

Experiences of Caregiving and Self-discrepancy in Carers / Family Recovery

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The Participants

Salvation Army's Very Important Families (VIFs)

- ▶ Working with families who have been impacted by a loved one's AOD problem
- ▶ 19 participants
 - Age range 40–78yrs (ave: 62.84yrs)
 - 14 Females & 5 males
 - Attendance ranges <1yr to >10yrs (ave: 3–5 yrs)
- ▶ 14 Loved Ones
 - Age range 19–66yrs (ave 37.42)
 - 11 males, 3 females

Identity



What is it?

- ▶ A person's identity is:
 - based on his or her experiences in the world, the meaning that he or she ascribes to those experiences and the perception he or she has of the interaction between themselves and their experiences.
- ▶ **Growth Mindsets** (Dweck, 2006)
 - The Path to Opportunity
- ▶ **Fixed Mindsets** (Dweck, 2006)
 - The Path to Stagnation

What is it?

- ▶ Possible Selves are:

“personalized images, conceptions, or senses of the self in the future” (Cross & Markus, 1991, p.232)

- ▶ Strengths–based perspective

“the belief that people are capable of growth and change, particularly when empowered to gain insight into their own assets, strengths and resources” (Berg–Weger, 2001, p. 264)

- ▶ Values are:

“what you want your life to be about, deep in your heart. What you want to stand for. What you want to do with your time on this planet”

(http://thehaapinesstrap.com/about_act)

How do we measure it?

- ▶ Self-discrepancy
 - “a particular type of negative psychological situation” (Higgins, 1987, p. 322)
 - Improvements in wellness/recovery
- ▶ Repertory Grid
 - Measuring the movement towards an ‘preferred’ or ‘ideal’ self.

Elements

Possible Selves

“Myself as I usually am” (Usual Self)

“Myself as I used to be” (Past Self)

“Me as I ought to be” (Ought Self)

“Me as I would ideally like to be” (Ideal Self)

“Myself as I will be in 12 months time” (Future Self)

“My best self” (Best Self)

Others

“My family” (Family)

“The support group” (Support Group)

“My loved one” (Loved One)

Constructs

- ▶ Elicited via ‘Self-Characterisations’
- ▶ Example:

Sarah* is a **nice & caring** person, she **works very hard** every day to keep everything together & happy = the house, the garden, the sons, the pets, the clients She makes **time for herself** (likes TV shows, reading & music) and is always **polite and friendly**. She has **high self-esteem** and a **positive attitude** (most of the time) and a **sense of humour**. She **loves all creatures** great and small & talks to them. (won't kill spiders but puts them in the paddock next door)

Alternate construct

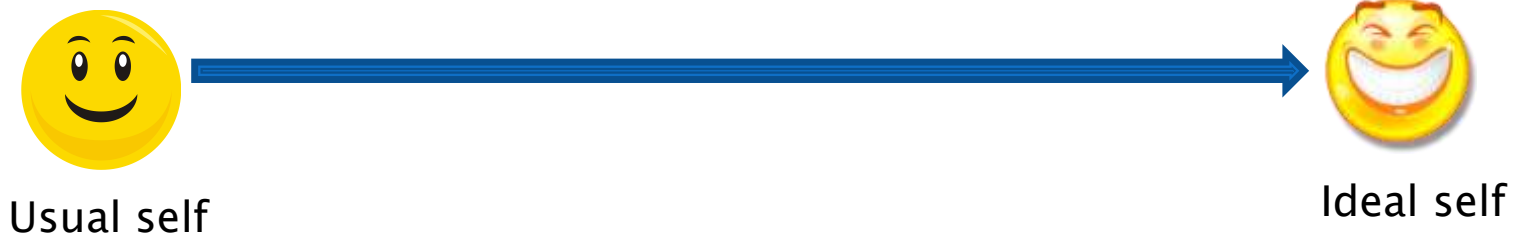
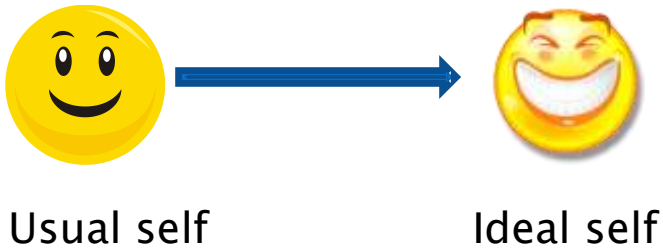
- ▶ Elicited construct from Self-Characterisations
 - ‘Nice’
- ▶ The alternate construct was obtained by asking the following:
 - ▶ “To you being ‘nice’ would contrast with someone who is...”
 - ‘Rude’

Repertory Grid

Constructs		ELEMENTS	
		Usual	Ideal
1	5	RATING	
Rude	Nice	5	5
Self-centred	Caring	5	5
Lazy	Hardworking	4	3
Workaholic	Time for Self	2	3
Abrupt	Polite	5	5
Aloof	Friendly	4	4
Self-conscious	High self-esteem	3	5
Negative attitude	Positive attitude	3	5
Whinger	Sense of humour	4	5
Selfish	Loves all creatures	5	5

Distance Measures

- ▶ Identifies the distance between how you perceive your usual self and your perceptions of other selves/groups
- ▶ The smaller the distances the more similar you perceive your usual self to the other self/group.

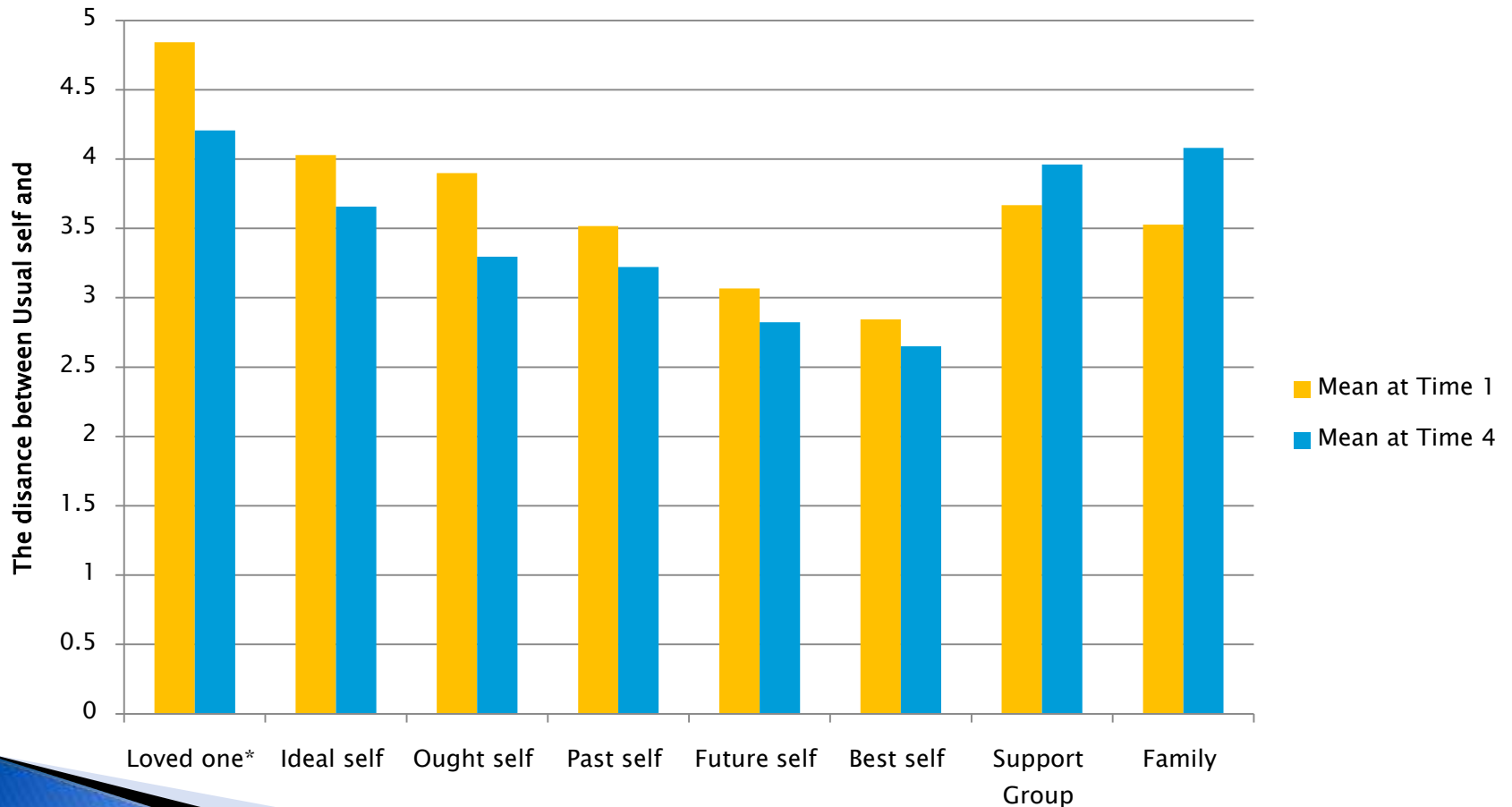


Questionnaires

- ▶ **Grief:** Marwitt–Mueser Caregiver Inventory – Short Form (Marwitt & Meuser, 2005)
- ▶ **Coping:** Experiences of Caregiving (ECI) (Szmukler, et al., 1996)
- ▶ **Well–Being:** Mental Health Continuum – Short Form (C.L.M.Keyes, 2009)
- ▶ **Hope:** State Hope Scale (Snyder et al.,1996)

Results

Are there changes in the Distance between Usual Self and other selves/groups over 12 months?

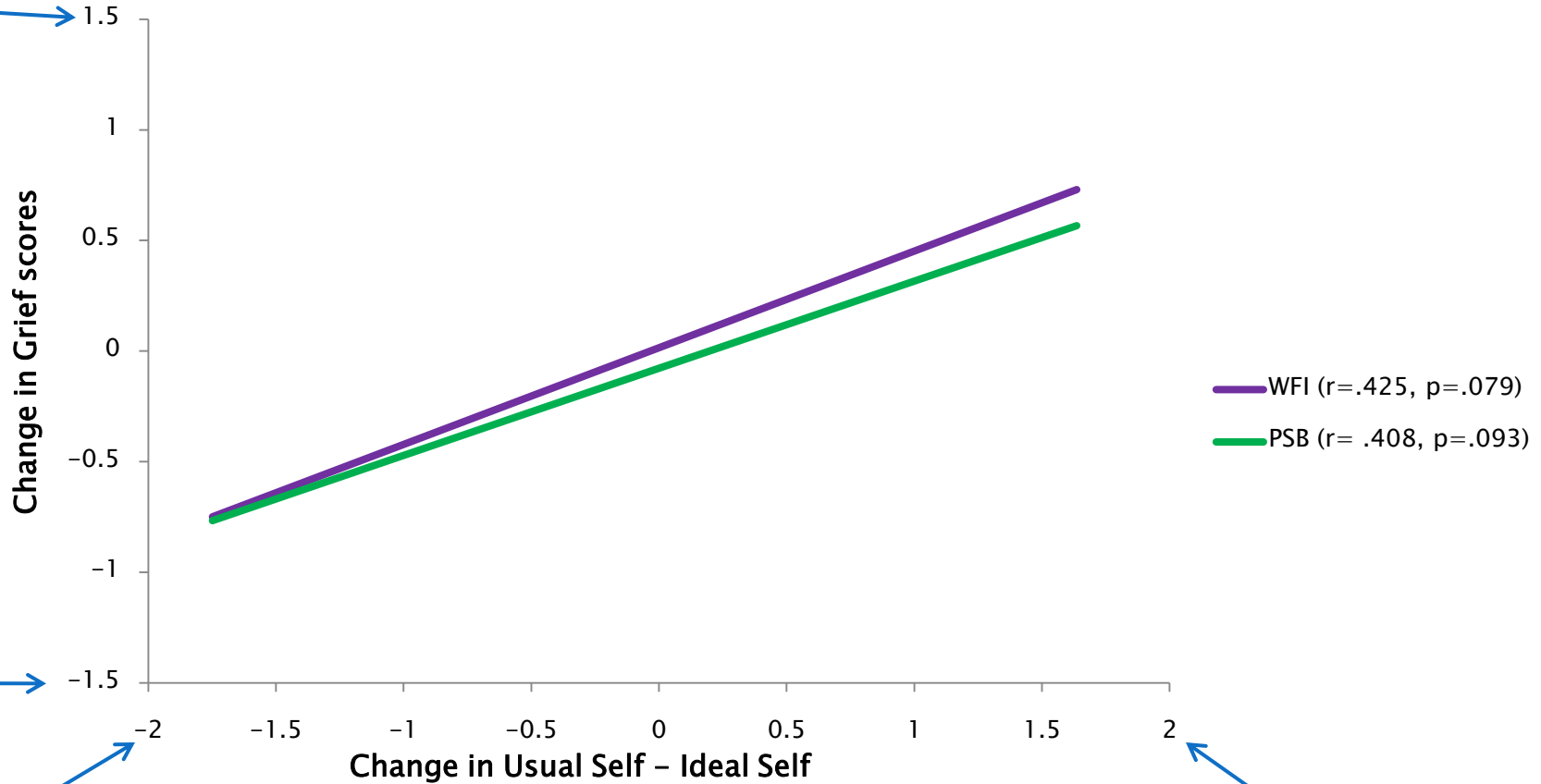


Grief

- ▶ Two Subscales are measured –
 - Personal Sacrifice and Burden (PSB)
 - measures the individual losses experienced by caregiving
 - Worry & Felt Isolation (WFI)
 - measures the feeling of losing connections with, and support from others

Is there a relationship between Usual self- Ideal self and Grief over 12 months?

Higher scores at Time 4



Lower scores at Time 4

Closer to the Ideal Self

Further away from Ideal Self

Experiences of Caregiving

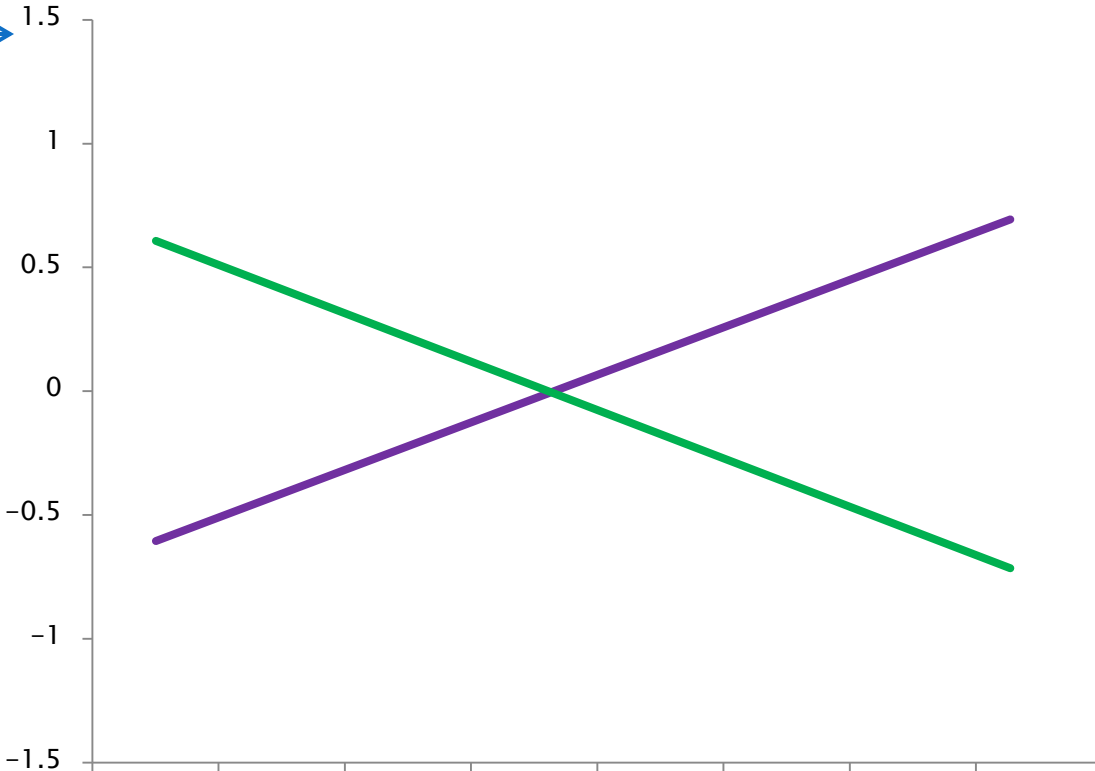
- ▶ Two Subtotals calculated–
 - Negative experiences
 - Having to support him/her (Need to backup)
 - Unable to do the things you want (Dependency)
 - Positive experiences
 - I have learnt more about myself (Positive personal experiences)
 - I have contributed to his/her wellbeing (Good aspect of the relationship)

Is there a relationship between Usual self- Ideal self and Experiences of Caregiving over 12 months?

Higher scores at Time 4



Change in ECI Scores



ECI Negative

ECI Positive ($r=-.403$, $p=.098$)

Lower scores at Time 4



Change in Usual Self - Ideal Self

Closer to the Ideal Self

Further away from Ideal Self

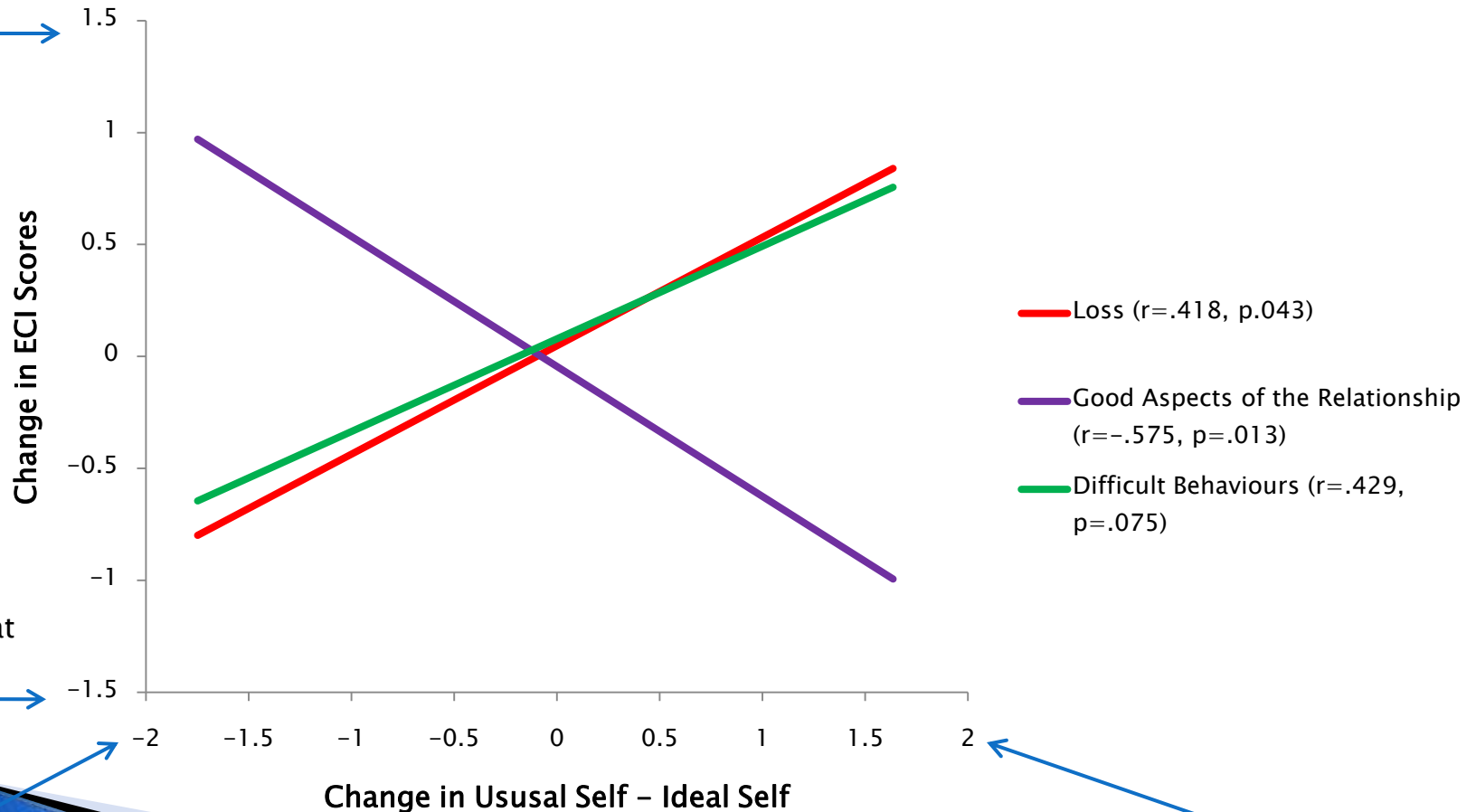
Experiences of Caregiving

- ▶ Ten subscales measured –
 - Stigma
 - Problems with services
 - Effects on Family
 - Loss
 - Difficult behaviours
 - Negative symptoms
 - Need to provide backup
 - Dependency
 - Rewarding personal experiences
 - Good aspects of the relationship

Is there a relationship between Usual self- Ideal self and Experiences of Caregiving over 12 months?

Higher scores at Time 4

Lower scores at Time 4



Closer to the Ideal Self

Further away from Ideal Self

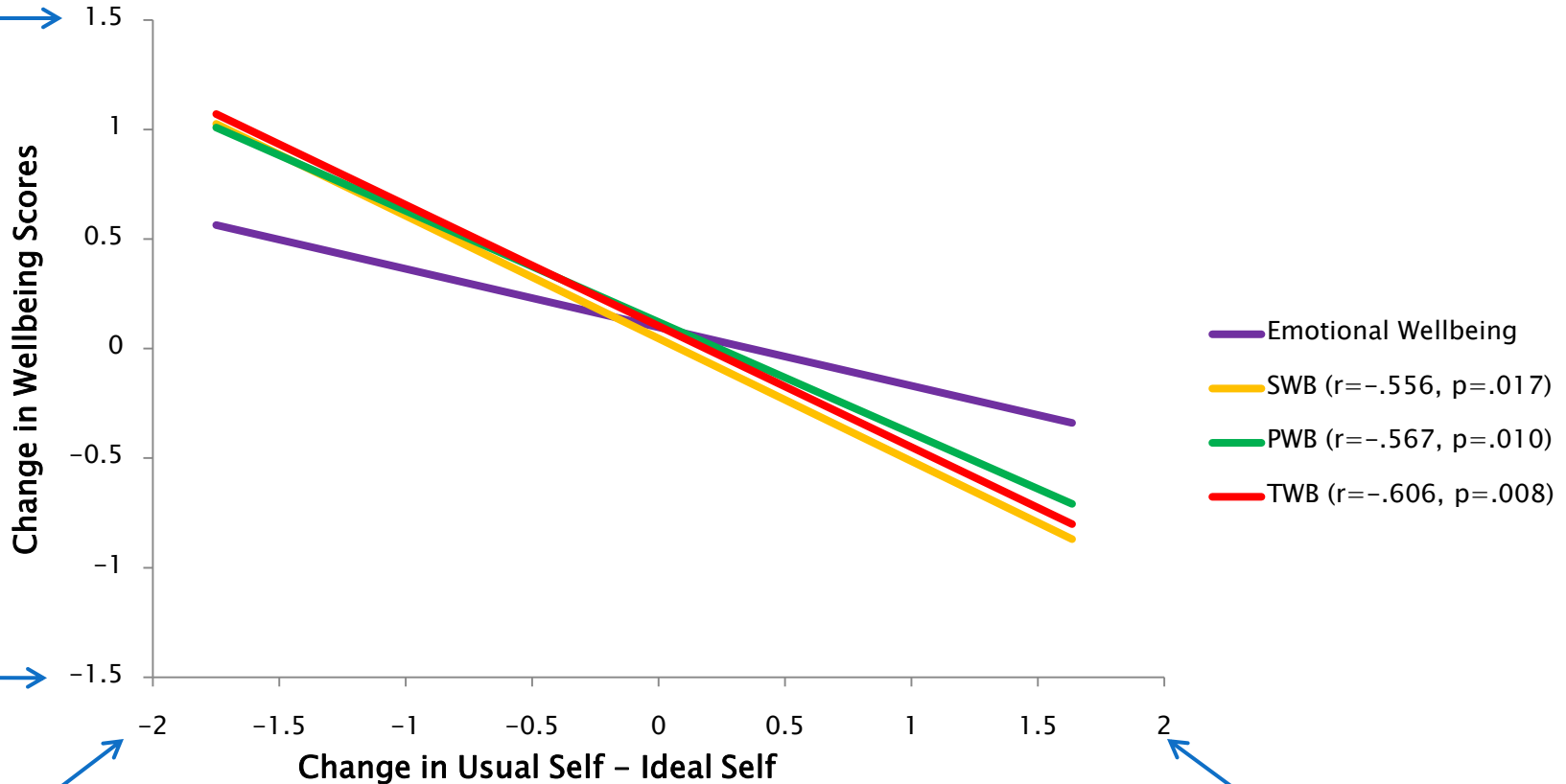
Wellbeing

- ▶ Three Subscales are measured –
 - Emotional Wellbeing (EWB)
 - focuses on feeling towards life
 - Social Wellbeing (SWB)
 - which indicates whether and to what degree individuals are functioning well in their social lives.
 - Psychological Wellbeing (PWB)
 - reflects the challenges that individuals encounter as they strive to function fully and realise their unique talents.
 - PLUS Total Wellbeing (TWB)
 - are the appraisals individuals make about the quality of their lives

Is there a relationship between Usual self- Ideal self and Wellbeing over 12 months?

Higher scores at Time 4

Lower scores at Time 4



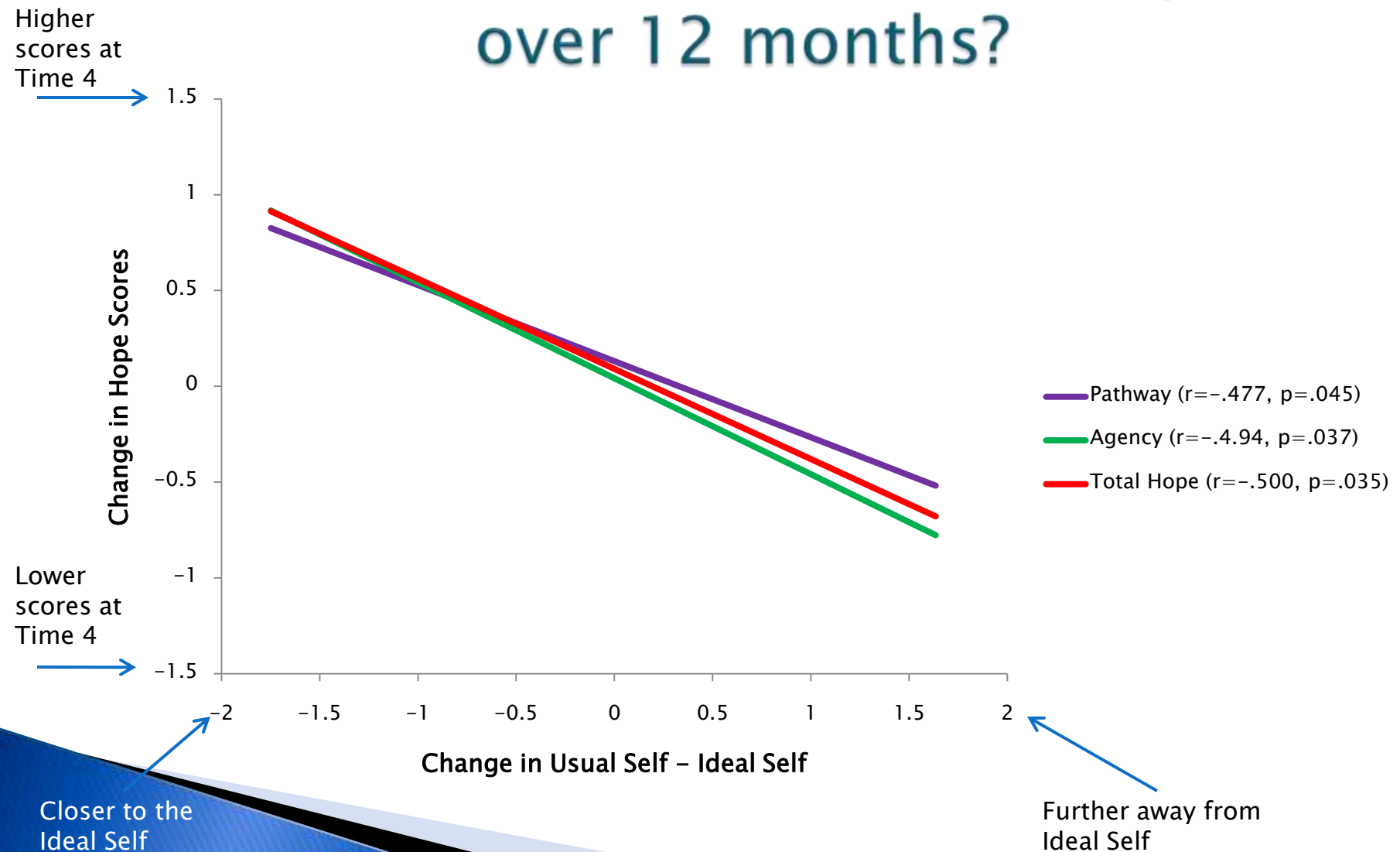
Closer to the Ideal Self

Further away from Ideal Self

Hope

- ▶ Two subscales measured –
 - Pathway
 - is the measure the person ability to identify a number of different ways of achieving their goals.
 - Agency
 - is measures the determination a person has in achieving their goals.
 - Total Hope
 - is the amount of hope a person has in achieving their goals.

Is there a relationship between Usual self- Ideal self and Hope over 12 months?



How do we get movement towards an ideal self ?

- ▶ The 12 modules
 - Meet people where they are at
 - Move forward through recovery to flourishing
- ▶ Focus on Identity through
 - Values, strengths and goals
- ▶ The 'village' is also important
 - Not alone
 - Need support



Module One - Family Empowerment

The material presented in this module aims to:

1. Outline common family recovery experiences
2. Explore what the road to recovery may mean to you
3. Outline family empowerment

The overall aim of this programme is to assist you with your journey of empowerment and towards living the kind of life you want now and in the future. The ability to move forward in a positive way is possible even when problems persist in a family.

To help highlight the issues raised in each of the modules, three families will be sharing their experiences of having a loved one with a substance use and/or mental health disorder. There will also be ongoing reflection on the idea of the "village" as a significant part of the recovery and growth process throughout the modules. A brief introduction to our families follows:



Brian and Beryl's Story

They have been married for 45 years and have four children, three boys and one girl, and six grandchildren. Their eldest son Matthew, now 45 years, had a dependency on speed, heroin, methadone and other drugs for 9 years and has been clean for 5 years. Matthew also has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, for which he is taking medication. Brian and Beryl took custody of Matthew's two children (aged 7 and 5). They have described the impact on themselves and their family as involving denial, shock, shame, frustration, betrayal, disappointment, self-blame, self-pity and grief.

Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) use and/or Mental Health (MH) problems are complicated and are often a damaging reality for our families, communities and society in general. The impact of AOD and/or MH problems on individual family



John and Patricia's Story

They have three children, two girls and a boy. Their youngest child, Brett, now 34 years has been dependent on heroin and other drugs for 16 years. They think he has been clean for 3 years but they are not certain, they suspect that he may be using prescription drugs. Brett's drug use has affected his mental health. Brett has stolen from his parents and others and has had time in gaol. He has been to rehabilitation programmes on many occasions. They have described the impact on themselves and their family as one of shock, stress, loss of trust, powerlessness, theft, manipulation and financial strain.

members and the family as a whole is significant and can include, but is not limited to theft, violence, manipulation, isolation, conflict, stress, lack of trust, and financial strain. Individual family members may experience a



Sharon's Story

Sharon is a single parent, who has four children, three boys and one girl. The middle son, Chris, who is now 19 years old, has been an alcoholic and drug addict since he was 11 years old. He has just been released from gaol and is back drinking and doing drugs again. She described her family as chaotic and aggressive and she felt consumed by Chris, to the point where her other children were too frightened to speak to her about their feelings, as they were concerned that it might add to their mother's burden. Sharon also experienced feelings of confusion, frustration, worry, self-blame and grief. She felt unsupported and drained emotionally and physically.

range of differing emotions such as powerlessness, feeling tired, drained, unsupported, anxious, guilty, tearful, fearful, confused, tense and lonely.

