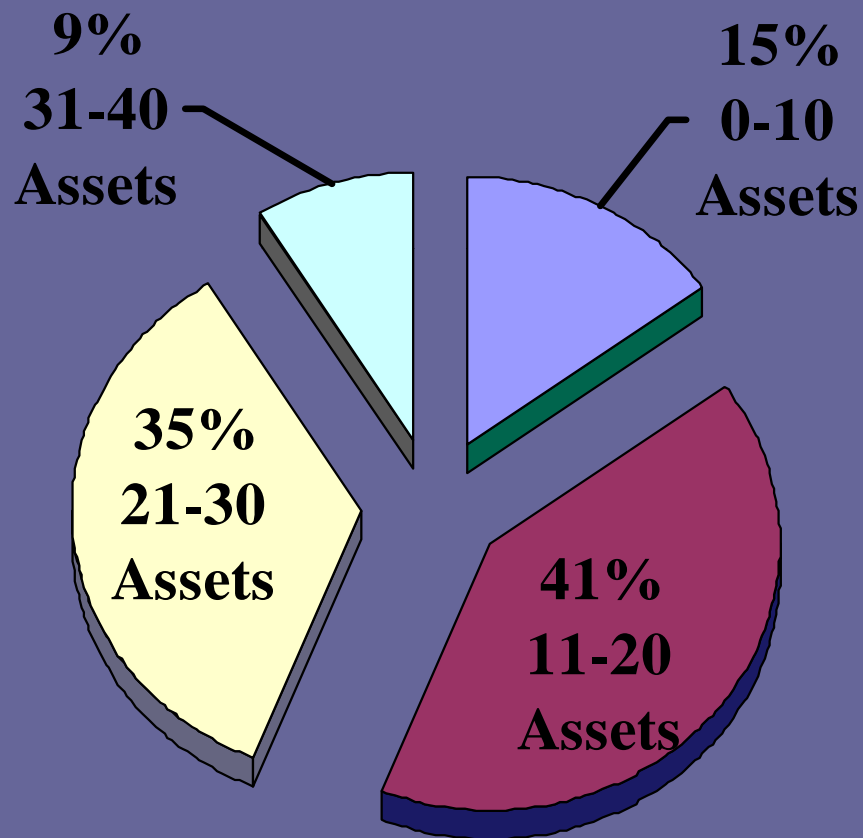
0-10 Assets 11-20 Assets 21-30 Assets 31-40 Assets



The Power of Assets to Promote



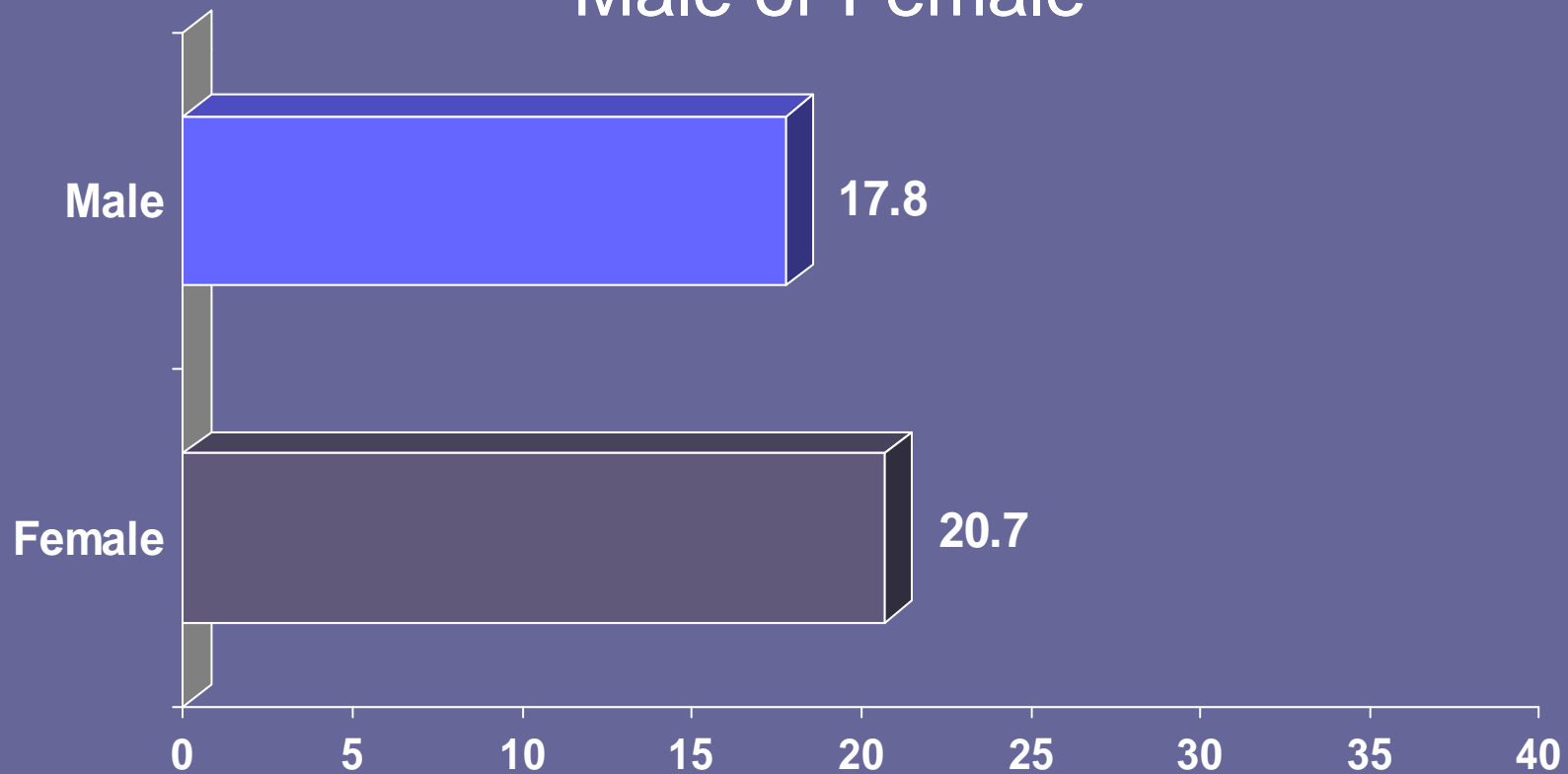
Assets Among Youth



**Average
Number of
Assets:**
19.3

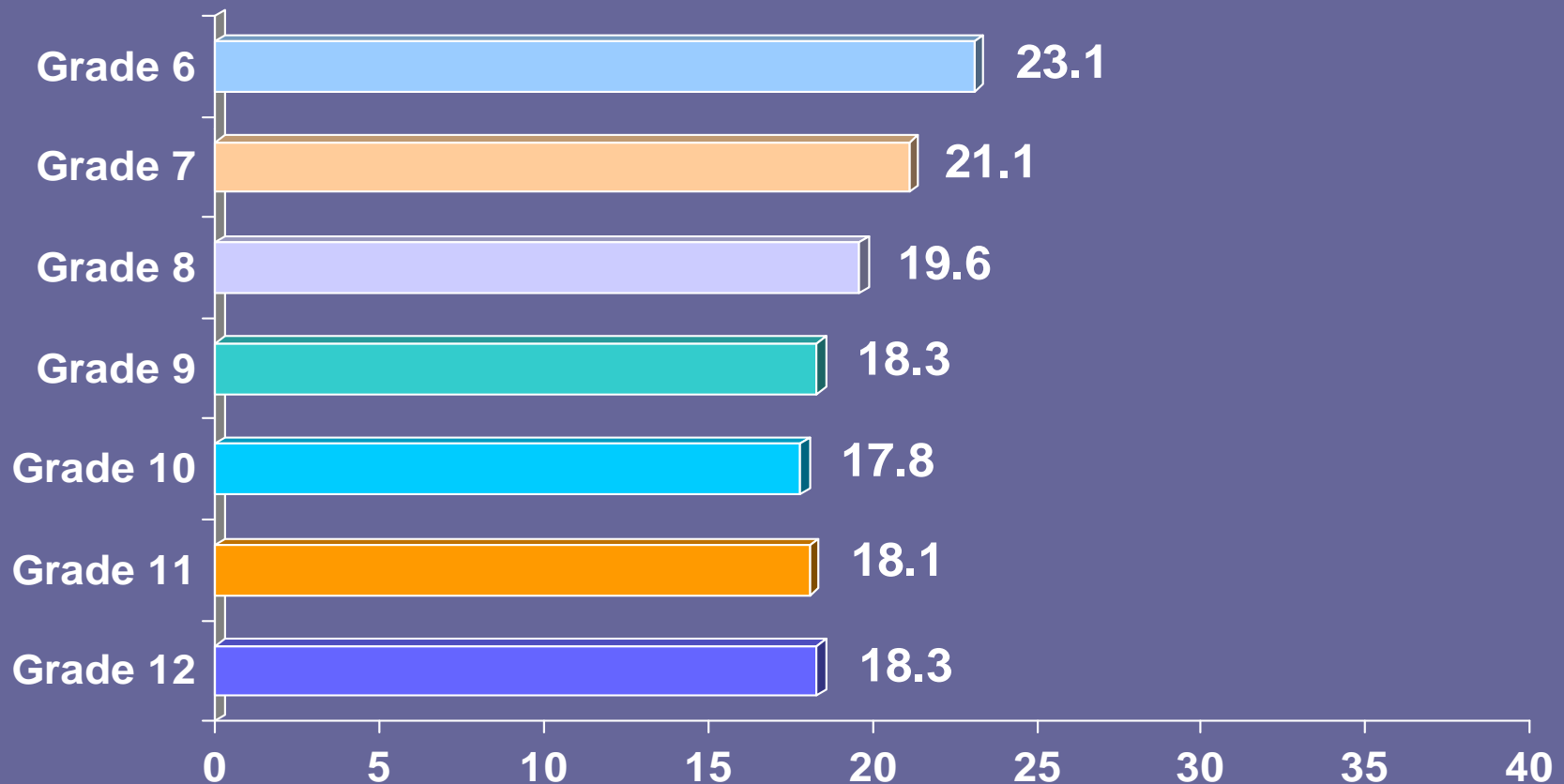
The Gap in Assets Among Youth

Average Number of
Assets,
Male or Female



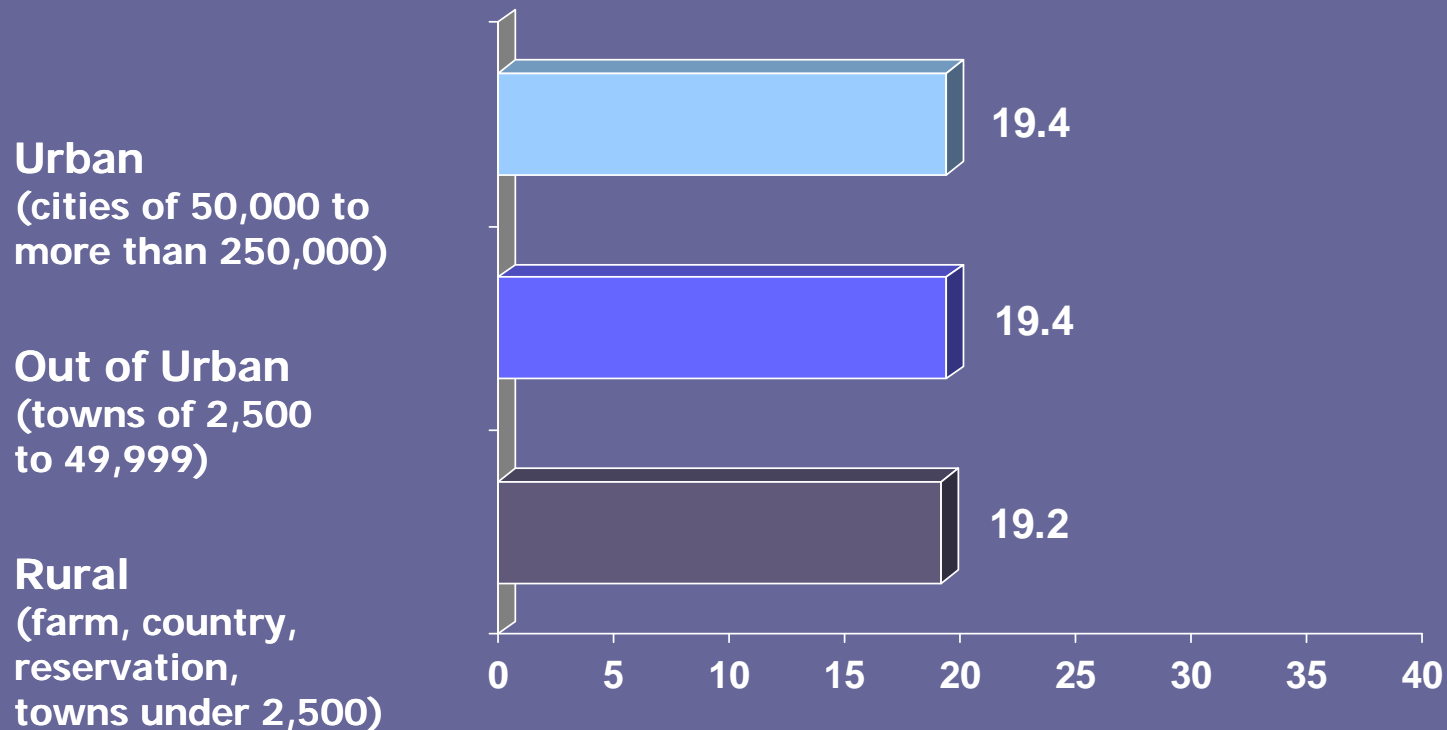
The Gap in Assets Among Youth

Average Number of Assets,
by Grade

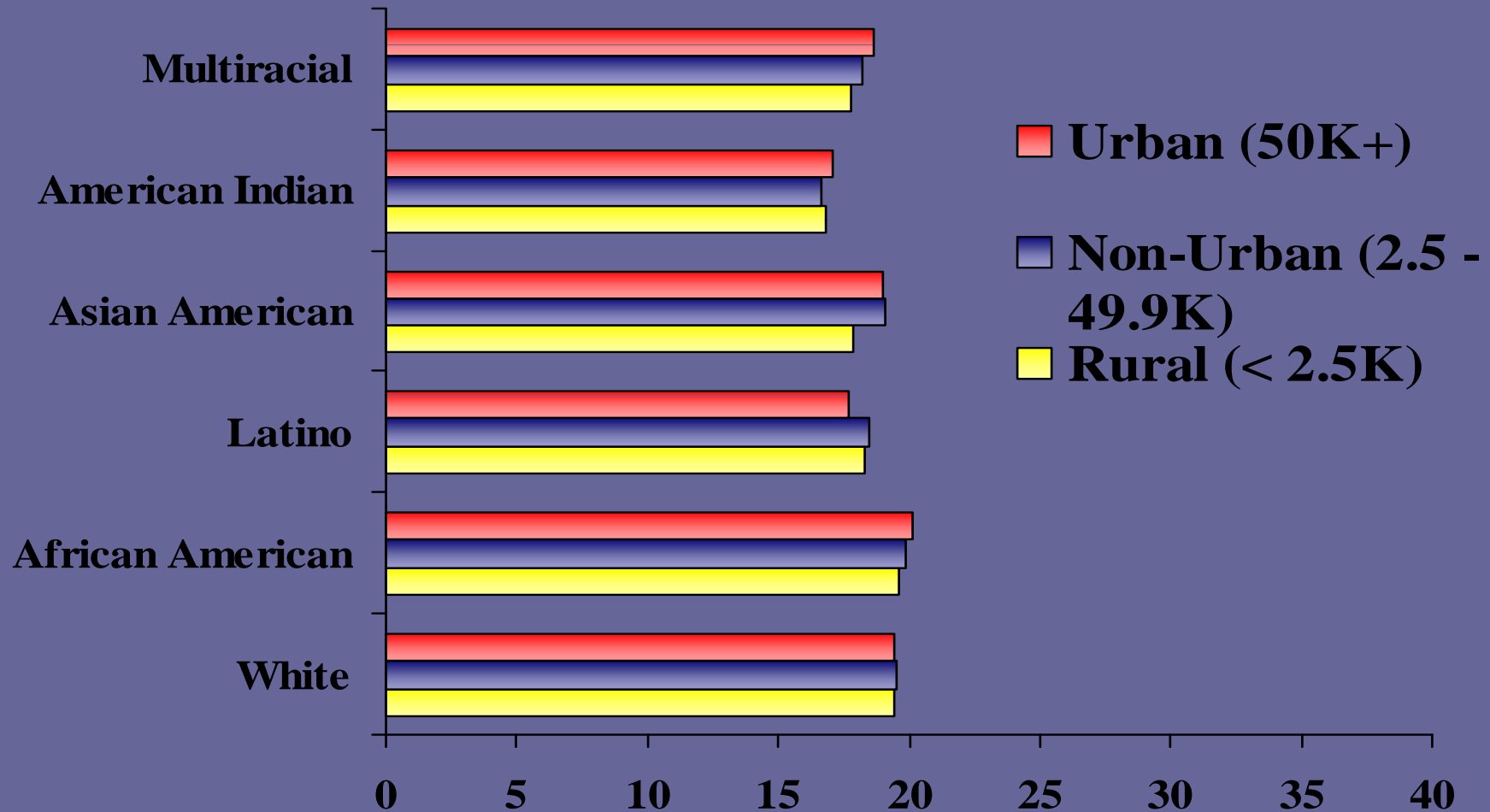


The Gap in Assets Among Youth

Average Number of Assets,
by Geographical Location



Development Assets by Race/Ethnicity and Urbanicity



What does it all mean?

- There is a need for treatment adjustments with youth engaged in risky and impulsive behavior. Simply helping youth explore patterns - including gambling specific - often reveal the significant risk factors that are keys to treatment. The need for life skill training, identification of unique developmental deficiencies, particularly the exploration of self identity, is necessary for successful elimination of risk factors. Prevention efforts are only as accurate as the assessment. Failure to address both risk factors and underlying factors encourage the continuation of maladaptive behavior as supported by recidivism and asset research.

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