Promoting Smart Decarceration: *Beginning with the School to Prison Pipeline*

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Background

- PhD Candidate –National Catholic School of Social Service

- Adjunct Professor- National Catholic School of Social Service

- LICSW, LCSW (Washington, DC & Virginia)

- School Social Worker District of Columbia Public Schools

- Special research interest (Students with disabilities and the school-to-prison pipeline)

Objectives

- Briefly explain the grand challenge of smart decarceration.

- Briefly explain and describe the history, current state and policies associated with the school to prison pipeline.

- Increase knowledge of evidence based practices that can reduce the risk of students with disabilities involvement in the school to prison.

- Advocate for effective discipline strategies within schools.

Grand Challenge: Smart Decarceration

- Stimulate applied policy and behavioral intervention research to reduce the incarcerated population in ways that are humane, socially just, and sustainable.
  - The incarcerated population in U.S. jails and prisons will be substantially lessened.
  - Existing racial and economic disparities among the incarcerated will be redressed.
  - Public safety and public health will be maximized.

Beginning with our YOUTH

THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

What Do You Know?

○ What is the school-to-prison pipeline?

○ Based on your knowledge what are some of the contributors to the school-to-prison pipeline?

The SPP

Conceptualizes the phenomenon of educational systems funneling students from schools to incarceration.

Describes the pathways traveled by students from public education to incarceration in secure juvenile detention and correction programs due to classroom structures, inadequate education (low achievement standards, poorly trained staff, and limited academic resources) and strict discipline strategies. (Nelson, 2014).

Who's Who of the SPP

- Disproportionally affects:
  - Male students of color
  - Students with disabilities
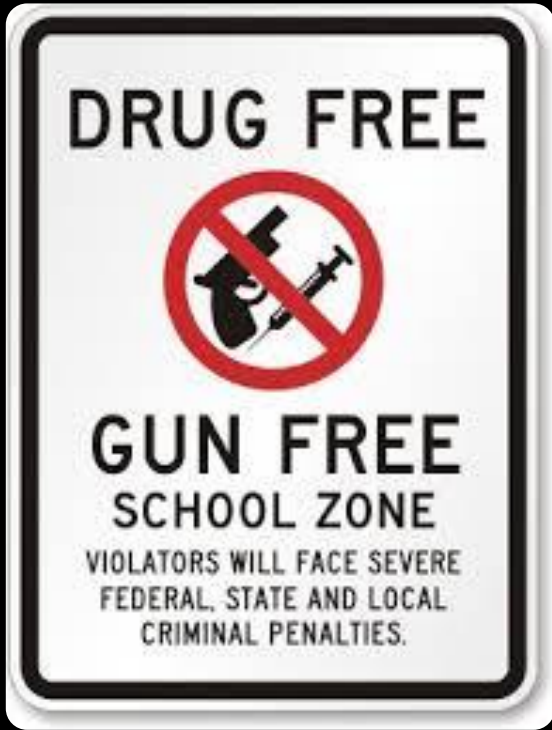 - Students of lower SES

Who's Who of the SPP

43%

22%

32%

3%
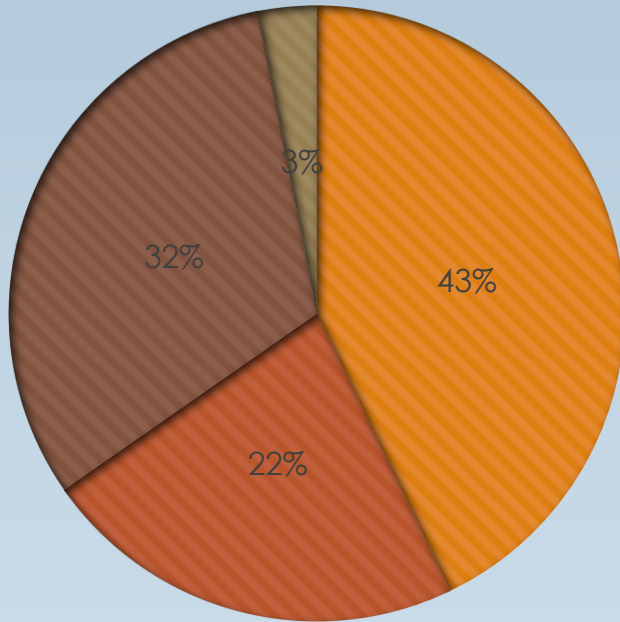
■ African Americans ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Other

OJJDP, 2015

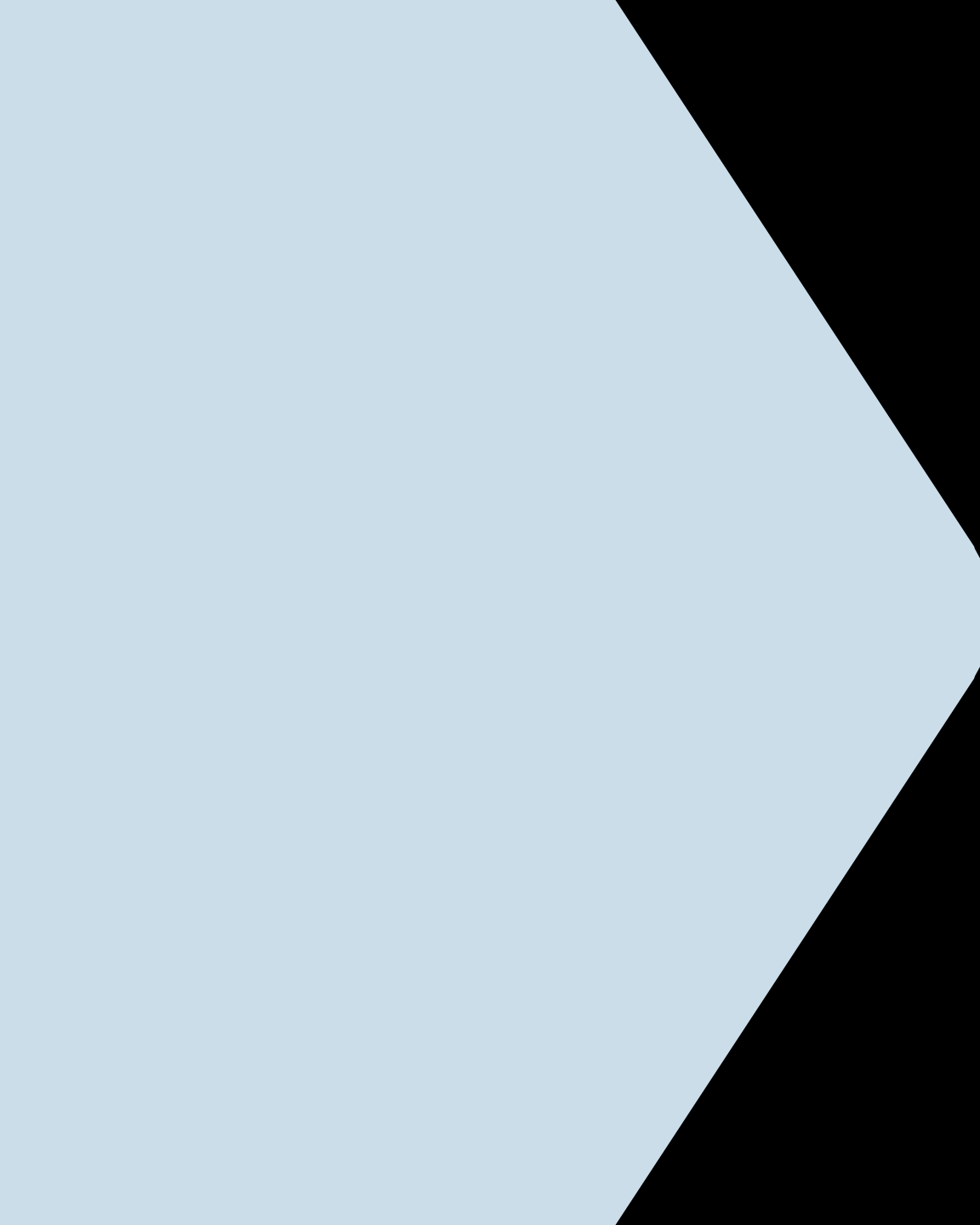■ Students with disabilities ■ Students without disabilities

NCD, 2015

How did we get here?

Suspension Data

- 1/5 students with disabilities receive out of school suspension (3x the rates of their peers)

- In 2015 17.8 suspensions occurred for every 100 African American students, 5.2 for every100 Hispanic students, and 4.4 suspensions for every 100 white students.

- Students involved in one or more disciplinary incidents were 23.4 times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system.

- Over 50% of suspensions are a result of student defiance, and fighting.

"Even when suspension doesn't work, at least they are out of classroom and not bothering anyone... Let the parent deal with them, it's their problem really"

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

POP QUIZ

INTEGRITY

IMPORTANCE OF
HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

COMPETENCE

DIGNITY AND WORTH
OF THE PERSON

SERVICE

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Why is this important to the field of school social workers?

Values and Ethics

- <u>Competence:</u> Social workers practice within their areas of competence and personal expertise.

- <u>Dignity and Worth of the Person:</u> Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

- <u>Social Justice:</u> Social workers challenge social injustice.

NASW, 2018

Competence

- Clear understanding and acknowledgement of:
  - Disabilities (behaviors related to students disability).
  - Student backgrounds and triggers.
  - Best practices and appropriate evidence based practices.
  - School and district wide disciplinary rules, regulations, and consequences.

| ADHD/ADD	Emotional Disturbance	Specific Learning Disorder
• Inattentiveness • Behavioral Aggression • Impulsivity • Hyperactivity • Anger • Anxiety • Difficulty Concentrating • Moodiness	• Hyperactivity • Short attention span • Withdrawn • Aggression • Excessive fear or anxiety • Immaturity • Learning difficulties • Poor coping skills	• Academic problems • Disorders of attention • Poor motor abilities • Psychological process deficits • Limited or lack of cognitive strategies • Difficulty paying attention

Competence

- Evidence based practices for individuals and groups
  - Social skills (Child center play therapy, second step, etc.)
  - Coping and self regulation (Zones of regulation, CBT, etc.)
  - Trauma (CBITS (cognitive behavior intervention for trauma in schools), SPARKS, Bounce Back, etc.)
- PBIS (Positive behavior intervention and supports)
- **RESTORATIVE JUSITCE**
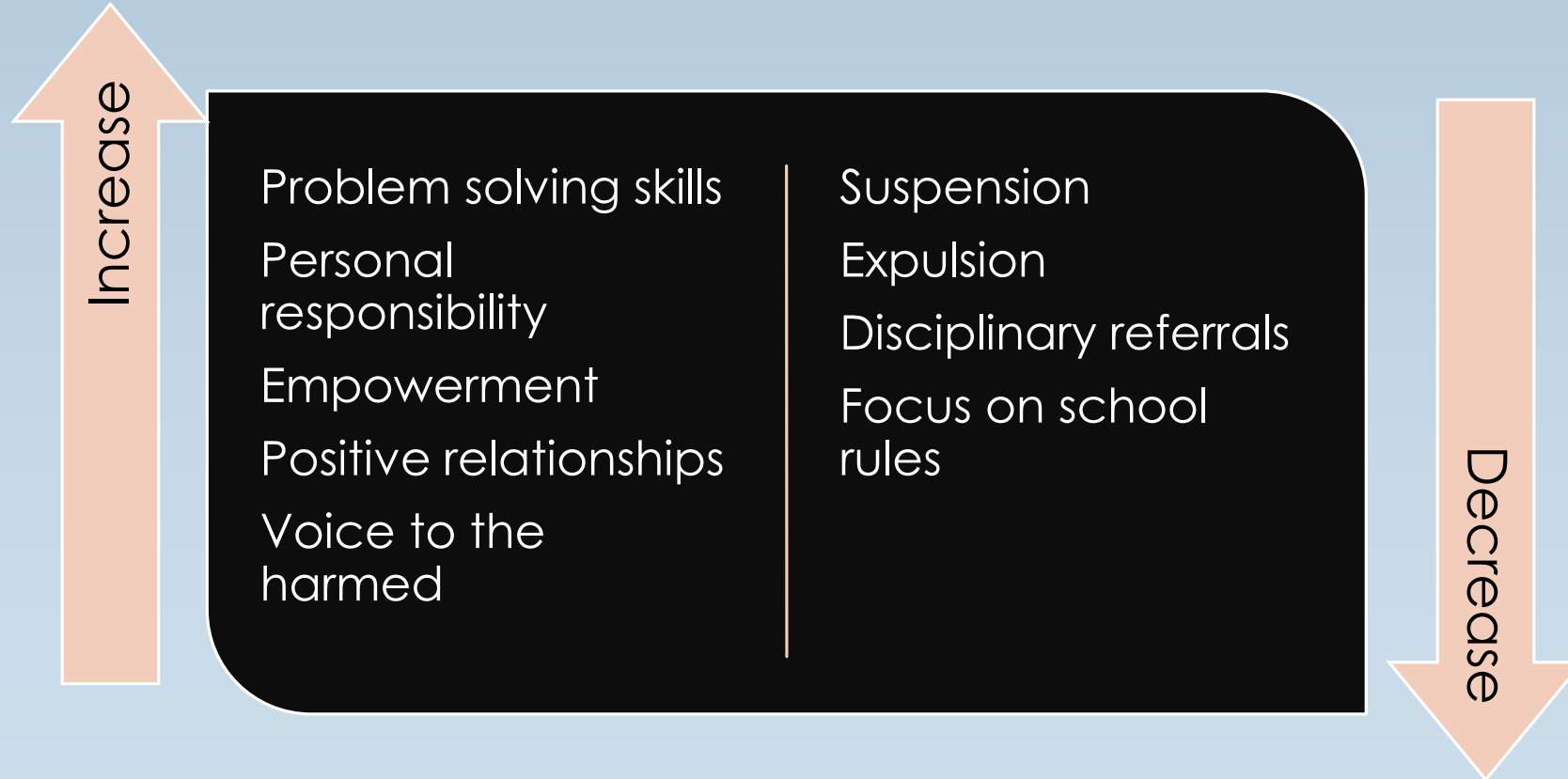
Not This

- What was the rule? Who broke the rule?
- According to the rules what should be your punishment
- Administrator discipline decisions

But This

- What was the harm and who was affected?
- How do we fix this (repair the harm)
- Victim, offender, and community discipline decisions

Minnesota Department of Education, 2010

Restorative Justice Skills

- Focus on practical consequences rather than rule book consequences

- Uses dialogue from everyone involved and affected in the conflict

Victim-offender mediation

Peer mediation

Mediation Circles

Peer Courts

In-kind restitution

Mediation Programs

Minnesota Department of Education, 2010

Does it work?

Minnesota

Oakland, California

Denver, Colorado

West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Chicago, Illinois

Palm Beach County, Florida

United Kingdom

Canada

Australia

Dignity and Worth of the Person

- Self-determination
- Student involved intervention plans
- Individualized response to behaviors

Social Justice

Social workers pursue social justice specifically on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people.

- **Advocacy**
  - Discipline policies
- **Multidisciplinary team**
- **Family & community engagement**
  - Community based organizations
  - School Resource Officer (SRO)
- **Education**
  - Increase staff awareness of student disabilities

Self Reflection

Perceptions of students with disabilities.

Your contribution to the SPP.

What will you change.

Opinions on behavior management and control.

Notable Books

- Christopher Mallet : **The School to Prison Pipeline.**
- Nancy A. Heitzeg: **The School to Prison Pipeline Education, Discipline, and Racialized Double Standards.**
- Rachel Currie-Rubin: **Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline.**
- Priya Parmar and Anthony J. Nocella II: **From Education to Incarceration: Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline.**

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