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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE  
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CICAD**

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

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**Interventions for Youth Affected by Alcohol and Drugs- The Bahamas**

The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of a wooden pencil with a sharpened lead tip, resting on a sheet of graph paper. A ruler is also visible, partially overlapping the pencil and the graph paper. The overall color palette is warm and muted, with shades of beige, light brown, and soft yellow.

# INTERVENTION FOR YOUTH AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

David F. Allen, M.D., M.P.H.

# P.B.S. Documentary

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# P.B.S. Documentary

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# The Chronic Violent Drug Syndrome

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- Major components include:
  1. Drug trafficking
  2. ↑ in # of chronic and professional addicts
  3. Guns, guns, and more guns
  4. Destruction of the socio-cultural values
  5. Violent Gang Formation
  6. Sprees of violent crimes

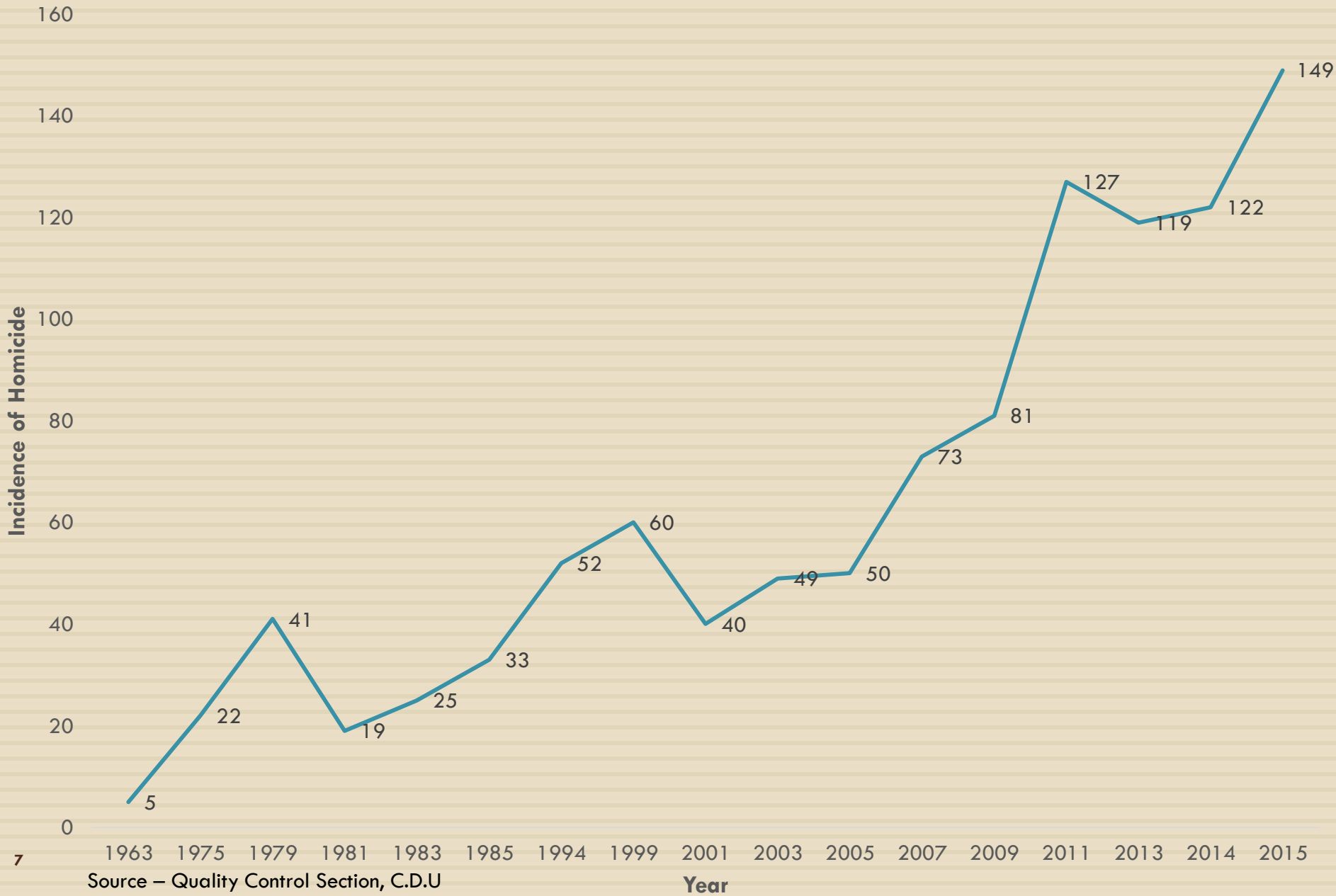
# Socio-Cultural Fragmentation

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## □ Characterized by:

1. Burgeoning murder & violent crime rates
2. Poor work ethic
3. Family disintegration
4. Community fragmentation
5. Youth gang formation

# Homicides in the Bahamas (1963-2015)



# Social Fragmentation

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- A process by which persons are victimized by the negativity of shame, giving them a diminished view of the world
- Shame is a powerful emotion that is usually hidden
- It results from the shattering of cherished wishes, expectations and dreams
- Shame manifests itself as:
  - ▣ Anger
  - ▣ Violence
  - ▣ Revenge
  - ▣ Addiction



# Dynamics of Drug Abuse

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- Brain disease
  
- Susceptibility
  - ▣ Sustained exposure
  - ▣ Interaction of drug effects
  - ▣ Re-enforcement phenomenon
  - ▣ Depletion of dopamine
  
- Recreational use
  
- Molecular/circuit changes in the brain

# Alcohol & Drug Abuse Admissions (2006)

## Community Counseling & Assessment Ctr.

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Classification of New Clients	Age (Years)				
	Total (Males & Females)				
	Total	15 & Under	16 – 20	21 – 35	35+
Alcohol	94	2	1	19	72
Cocaine	2	0	0	0	2
Marijuana	262	91	96	63	12
Poly Drug	92	1	4	35	52
Other Drug	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>138</b>

Grand Total: **450**

# Sandilands Morbidity Report (2012)

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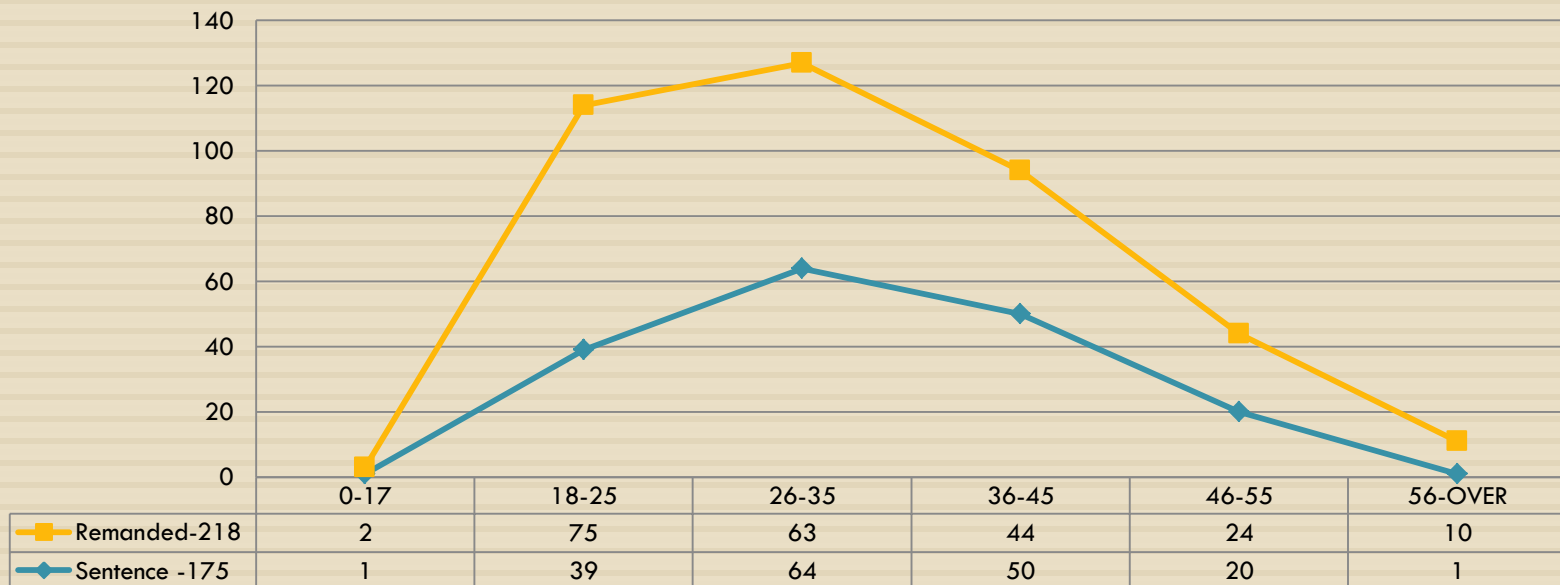
<b>Mental &amp; Behavioral Disorders Caused by:</b>	<b>Morbidity (number) MALES</b>	<b>Morbidity (percent) MALES</b>	<b>Morbidity (number) FEMALES</b>	<b>Morbidity (percent) FEMALES</b>
Cannabinoid Use	138	19.4%	4	1.5%
Multiple Drug Use	85	11.9%	22	8.4%
Alcohol Use	79	11.1%	14	5.3%
Cocaine Use	23	3.2%	2	0.8%

# Drug Arrests Statistics (2015)

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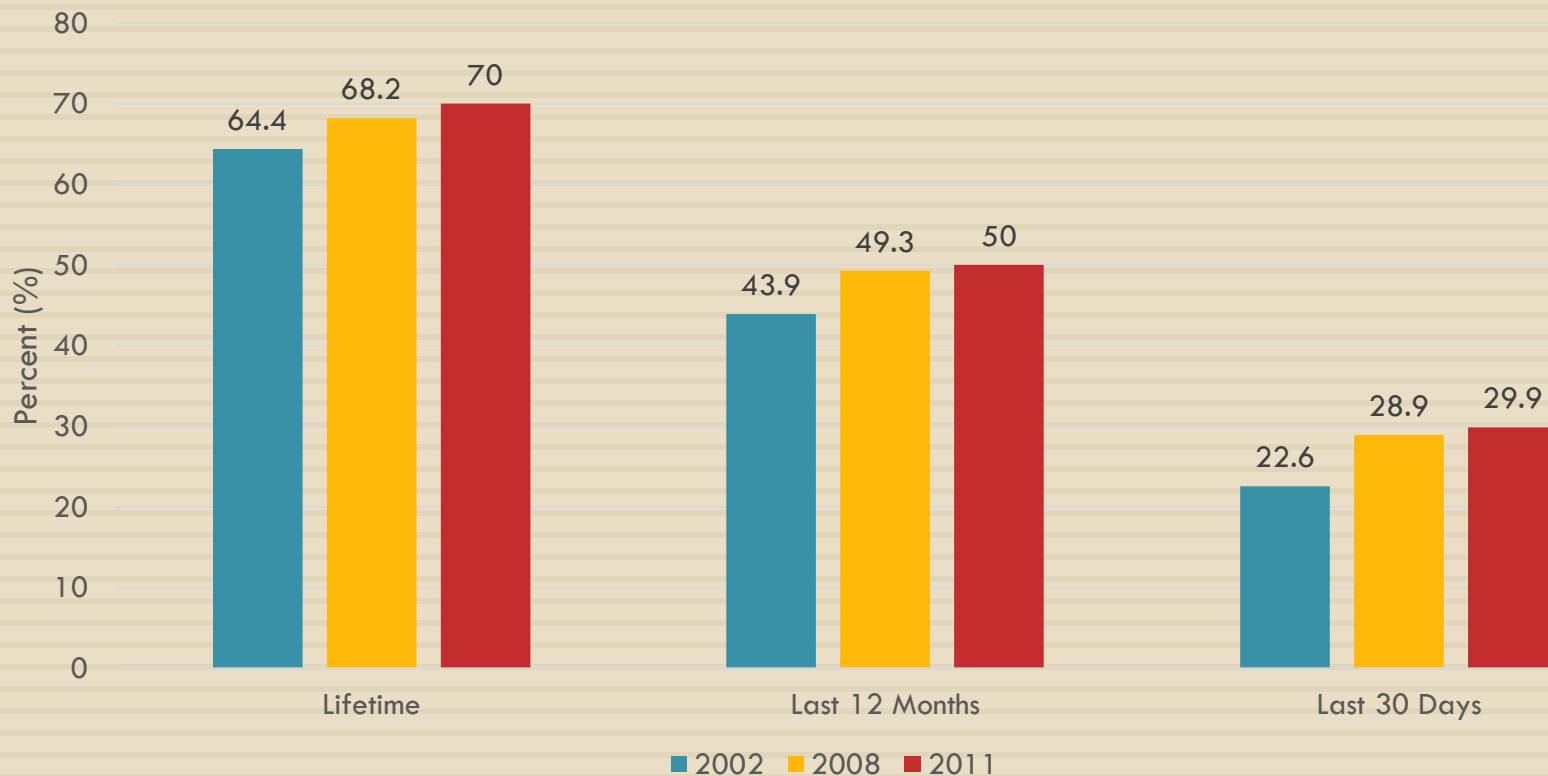
- ✓ Of the 1,499 drug arrests made in 2015, **39** were **juvenile males** (2.6%) and **4** were **juvenile females** (0.3%).

**DRUG ADMISSIONS BY AGE GROUP**



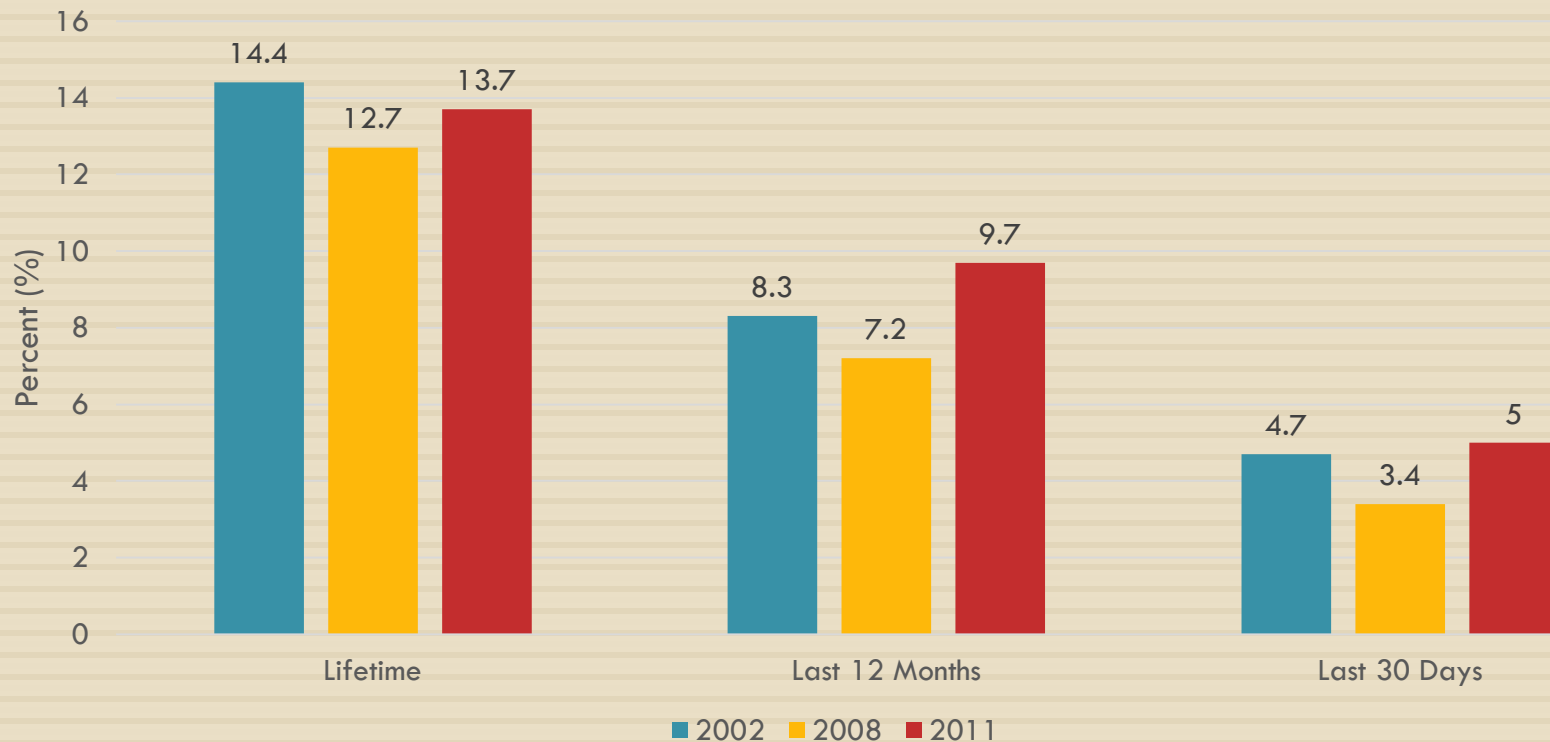
Sources: Drug Enforcement Unit, Bah. Dept. of Corrections

# Prevalence of Alcohol Use Among Secondary School Students



The use of alcohol is popular among Bahamian secondary school students, with rates ↑ from 2002 – 2011. The prevalence of alcohol consumption in females surpassed that of males. Usage ↑ as grade level ↑.

## Prevalence of Marijuana Use Among Secondary School Students



Since 2008, marijuana use ↑, with more students having tried it and more continuing to use. Males use marijuana at more than double the rate of their female counterparts. 12<sup>th</sup> graders use almost 4X as much as the 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

# The Family: People Helping People Project



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- Community-based intervention designed to ↓ social fragmentation & promote resocialization
- Uses principles based on the Contemplative Discovery Pathway Theory (CDPT)
- Liberates ppl. from shame to experience love, compassion & healing community
- Group sessions led by trained psychotherapists & facilitators
- Group process involves:
  - ▣ Storytelling
  - ▣ Reflection
  - ▣ Self-examination
  - ▣ Transformation
- Prgm. Offered in 20 marginalized, Bahamian communities including:
  - ▣ 5 adolescent groups: W.M.P.C., S.P.C., Collins Ave. (X2), East St.
  - ▣ Basketball Outreach at T.A. Thompson & Carmichael

# Contemplative Discovery Pathway Theory

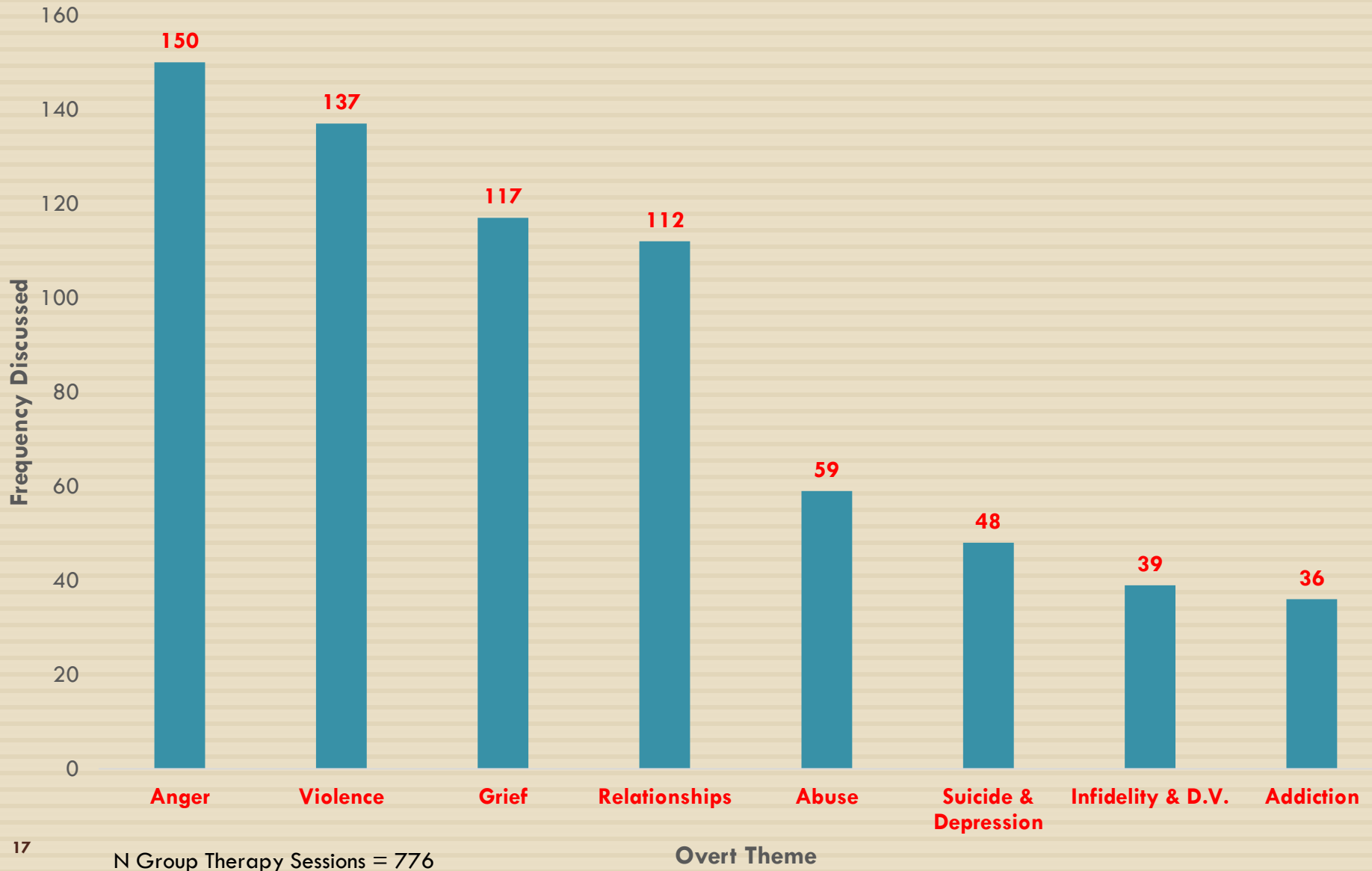
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- CDPT motivates persons to move beyond hurt & shame to discover their authentic self based in love & gratitude
- 3 basic needs at birth
  - a) Safety (survival / security)
  - b) Connection (affection / esteem)
  - c) Empowerment (power / control)
- Life is wounded → we get hurt → S.H.A.M.E. develops
- Illusory False Self, developed to block Shame, hijacks our life's purpose



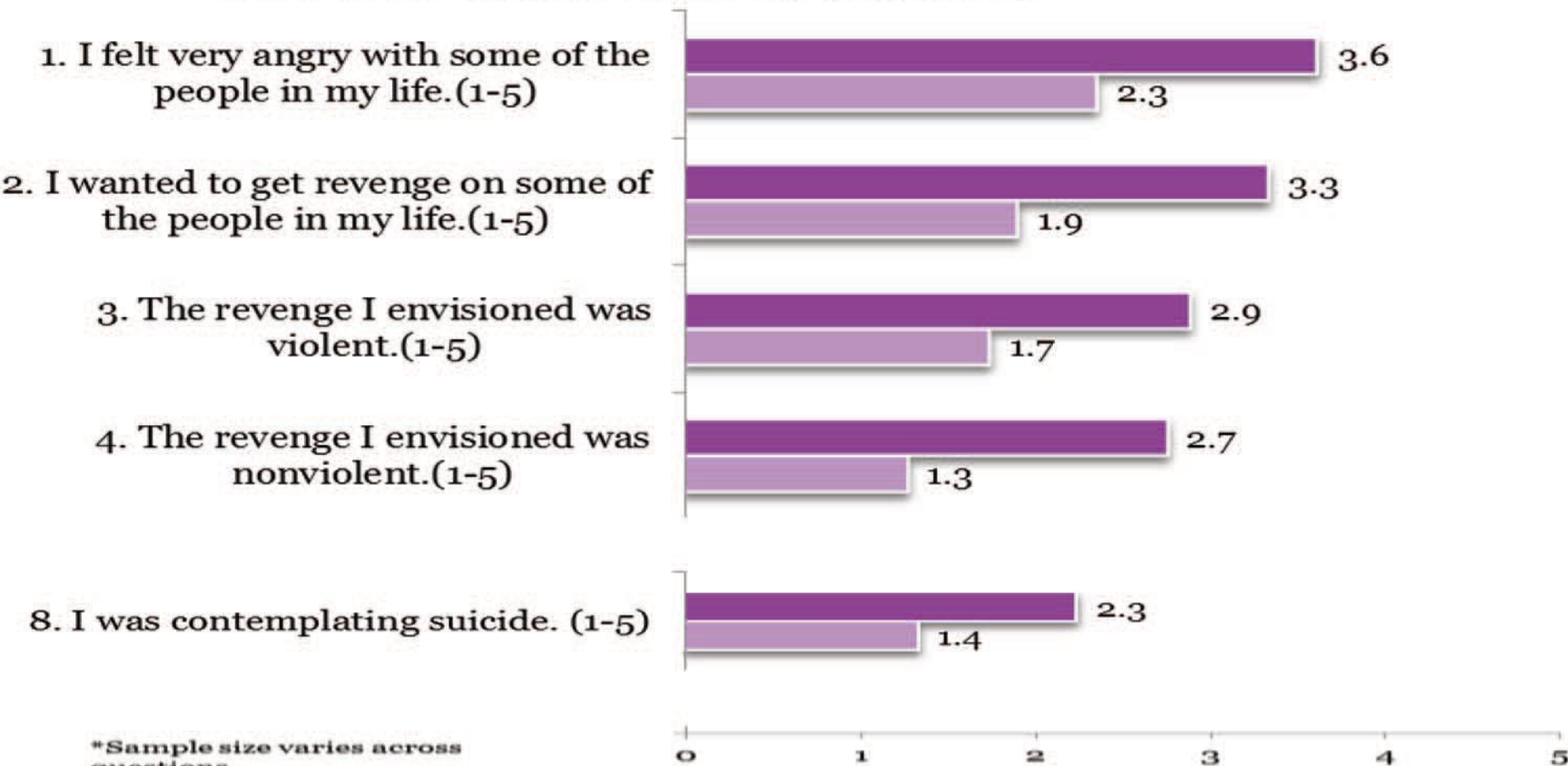


# Incidence of Overt Themes in the Family Sessions

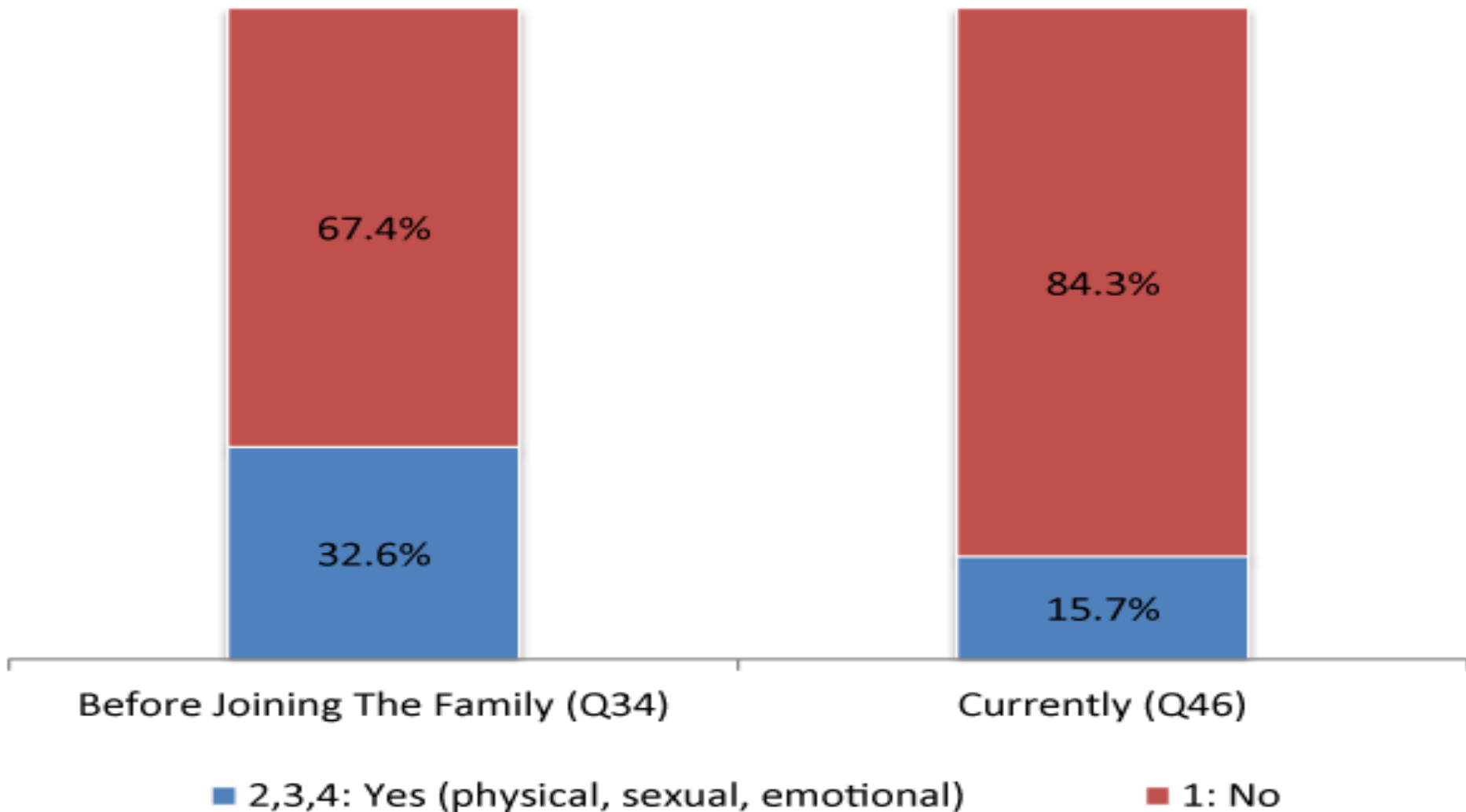


# Results –The Family Pilot Study

- **Before Joining The Family (Retrospective)**
- **After Joining The Family (Current)**



\*Sample size varies across questions



Q34 of the questionnaire asked 'Before joining the Family, were you in an abusive relationship?' 32.6% of participants indicated 'yes', 67.4% indicated 'no'. Q46 of the questionnaire asked 'Are you currently in an abusive relationship?' 15.7% indicated 'yes', 84.3% indicated 'no'.

# Case Vignette 1

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- 16 yr. old male (Sam) referred to the Family b/c he witnessed his father violently murder his mother
- He tried to intervene and was stabbed in the process
- Father is in custody awaiting trial
- Sam is supposed to testify at the trial but is conflicted
- He struggles w/ feelings of anger and forgiveness towards his dad
- He lives with a verbally abusive uncle
- He participates in grp. sessions but appears to be agitated
- He has expressed suicidal ideations on various occasions and has started 'cutting'

# Case Vignette 2

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- A young man stated that since he was 8 yrs. old, he discovered there was 'no love'
- He was disappointed w/ his mother and felt abandoned when she admitted him to Sandilands
- He said he only needs 3 things to survive:
  - **Lighter** (smoking marijuana makes him feel safe)
  - **Phone** – connection
  - **Swiss Knife** - power
- When asked how does he make it, he said '*one day at a time*'.

## November's Death

A new girl came a week ago  
Short, dark and hair cut low  
Sometimes she talked a little slow  
And she always kept her hands below.

Her name was Sarah

When she talked the room would be full with laughter  
She always would have a smile on her face  
I'm sure nobody could take her place.

She came in [here] Wednesday 29th of October last week  
When we came from school and she saw us she only did a little peek.

Now on Monday the 3rd of November we left her with her breath

When we came back from school we heard of her death.

Maybe she was feeling stressed

But now I hope her soul may rest.

We didn't know she was going to be November's death.

Who knew I would be writing a poem about her without breath.

# Conclusion

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- Adolescence is a confusing time.
- A teen's 1<sup>st</sup> notions about drug use come from the behavior of their own family.
- Parents need to provide teens w/ love, good communication & consistent standards about drug & alcohol use.
- Teens may use drugs to escape emotions.
- Bring your teen to an adolescent Family so they can talk through their issues.