

Working with Acceptance, Mindfulness, and Values in Chronic Pain: An Introduction and Experiential Skills- Building Workshop

Kevin E. Vowles, Ph.D.

Interdisciplinary Musculoskeletal Pain Assessment and Community Treatment Service
The Haywood Hospital &
Centre for Primary Care Sciences
Keele University

23 July 2011

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
Surrey, UK



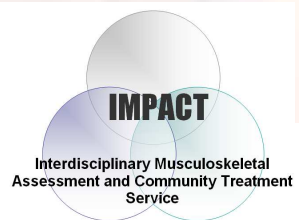
Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY



Our goals:



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services

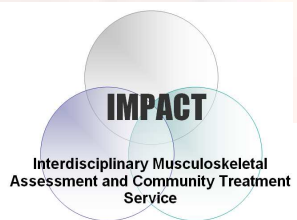


KEELE
UNIVERSITY

- Provide an adequate description of the the ACT theoretical model.
- Facilitate an accurate understanding of what is being treated and the goals of treatment.
- Allow time enough to practice methods:
 - To augment acceptance and mindfulness.
 - Of values clarification and ways to promote values-based action.



What we ask of you:



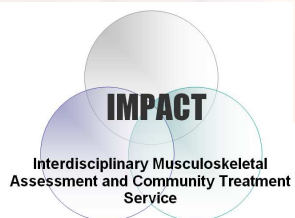
Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

“Ground Rules”

- Humans are incredibly complex.
- Participation is encouraged, but not required.
 - See if you are willing to experiment.



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent

- At times this will be experiential
 - Meaning at times, you will be asked questions about you.
- Although you will be invited to take a few risks, your privacy and autonomy are very important to us.



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

Where is the “Difficulty” in Difficult Clients?



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

- Have you ever had a client who made you
 - Want to quit the field
 - Want to refer out
 - Want to avoid seeing
 - Want to avoid eliciting difficult material

From Hayes 2006



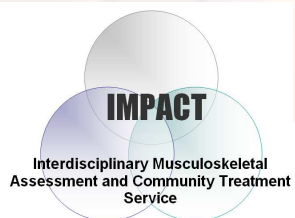
Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

- Have you ever decided:
 - Not to take any more of “that kind” of client
 - Not to fill that timeslot
 - Not to care that much anymore

From Hayes 2006



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

The Most Complex Case I have ever seen



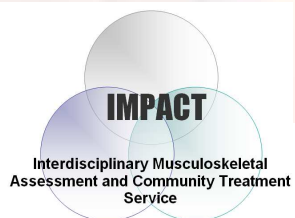
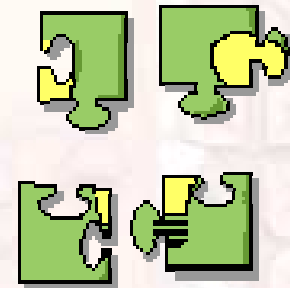
Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

Radical Idea?

- For many of the people who we treat, the fundamental aspect of their struggles may be viewed as untreatable.



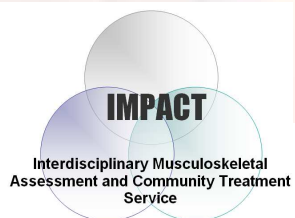
Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

Where is the “difficulty” in difficult patients?

- They bring up painful and difficult thoughts and feelings in us.
- Therapist struggles with these experiences can actually magnify both the feeling and their impact.
- These struggles can negatively impact treatment.
 - (e.g., Kenny, 2004, *Patient Ed & Couns*; Stomski et al., 2010, *Clin J Pain*; Waller, 2009; *Beh Res & Ther*)



A possibility: Our task is the same as our patients

Perhaps we can respond to distress/inadequacy/
confusion/frustration/etc. *within the treatment
environment* in a manner that demonstrates
acceptance and willingness (and compassion) as
we move in directions we deem to have meaning
and value.



- This may, in turn, also have an effect on treatment.



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

Mindfulness defined

- Bringing attention back to the present moment when it wanders into the past or future.
- Allowing present experiences to be present.



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

**Sometimes, our client's goals
can be defined as:**

“If only I could just get rid of X”



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY



Photograph by David Doubilet

 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

© 2007 National Geographic Society. All rights reserved.

What would be worth jumping in that water?



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

A Focus on Values

– Form an answer to the questions:

- “What do you want your life to stand for?”
- “Why does this matter?”
- “What brings meaning to life?”



**This is not a matter of
“just accept it” –**

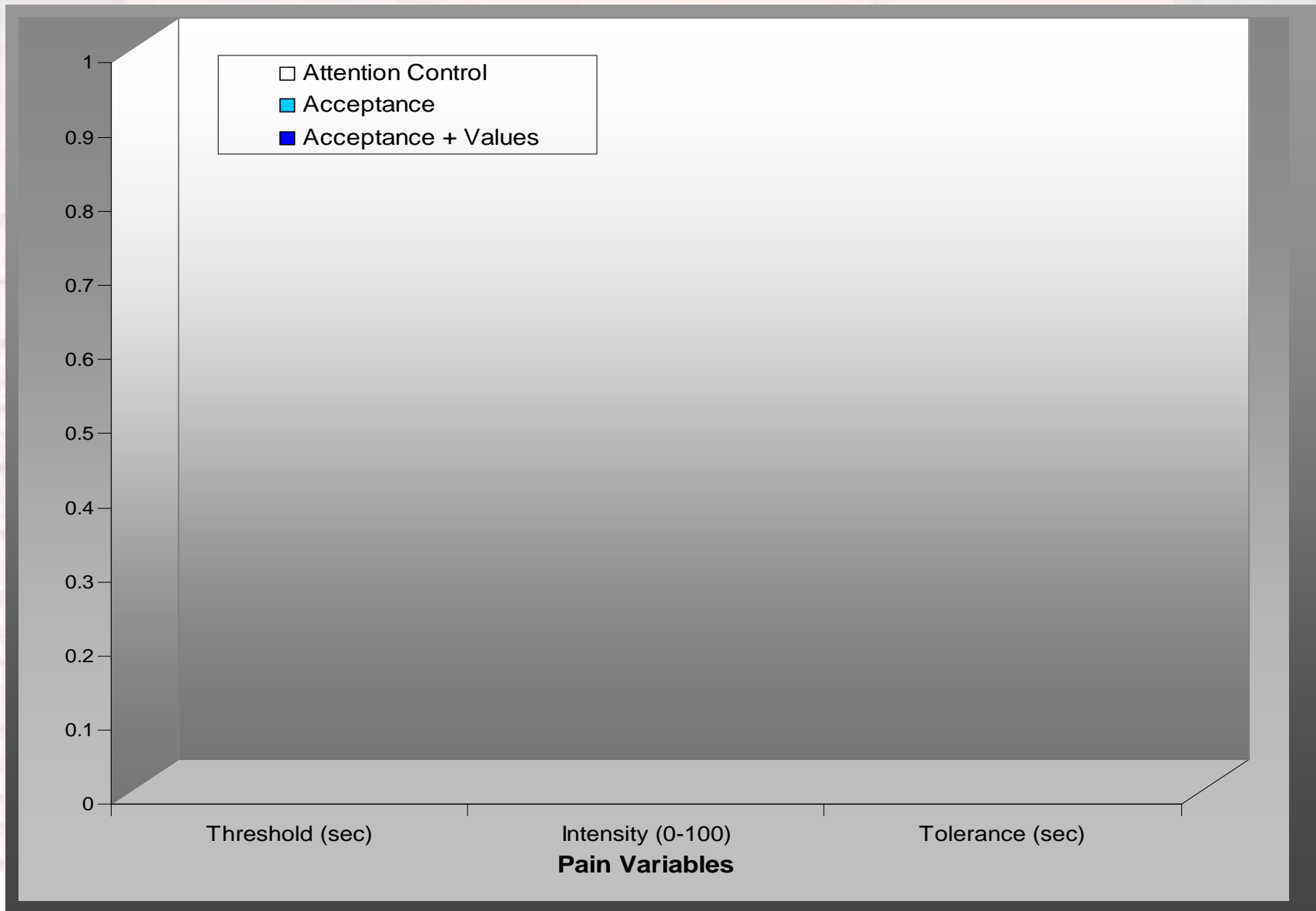
**There is a value to being aware of
the purposes being served by
“accepting it”**



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY



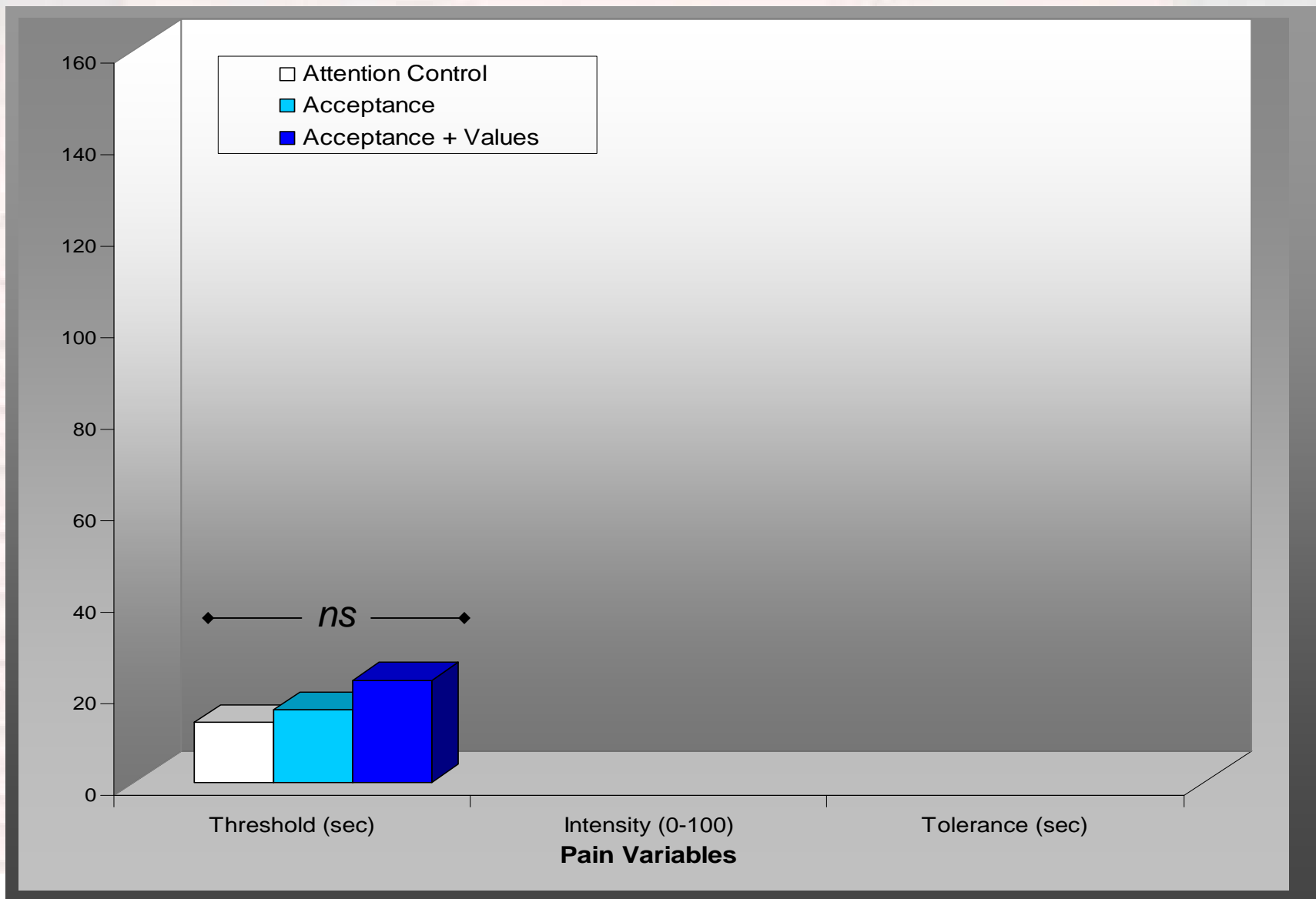
Branstetter-Rost et al. (2009), *J Pain*



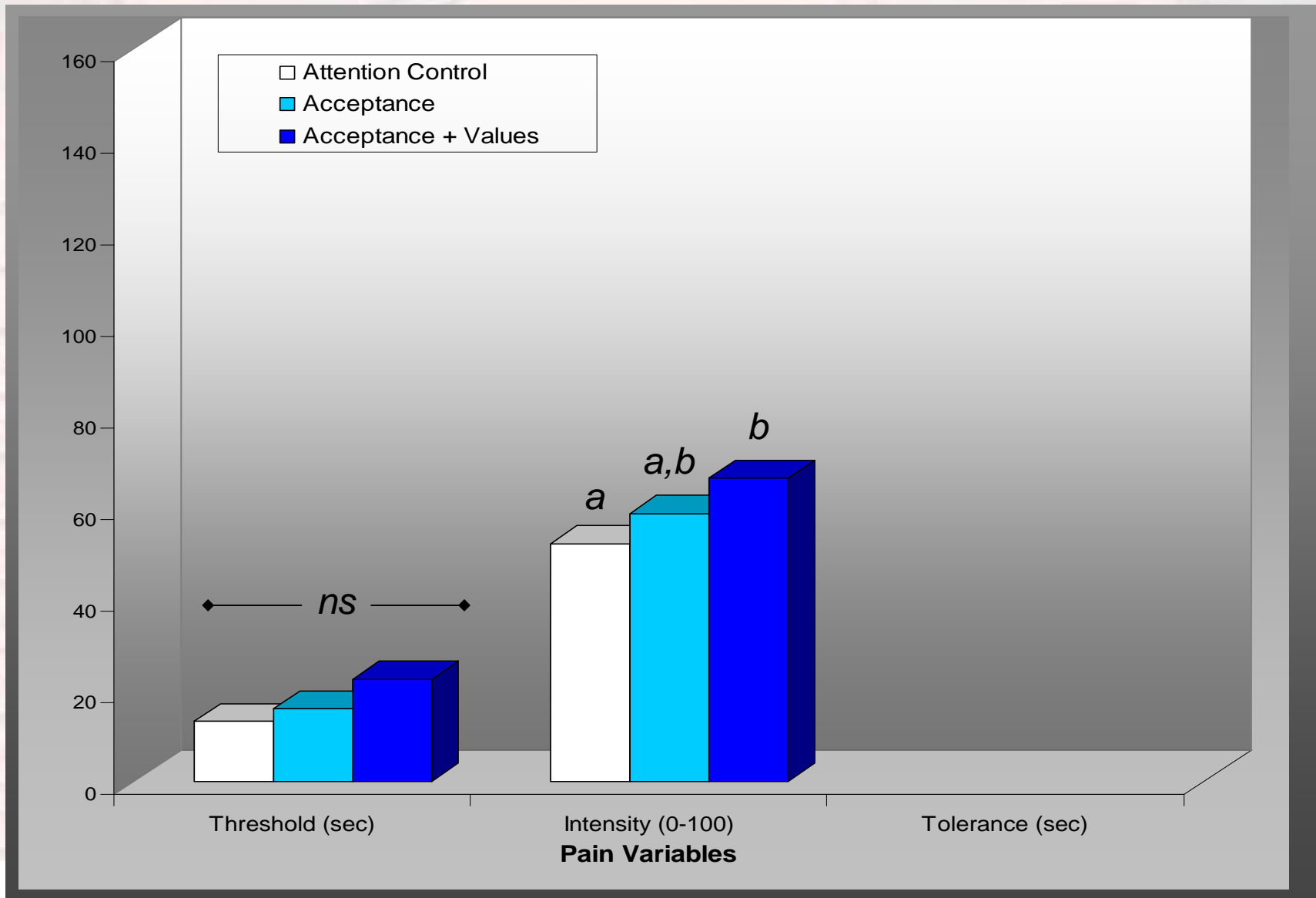
Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



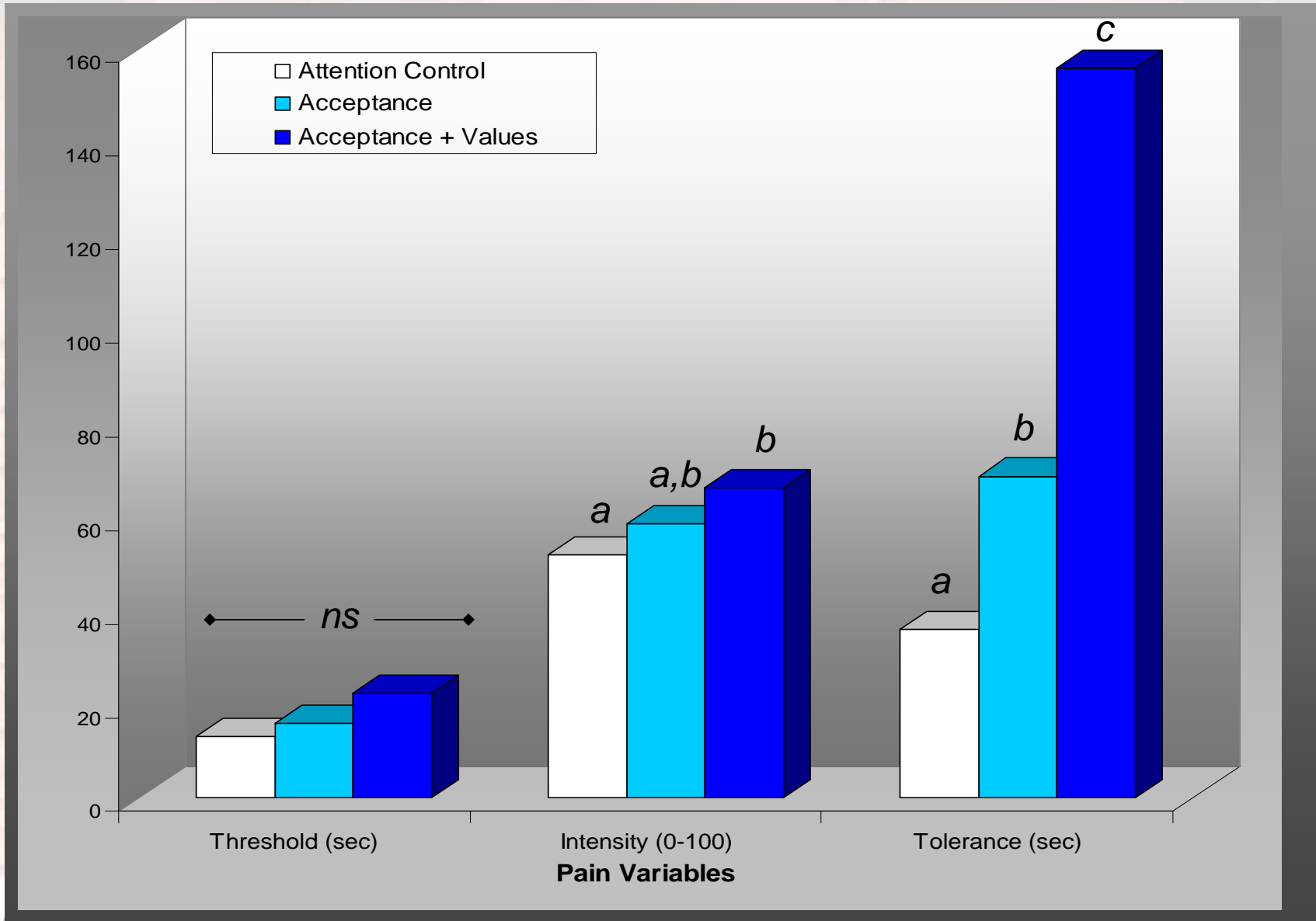
KEELE
UNIVERSITY



Branstetter-Rost et al. (2009), *J Pain*



Branstetter-Rost et al. (2009), *J Pain*



Branstetter-Rost et al. (2009), *J Pain*

The Case of Simple Phobia

- Gloria: Lady in her mid-40's with Rheumatoid Arthritis, a condition that tends to respond well to medication.
- Unfortunately, Gloria cannot take medication as she worries she will choke on it and die.
- Referral question?
 - Please help Gloria take medication.



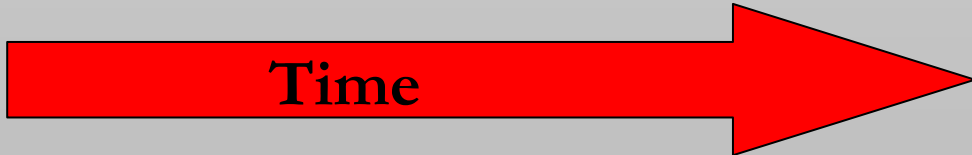
Textbook “Systematic Desensitization”

High

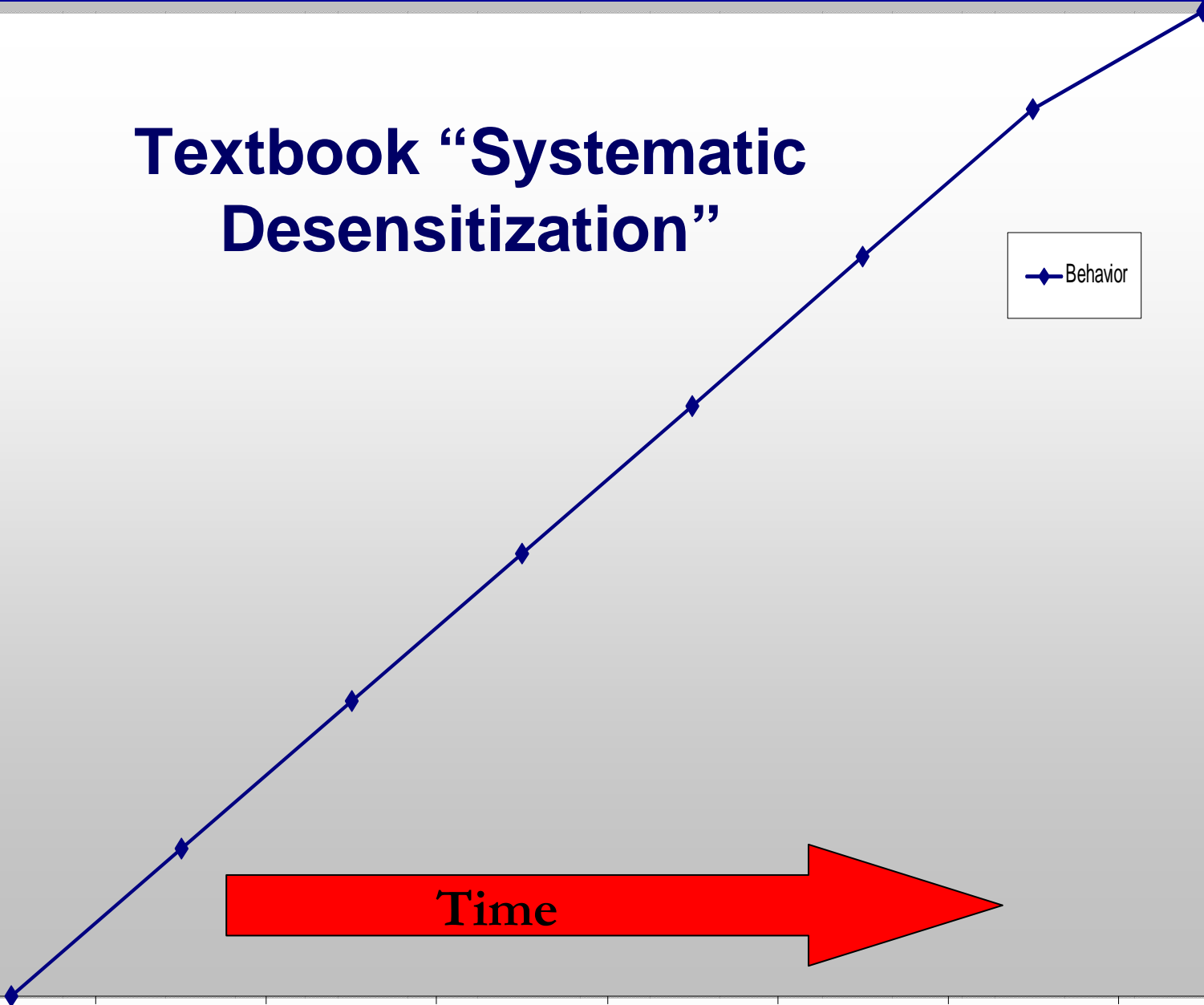
“Complexity” of Behavior

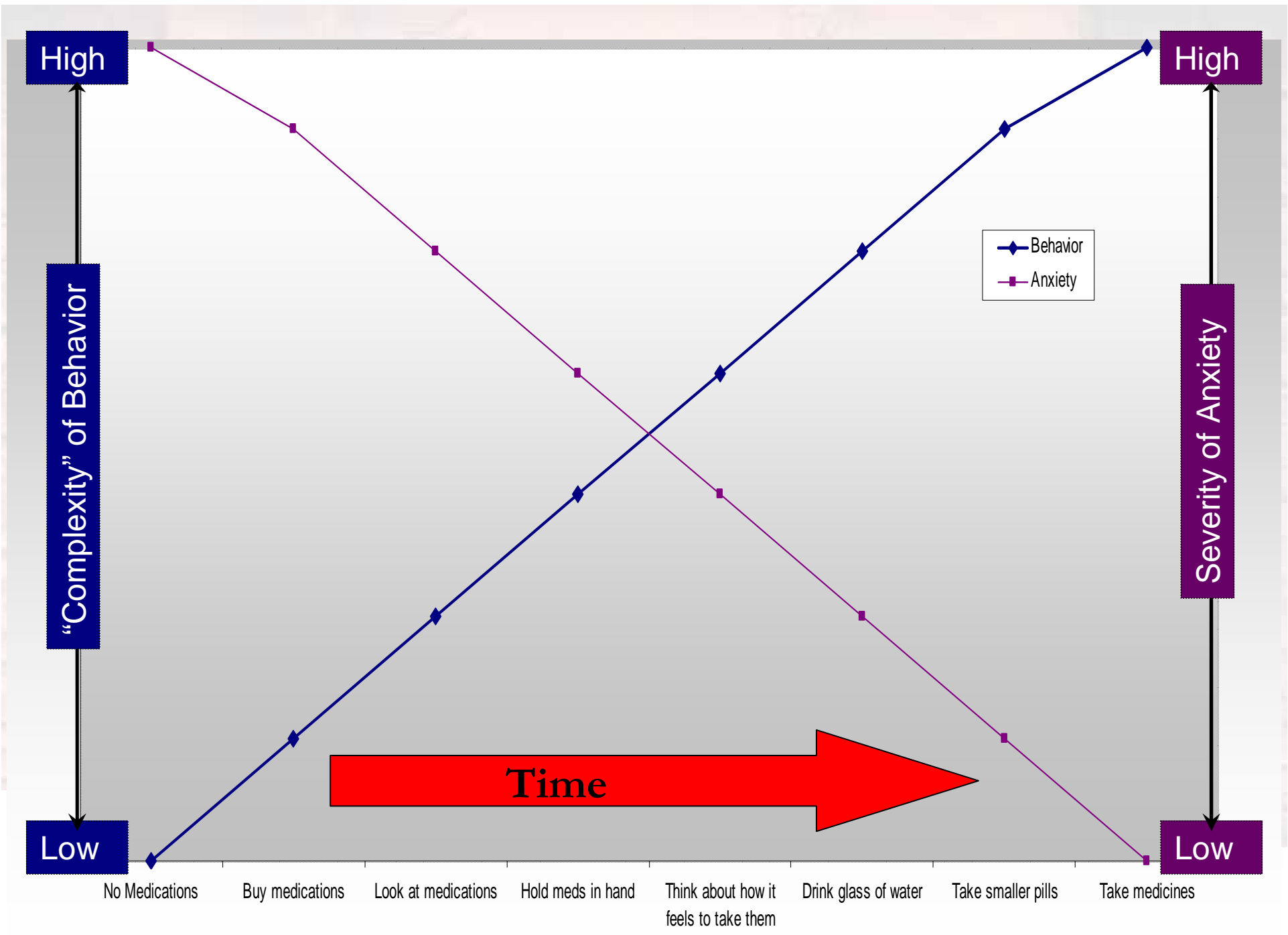
Low

◆ Behavior



- No Medications
- Buy medications
- Look at medications
- Hold meds in hand
- Think about how it feels to take them
- Drink glass of water
- Take smaller pills
- Take medicines





High

High

“Complexity” of Behavior

Severity of Anxiety

Low

Low

Time

No Medications Buy medications Look at medications Hold meds in hand Think about how it feels to take them Drink glass of water Take smaller pills Take medicines

◆ Behavior
■ Anxiety

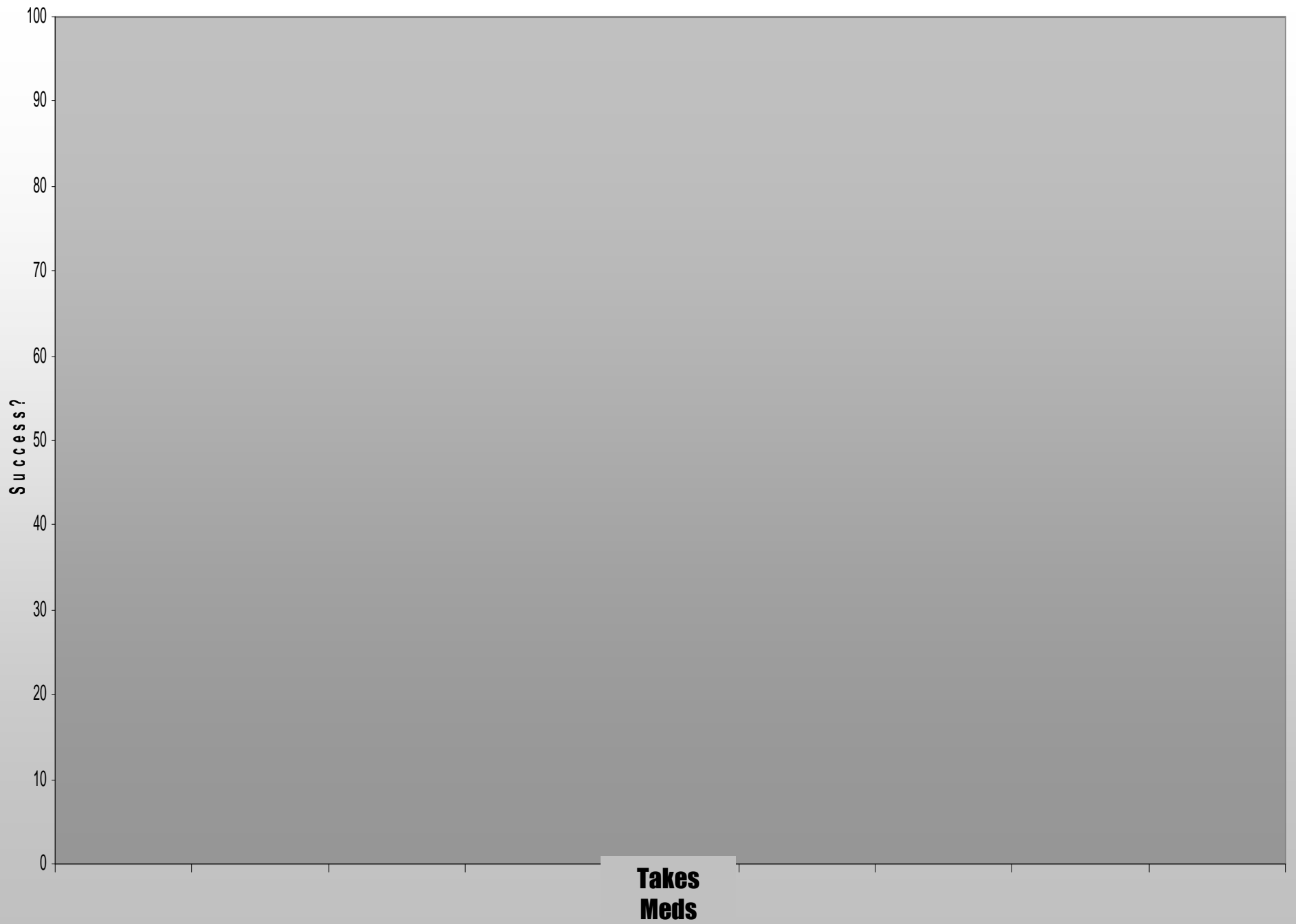
Success Criteria?

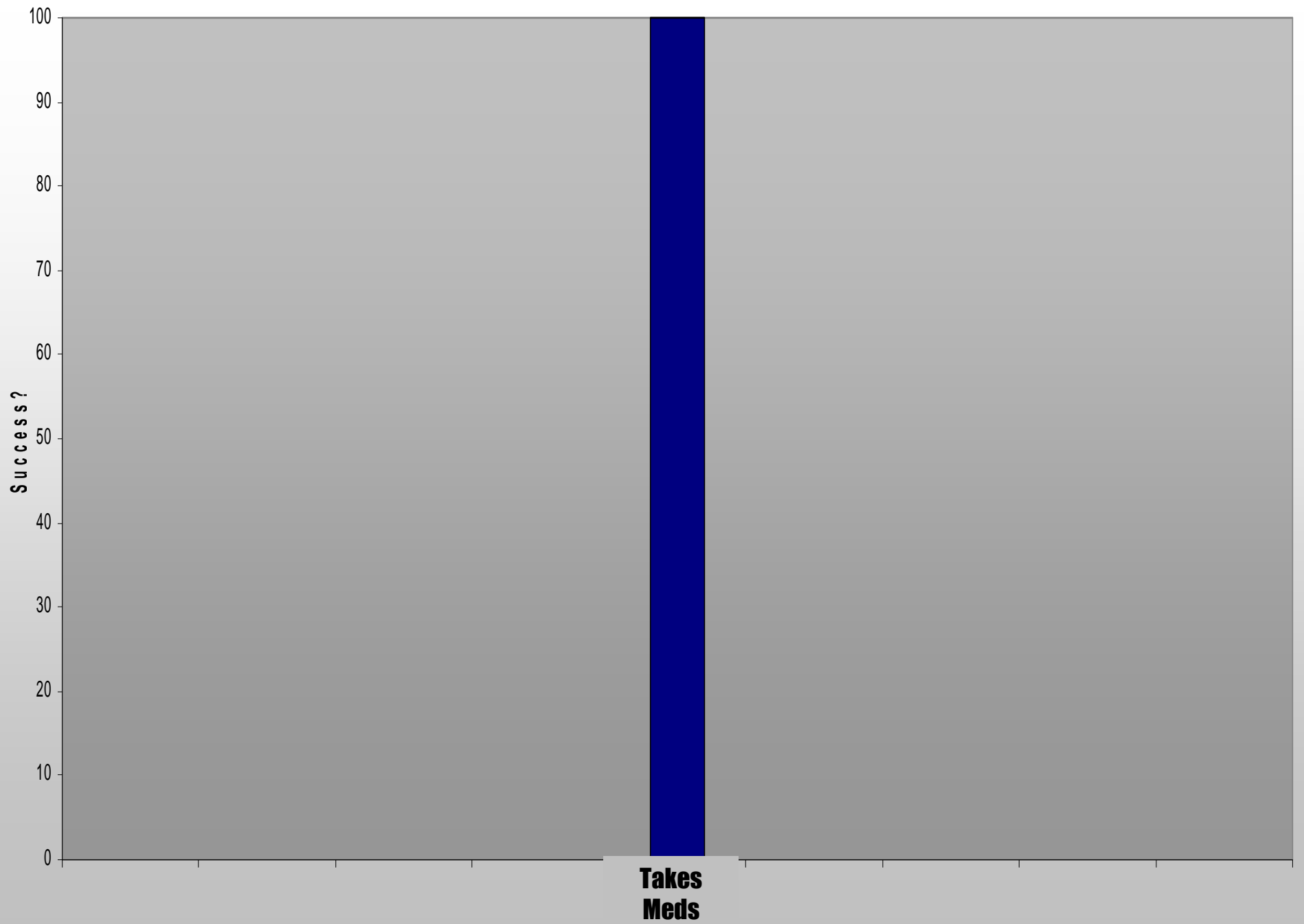


Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY







Leaves Home Regularly

Walks the Dog

Visits local ducks

Rides Train at all

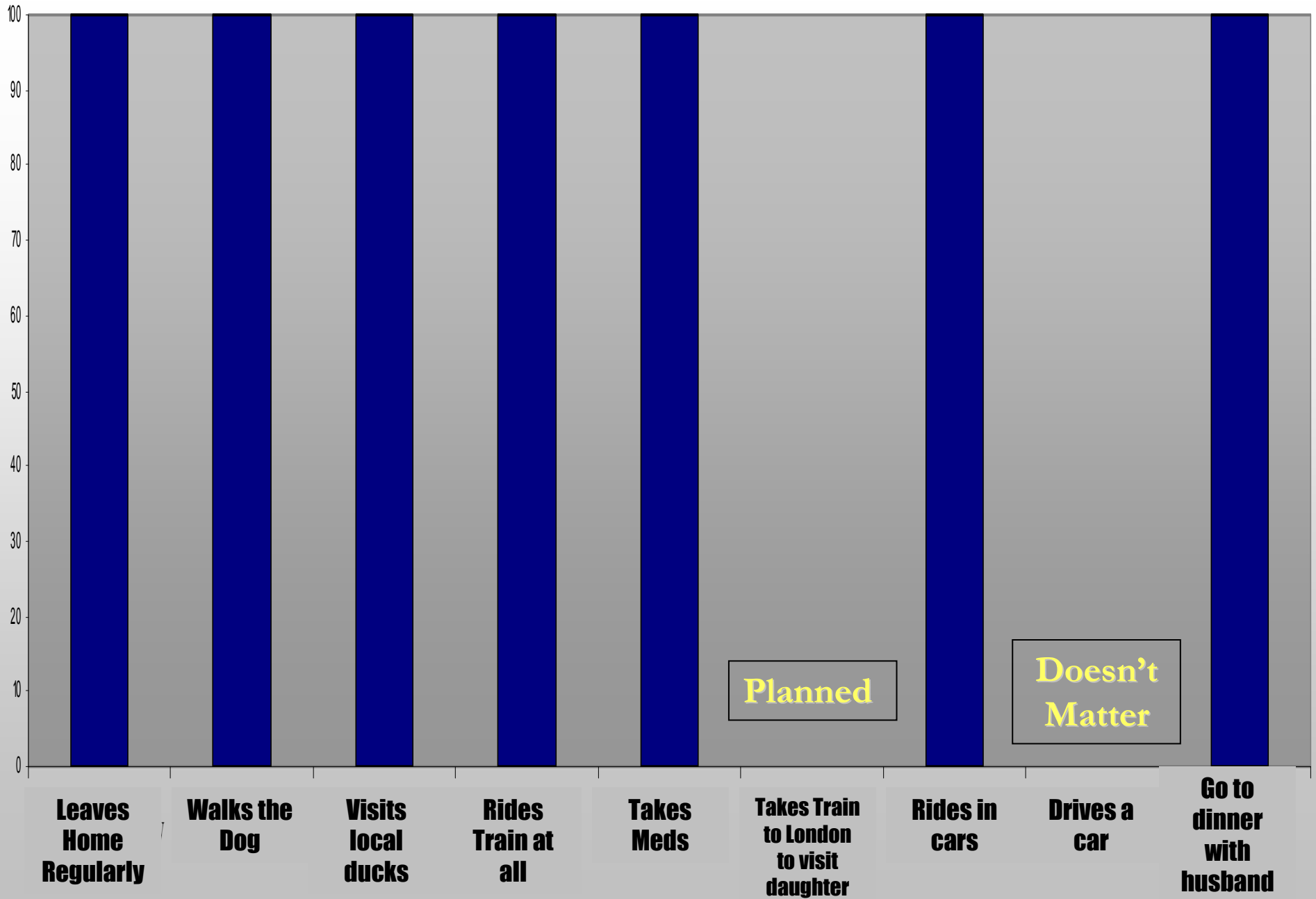
Takes Meds

Takes Train to London to visit daughter

Rides in cars

Drives a car

Go to dinner with husband



An exercise



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

- **Speaker:**

- Think of something you want to change, but still have some ambivalence about.
- Perhaps something related to a health (smoking, diet, exercise), recreation (TV watching, hobby), or work.



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

- Clinician:

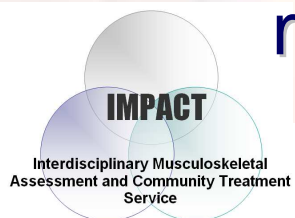
- Your job is to listen mindfully . . .

- You'll notice lots of other approaches are within this.

- and to communicate a *desire* to understand the situation the speaker finds him- or herself in . . .

- If you end up understanding, all the better, but that's not really necessary.

- and a *desire* to understand why this change matters.



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY

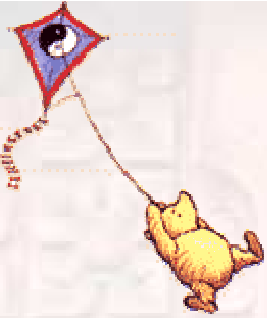
Ideas

- “I’m curious . . .”, “Would you be willing . . .”
- “What does that feel like?”, “That must feel . . .”
- “What would that do for you?”

- Please:
 - Slow down
 - Recognize that this is likely to be important
 - Notice that there is a human being across from you
 - Listen, don’t solve

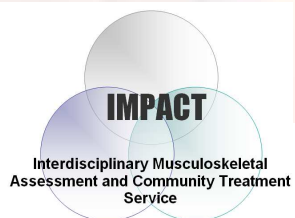
How do we know when it is working?

- You are speaking slowly.
- The person keeps talking.
- The person talks more than you.
- You are following and understanding.
- The person seems to be learning, relaxing, or being more open.
- You are learning, relaxing, and being more open.
- You are asked for information or advice.
- You are receptive to information or advice.



Knowledge from Pooh

- “When you are a Bear of Very Little Brain, and you Think of Things, you sometimes find that a Thing which seemed very Thingish inside you is quite different when it gets out in the open and has other people looking at it.”



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



From: Winnie-the-Pooh's Little Book of Wisdom

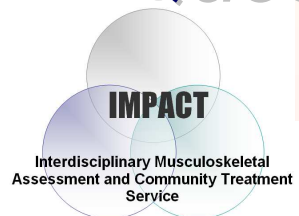


KEELE
UNIVERSITY

Thanks for you attention



Questions? - Kevin.Vowles@uhns.nhs.uk



Stoke on Trent Community Health Services



KEELE
UNIVERSITY