

# **Can human beings flourish in prison?**

Alison Liebling  
Cambridge Institute of Criminology

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# Human flourishing

- ‘The difference between the atmosphere in Workshop 10 (a music room) and the rest of [this maximum security prison] was like the difference between *life* and *death*..’ (Liebling, 2010, Arts Alliance Conference).
- One of the things that makes a human life go well is the recognition by the person who lives it that he is fully human, and the social forms in which that recognition is expressed (Kraut 1999: 329).
- Law is in effect no more than a form of psychology, since it is really a symbolic expression for the fact that the human mind responds in particular ways to certain kinds of social pressures (Lloyd 1969, p. 217-8).

- ‘That human persons are flourishing means that their lives are good, or worthwhile in the broadest sense’  
(Pogge 1999: 333).

# Paternoster and Bushway 2009:

- ‘Theorizing and research about desistance from crime is one of the most exciting, vibrant, and dynamic areas in criminology today.’

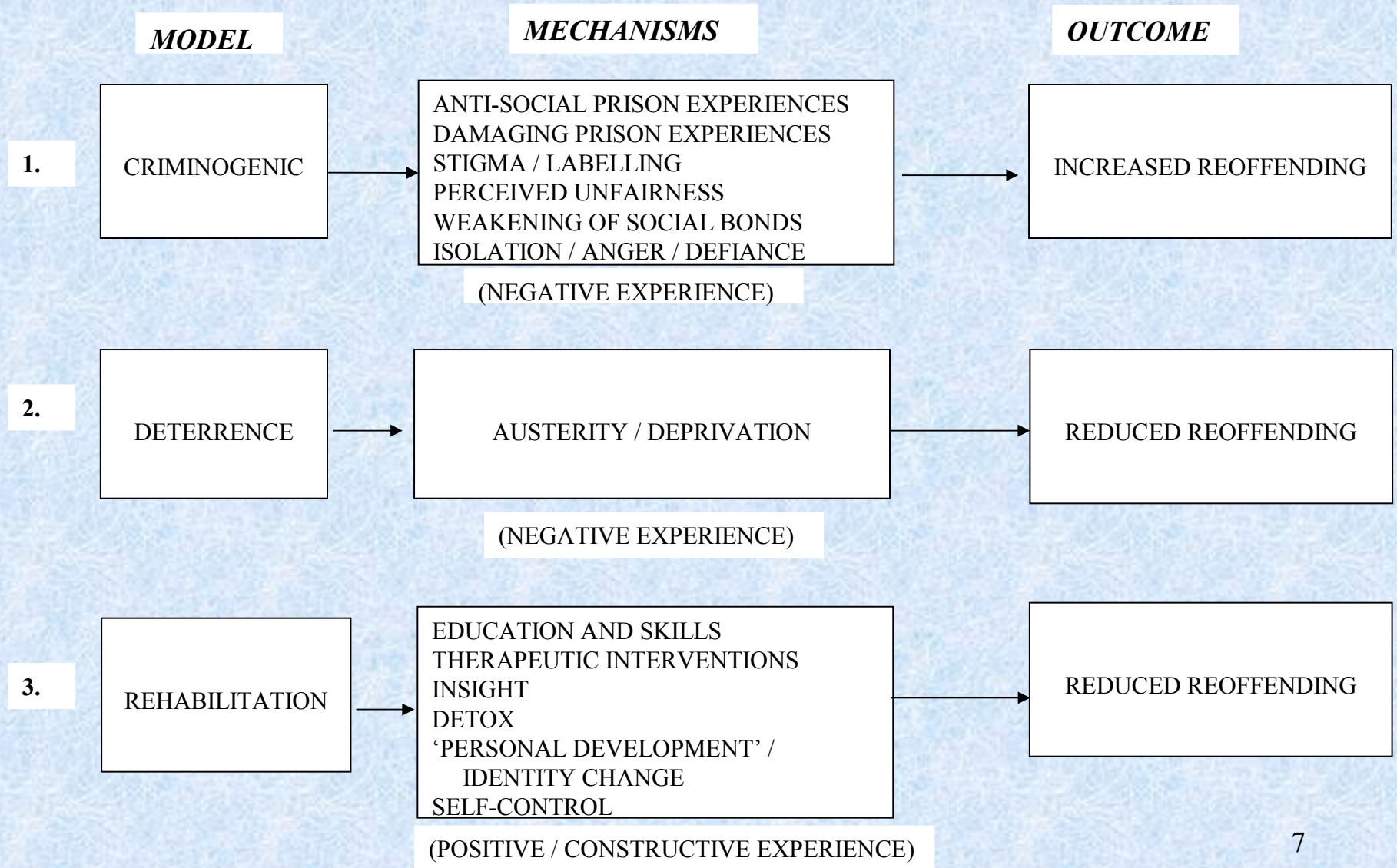
# Prison suicide and hopelessness

- Suicide is an attempt to end a situation felt to be unbearable, committed in a state of mind in which it does not matter any more whether all is really lost..' (Diekstra 1987).
- Why does someone kill himself? .. Because one will not, cannot go through the next half hour, the next five minutes. The limit has been reached ... (Klaus Mann's *Turning Point*, 1940)

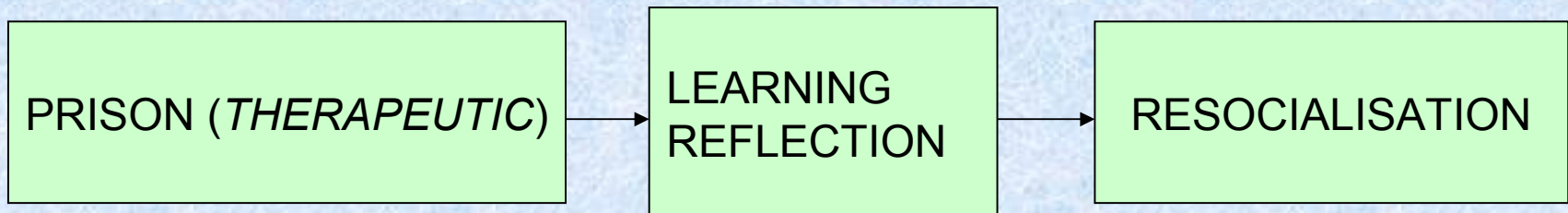
# Is there a role for the prison in desistance?

- The great majority of studies point to a null or criminogenic effect of the prison experience on subsequent offending. (Nagin, Cullen and Johnson 2009)
- Offenders imprisoned for assault were more likely to reoffend than matched offenders not sent to prison (Weatherburn 2010).

# Figure 1. The Effects of Imprisonment on Reoffending: 3 Hypotheses

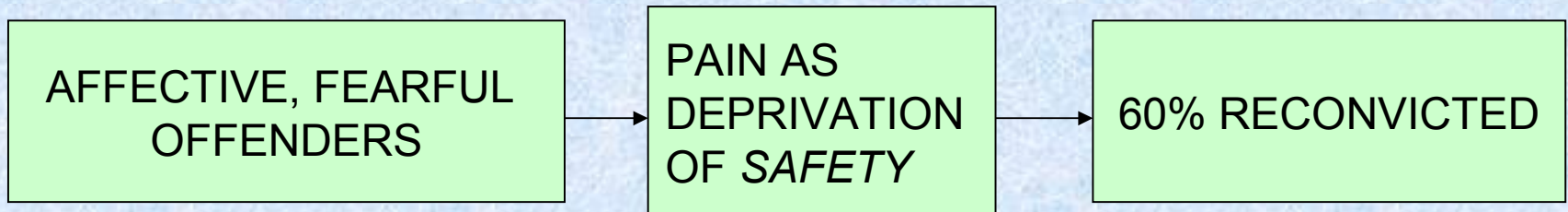


## *Figure 2 TWO HYPOTHESES ON PRISON EFFECTS*





***Figure 2 cont. TWO TYPES OF PRISON  
EFFECTS  
(HANOVER PRISON PROJECT)***



# Well-being and offending

- [P]ositive emotions broaden one's awareness and encourage novel, varied and exploratory thoughts and actions (which build skills over time). Negative emotions, on the other hand, mostly prompt narrow survival-oriented behaviours. When we go out of our way to make offenders miserable, both they and we suffer the consequences (Porporino 2010: 80).

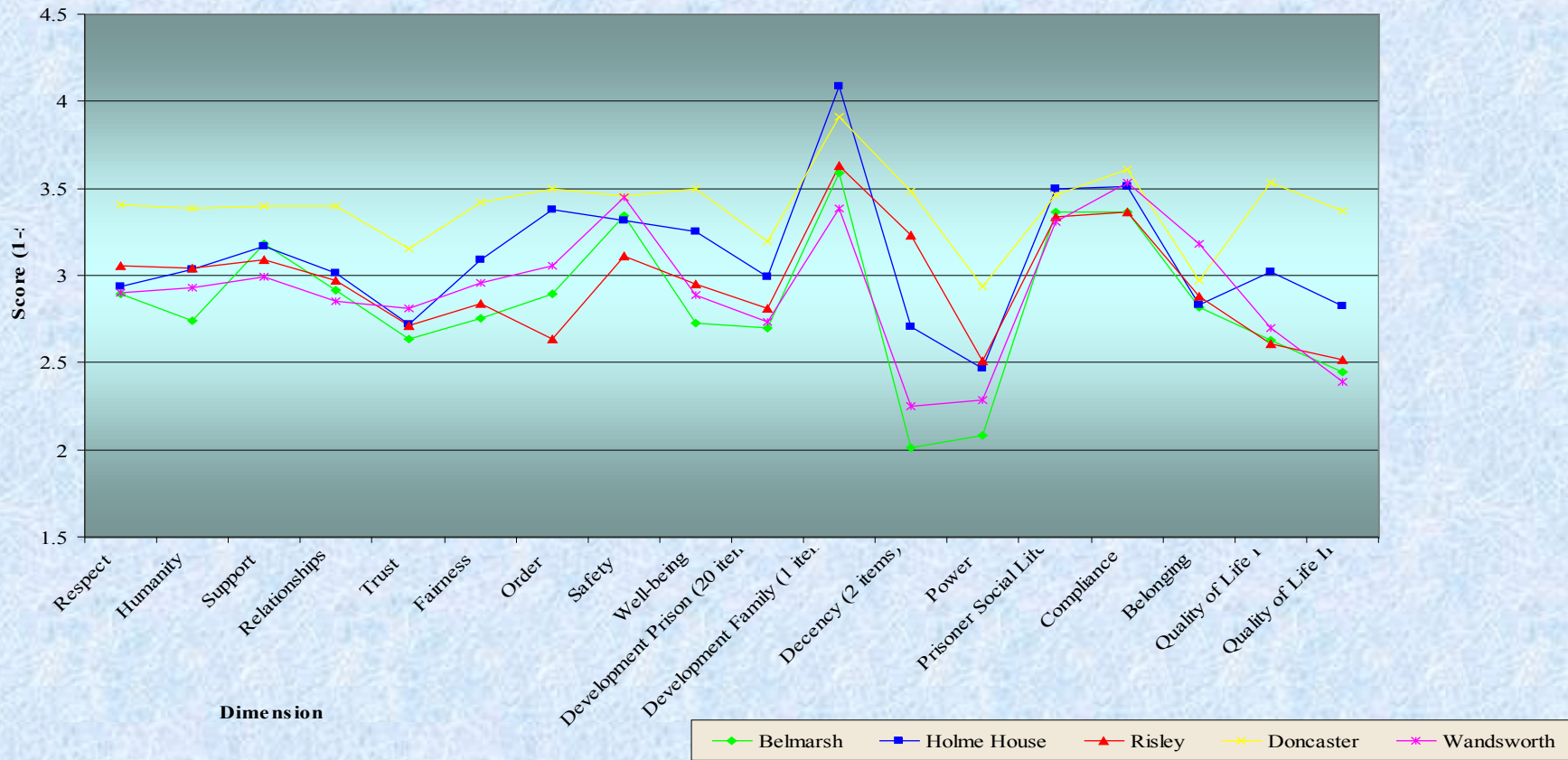
# Using Appreciative Inquiry to identify Prison Quality Dimensions (‘things that matter’)

- Relationships:
  - Respect
  - Humanity
  - Relationships
  - Trust
  - Support
- Social Structure:
  - Power/authority
  - Social relations
- Regime:
  - Fairness
  - Order
  - Safety
  - Well-being
  - Personal Development
  - Family Contact
  - Decency
- Other:
  - Meaning
  - Quality of life

When I first came in, I had no pillow. I approached two officers – they were chatting, so I waited. Eventually, one of them asked me what I wanted. He said, ‘You’re not entitled to a pillow’ and carried on chatting. They were not concerned about me. That seems minor, but it’s crucial. *It can turn you into a different person.*

*(Prisoner)*

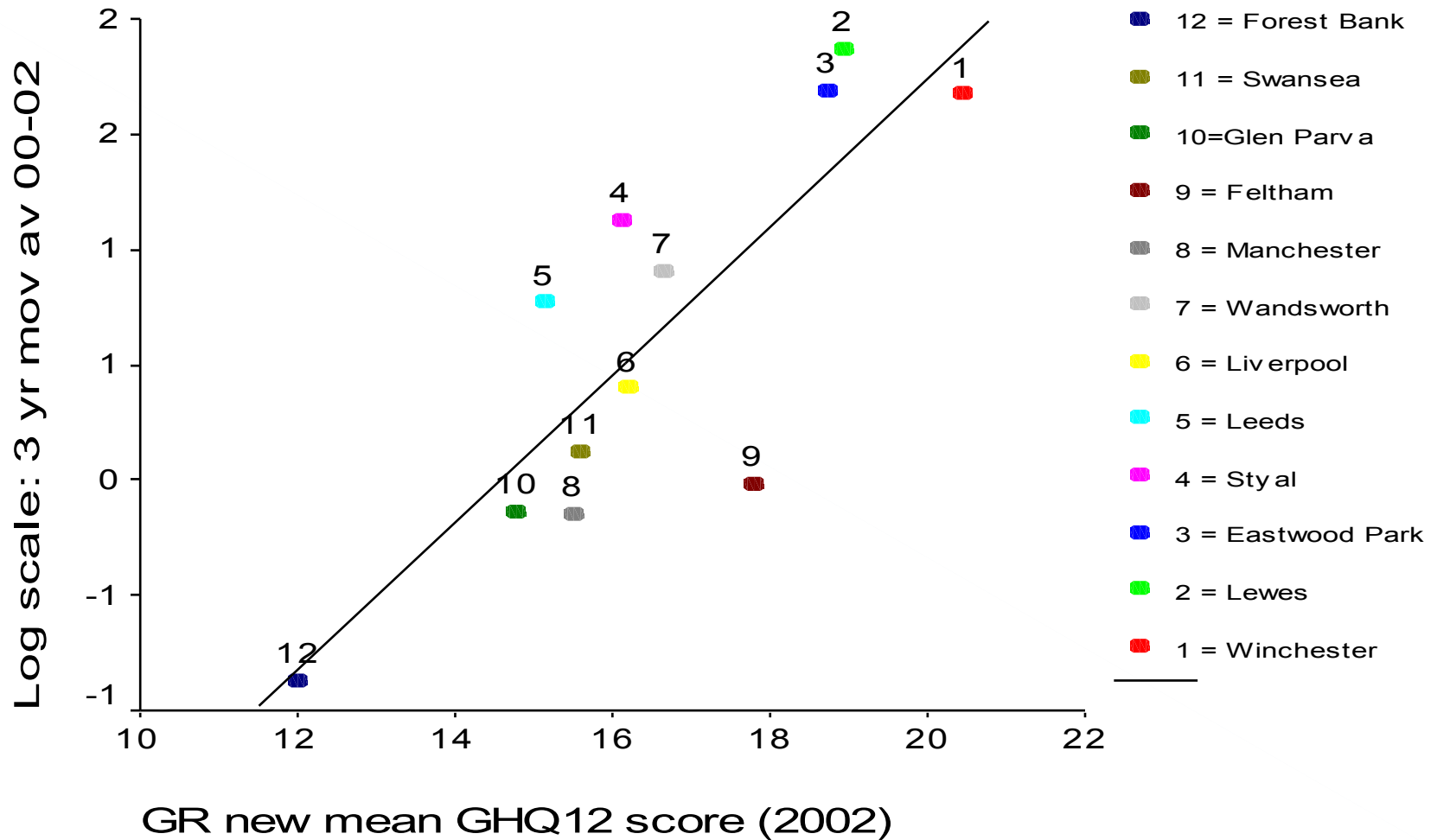
# A Comparison of Prisoners' Views of the Quality of Life in Five Prisons



# Prisoners as ‘moral dualists’

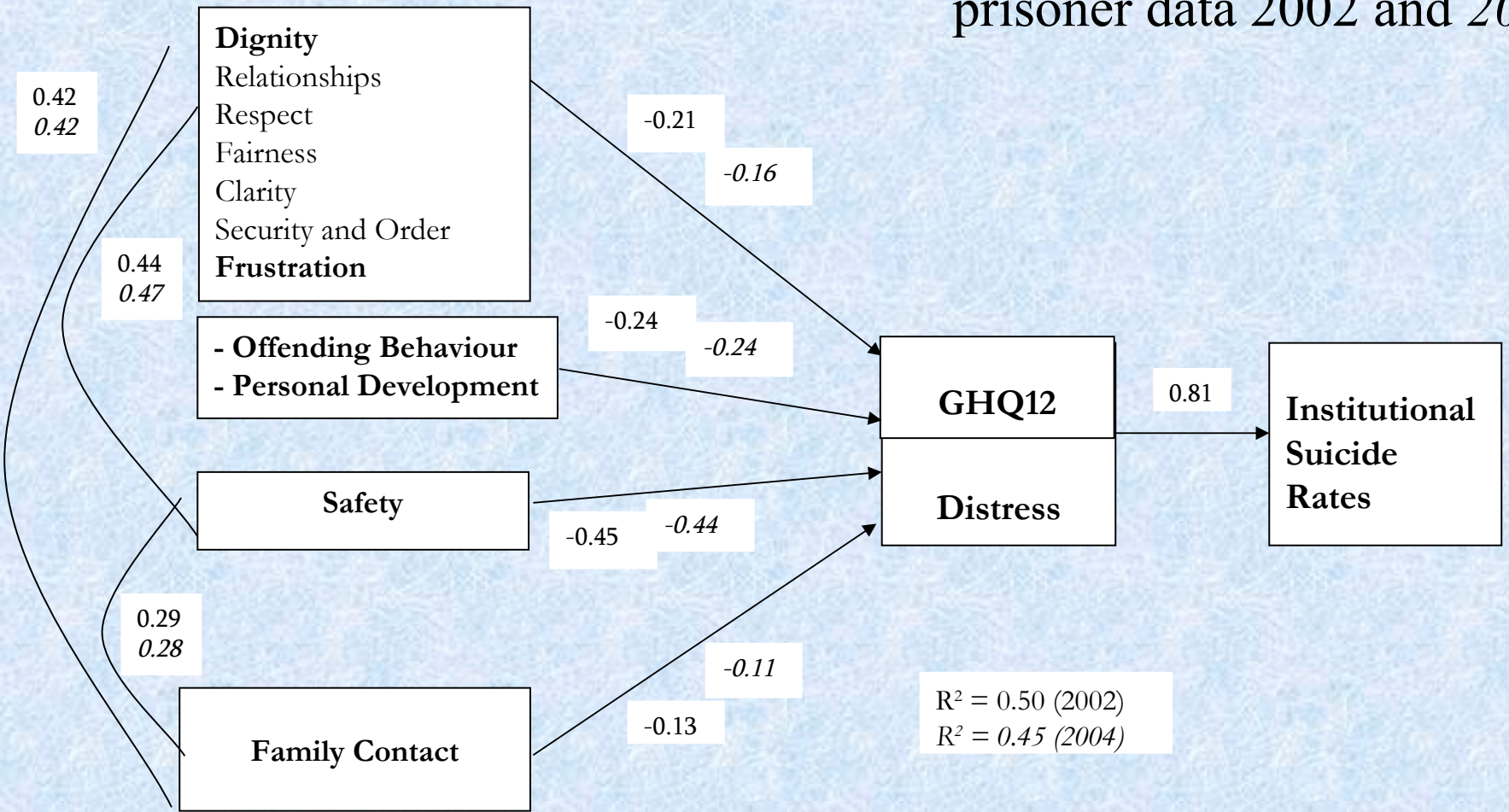
- Security values
- (Conservative)
- Self-protection
- Rule of law
- Authority
- Competitiveness
- Tough law enforcement
- Harmony values
- (Liberal/social democratic)
- Peaceful coexistence
- Mutual respect, human dignity
- Sharing of resources
- The development of individual potential
- Wealth redistribution

# Relationship between moving average suicide rates and mean GHQ12 score (2002) [r=0.83]

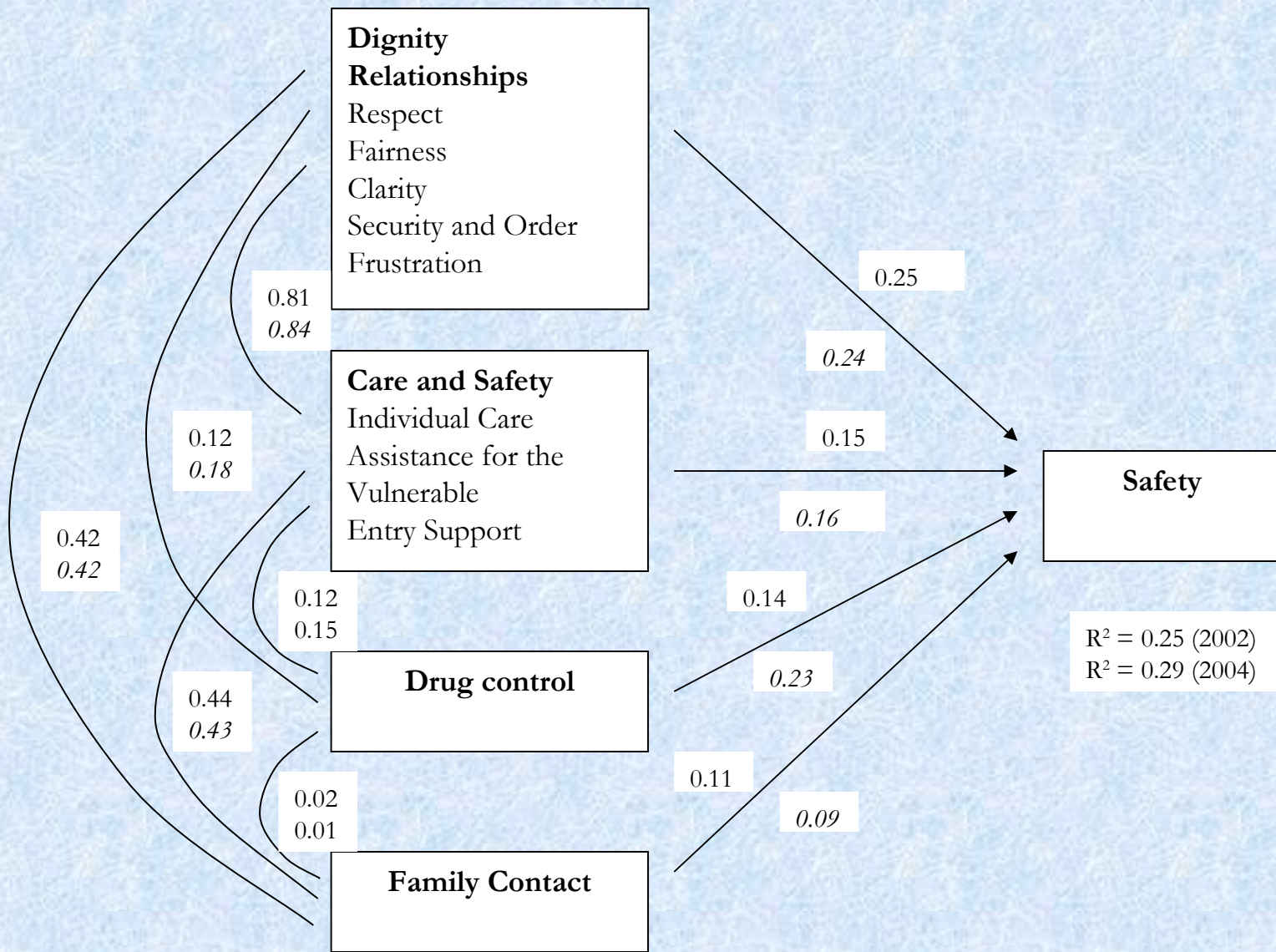


# Modelling overall distress and GHQ12:

prisoner data 2002 and 2004







# Revised dimensions measuring the moral quality of prison life

## (Liebling, Crewe and Hulley 2011)

- **Harmony**
- Entry into custody
- Respect/courtesy
- Staff-Prisoner relationships
- Humanity
- Decency
- Care for the vulnerable
- Help and assistance
- **Professionalism**
- Staff professionalism
- Bureaucratic legitimacy
- Fairness
- Organisation and consistency
- **Security**
- Policing and security
- Prisoner safety
- [Prisoner adaptation]
- [Drugs and exploitation]
- **Conditions and Family Contact**
- Regime decency
- Family contact
- **Wellbeing and Development**
- Personal development
- Personal autonomy
- Wellbeing

A – ‘Poor’		B – ‘Average’	C – ‘Good’		D – ‘Very Good’	
<i>Private Trainer</i>	<i>Private Trainer</i>	<i>Private Local</i>	<i>Public Local</i>	<i>Public Trainer</i>	<i>Private Trainer</i>	<i>Private Local</i>
<b><i>Dovegate</i></b>	<b><i>Rye Hill</i></b>	<b><i>Forest Bank</i></b>	<b><i>Bullington</i></b>	<b><i>Garth</i></b>	<b><i>Lowdham Grange</i></b>	<b><i>Altcourse</i></b>
Respect/courtesy 3.01 Prisoner safety 3.24	Respect/courtesy 3.07 Care for the vulnerable 3.01 Prisoner safety 3.32 Drugs and exploitation 3.02	Respect/courtesy 3.18 Staff-prisoner relationships 3.10 Care for the vulnerable 3.10 Staff professionalism 3.18 Prisoner safety 3.32	Respect/courtesy 3.24 Staff-prisoner relationships 3.15 Care for the vulnerable 3.27 Help and assistance 3.22 Staff professionalism 3.24 Policing and security 3.35 Prisoner safety 3.46	Respect/courtesy 3.29 Staff-prisoner relationships 3.17 Humanity 3.08 Care for the vulnerable 3.15 Help and assistance 3.05 Staff professionalism 3.25 Policing and security 3.26 Prisoner safety 3.36 Personal development 3.04 Personal autonomy 3.04	Entry into custody 3.21 Respect/courtesy 3.47 Staff-prisoner relationships 3.27 Humanity 3.17 Decency 3.30 Care for the vulnerable 3.24 Help and assistance 3.20 Staff professionalism 3.27 Policing and security 3.22 Prisoner safety 3.57 Drugs and exploitation 3.22 Personal development 3.07 Personal autonomy 3.14 Wellbeing 3.19	Entry into custody 3.10 Respect/courtesy 3.48 Staff-prisoner relationships 3.45 Humanity 3.27 Decency 3.38 Care for the vulnerable 3.44 Help and assistance 3.37 Staff professionalism 3.53 Fairness 3.15 Organisation and consistency 3.08 Policing and security 3.27 Prisoner safety 3.48 Personal development 3.28 Personal

# Personal Development ( $\alpha = .875$ ).

An environment that helps prisoners with offending behaviour, preparation for release and the development of their potential.

Item no	Item	Corr.
rq25	My needs are being addressed in this prison.	.690
rq87	I am encouraged to work towards goals/targets in this prison.	.689
rq17	I am being helped to lead a law-abiding life on release in the community.	.683
rq146	Every effort is made by this prison to stop offenders committing offences on release from custody.	.660
rq133	The regime in this prison is constructive.	.650
rq114	My time here seems like a chance to change.	.655
rq46	This regime encourages me to think about and plan for my release.	.592
qq65	On the whole I am doing time rather than using time. <i>(removal <math>\alpha = .877</math>)</i>	.477

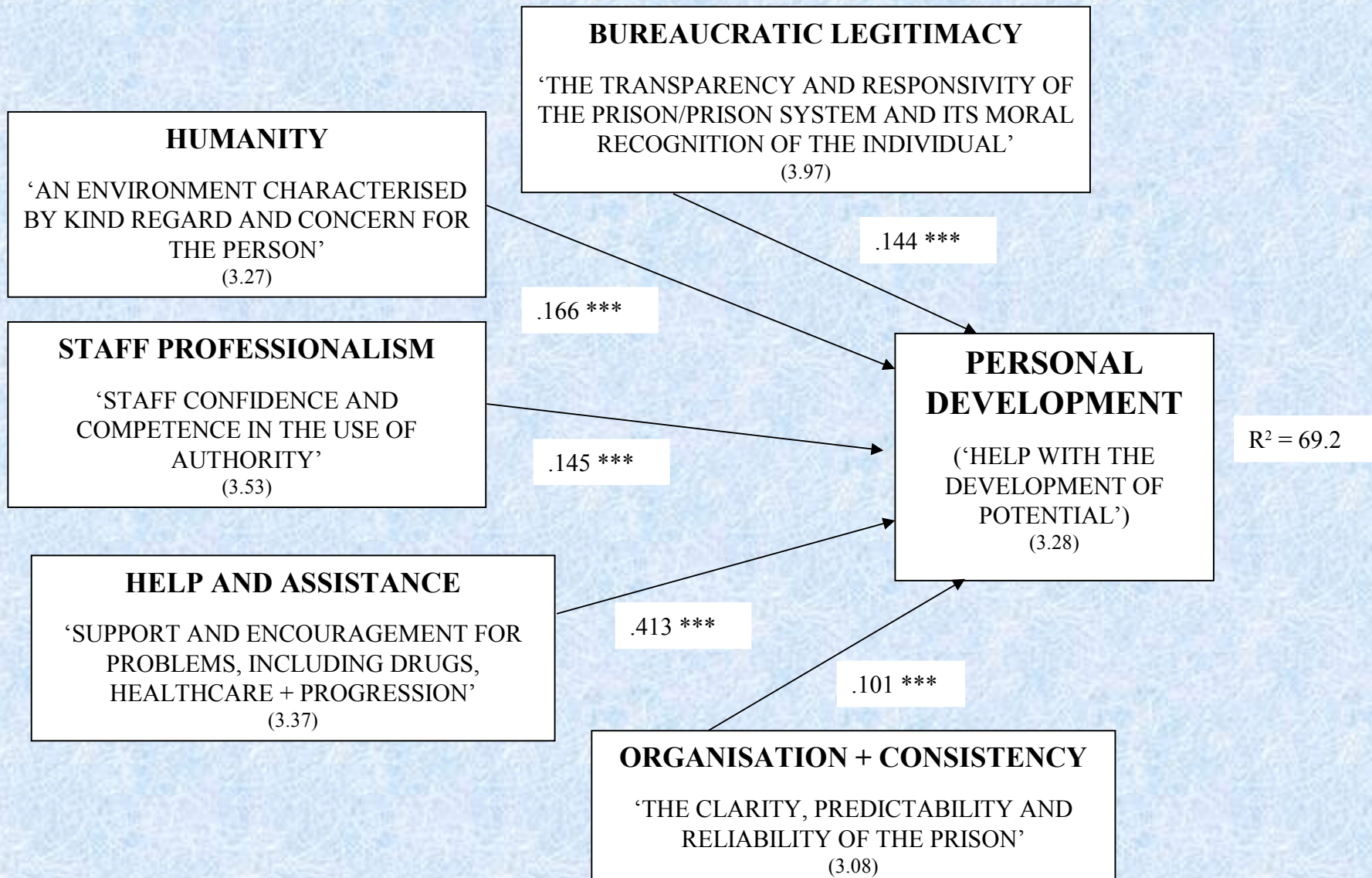
# The dimensions with the **lowest scores**

Organisation and consistency) (p)	2.23 - 3.08	.85
Bureaucratic legitimacy (p)	2.35 - 3.97	.62
Fairness	2.46 - 3.15	.69
Well being (w)	2.57 - 3.19	.62
Personal development (w)	2.69 - 3.28	.59
Entry into custody (h)	2.78 - 3.21	.43
Humanity (h)	2.79 - 3.27	.48

## Dimensions with the most significant variation between prisons

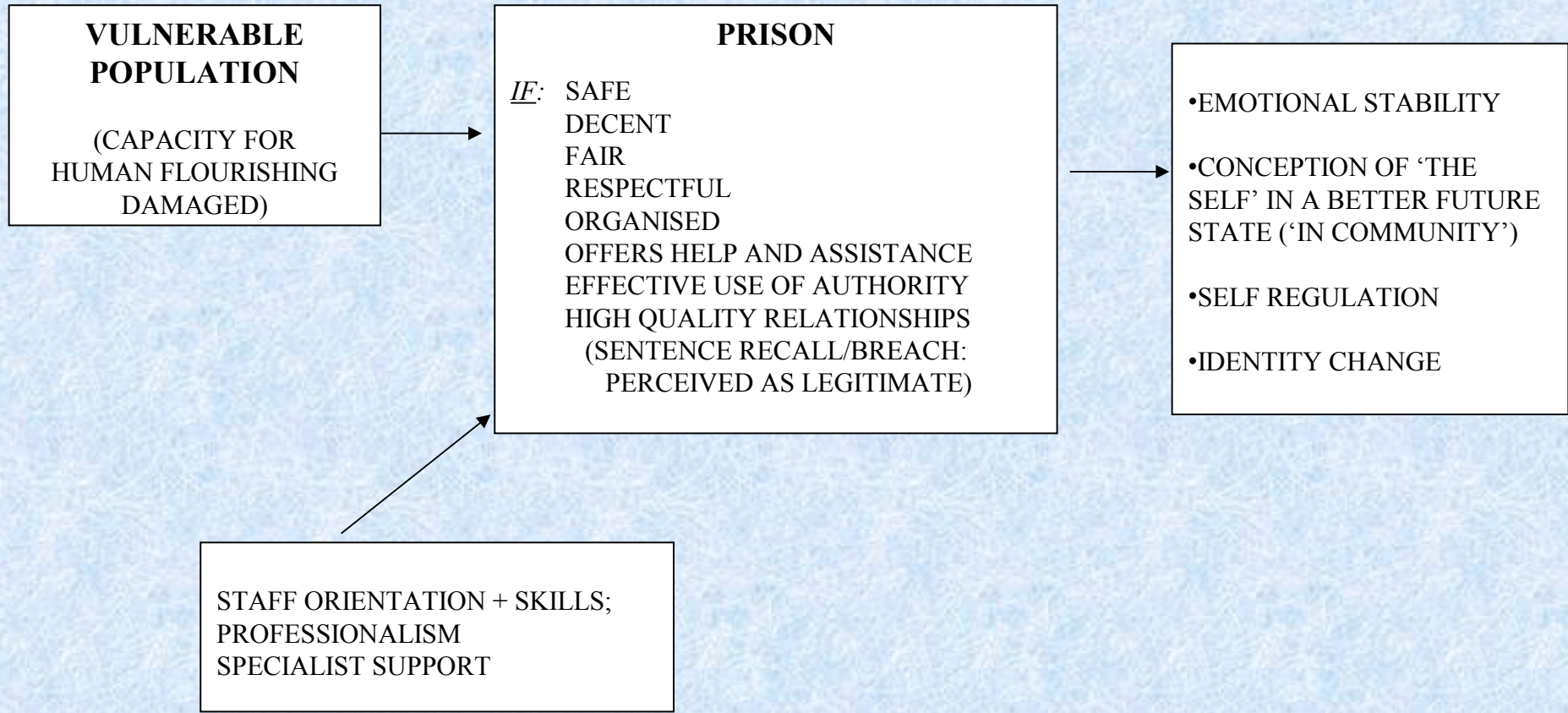
Staff professionalism (p)	2.62 - 3.53	.91
Organisation and consistency) (p)	2.23 - 3.08	.85
Staff-prisoner relationships (h)	2.74 - 3.45	.71
Fairness	2.46 - 3.15	.69
Decency	2.72 - 3.38	.66
Help and assistance (h)	2.74 - 3.37	.63
Bureaucratic legitimacy (p)	2.35 - 3.97	.62
Well being (w)	2.57 - 3.19	.62
Personal development (w)	2.69 - 3.28	.59

# Figure 4. Personal Development: An in-prison model <sup>1</sup>



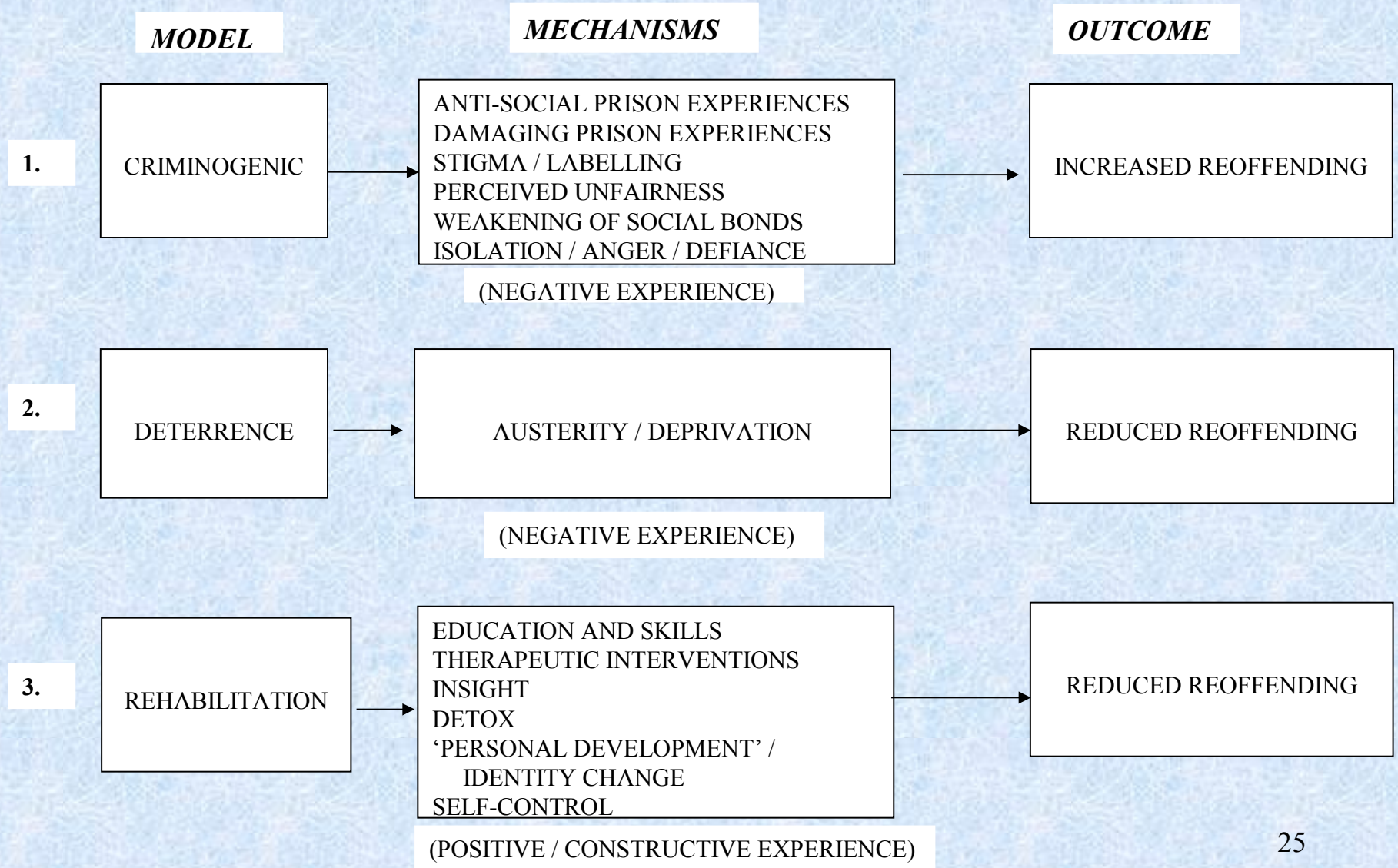
<sup>1</sup> Controlling for function, + public/private ownership/management

# Figure 5. Values, Stability and Human Flourishing





# Figure 1. The Effects of Imprisonment on Reoffending: 3 Hypotheses



# Further reading

Liebling, A; assisted by Arnold, H (2004) *Prisons and their Moral Performance: A Study of Values, Quality and Prison Life*  
Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Liebling, A., Hulley, S. and Crewe, B. (2011), 'Conceptualising and Measuring the Quality of Prison Life', in Gadd, D., Karstedt, S. and Messner, S. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Criminological Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Liebling, A Tait, S (2005) 'Revisiting prison suicide: the role of fairness and distress', in A Liebling and S Maruna (eds) *The Effects of Imprisonment* Willan

Liebling, A., Price, D., and Shefer, G (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2010) *The Prison Officer* Routledge.

Liebling, A; Elliot, C and Price, D (1999) 'Appreciative Inquiry and Relationships in Prison', *Punishment and Society: The International Journal of Penology* 1(1) pp 71-98

Thank you!