

Mental health resilience amongst AIDS-orphaned children in South Africa

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Thank you!



The Nuffield Foundation

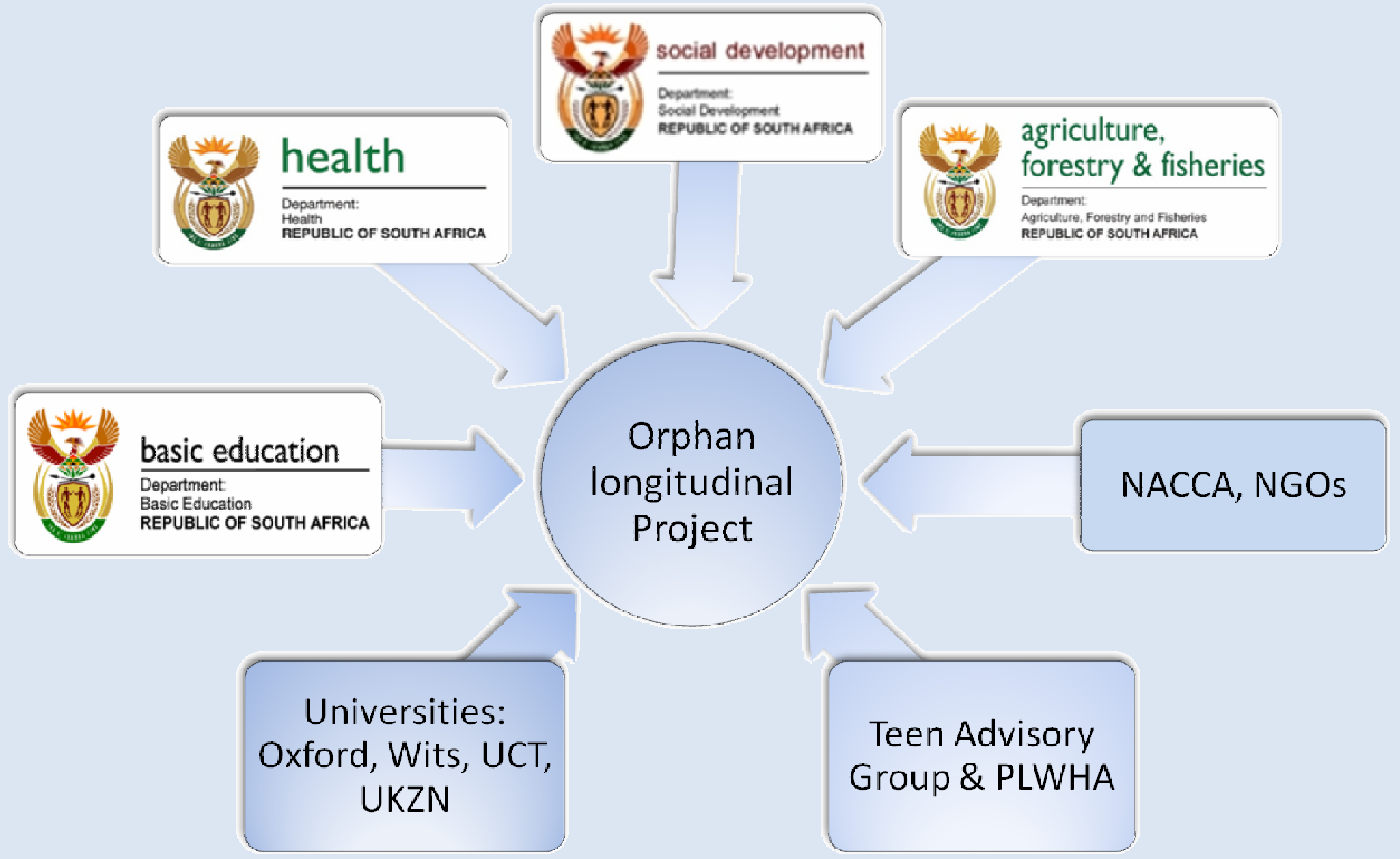


The Economic and Social Research Council



John Fell Oxford University Press Fund

Collaborative research: Science to inform Policy

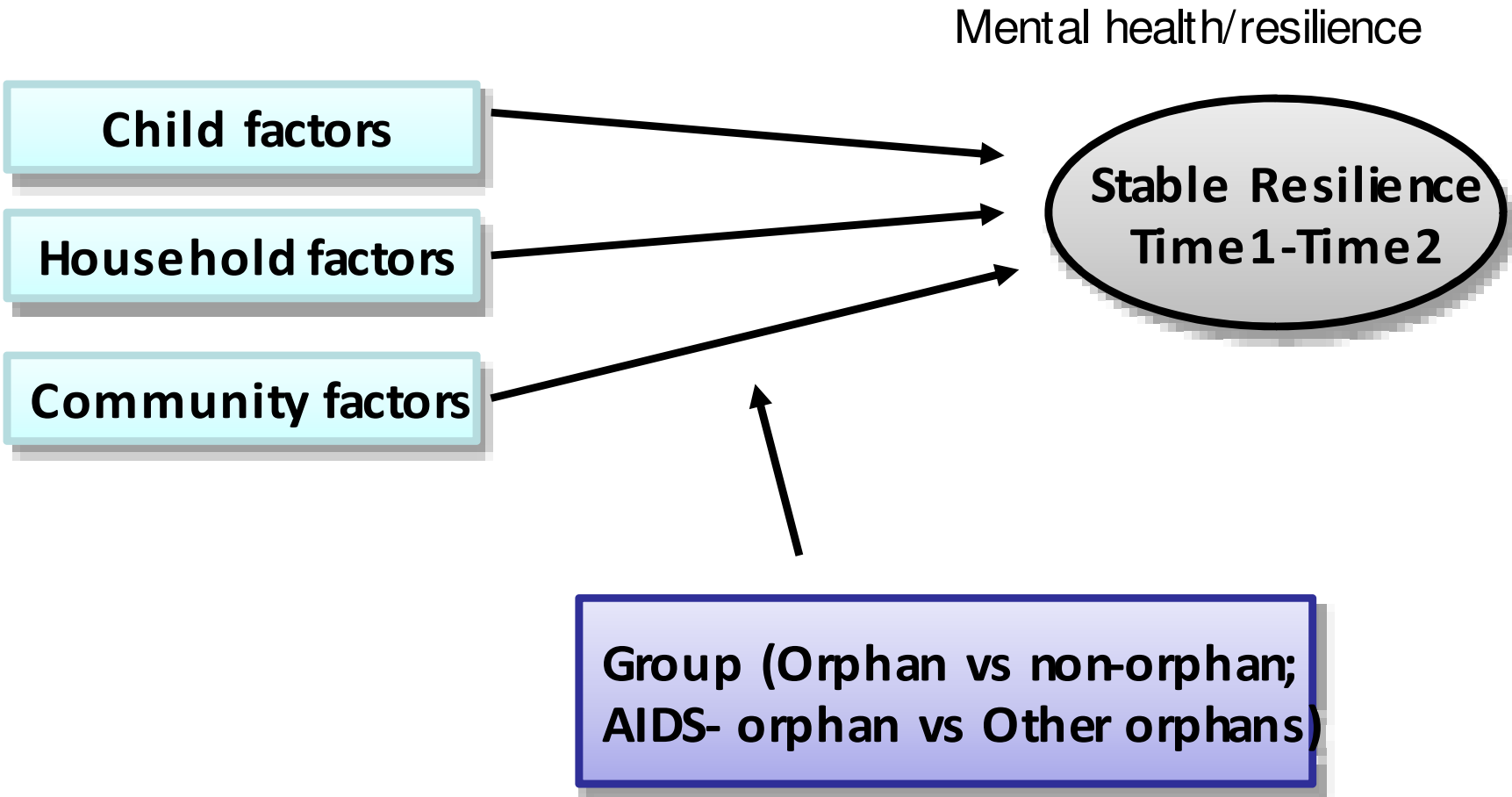


Resilience concepts and methods

Resilience: Adaptive functioning in spite of stressful experience

- AIDS-orphanhood → more mental health distress
- But huge individual differences in response
- Why do some children do ok?
- Informing interventions

Resilience concepts



AIDS-orphans and mental health (2005)

Questions

Do AIDS-orphaned children have more psychological distress than other children in similarly high-risk communities; than other orphans?

Sampling (N = 1025)

Western Cape township (Schools, NGOs, community)

Oversampling of child-headed households, streetchildren, non-school attenders

Not orphaned in past six months

Study groups (N = 944 known orphan status)

AIDS-orphaned children (N = 425, verbal autopsy)

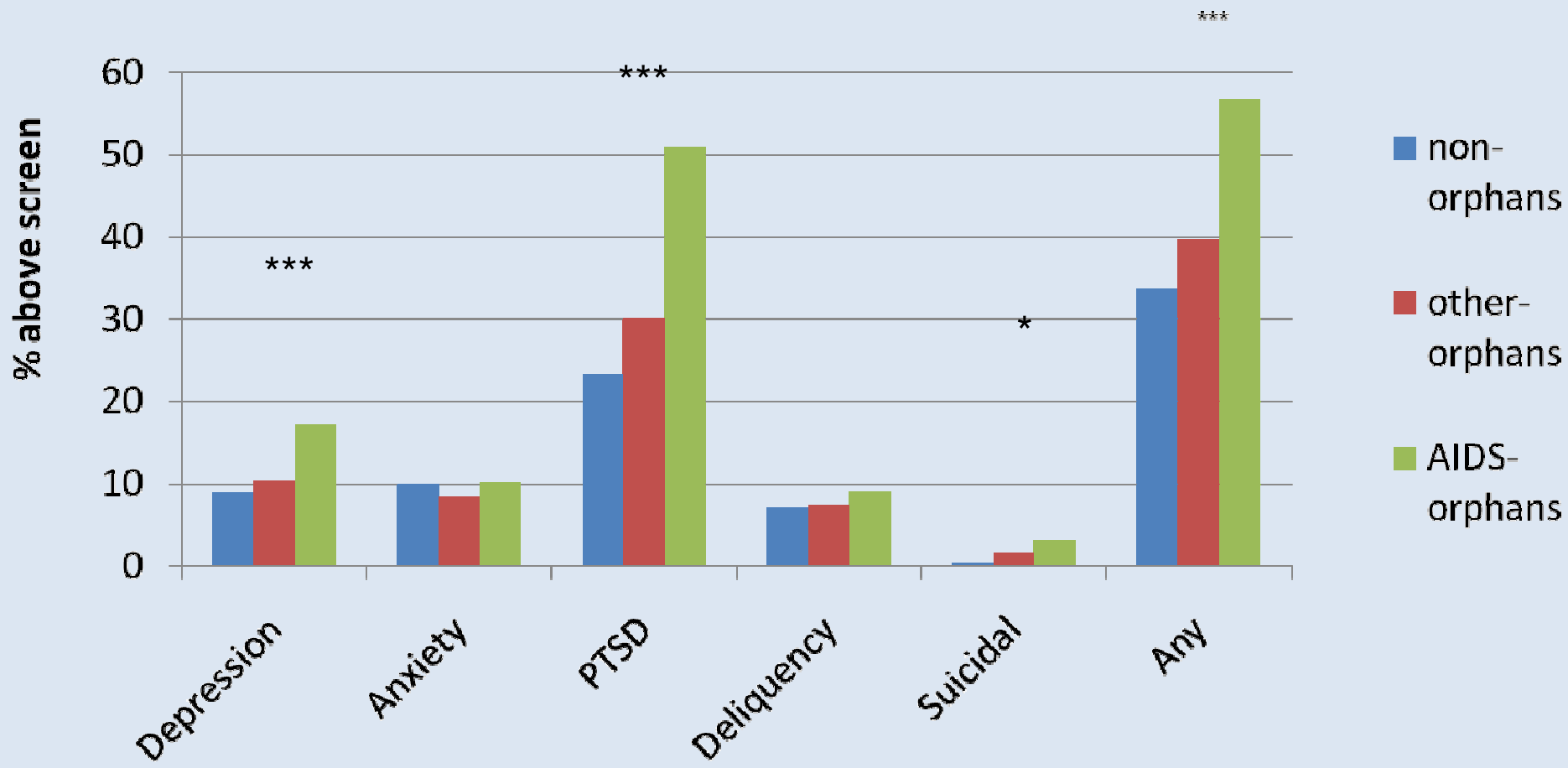
Other-orphaned children (N = 241, homicide, 28%)

Non-orphans (N = 278)

Demographics

Age = 10-19 (mean 13.5 yrs; 47% female; 97% Xhosa)

2005: Proportion in range for clinical-level disorder



But nearly half had no problems

Longitudinal follow-up (2009)

Questions

How many AIDS-orphans show resilience over time?

What factors predict resilience among AIDS orphans?

What predictors are of particular importance in the context of AIDS orphanhood?

Follow-up (N = 723, 75%)

Traced via old addresses, family, community, NGOs, police, health and education

Interviews in community, streets, prisons

Study groups (N = 655 with complete data)

AIDS-orphaned children (N = 290, 68%)

Other-orphaned children (N = 163, 68%)

Non-orphans (N = 202, 73%)

Demographics

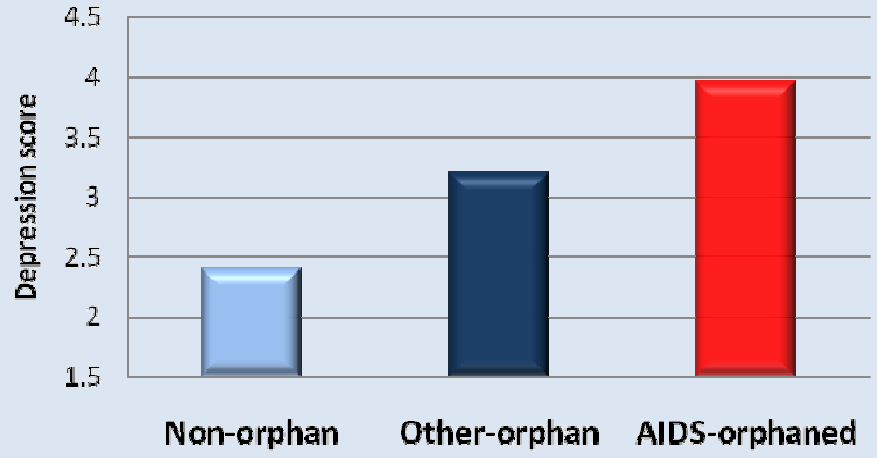
Age = 14-23 (mean 17.5 yrs)

Non-response unrelated to psychopathology and group status

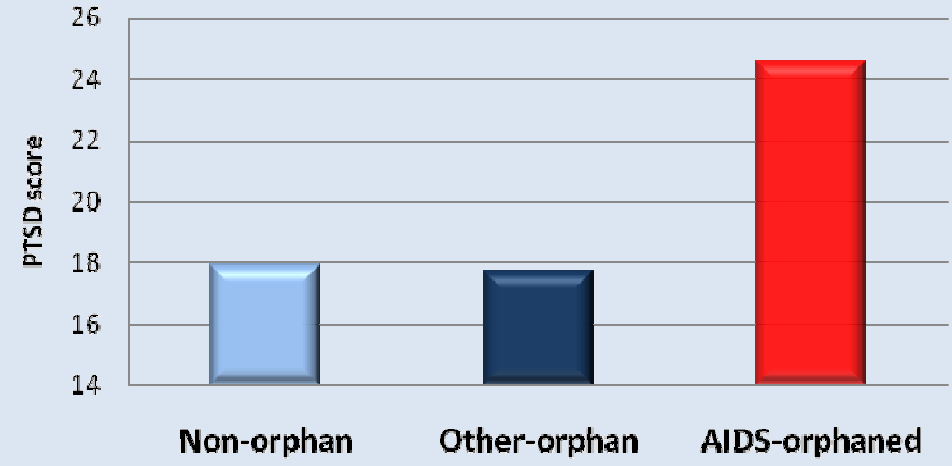


2009: AIDS-orphaned children now aged 14-22

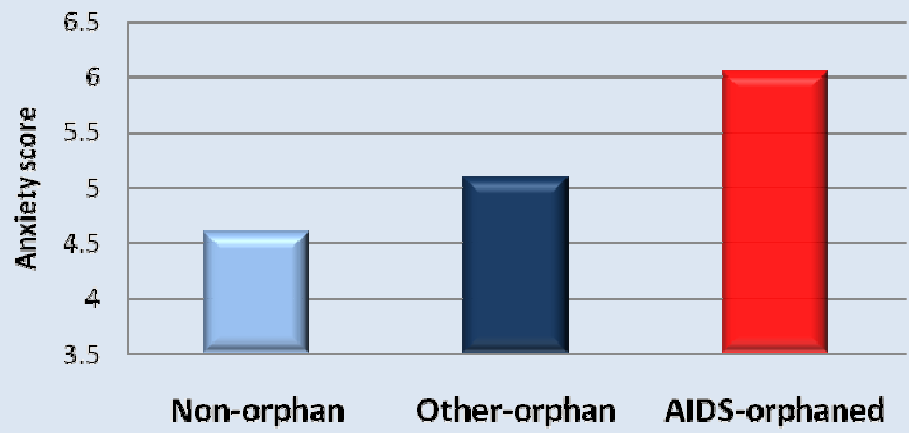
Depression



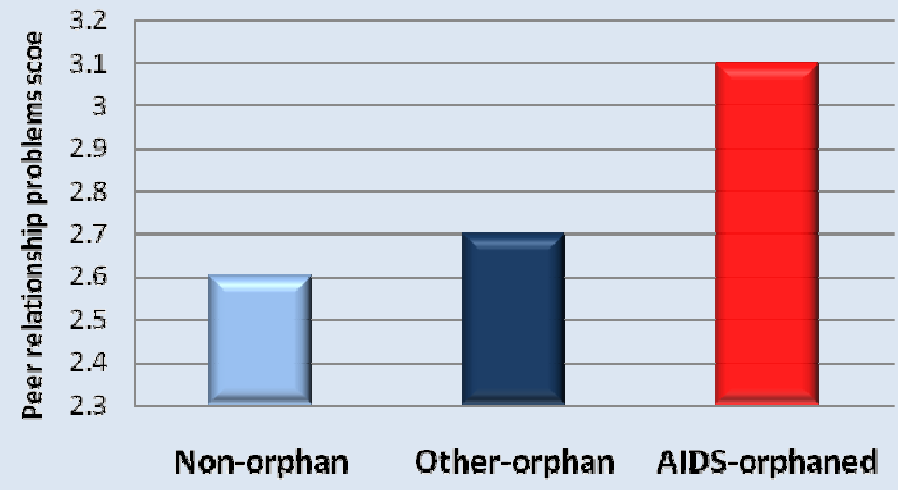
Post-traumatic Stress



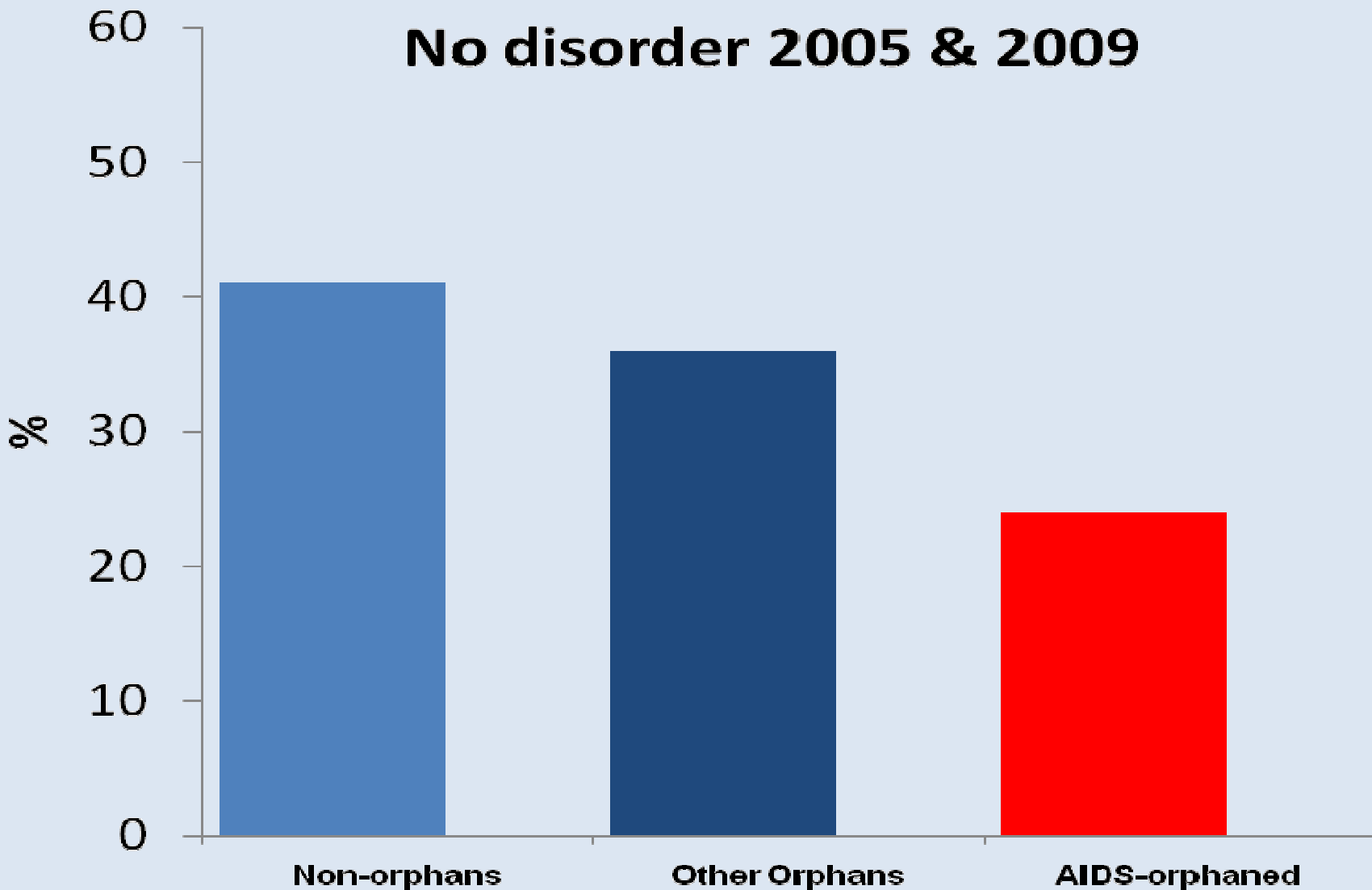
Anxiety



Peer Problems



What proportion are resilient across time/domains?



Predictors of resilience: 1. Orphanhood factors

No differences according to:

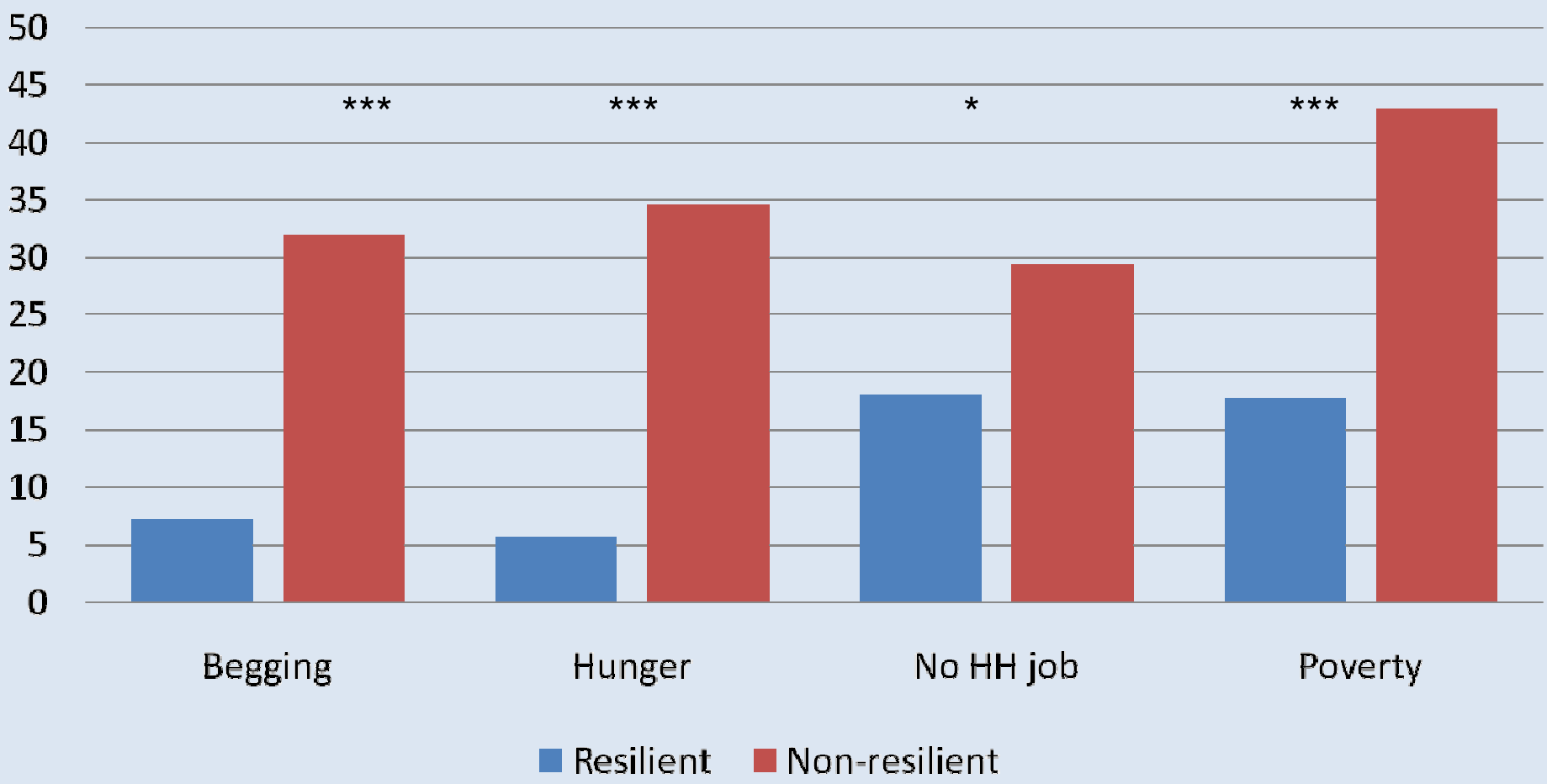
Age at bereavement

Single or double bereavement

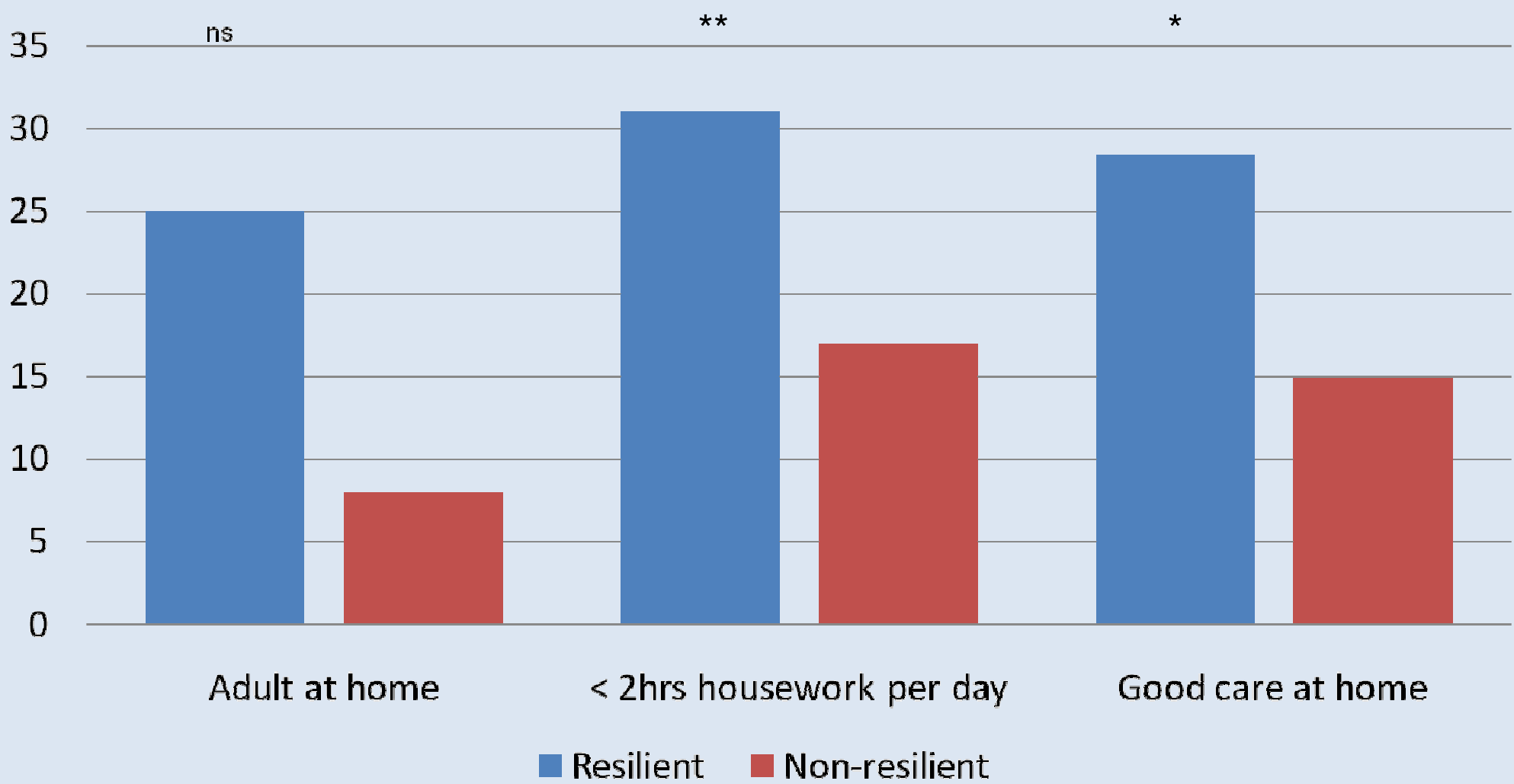
Mother or father death



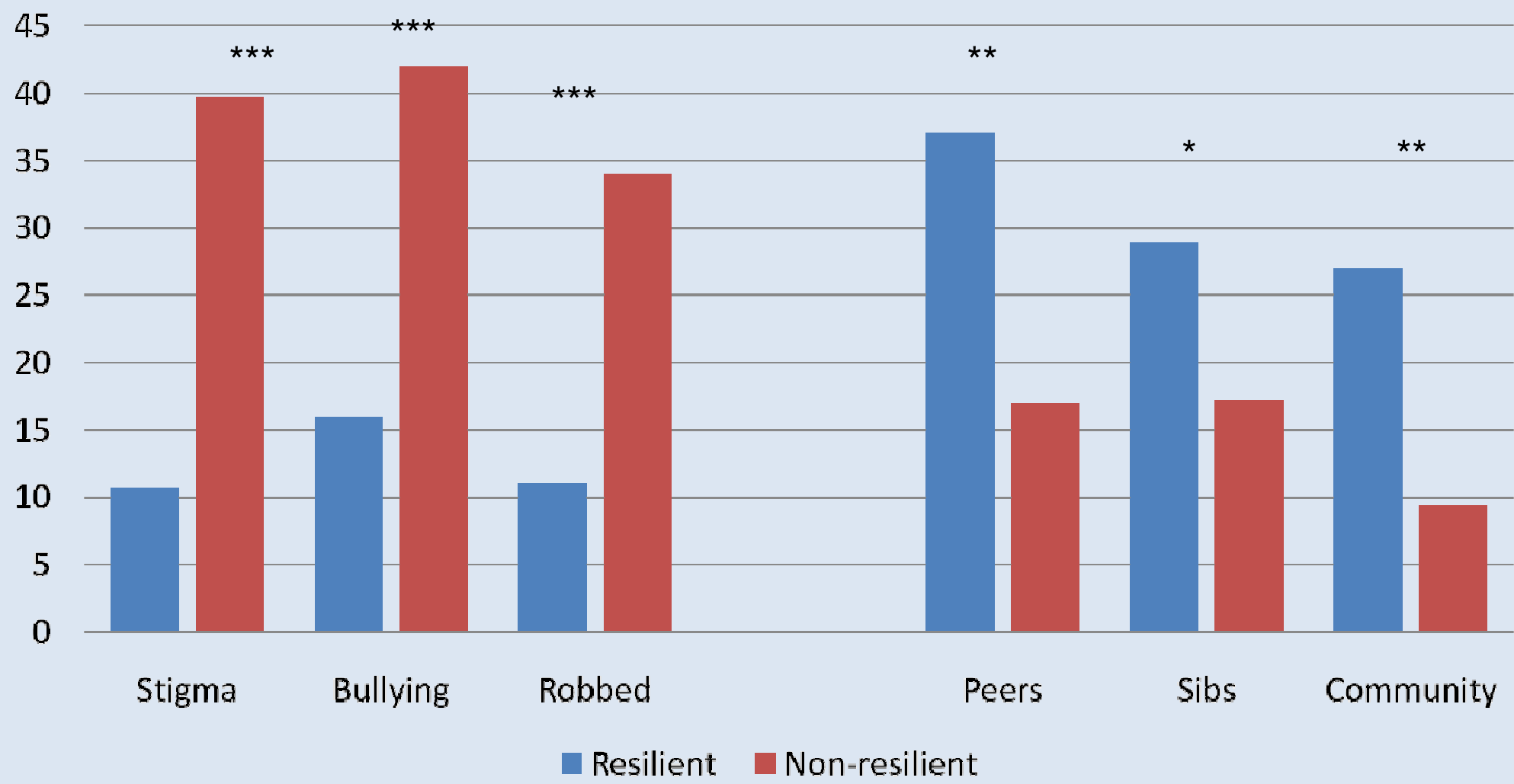
Predictors of resilience: 2. Poverty



Predictors of resilience: 3. Caregiving



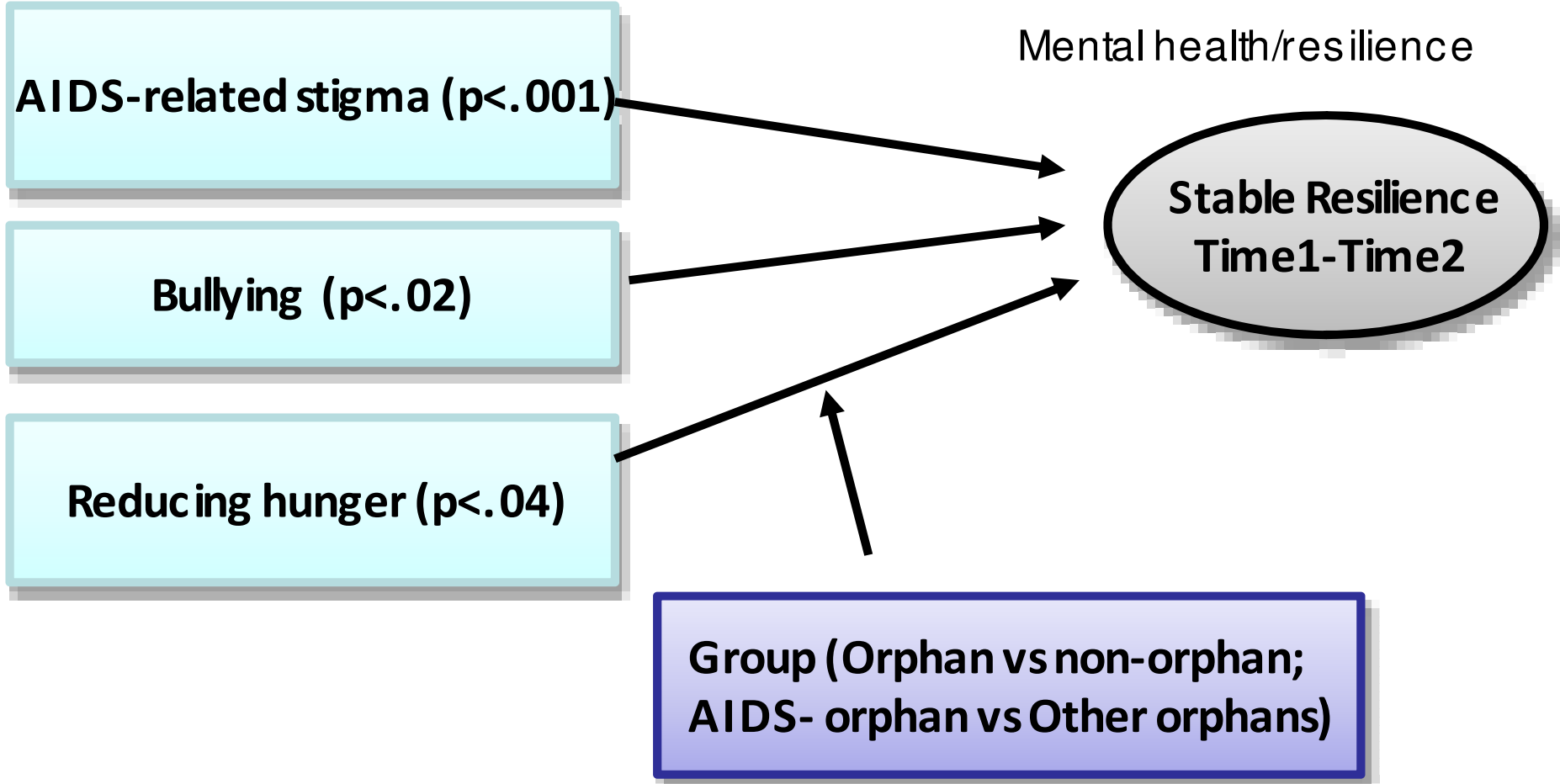
Predictors of resilience: 3. Peers and community



Victimization

Social support

Multivariate model of resilience



How can we improve our research?

Ongoing work

- Qualitative study: Resilience and religion (ongoing)
- Quantitative study: individual coping
- Intervention trial (in discussion with government)

Wishlist

- Long-term follow-up into adulthood

Your suggestions

- What would be useful for us to look at?
- How can we best present this?



Conclusions:

- 1) AIDS-orphaned children suffer significant psychopathology (depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidality).
- 2) This is not a transient problem; mental health problems 4 years later
- 3) However, a quarter were problem free (i.e. appear resilient)
- 4) Rates of resilience without extreme poverty, and who avoid bullying and community stigma higher than 50%.
- 5) Programmes which may help:
 - ARVs to HIV+ adult caregivers
 - Reducing bullying in schools
 - Addressing poverty
 - Addressing community stigma