Differentiating Elder Financial Exploitation from Other Forms of Abuse: Findings from Over 8000 Substantiated Cases

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, (UTHealth) and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Adult Protective Services Division

PRESENTERS

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Conflicts of interest

- The presenters have no financial or conflicts of interest to report.

Objectives

1. Describe the purpose of the project and roles of UTHealth and Texas APS
2. Present a Snapshot of the Findings
3. Briefly discuss how this collaboration helps move research and policy forward

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SHIP

Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment Institute

UTHealth

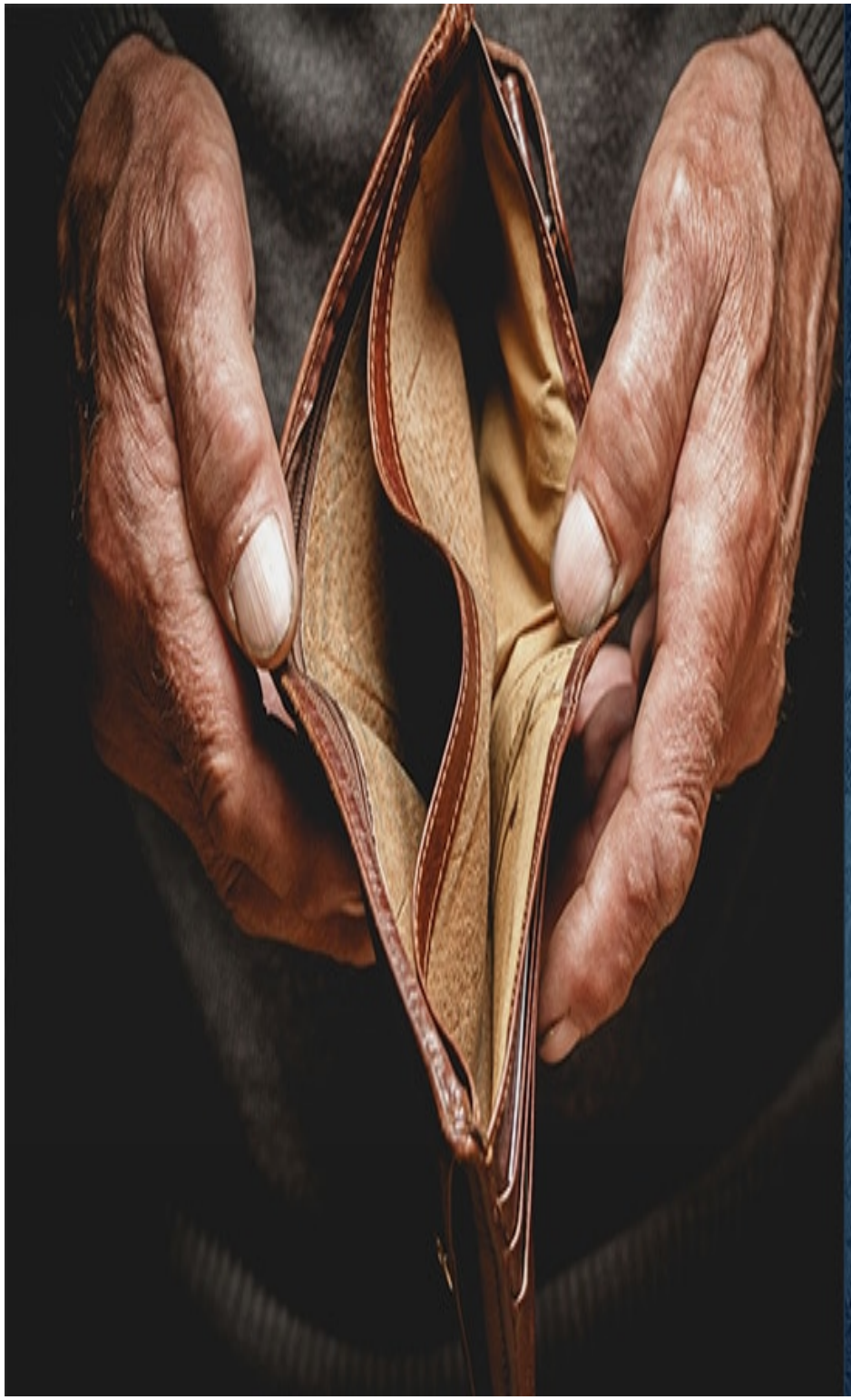
The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston

TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

HARRIS HEALTH
SYSTEM

Project and Roles

- **Financial exploitation of older adults occurs often and results in bad outcomes for the victims**
- **Project Purpose: Build on the evidence provided by Jackson and Hafemeister (2012) recognizing the importance of knowing whether pure or hybrid financial exploitation is occurring.**
- **UTHealth- Research**
- **Texas APS – Provided 5-years of statewide data (over 300,00 referred cases)**



Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Financial Exploitation Prevention and Response

Project Goal

- Use 5-years of APS investigation data including victim, perpetrator(s), environmental, social and community-level variables (~150 variables) to identify those of greatest importance in determining when:

- 1. Non-FE related abuse vs FE related abuse was occurring
- 2. Pure FE vs Hybrid FE

APPROACH

- Used data science machine learning algorithms to explore the large data set and allow the algorithms to detect patterns in the data and highlighting the most important variables for classifying each type of abuse

Brief Snapshot of findings

- We were able to isolate variables across the socioecological context that helped reliably classify types of abuse.

- Financial questions are important for differentiation, but even without them we are do able to reliably classify the group types.

- **Non-FE Related Abuse vs FE Related Abuse:** Victims tend to express worse psychological effects, appear with apparent injuries, have environmental concerns when non-FE related abuse is occurring versus FE related abuse while use of drugs by others appears to be associated with FE related abuse.
- **Pure FE vs Hybrid FE:** Hybrid is associated with the victim presenting with apparent injuries, facing foreclosure, evictions, condemnation, lacking medical supplies, and food and living in unsanitary environmental conditions.

How this collaboration Helps

- **Research:** Confirms previous studies and provides new findings and research questions for further understanding elder FE

- **APS:**
- Knowing which variables point to FE and differentiate pure vs hybrid could help APS investigators not miss an FE case.
- These sorts of collaborations can help us develop better training for FE investigations
- It may also translate into policy changes that extend investigation timelines when certain factors present so that we can be sure to rule out FE.

Questions

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RESEARCH TO PRACTICE: PARTNERSHIP FROM OHIO & TEXAS THAT WORKS IN APS PRACTICE

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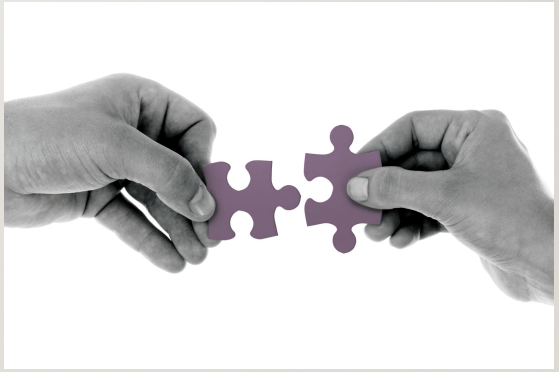
MADE POSSIBLE BY…

OUR HISTORY, PART ONE

2012 – 2016: Elder Abuse Prevention Intervention Grant

- Texas APS – Lead Agency
- WellMed – Project Site
- Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging (BRIA) – Local Evaluator



OUR HISTORY, PART TWO

2016 – Present: Elder Justice Innovation Grant

- BRIA – Lead Agency & Evaluator
- Texas APS – APS
- WellMed – Project Site

CHALLENGES OF PARTNERSHIP

- Developing the Team
- Managing Time/Resources
- Developing Contracts & Data Use Agreements
- Administrative Burden & Bureaucracy
- Dispersed Team(s)

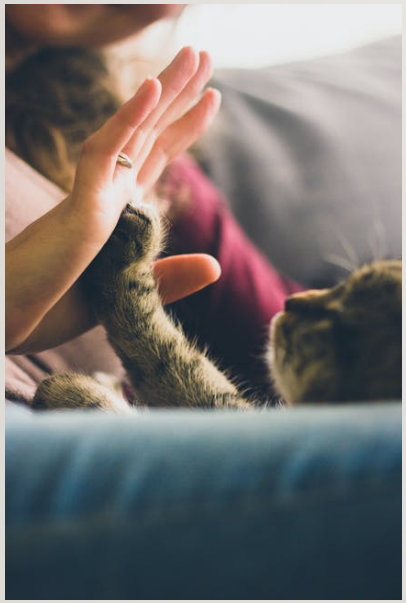
OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- Developing the Team: **Open Communication, Shared Decision-Making, Respect/Trust**
- Managing Time/Resources: **Shared Vision, Project Management**
- Developing Contracts & Data Use Agreements: **Shared Vision, Commitment, Planning**
- Administrative Burden & Bureaucracy: **Flexibility, Creativity, Proper Allocation of Resources**
- Dispersed Team(s): **Open Communication, Shared Decision-Making, Shared Vision**

BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP

- Impactful
- Enriching
- Unexpected Products
- Findings Can Be Shared and Used By Others
- Relationship Development
- Funding Stream That Enables Innovative Practices

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED THAT YOU NEED FOR A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP



- Respect & Trust
- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Optimistic Attitude (Challenges are Opportunities)
- Understanding of Each Other's Strengths and Limitations
- Motivated & Engaged Leadership

QUESTIONS?

From San Francisco APS' High-Risk Self-Neglect Unit to APS Outcomes

Akiles Ceron, MSW
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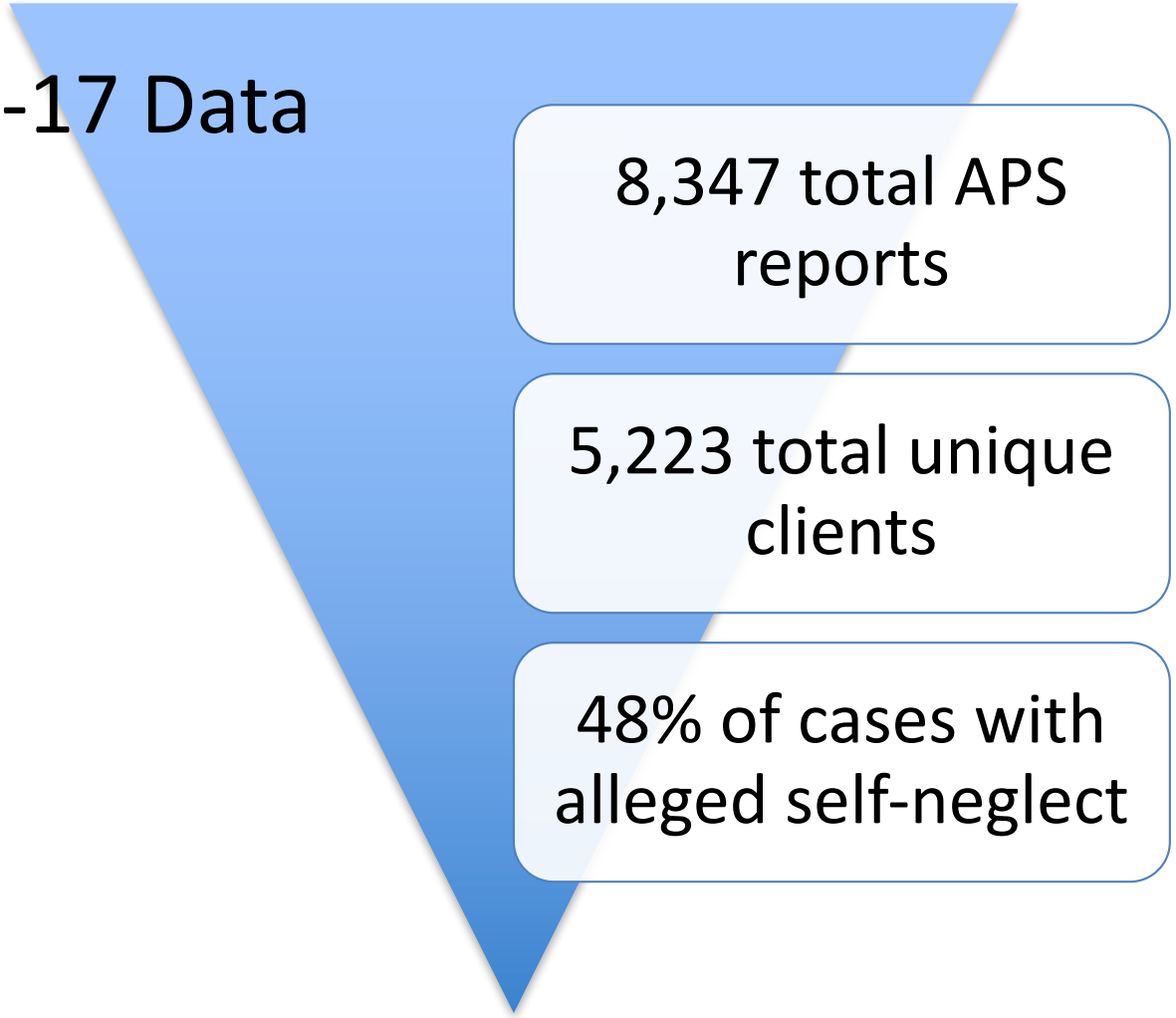
SF APS Dashboard

- FY 16-17 Data



What do SF caseworkers see?

High-Risk Self-Neglect Unit's Clients

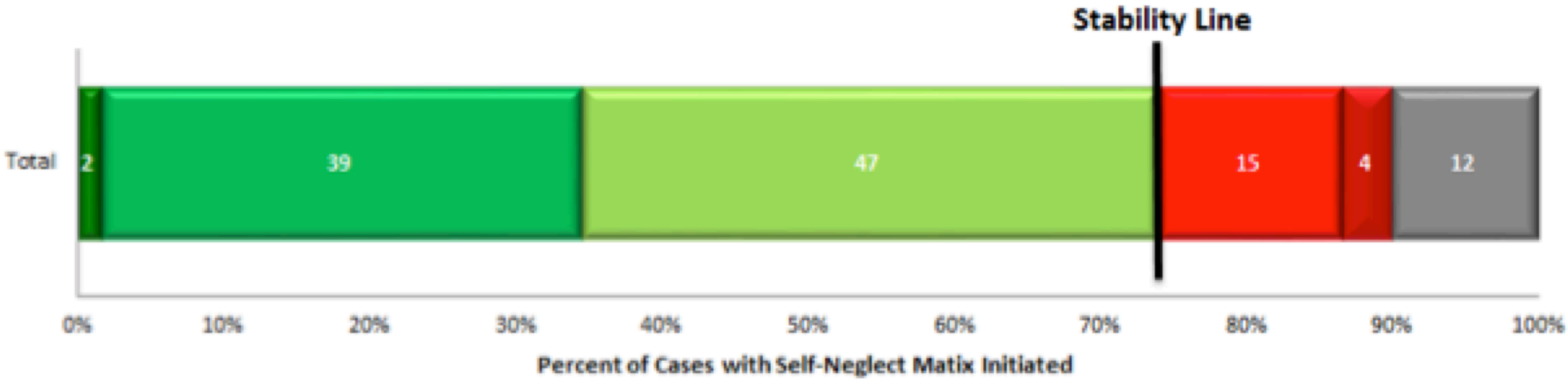
- 285 cases from May 9, 2017 to March 9, 2018
  - 109 cases still open
- 49% cases had unpaid bills (utilities, rent, mortgage) or risk of eviction

How did Marian get involved?

- Introduce self to SF APS
- Work with CA Consistency Workgroup
- Work with CA NAMRS Workgroup
- Reach out to county-run APS states
- Have research skills!

High-Risk Self-Neglect Unit's Outcomes

- 74% clients were stable, safe, or thriving



Thriving/Safe/Stable/Vulnerable/In-Crisis/NA

In the meanwhile…

- What about outcomes outside of the high-risk self-neglect unit?
  - Prepare for outcomes data collection from all units
- How can we ensure reliable and valid data collection?
  - Introduce the marriage between outcomes developed by CA Consistency Workgroup and the Elder Abuse Decision Support System

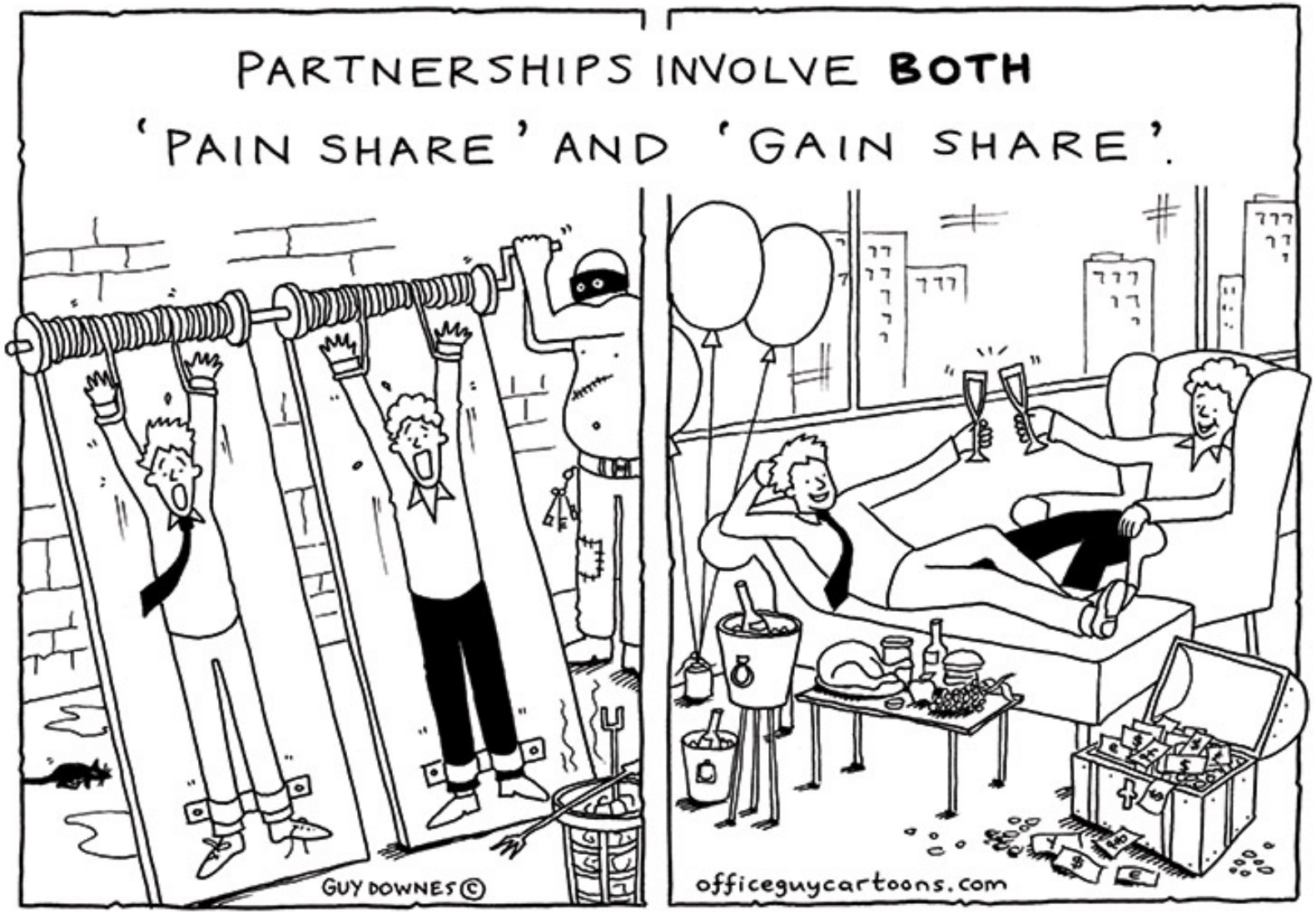
We received an ACL Grant!!

- Propose to use pre-test/case investigation and post-test/case closure difference to capture outcomes
- Support from Elder Justice Innovation Grant

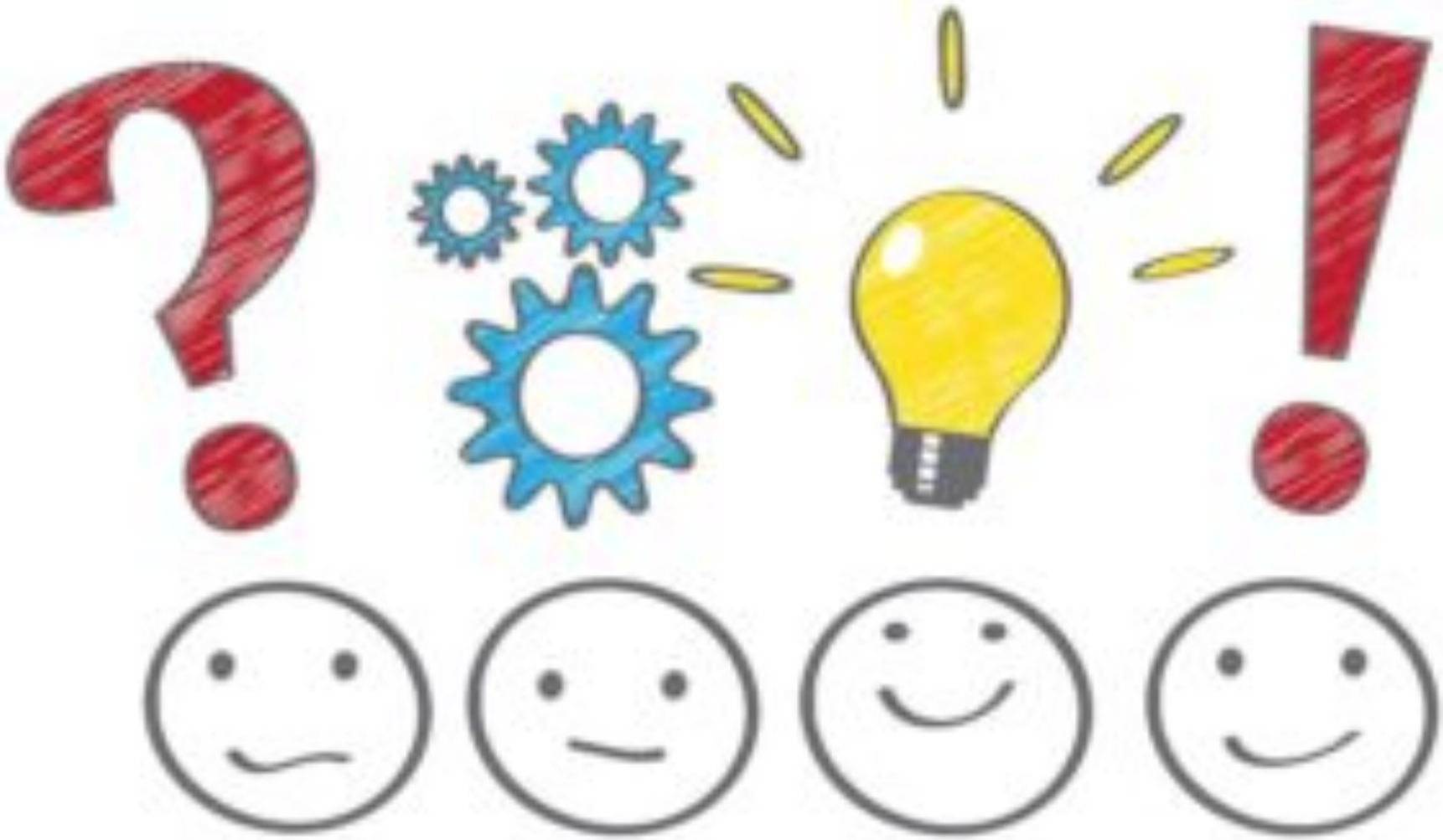
What did Akiles think was going to happen…

What did Marian think was going to happen…

Here is the reality…



To be successful in collaboration…

- Leadership support (at various levels)
- Researchers' understanding of APS and commitment
- Program preparedness to embrace changes and innovations
- Ongoing relationship between APS and researcher (start with something small)

Questions?