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Back to the future: Bringing implementation science to evidence-based policing

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Using Implementation Science to Improve Evidence-Based Policing: An Introduction for Researchers and Practitioners

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Faye S. Taxman⁷



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IDEAS IN AMERICAN POLICING



Evidence-Based Policing

By Lawrence W. Sherman

- An estimated 85 percent of police practices remain untested by research evidence.
- Most chiefs rarely read the criminology journals available, and instead base their practice on local custom.
- Most studies that do guide practice use weak, non-randomized research designs.

Sherman was... wrong about how much medicine was really based on scientific research. New evidence shows that doctors resist changing practices based on new research just as much as police do, if not more so.

Closer examination reveals medicine to be a battleground between research and practice, with useful lessons for policing on new ways to promote research. Those lessons come from a new strategy called “evidence-based medicine...” “widely hailed as the long-sought link between research and practice” (Zuger 1997).



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This Issue

Views **31,778** | Citations **0** | Altmetric **428** | Comments **1**

Medical News & Perspectives

April 5, 2023

It Takes an Average of 17 Years for Evidence to Change Practice—the Burgeoning Field of Implementation Science Seeks to Speed Things Up

Rita Rubin, MA

Article Information

JAMA. 2023;329(16):1333-1336. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.4387



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Resisting evidence: the study of evidence-based medicine as a contemporary social movement

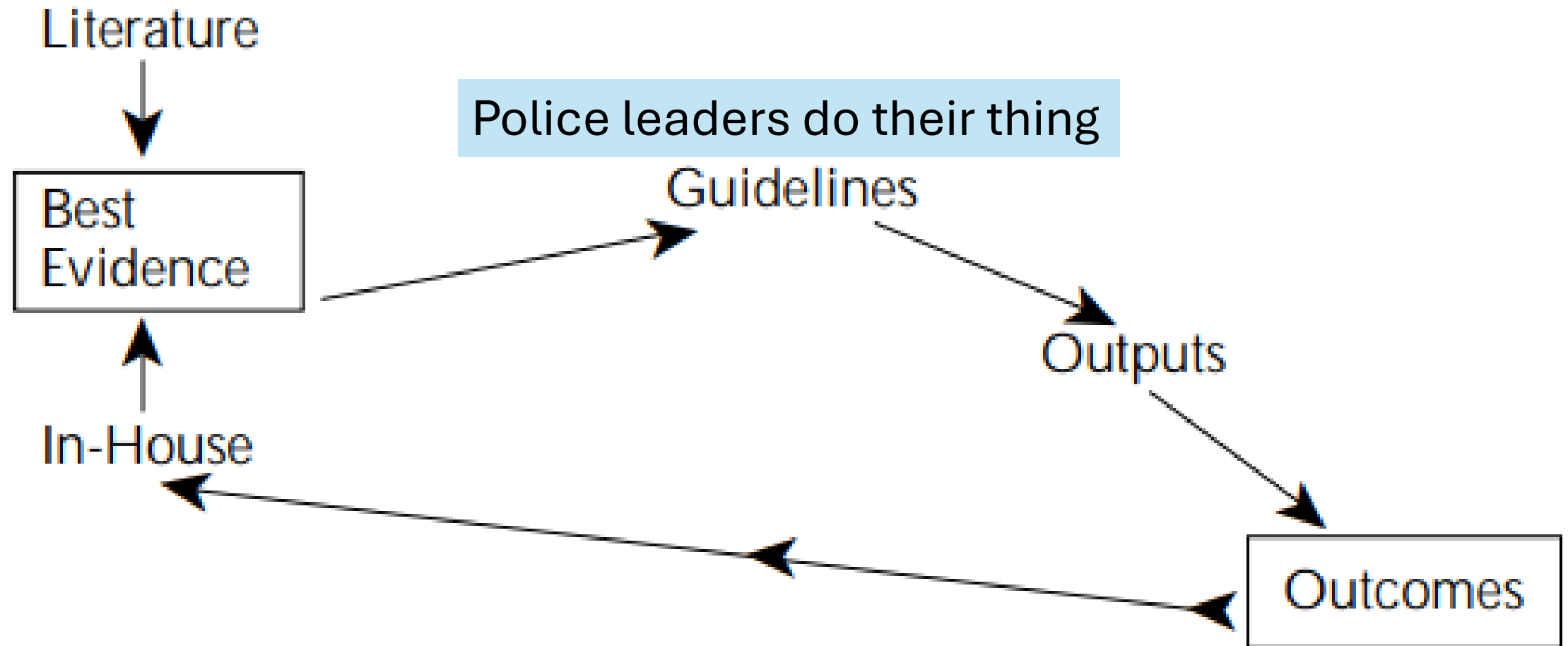
Catherine Pope

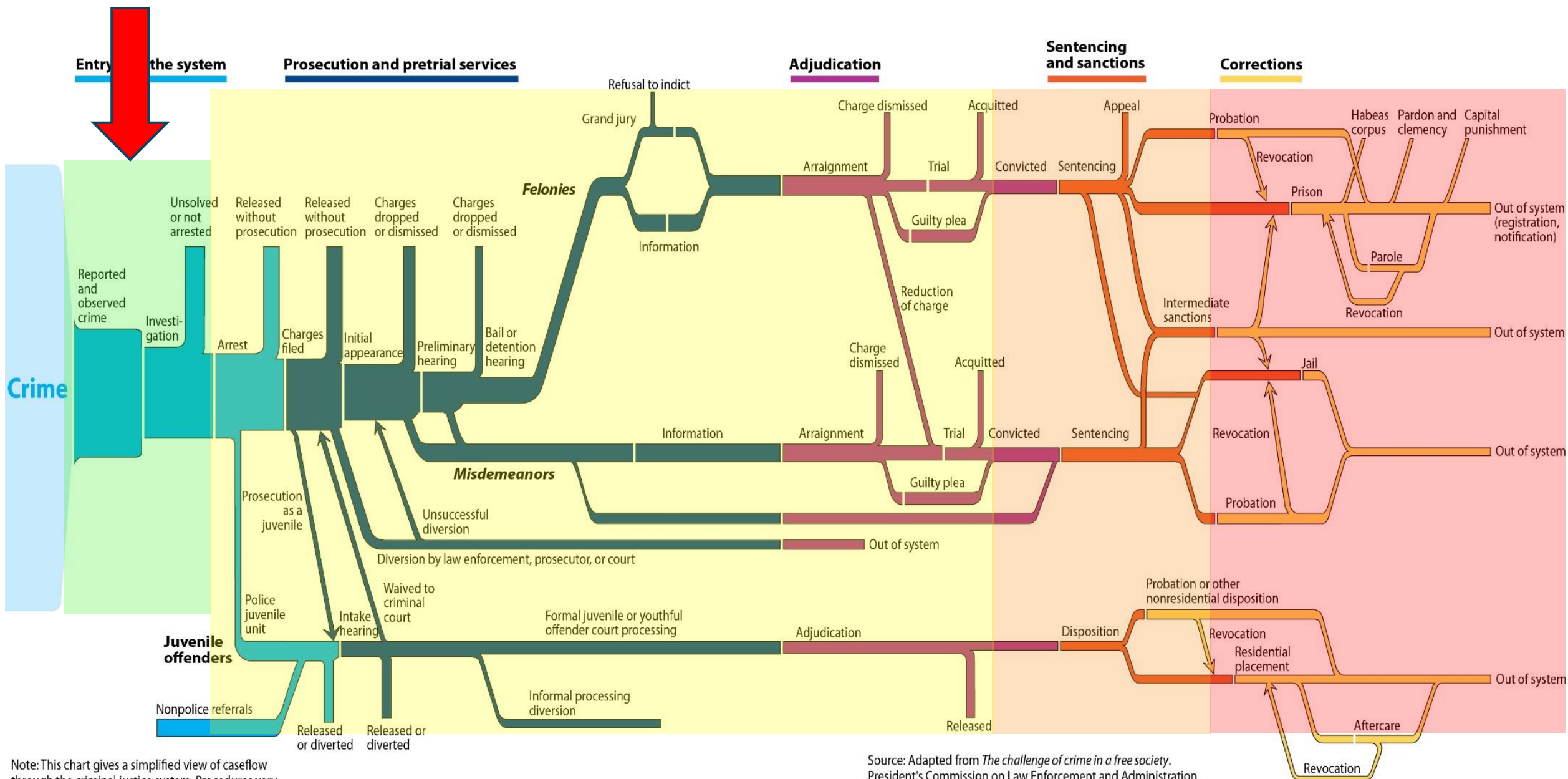
University of Bristol, UK

Surgeons' accounts of their 'art'

“Many of them suggested that their practice was guided by rather nebulous, instinctive ‘hunches’ or ‘gut feeling.’”

Figure 1. Evidence-Based Policing.



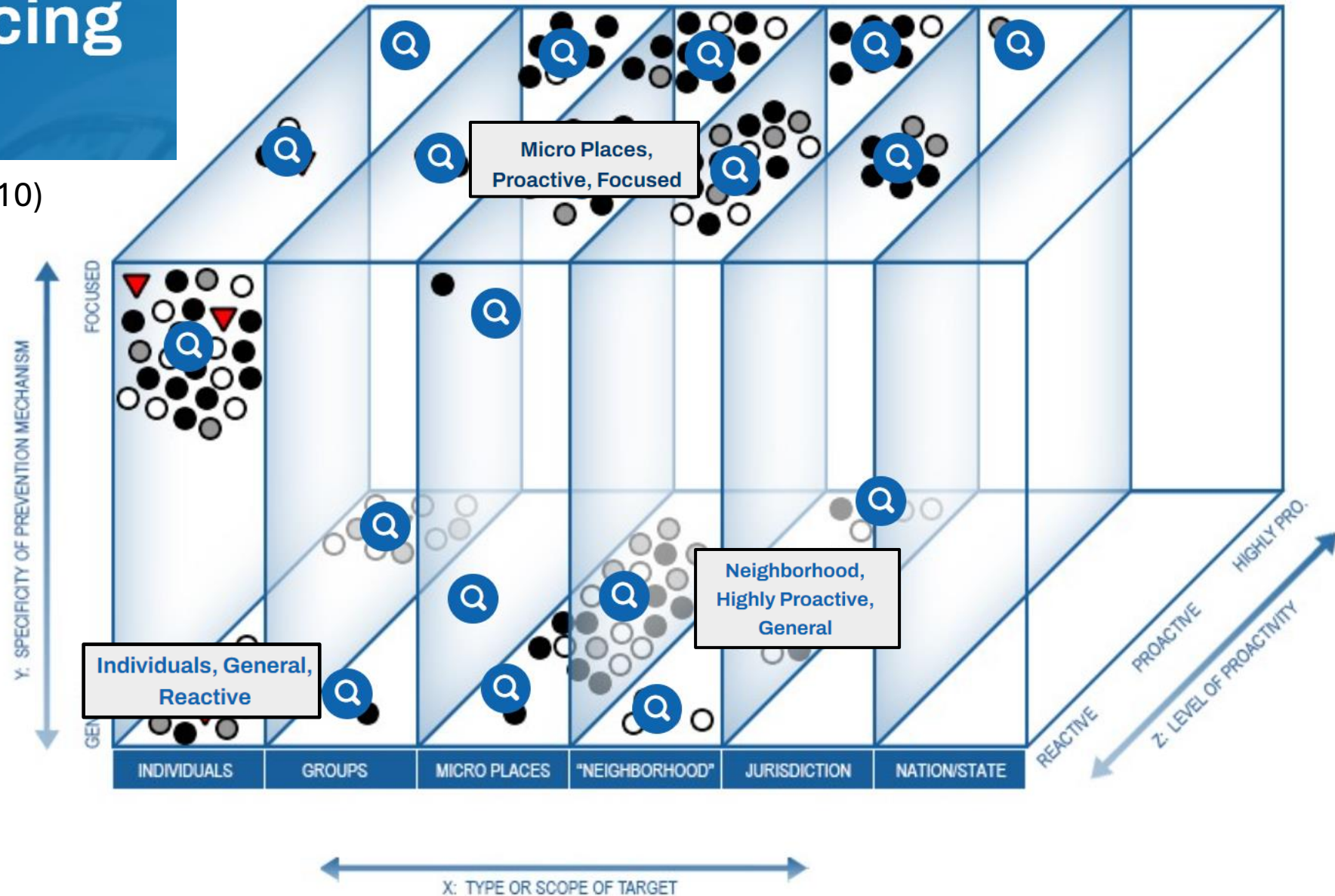


Note: This chart gives a simplified view of caseload through the criminal justice system. Procedures vary among jurisdictions. The weights of the lines are not intended to show actual size of caseloads.

Source: Adapted from *The challenge of crime in a free society*. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967. This revision, a result of the Symposium on the 30th Anniversary of the President's Commission, was prepared by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1997.

The Evidence-Based Policing Matrix

(Lum, Koper & Telep, 2010)



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Micro Places – Braga et al. (2012)

+ implementation research

Micro Places

Focused

Highly Proactive

Efficacious

&

Effective

Safe Street Team problem-oriented policing project associated with a reduction in violent index crimes at treatment hot spots relative to comparison places

Micro Places – Morton, Luengen, & Mazerolle (2019)

Micro Places

Focused

Highly Proactive

Mixed effects

Police partnerships with hoteliers to reduce drug and nuisance problems increased police engagement with hoteliers, hotelier reporting of crimes, and increased executed warrants. Effects decayed over time.

Micro Places – Groff et al. (2015) (Problem-Oriented Policing)

Micro Places

Focused

Highly Proactive

No evidence of effect

Problem-oriented policing did not lead to a reduction in violent crime, however likely due to weak implementation

Why innovations in policing don't work or don't translate: An implementation science survey of US police leaders

This study examined organizational and community-level barriers and facilitators that influence innovation in policing using an implementation science framework.

by Brandon del Pozo, Rose E. Nevill, Javier Cepeda, Ian T. Adams, Alina Whiteside, and Erin Thompson

Table 3. Demographics of implementation science survey respondents, n=72	
Census Bureau region	%
South	37.7
Midwest	20.3
West	24.6
Northeast	17.4
Location	
Rural	13.0
Urban	87.0
Rank	
Officer or Detective	1.4
Sergeant or Lieutenant	12.5
Captain or above	80.6
Non-sworn employee/researcher	5.6
Highest level of education	
High school	7.0
Associate's degree	2.8
Bachelor's degree	32.4
Master's degree	49.3
J.D.	0
Ph.D.	8.5
Respondent tenure	
8-15 years (mid-career)	9.7
16-25 years (senior)	51.4
More than 25 years	38.9
Sworn agency head count	
0-99	16.7
100-499	29.2
500-999	15.3
1000+	38.9

- Respondents overwhelmingly believed that the process of implementation bore heavily on an innovation’s prospects for success.
- 70.4% believed innovations failed because they were not implemented as necessary.
- When a new practice was introduced by an external source, 73.6% disagreed “the rank-and-file trust the external actors who helped create it.”
- 81.4% agreed when an agency provides an alternative to arrest, police leaders rarely explain how it will be used in performance evaluations.
- 61.8% agreed “when alternatives to enforcement are introduced, they are more difficult to execute than the original enforcement practice.”
- It was a widely-held that “police culture determines if a given practice will cease more so than decisions made by police executives” (64.7% agreement).

The Stages of Change of implementation science in police settings

- “We’ve always been doing implementation science, that’s what you call ‘leadership,’ and we should be the ones teaching it.”
- “There are barriers and facilitators that can make implementation succeed or fail. We should be mindful of them.”
- “Let’s see what we can learn from past attempts at implementation. We’ll do postmortems and reviews using implementation science determinants.”
- “We are about to implement something. Let’s prospectively identify the determinants of implementation to help reduce barriers and leverage facilitators.”
- “We are about to implement something. Let’s prospectively identify the most important determinants, *then design an experiment comparing different approaches to implementation.*”

The Stages of Change of implementation science in police settings

- “We’ve been doing this for years. We’ve been leading the way.”
- “The system is broken. We should do something about it.”



d or fail.

- “Let’s see what we can learn from past attempts at implementation. We’ll do postmortems and reviews using implementation science determinants.”

- “We are about to implement something. Let’s prospectively identify the determinants of implementation to help reduce barriers and leverage facilitators.”

★ “We are about to implement something. Let’s prospectively identify the most important determinants, *then design an experiment comparing different approaches to implementation.*”



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Police discretion in encounters with people who use drugs: operationalizing the theory of planned behavior

Research | [Open access](#) | Published: 16 December 2021

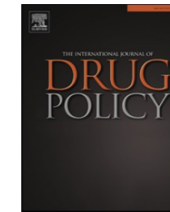
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International Journal of Drug Policy

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/drugpo



Research Paper

Unlocking deflection: The role of supervisor support in police officer willingness to refer people who inject drugs to harm reduction services



Phillip L. Marotta^{a,*}, Brandon del Pozo^b, Pieter Baker^{c,d}, Daniela Abramovitz^e,
Irina Artamonova^e, Jaime Arredondo^e, Katie McCreedy^f, Steffanie A. Strathdee^e,
Javier Cepeda^c, Leo Beletsky^{a,b,c,d,e,f}

Asking for directions: The responsible conduct of police participatory research

by Brandon del Pozo, Lauren Magee, Alina Whiteside, Erin Thompson, and Kaitlin F. Martins



RESEARCH

Open Access

A refined compilation of implementation strategies: results from the Expert Recommendations for Implementing Change (ERIC) project

Byron J Powell^{1*}, Thomas J Waltz², Matthew J Chinman^{3,4}, Laura J Damschroder⁵, Jeffrey L Smith⁶, Monica M Matthieu^{6,7}, Enola K Proctor⁸ and JoAnn E Kirchner^{6,9}

Cited by 3474



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Develop and implement tools for quality monitoring

Develop, test, and introduce into quality-monitoring systems the right input—the appropriate language, protocols, algorithms, standards, and measures (of processes, patient/consumer outcomes, and implementation outcomes) that are often specific to the innovation being implemented

Develop and organize quality monitoring systems

Develop and organize systems and procedures that monitor clinical processes and/or outcomes for the purpose of quality assurance and improvement

Develop disincentives

Provide financial disincentives for failure to implement or use the clinical innovations

Develop educational materials

Develop and format manuals, toolkits, and other supporting materials in ways that make it easier for stakeholders to learn about the innovation and for clinicians to learn how to deliver the clinical innovation

Develop resource sharing agreements

Develop partnerships with organizations that have resources needed to implement the innovation

Distribute educational materials

Distribute educational materials (including guidelines, manuals, and toolkits) in person, by mail, and/or electronically

Facilitate relay of clinical data to providers

Provide as close to real-time data as possible about key measures of process/outcomes using integrated modes/channels of communication in a way that promotes use of the targeted innovation

Facilitation

A process of interactive problem solving and support that occurs in a context of a recognized need for improvement and a supportive interpersonal relationship

Fund and contract for the clinical innovation

Governments and other payers of services issue requests for proposals to deliver the innovation, use contracting processes to motivate providers to deliver the clinical innovation, and develop new funding formulas that make it more likely that providers will deliver the innovation

Identify and prepare champions

Identify and prepare individuals who dedicate themselves to supporting, marketing, and driving through an implementation, overcoming indifference or resistance that the intervention may provoke in an organization

Identify early adopters

Identify early adopters at the local site to learn from their experiences with the practice innovation

Increase demand

Attempt to influence the market for the clinical innovation to increase competition intensity and to increase the maturity of the market for the clinical innovation

Inform local opinion leaders

Inform providers identified by colleagues as opinion leaders or “educationally influential” about the clinical innovation in the hopes that they will influence colleagues to adopt it



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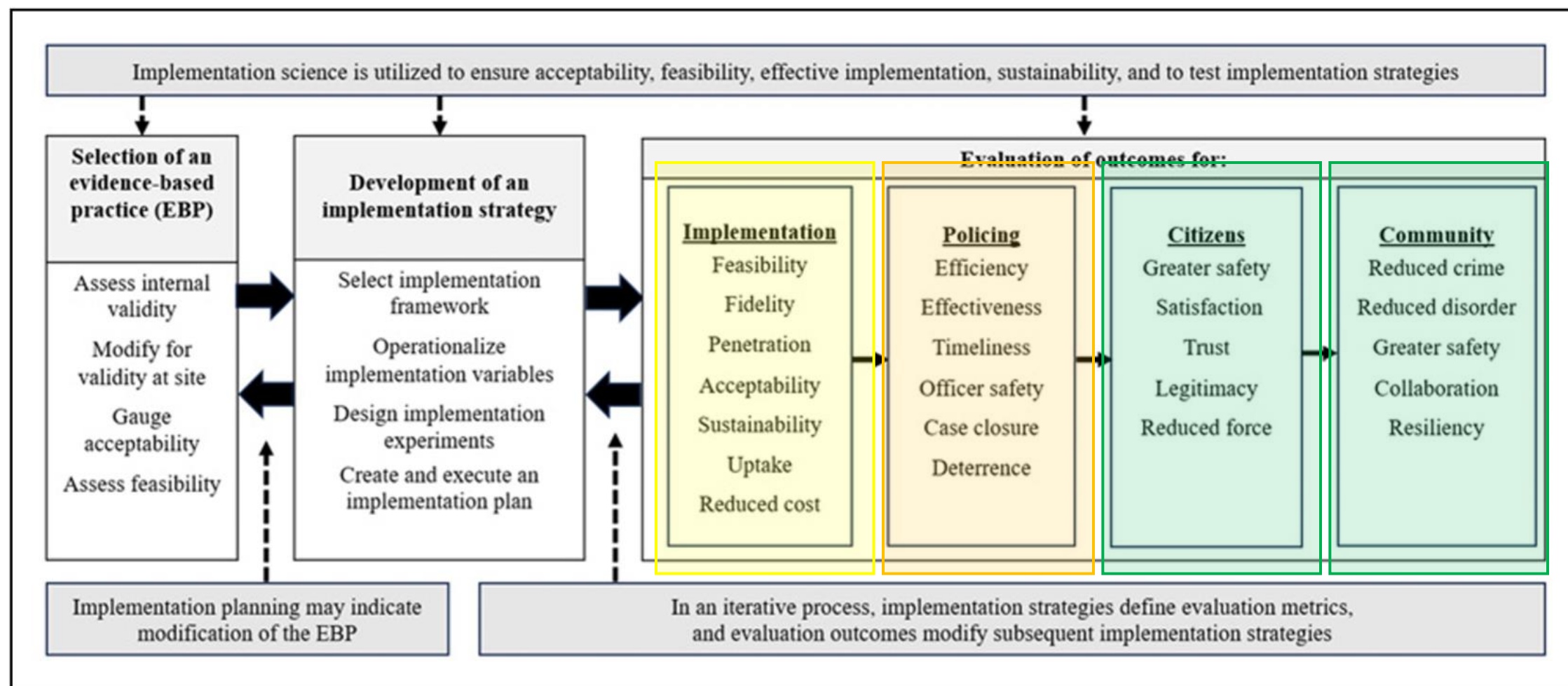


Figure 1. A provisional conceptual model of implementation in police settings adapted from Proctor et al. (2009).

Implementation Research Logic Model

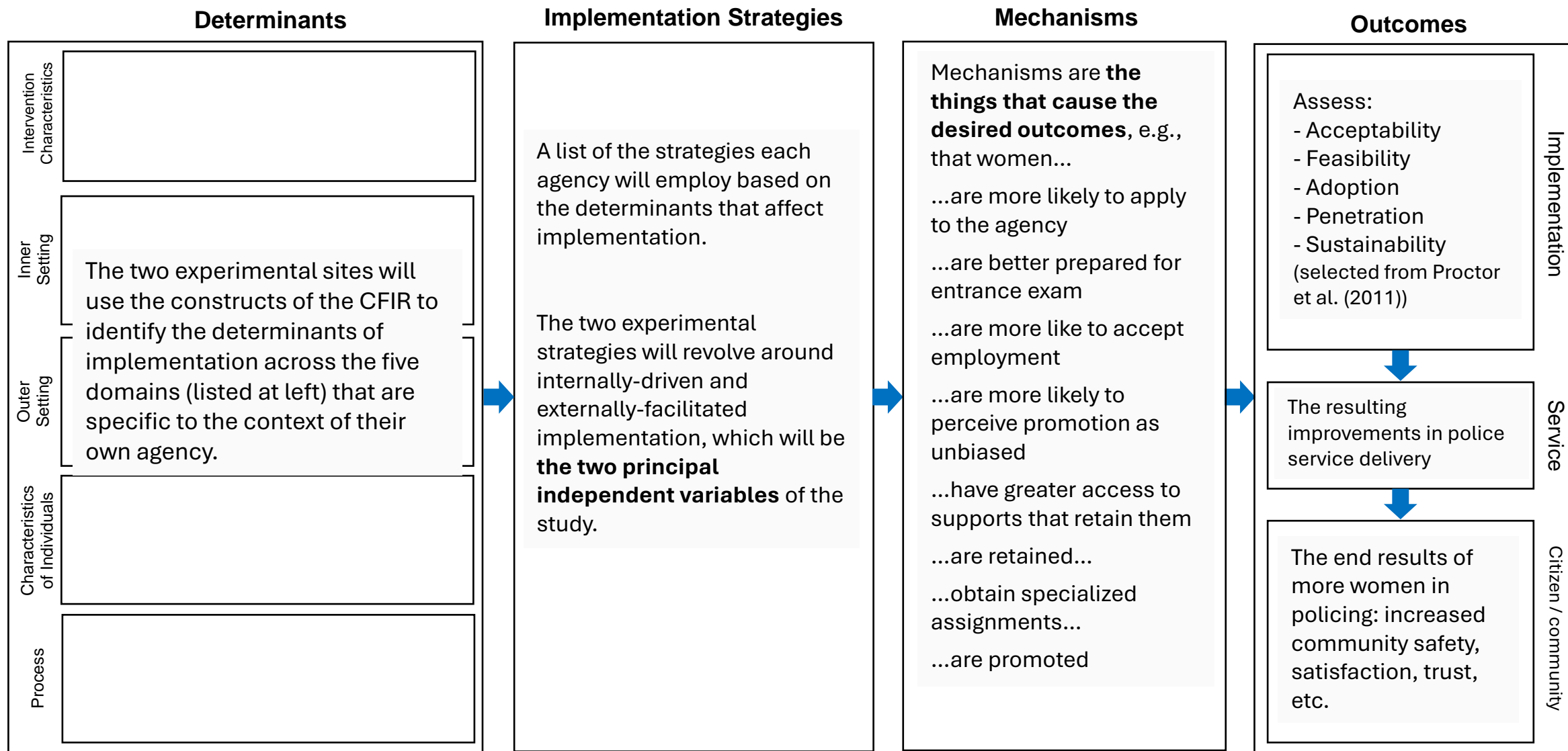
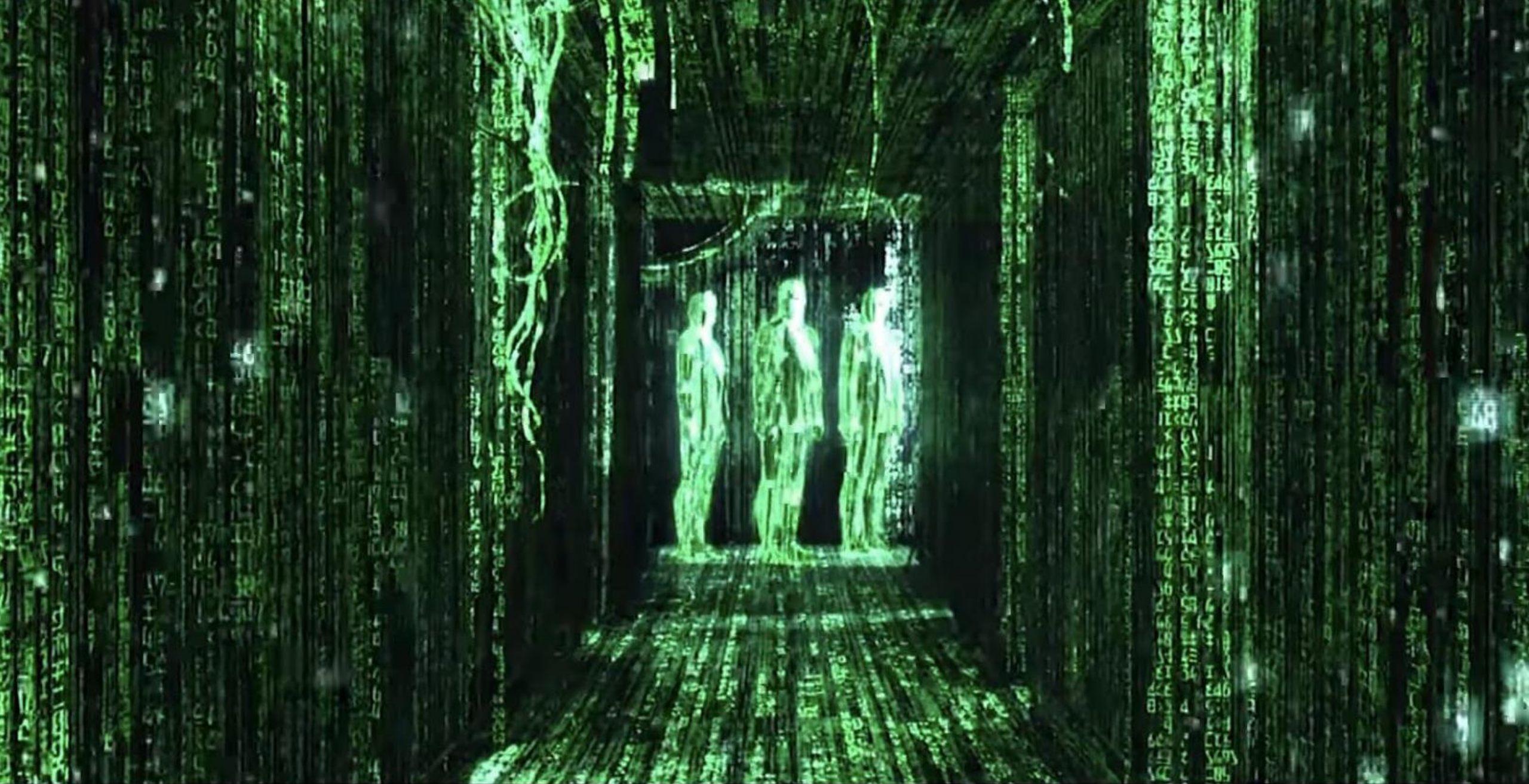


Figure 3

Agencies (and researchers) that seek to integrate IS into their work can be guided by these principles and recommendations:

- Effectiveness and implementation go hand in hand.
- Implementation is a cyclical process.
- Allocate adequate resources not just to a proposed initiative, but to the implementation process itself.
- Involve implementation stakeholders broadly, and early.
- Actively cultivate partnerships between practitioners and implementation scientists.
- Hire implementation scientists and train staff.



“Let’s conduct experimental research about.. *de-implementation*.”

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