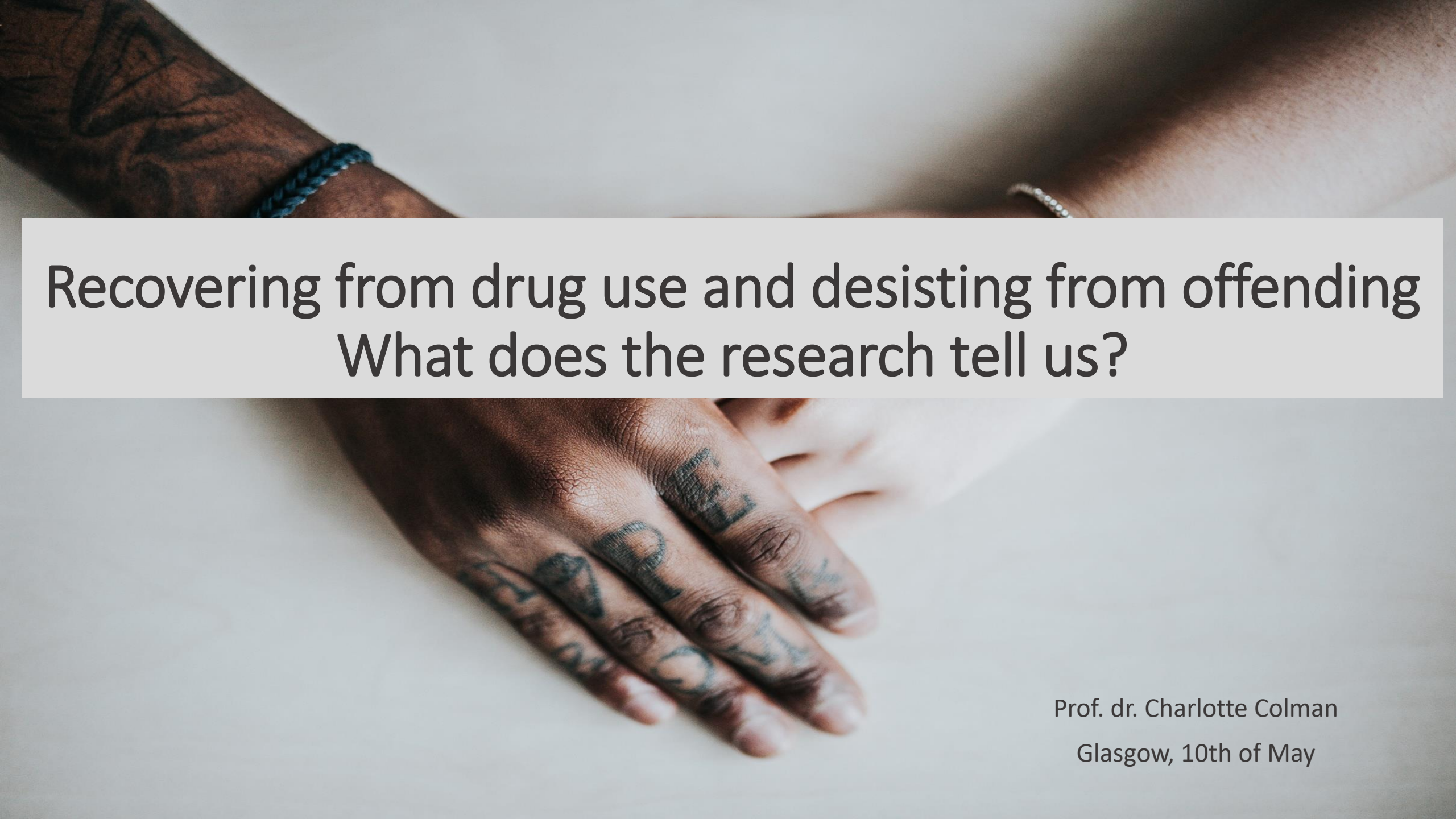
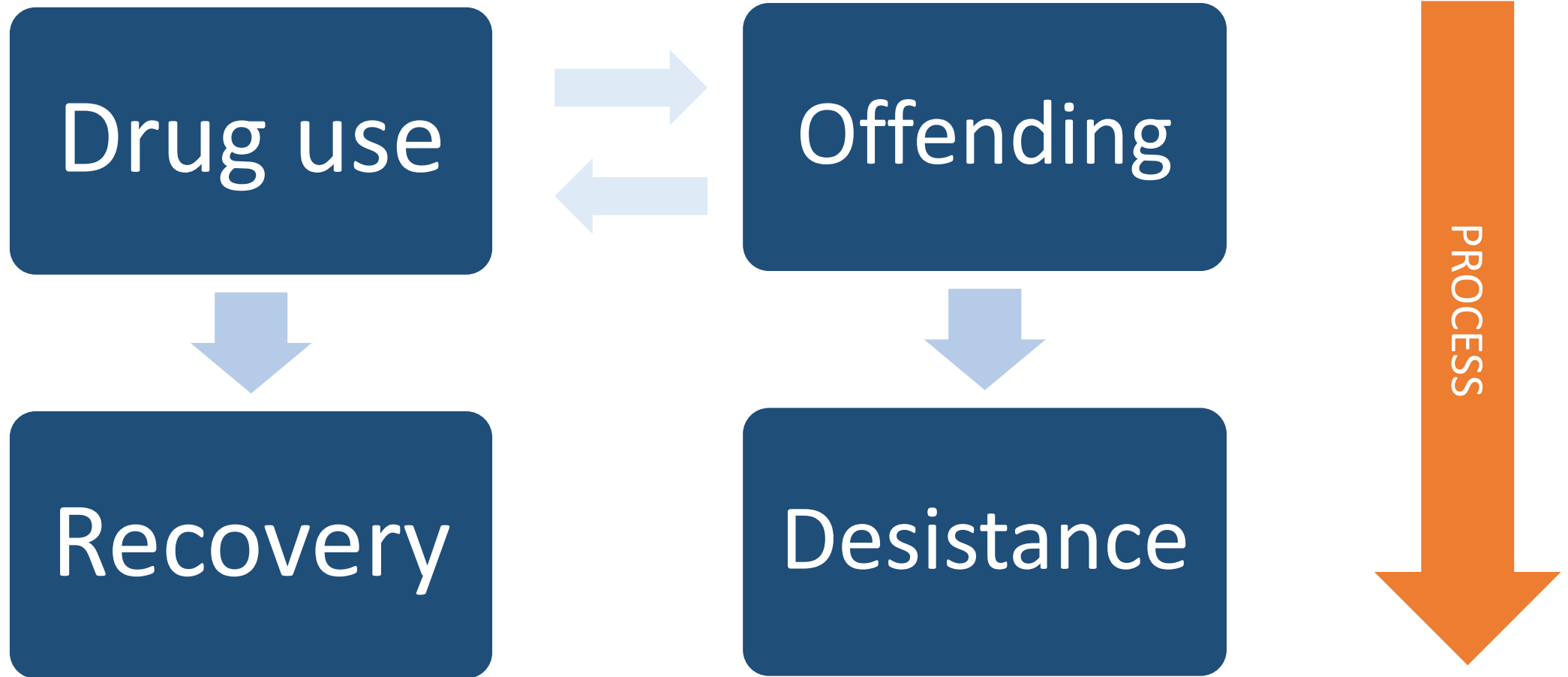


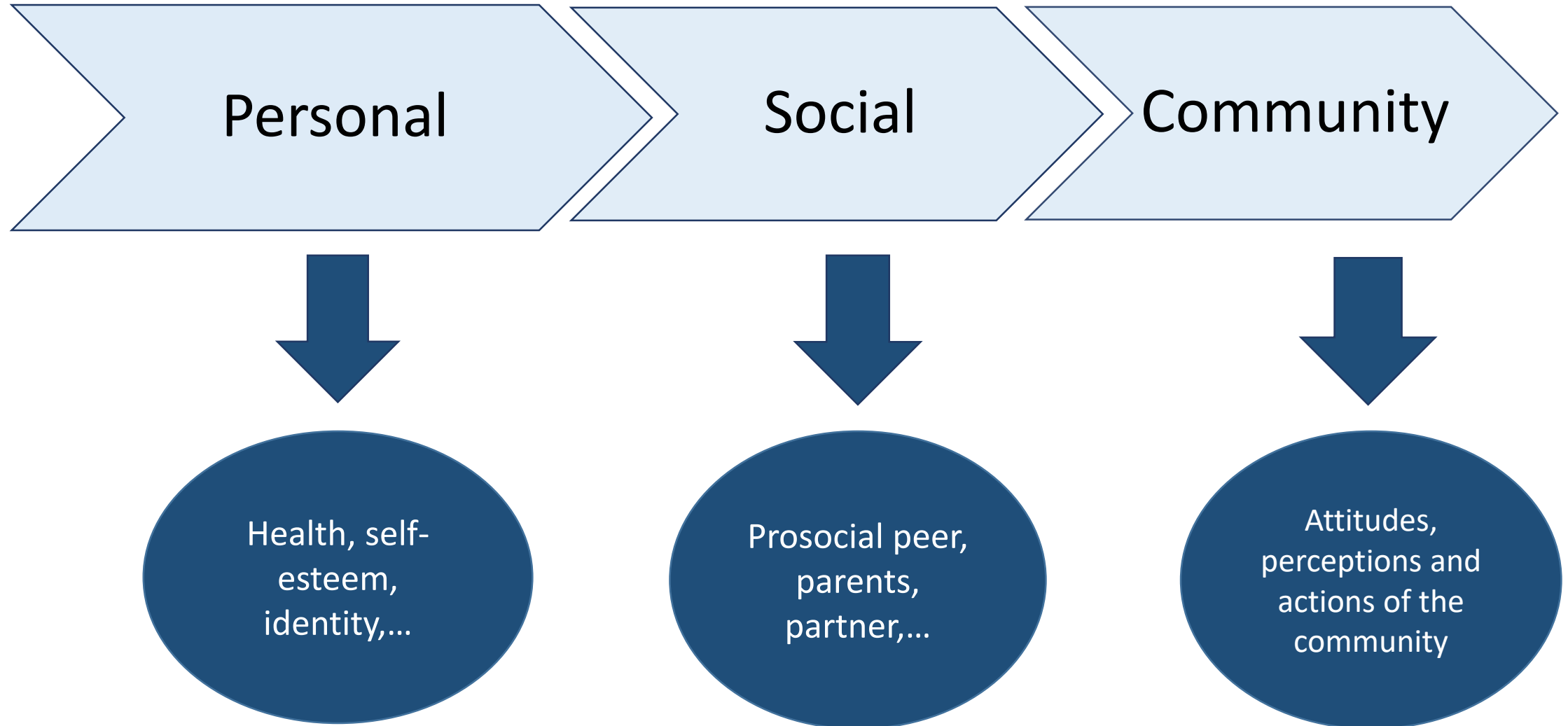


Recovering from drug use and desisting from offending What does the research tell us?

Prof. dr. Charlotte Colman
Glasgow, 10th of May

Recovery and desistance



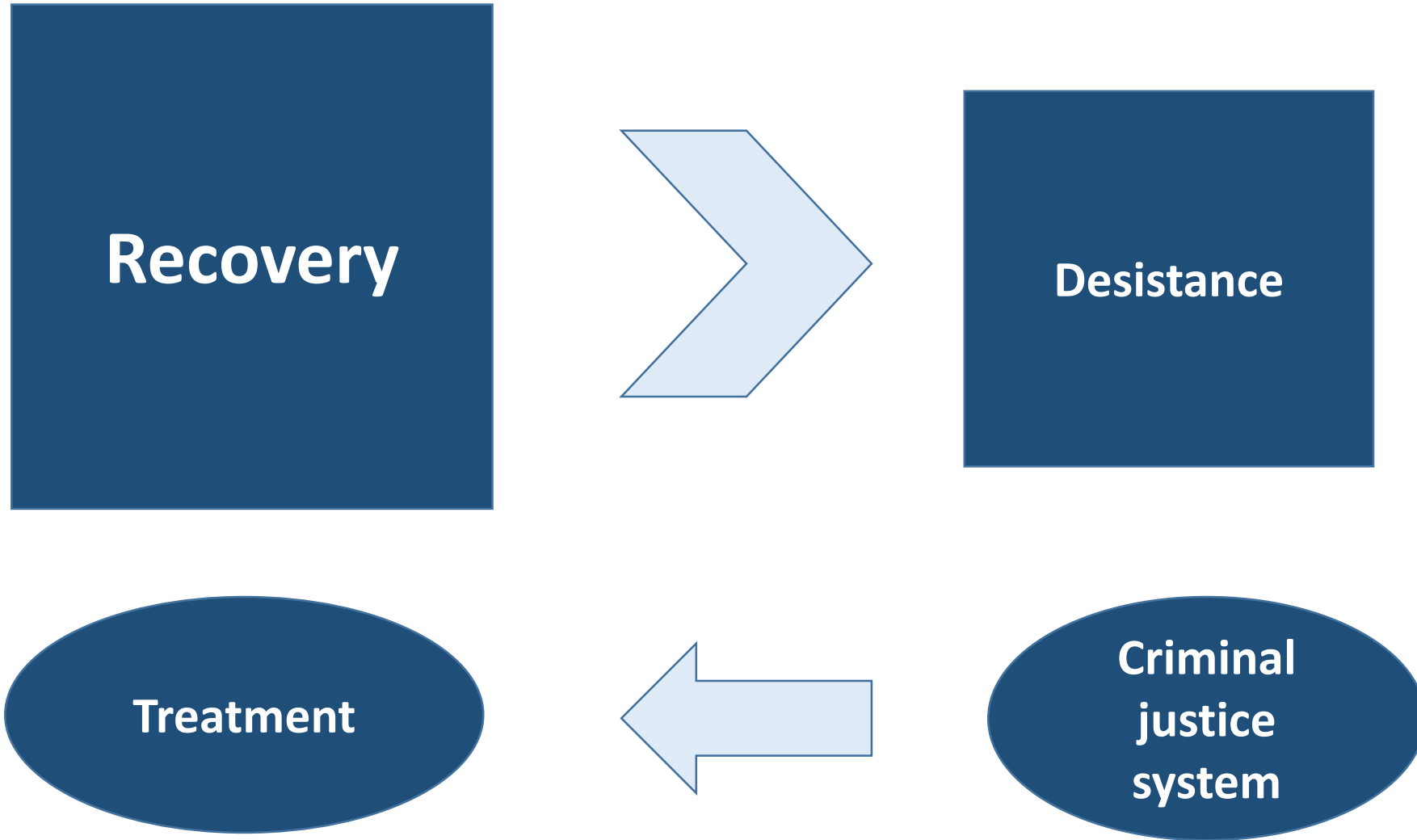


A close-up photograph of a person's arm and hand gripping vertical metal bars, likely in a prison cell. The person's skin is dark, and their muscles are visible. The background is blurred, showing more bars and some light. The text is overlaid in the center.

DESISTANCE & RECOVERY IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- A large amount of drug misusers in our prisons
 - The criminal justice system may present barriers to recovery and desistance
 - Lack of treatment within the criminal justice system
 - Isolation from (prosocial) family/friends
 - Criminal record
 - Reducing the likelihood of employment
- International, European and national drug policies promote alternatives to punishment/conviction → diversion to treatment
- At different levels of the criminal justice system
 - The sooner the diversion away from the criminal justice system (into treatment), the better the outcome

Primary drug users who commit offences



- ‘Voluntarily’ drug treatment
 - Crime-reducing
 - Cost-effective relative to other measures
- Drug treatment under judicial pressure
 - Effect studies show promising results
 - ➔ Invest more in monitoring of high quality data, focus more on client-reported indicators
- The greater the reduction in the addiction identity, the greater the increase in the recovery identity = the better the treatment outcome
 - Treatment should be implemented with recovery and desistance in mind

Example: Drug Treatment Court, Ghent (2008-)

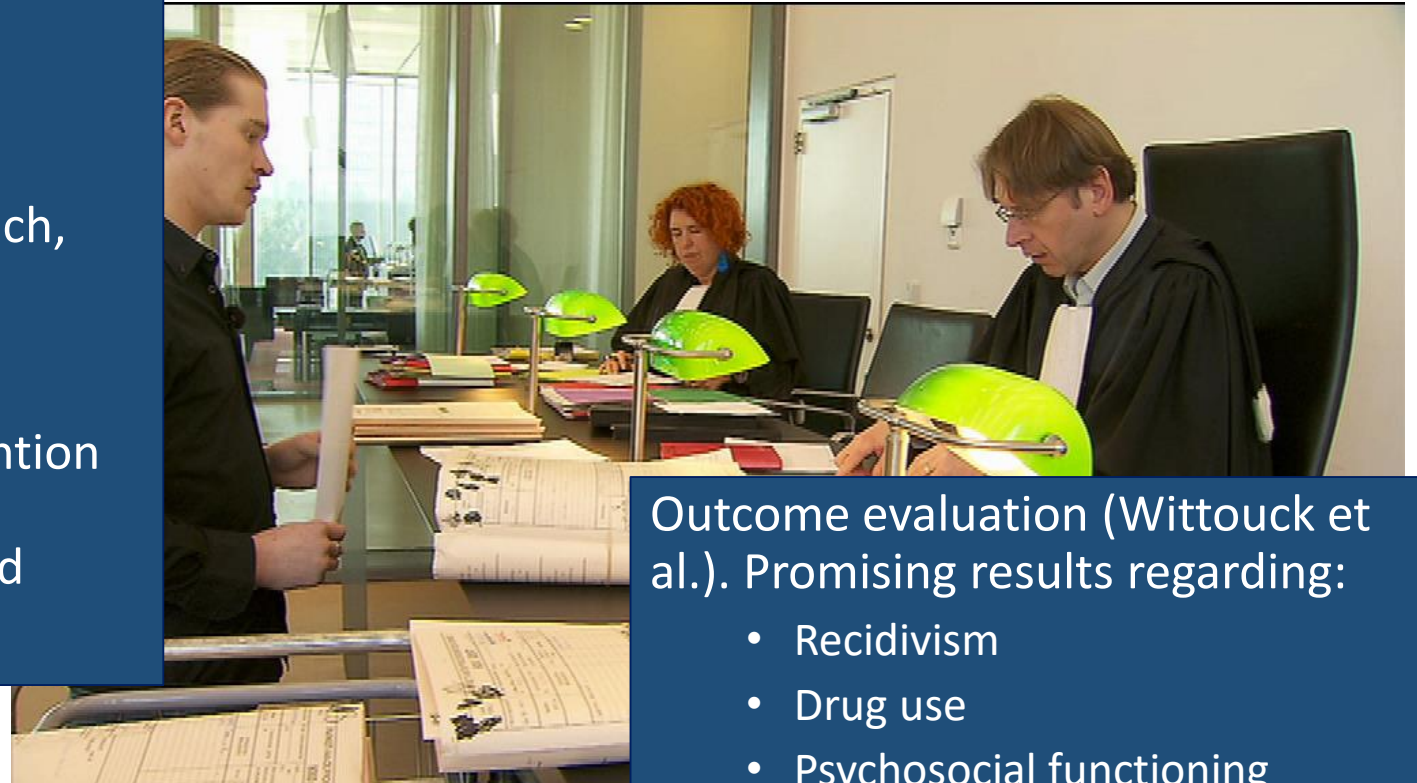
Bottom up

Pre-conviction, 6-8 months

Not a copy paste of the US drug courts
(continental law)

Focus on **empowerment**, holistic approach,
responsibility client, strengths

→ An important criminal justice intervention
that has the potential- if properly
implemented- to promote desistance and
recovery



Outcome evaluation (Wittouck et al.). Promising results regarding:

- Recidivism
- Drug use
- Psychosocial functioning

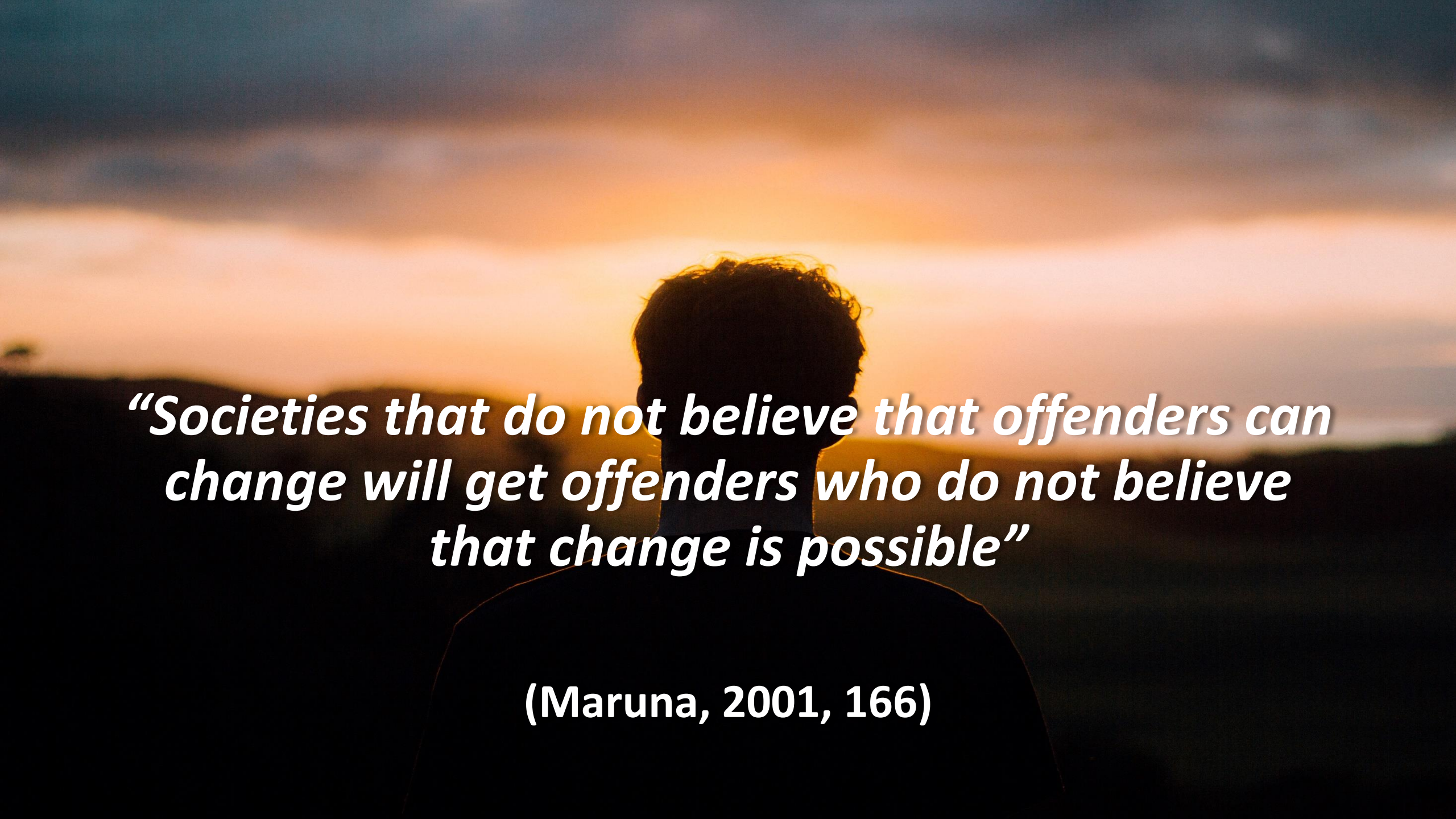
- Criminal justice interventions could learn from desistance and recovery
 - From offender focused to desistance focused
 - From risks to strengths (+ risks + needs)
 - Personal, individual focus
 - Holistic approach

But: what happens after the treatment trajectory, the judicial trajectory,..?

**DESISTANCE & RECOVERY
IN OUR COMMUNITY**



- Individual responsibility and motivation
BUT
 - Difference between willing/wanting to change and being able to change
 - Recovery and desistance are a co-production (Beth Weaver, DRA conference, 2017)
 - Recovery and desistance are personal journeys within a social context. The manifestation of recovery and desistance is community-based
- ➔ How could we as a society facilitate and promote desistance and recovery?

A silhouette of a person with curly hair, seen from behind, looking out over a body of water at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow that reflects on the water. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The person's silhouette is dark against the bright background.

“Societies that do not believe that offenders can change will get offenders who do not believe that change is possible”

(Maruna, 2001, 166)

“Would you want to live next to an addict, even if that person is in recovery?”

40% answered no

“I support recovery, as long as it’s not in my back yard”

- Public perceptions of addicts (Philips & Shaw, 2013)
 - 4 populations: smokers, obese people, active and recovering addicts
 - The US population generally does not believe in recovery
 - Addiction as an irreversible stain
- Similar perceptions among criminal justice and health students (Cano et al, in preperation)
 - 4 new populations: active/recovering/desisting; heroin addicts, alcoholics, violent drinkers, child offenders
- Target population: offenders who misuse drugs- drug misusers who commit offences → double stigma

- More *negative recovery capital* (Cloud & Granfield, Best et al.)
 - No access to meaningful jobs or stable housing
 - Social exclusion and stigma from gatekeepers
 - Disclosure of criminal records
- When society's reaction to former offenders and drug users is to stigmatise, segregate and exclude → limited opportunities to achieve and sustain desistance and recovery
- Developing supportive social networks, a safe place to live, meaningful activities,... as inherent part of desistance/recovery (not as a post-desistance/recovery part)

Strategy to enhance recovery and desistance: an inclusive city

- Inclusive cities (Best & Colman, x)
 - Central idea: no one should walk the recovery and desistance path alone
 - Central aim: 1) challenge social exclusion at city level 2) make recovery and desistance visible and celebrate it
 - “It is contagious”
 - Beneficial for the person in recovery and desistance, as well as for the community as a whole
 - “*The helper principle*”



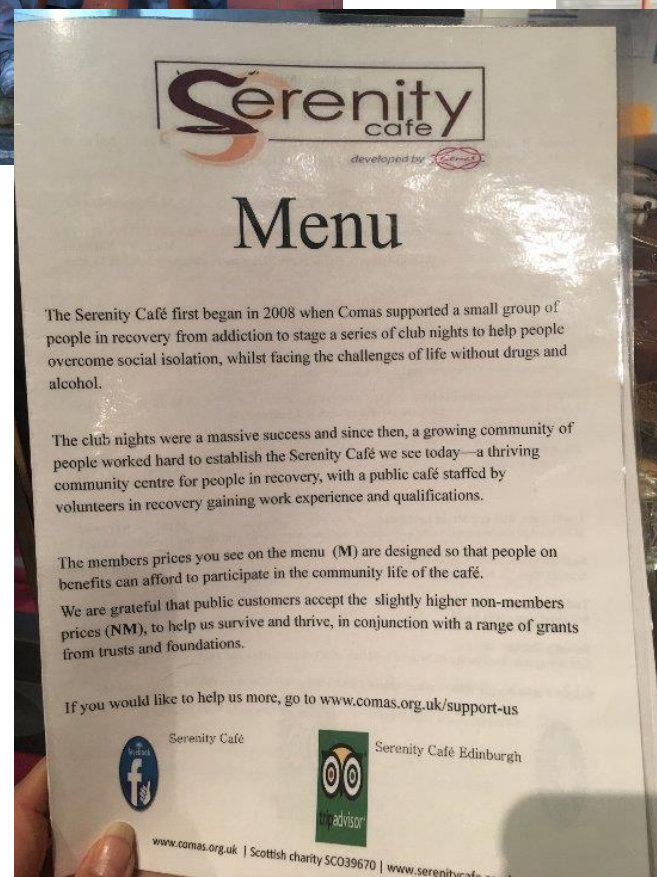
Different stakeholders working together

- City council
- Public & private organisations
- Criminal justice actors & treatment providers
- Family & friends
- Citizens
- People in recovery and desistance

- ROSC
 - Recovery Oriented Systems of Care
 - CHIME
 - Connectedness, Hope & Optimism about the future, Identity, Meaning in life & Empowerment
- ➔ Inclusive city: an initiative to support the creation of Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care at city level

Theoretical component of an Inclusive City	Examples of operational elements
Connectedness and social cohesion	• Peer support and involvement • Community support and involvement • Relationships with others
Hope about the future	• Champion visibility of recovery and desistance • Celebrate success • Hope-inspiring relationships
Promoting a recovery identity around social inclusion and social participation	• Challenging exclusionary labels and practices - work with housing services, employment agencies etc to challenge exclusionary processes and structures
Meaning	• Meaningful life and social roles: access to meaningful jobs and accessible recovery housing • Contribute and giving back to the society
Empowerment and strength-based	• Focus on strengths

Best & Colman, 2018



- Focus on beating stigma, discrimination and exclusion which represent significant barriers to desistance and recovery
 - Invest in meaningful jobs, stable housing, social relationships
 - ‘Giving something back’
 - Social connectedness and belonging are key
- A change of mindset in the society can promote sustained desistance and recovery
 - Make desistance and recovery visible and celebrate it
 - Contribute to the growth of community recovery capital
 - Recovery/desistance community → Co-recovery and co-desistance
- Let’s start building inclusive cities!
- Let’s start sharing ingredients and good practices to improve social justice and community engagement!

Questions, thoughts,..

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