GROWING SPECIALIZATION IN YOUTH DEFENSE SOCIAL WORK AND MITIGATION

WHO ARE WE?

GET TO KNOW US

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Research Expertise: Suicide

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Children/Youth/Young Adults

JLWOP and Parole Preparation

SOCIAL WORK & MITIGATION IN THE LEGAL FIELD:

FROM DEATH ROW TO THE PLAYGROUND

HOLISTIC DEFENSE

WHAT SOCIAL WORK BRINGS TO THE HOLISTIC DEFENSE TEAM & HOW TO COMMUNICATE OUR STRENGTHS

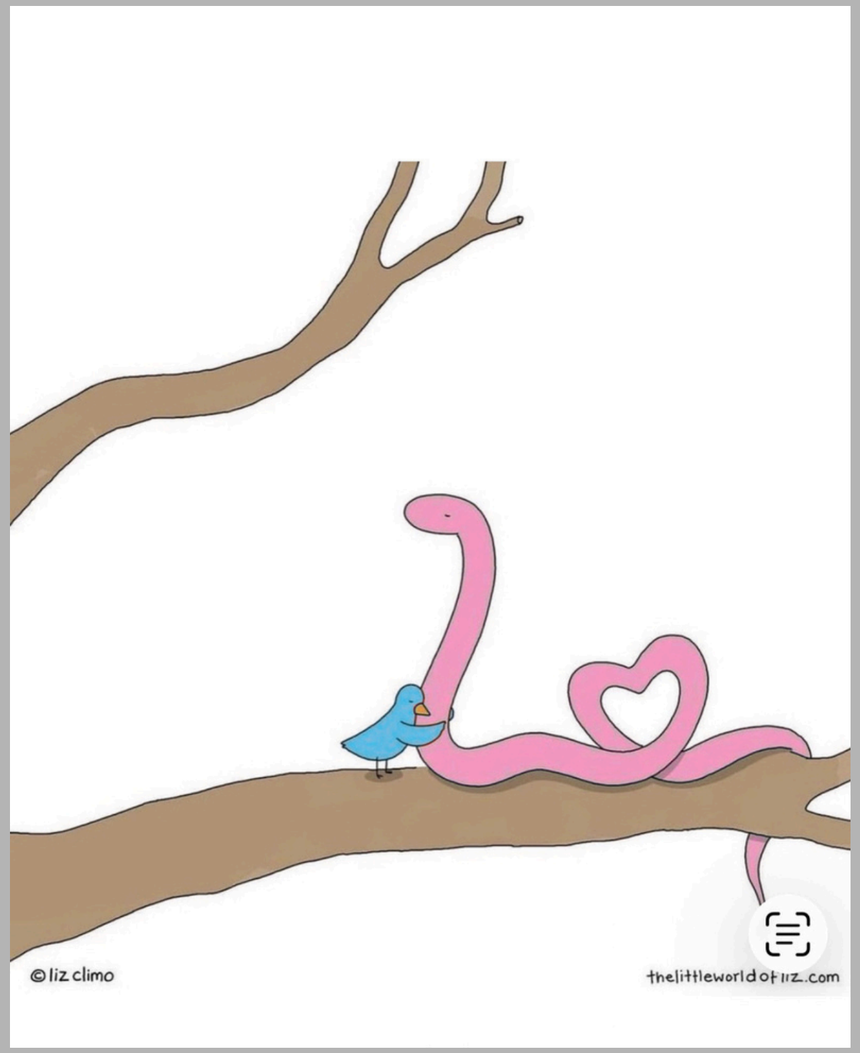
- ***Individual, Family, Community***
- ***Socio-economics, Race, History***
- ***Mental Health, Substance Use, ACEs***
- ***Engagement Techniques***
- ***Storytelling***
- ***Investigation, Record Collection, Experts***

Communication is Connection



Attorney-Client Privilege: child parent/guardian	Legal Terms: attorney translator
Age & Developmental Stage	Power Dynamics
Primary Language	Nonverbal Cues
Flow with the Conversation	Open-ended Questions


how are you?
great!
help
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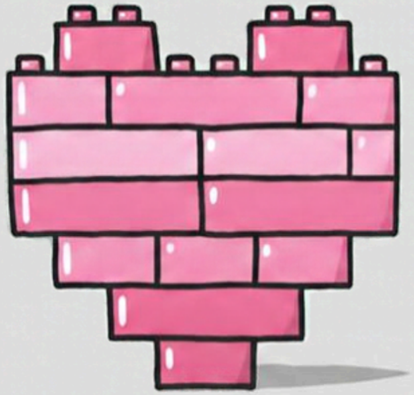
GATHERING THE NARRATIVE

TELLING THE STORY

TURNING THE COMPLEX INTO CLARITY



the events



storytelling

Our job is to simplify the way the case is understood.

ANALOGIES HELP DECISION-MAKERS CONNECT UNFAMILIAR CONCEPTS TO SOMETHING THEY ALREADY UNDERSTAND.

- Find the story
- Filter the noise
- Focus the reader
- Use plain language
- Use analogies
- Show, not tell

individual & family community & culture past & present & future



EXPLORING THE LAYERS

CREATIVE REPORTS/STORYTELLING/PRESENTATIONS

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- how do you define community?
- bring community into court
- gather info for your reports
- engage community as dispositional options

PICTURES/ ART WORK

- engages youth in telling their own story
- shows the decision makers how creative youth are
- brings in community culture

TAKING THE STAGE

- testimony vs presentation
- showing a powerpoint
- highlighting report or new information

VISUAL STORY



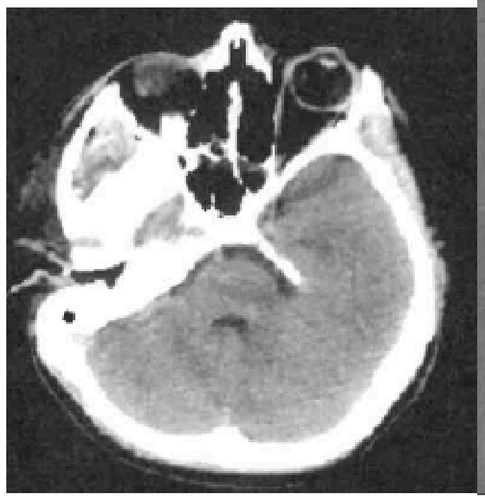


Photo of the impact on Josiah's brain.



Pieces of metal that remain in Josiah's brain

A LOVING BOND

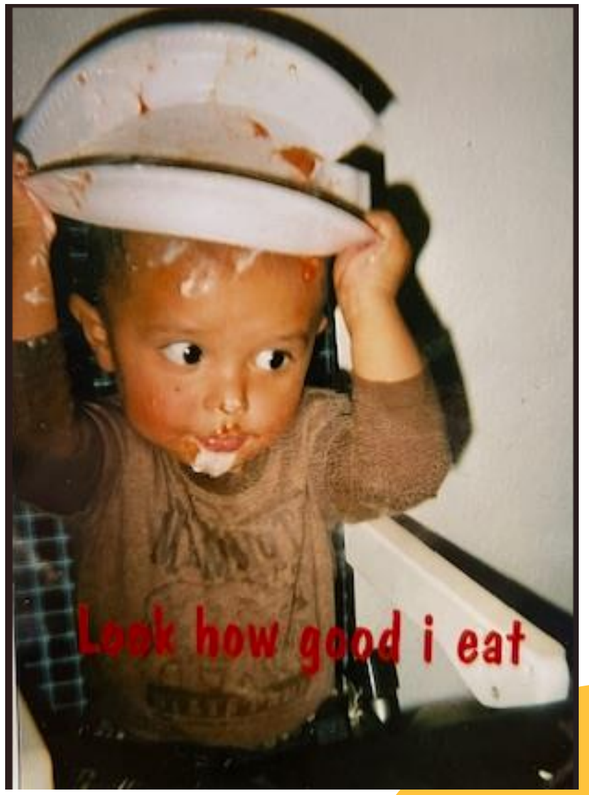
MAMA'S BOY



SIBLINGS



BABY DANIEL

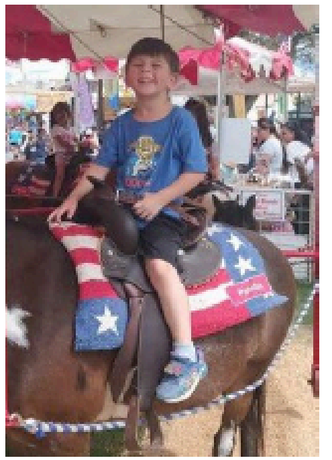


FORMATTING OPTIONS

1. Physical Abuse:
    a. One of Angela's boyfriends, Mere, the father of one of her children, used to beat Carlos. Mere was murdered in 2015.
    b. Carlos and his stepfather, Erik, often fought about Carlos' drinking and not getting a job. Some of the fights would get physical.
2. Physical Neglect:
    a. Angela experienced homelessness throughout Carlos' childhood. They were often kicked out of Liza's home and had to find places to stay.
    b. Many of the places Angela and Carlos stayed were drug houses. People would come in and out at all hours. Gang members were present. Guns were around.
    c. Carlos has asthma. He frequently missed school because he was hospitalized following asthma attacks. Angela's instability meant she had difficulty monitoring his health.
    d. Carlos remembers periods of time when they did not have enough food to eat.
3. Emotional Neglect:
    a. Carlos' family describes him as someone who does not talk about his feelings and keeps his emotions to himself. When asked about this, Carlos shared:
        i. "I saw everyone smoking [meth] and no one ever asked me how that made me feel. No one asked me how I felt about them using drugs."
        ii. "I never had anyone to share how I felt. No one was listening to me so I stopped trying."
    b. Angela and Liza would "always be mad" when they were high. Frequently yelling at Carlos and his siblings.

Daniel's life from 2016 to 2024

- **2016** In the aftermath of the events that took place on May 14, 2016, Daniel began the work to take accountability for his actions.
- **2018** Daniel was placed on pretrial supervision.
- **2019** Daniel's son Mason was born.



Confusion. Fear. He thought they went to the park to buy a gun. Why were people shooting? Where was Damian? Where was Jayvin? He thought Damian, the person closest to him in the world, was shot. Carlos jumped out of Jayvin's car and started shooting. Carlos carried a gun for protection. Was this the right time to use it? Carlos was not thinking straight. He started shooting.

In the chaos after Jorge [redacted] and Cameron [redacted] were shot, Carlos, Jayvin and Damian fled Cahoon Park. Adolph [redacted], Damien's father, who Carlos calls Tio Dope, was on the run from his own legal troubles. Scared, Carlos and Damien joined him. Tio Dope made it clear to the boys that they needed to keep their mouths shut. If they got caught, they better not snitch on anyone.

"My trial hurt me. Seeing those pictures. They were so young. I had to hold my tears back." -Carlos Gallegos describing his trial

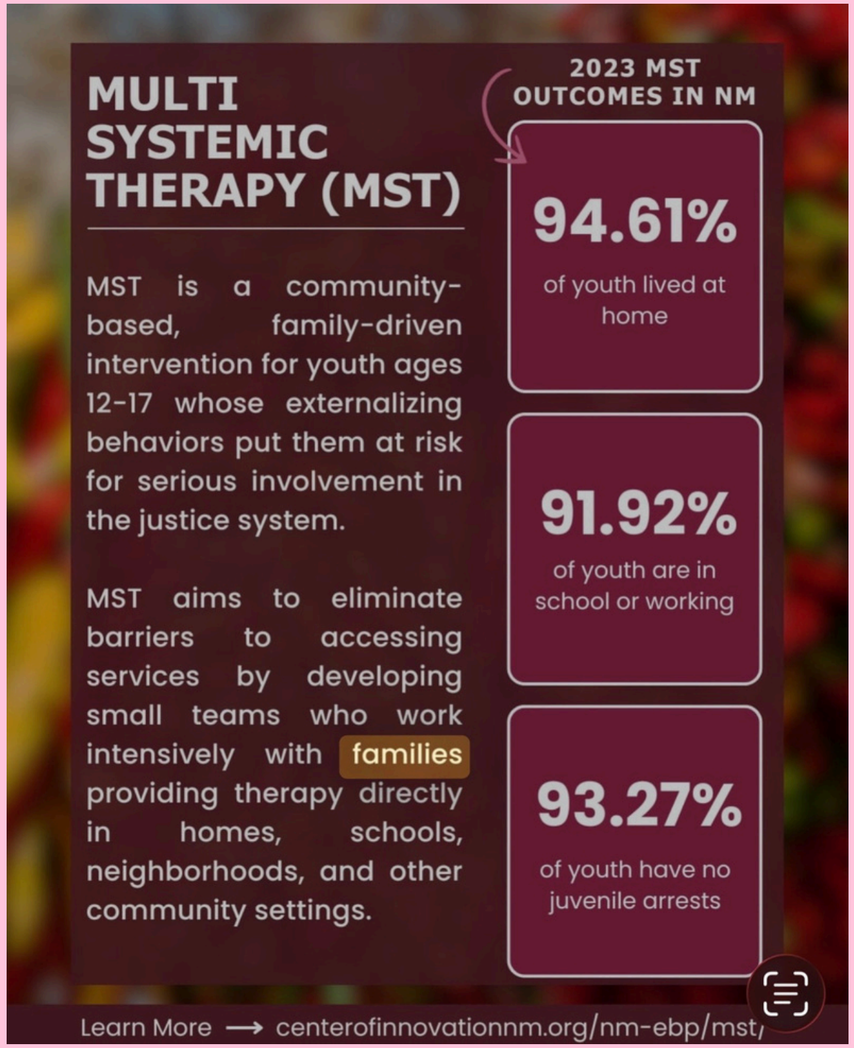
Carlos has had several years to think about the harm he caused and the tremendously painful impact of his actions. "I don't blame anyone for the situation I'm in." With his head down, tears in his eyes, Carlos talks about the pain the[redacted] and [redacted] families must be feeling. "No one deserves to go through that. Especially not kids. It just didn't have to happen like that." It has taken Carlos a while to feel comfortable enough to talk about what happened. He thought that expressing remorse and taking responsibility for what happened would affect his case. He believed talking about that day in Cahoon Park would negatively impact his chances at an appeal. With the freedom to open his heart to the emotions he has been holding in, Carlos brings up his regrets without prompting. He prays for the [redacted] and [redacted] families. He cries over the loss of life. He wonders, "How could that have been me?"

OF CHILDREN IN CUSTODY...

- 60% are diagnosed with ADD/ADHD, compared to 11% of youth nationally
- 27% are diagnosed with learning disabilities, compared to 8% of youth nationally
- 4% are diagnosed with autism, compared to 1.7% of youth nationally
- 55% of neurodivergent confined youth are youth of color

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/08/19/youth-victi



ONLY 14% OF ALL YOUTH UNDER 18 IN THE U.S. ARE BLACK,

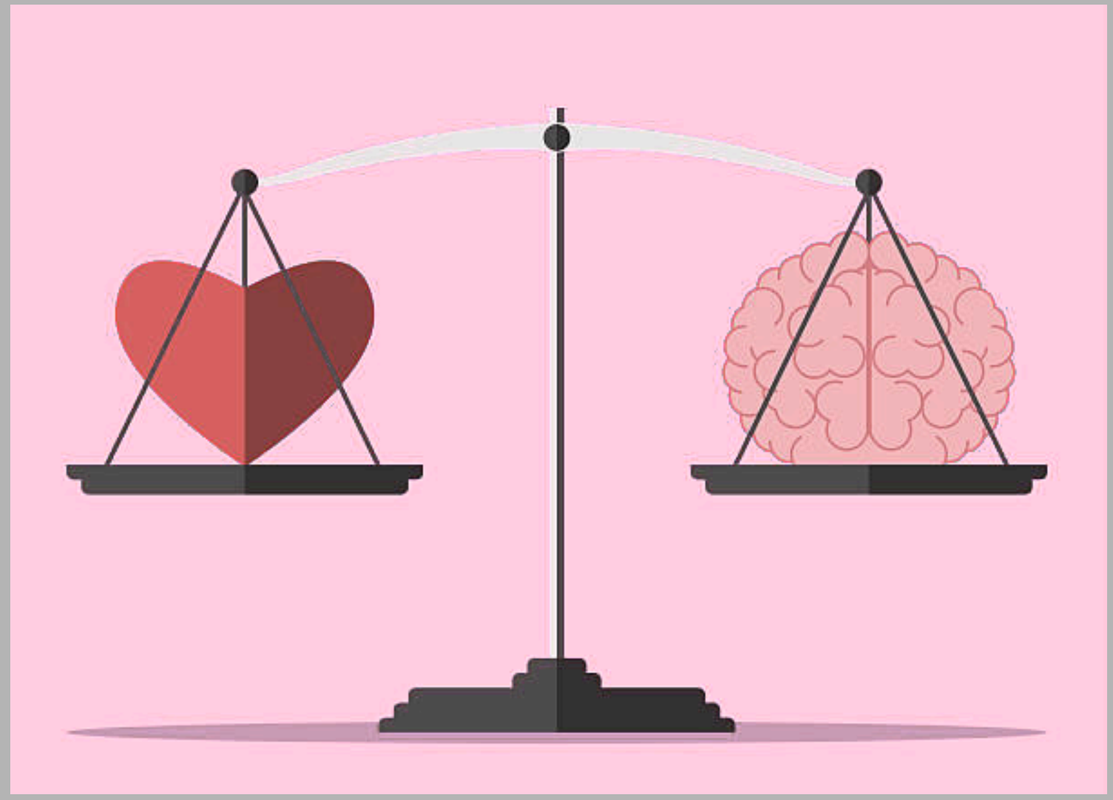
YET 47% OF BOYS AND 39% OF GIRLS IN JUVENILE FACILITIES ARE BLACK.

The U.S. is failing Black children.

Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/youth2025.html

PRISON POLICY INITIATIV

IT'S A BALANCING ACT



WHAT IS AN IDEAL OUTCOME?

Things we have control over:



Things we can let go:



BEST INTEREST VS STATED INTEREST

THE SATURATION OF TRAUMA NARRATIVES AND ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

POWER DYNAMICS

As lawmakers debate banning shower cameras in children's lockups, Bernalillo County removes theirs

Young man held in Juvenile Services Center says he and others convinced themselves what they were experiencing was normal

Macro Advocacy





REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN!



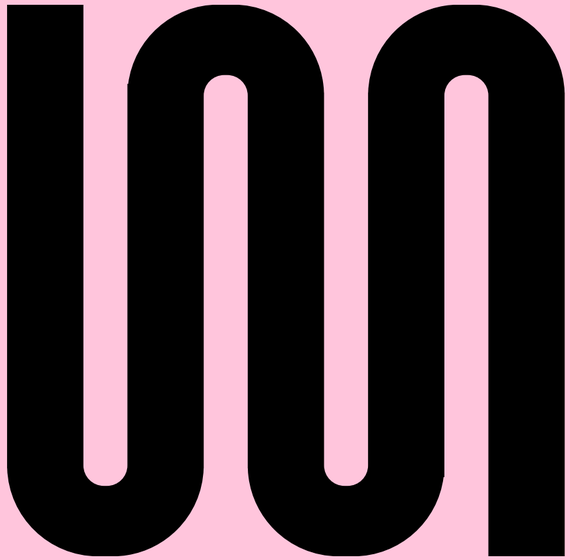
PLAY



CREATE



LAUGH



The children are always ours,
every single one of them,
all over the globe; and I am
beginning to suspect that
whoever is incapable of
recognizing this may be
incapable of morality.

- *James Baldwin*

THOUGHTS/QUESTIONS

IN THIS WORK TOGETHER

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Check your email on October 30, after Summit programming, for the CE verification survey email.

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