

SOCIAL (IN)JUSTICE, TRAUMA & MENTAL ILLNESS

Sarah Y. Vinson, MD

Acknowledgment of Ruth S. Shim, MD, MPH

WHAT'S AHEAD

- 1** DEFINITIONS
- 2** INTERPERSONAL & STRUCTURAL TRAUMA
- 3** HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
- 4** BENDING THE ARC

THE
AN AMERICAN
DREAM



SECTION 1

DEFINITIONS

MENTAL HEALTH

“A STATE OF WELL-BEING IN WHICH EVERY INDIVIDUAL REALIZES HIS OR HER OWN POTENTIAL, CAN COPE WITH THE NORMAL STRESSES OF LIFE, CAN WORK PRODUCTIVELY AND FRUITFULLY, AND IS ABLE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO HER OR HIS COMMUNITY”

-W.H.O.-

SOCIAL JUSTICE

**“ASSURING THE PROTECTION OF
EQUAL ACCESS TO LIBERTIES, RIGHTS,
AND OPPORTUNITIES, AS WELL AS
TAKING CARE OF THE LEAST
ADVANTAGED MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.”
-JOHN RAWLS-**

RACISM

**A MARRIAGE OF RACIST POLICIES AND
RACIST IDEAS THAT PRODUCES AND
NORMALIZES RACIAL INEQUITIES**

- IBRAM X KENDI -

HEALTH INEQUITIES

**DISPARITIES IN HEALTH THAT ARE A
RESULT OF SYSTEMIC, AVOIDABLE,
AND UNJUST SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT
CREATE BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY**

STRUCTURAL TRAUMA

**WHEN SOCIETY'S SYSTEMS AND
STRUCTURES (E.G.- GOVERNMENTS,
ECONOMIES, SAFETY NET SERVICES) AS
THEY ARE CONFIGURED AND
ROUTINELY OPERATE ARE
INSTRUMENTS OF HARM**

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE

- **ESSENTIALISM**

The belief that there are distinct, unchanging, and natural characteristics that define social groups and facilitate their categorization

- **ERASURE OF CONTEXT**

Failure to consider sociohistorical context when seeking to understand the etiology of inequities

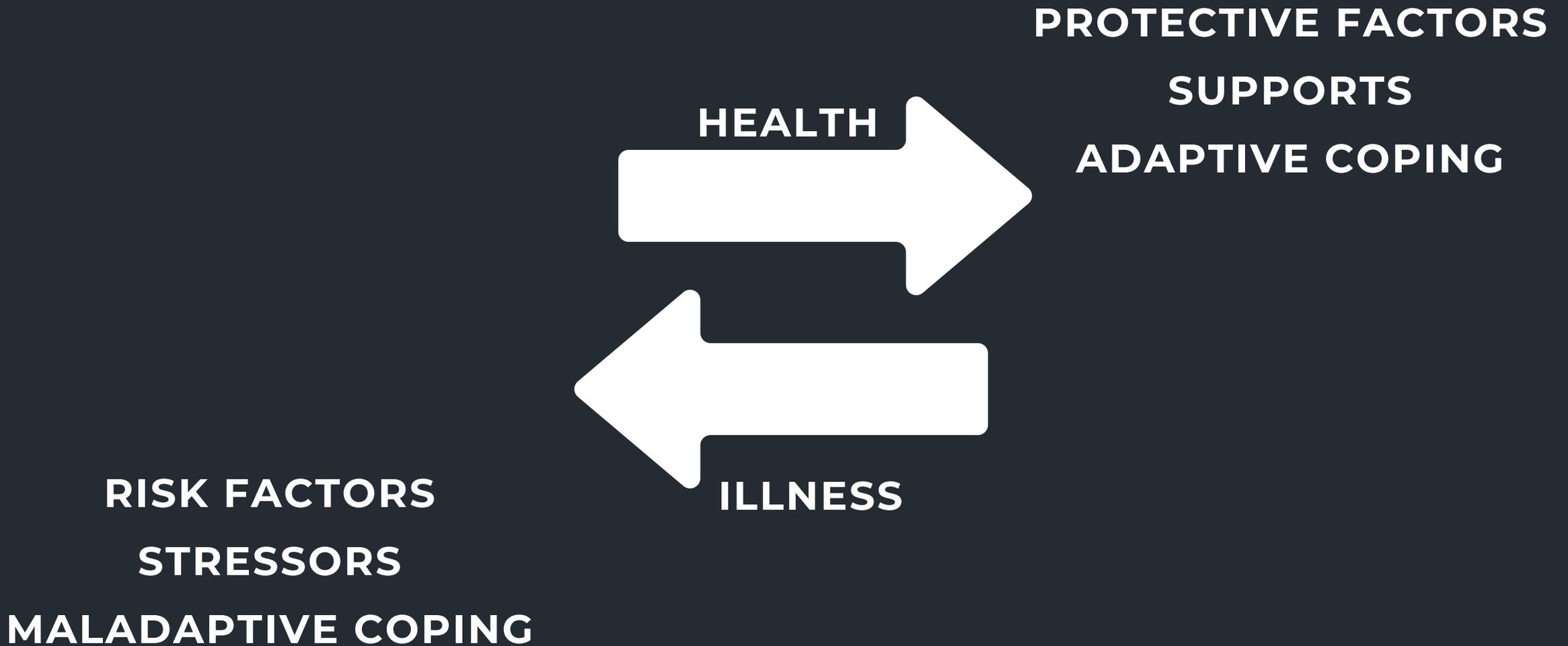
- **BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM**

The false belief that racial groups are biologically and genetically different

- **STRUCTURAL RACISM**

“A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity”

Shadravan S, Barcelo N: Social Injustice and Mental Health Inequities. In Social (In)Justice and Mental Health, Washington DC, APA Publishing. In Press.



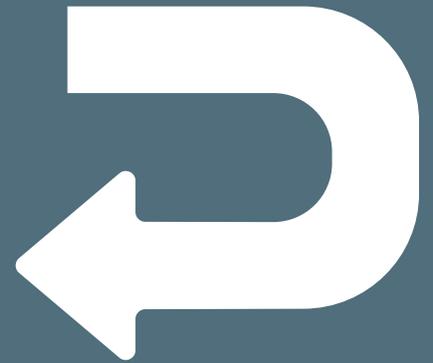
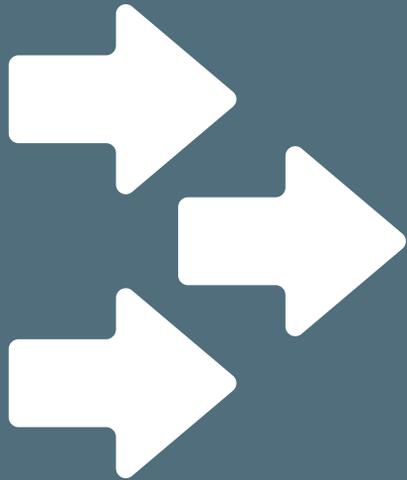
The Mental Illness to Mental Health Continuum

Video

**IF YOU'RE TREATED
A CERTAIN KIND OF
WAY, YOU BECOME A
CERTAIN KIND OF
PERSON. IF THINGS
ARE DESCRIBED TO
YOU AS BEING REAL,
THEY'RE REAL FOR
YOU WHETHER
THEY'RE REAL OR
NOT.**

- James Baldwin

DIRECTION, DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSION



TRAUMA

“The developing child's positive sense of self depends on the caregiver's benign use of power.”*



*Dr. Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery



“I WAS PROUD TO MAKE IT TO 21, EVEN THOUGH I WAS IN PRISON.”

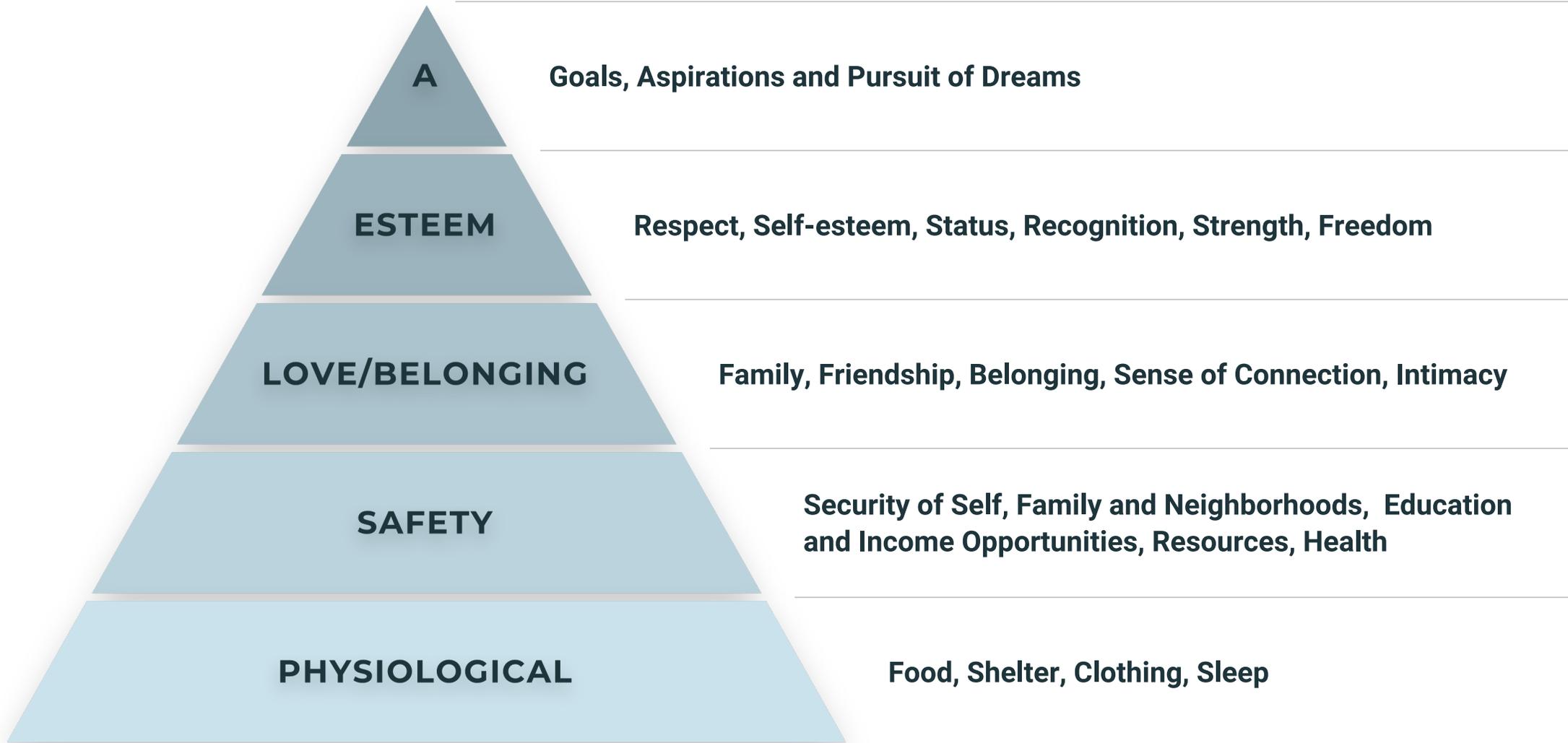
- Adult Defendant in Capital Murder Case

“SCHOOL WAS ALL I EVER REALLY HAD TO WORRY ABOUT.”

- Software Programmer in Private Practice Clinic

“THEY SAY I'M SUPPOSED TO CARE ABOUT PEOPLE WHEN AIN'T NOBODY CARED FOR ME.”

- Detained Teenager



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

A SOLID FOUNDATION



A TRUE HOME

Housing Stability
Food Security
Basic Needs Met



A RELIABLE CAREGIVER

Consistent, Available Adult
Instill Sense of Worth
Advocate for Child



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Safe Schools
Prep. for Career or College
Special Ed. Resources



HEALTHCARE

Medical Care
Mental Health
Adequacy and Access



CHILD POVERTY

- **15 MILLION (1/5) U.S. CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY**

<\$26,200 for family of 4

- **43% U.S. CHILDREN LOW INCOME FAMILIES**
- **WHITE CHILDREN ARE THE MAJORITY**

A POOR FOUNDATION - POVERTY



NO TRUE HOME

Housing Instability
Food Insecurity
Heavily Policed Neighborhoods



IMPAIRED CAREGIVERS

Poorly-supported adults
Lack of Living Wage
Unavailability - M.I.,
Incarceration, Work



UNMET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Under-Resourced Schools
Replication of Extant Social
Hierarchies



LIMITED ACCESS

Gaps in Coverage and Capacity
Untreated Illness Impacting
Attendance and Behavior

BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



GENE + ENVIRONMENT INTERACTIONS

- Some born with vulnerability to impairments in judgment, cognition and/or emotional regulation
- Adverse experiences increase likelihood that vulnerability translates to problem behavior or illness

BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



NEURAL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

- Emotional circuits and rewards in full gear
- Decision-making circuits and risk assessment less developed and more susceptible to emotional states and social circumstances

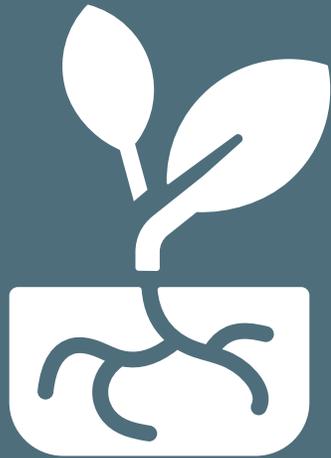
BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



SUBSTANCE USE

- Greater brain plasticity + early exposure
- Increased susceptibility to problematic use

BIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



PRE AND PERINATAL ENVIRONMENT

- Inter-generational trauma
- Alcohol or other substance use exposure
- Lead and other environmental neurotoxins
- Inadequate nutrition

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS



SELF-CONCEPT

Strengths

Deficits

Capabilities



STRESS RESPONSES

Problem-Solving

Coping Strategies

Defense Mechanisms



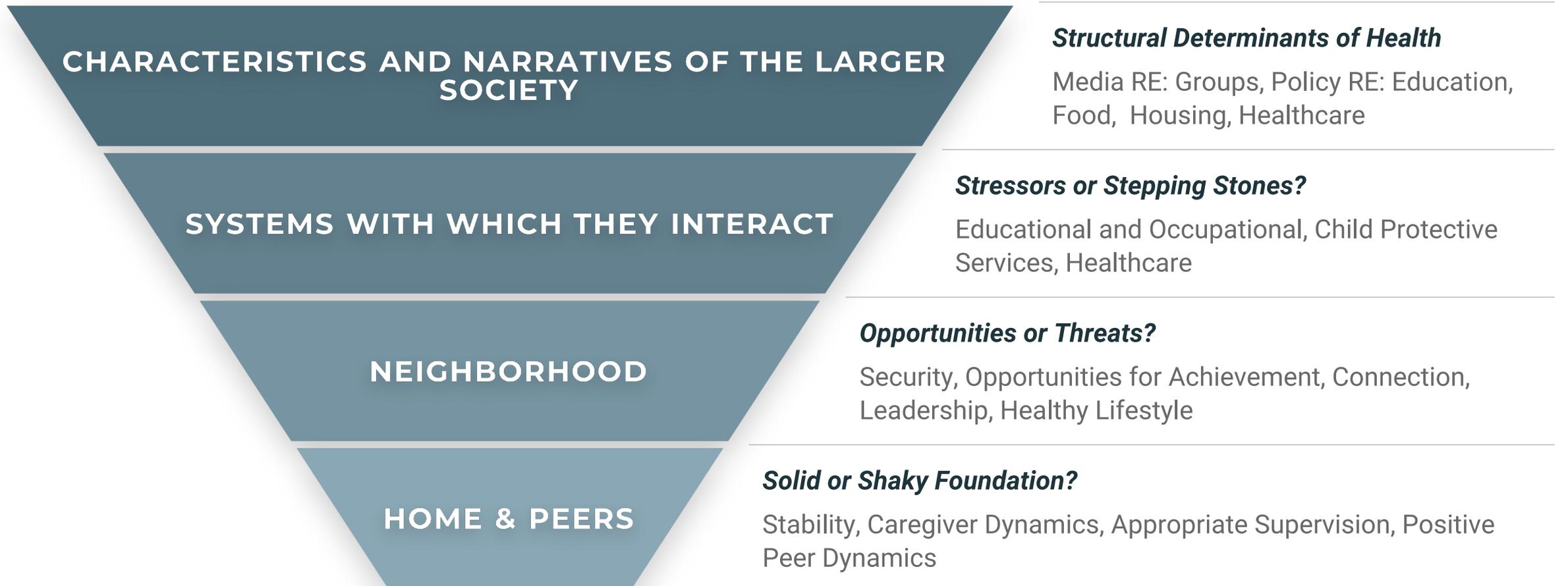
PERCEPTIONS OF LARGER SOCIETY

Its Rules

Their Place In It

Safety and Agency

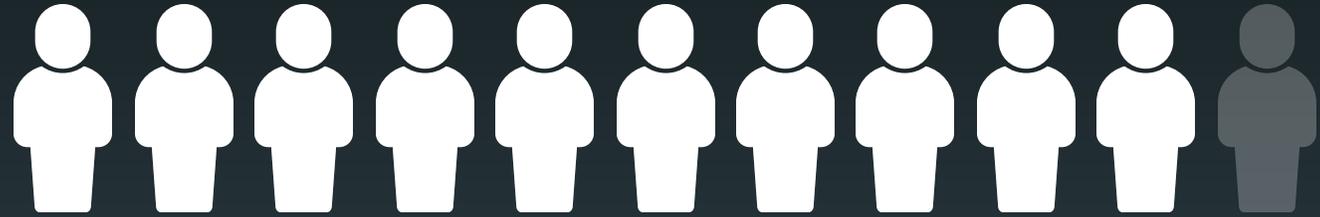
SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS



**EARLY
ASSAULTS
MATTER
THE IMPACT OF
TRAUMA**

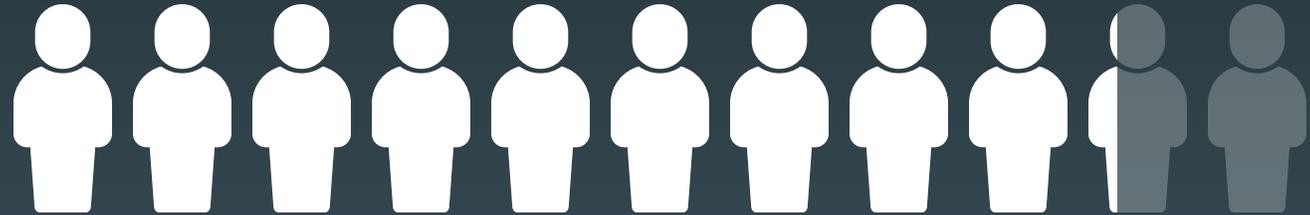


90%



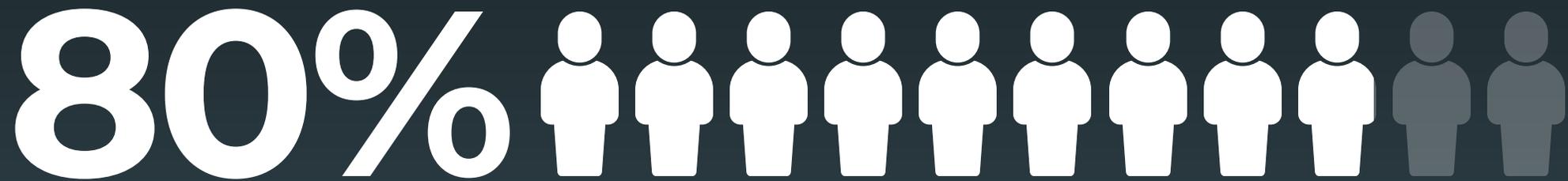
Experienced at least one trauma

84%



More than 1 trauma

TRAUMA IN JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVED YOUTH



DJJ Involved youth with family on public assistance or incomes under \$30,000 per year

POVERTY

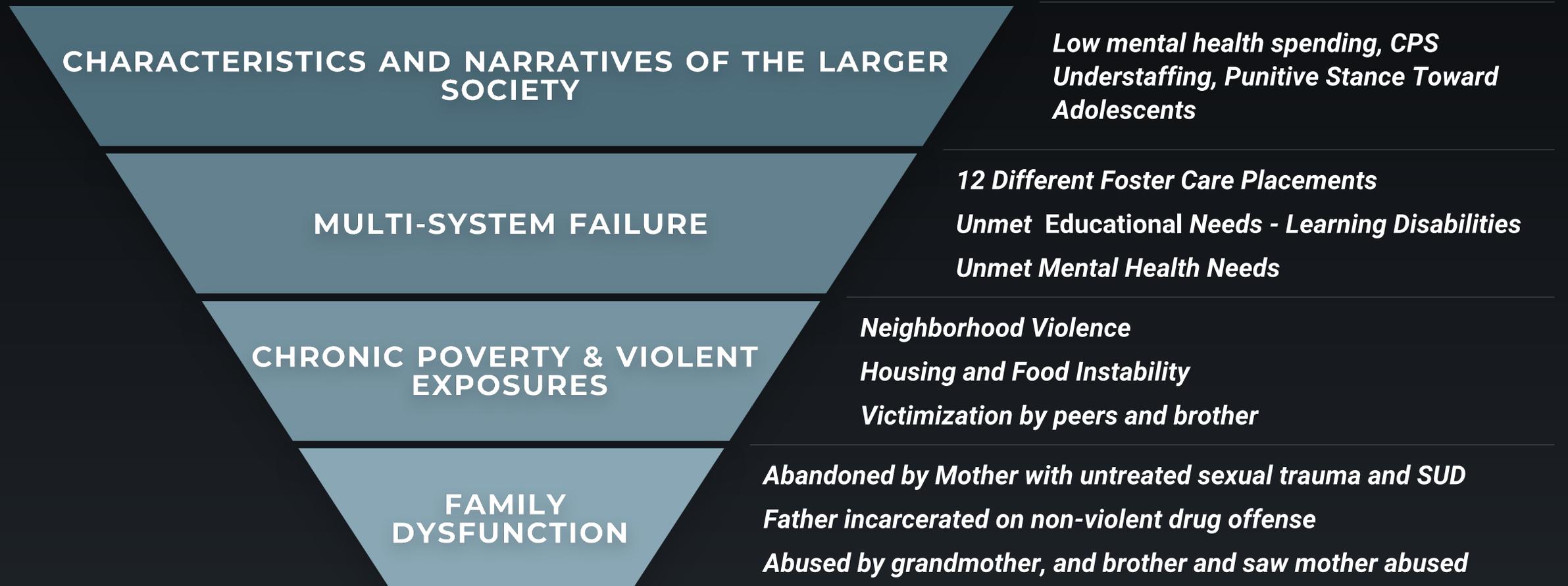


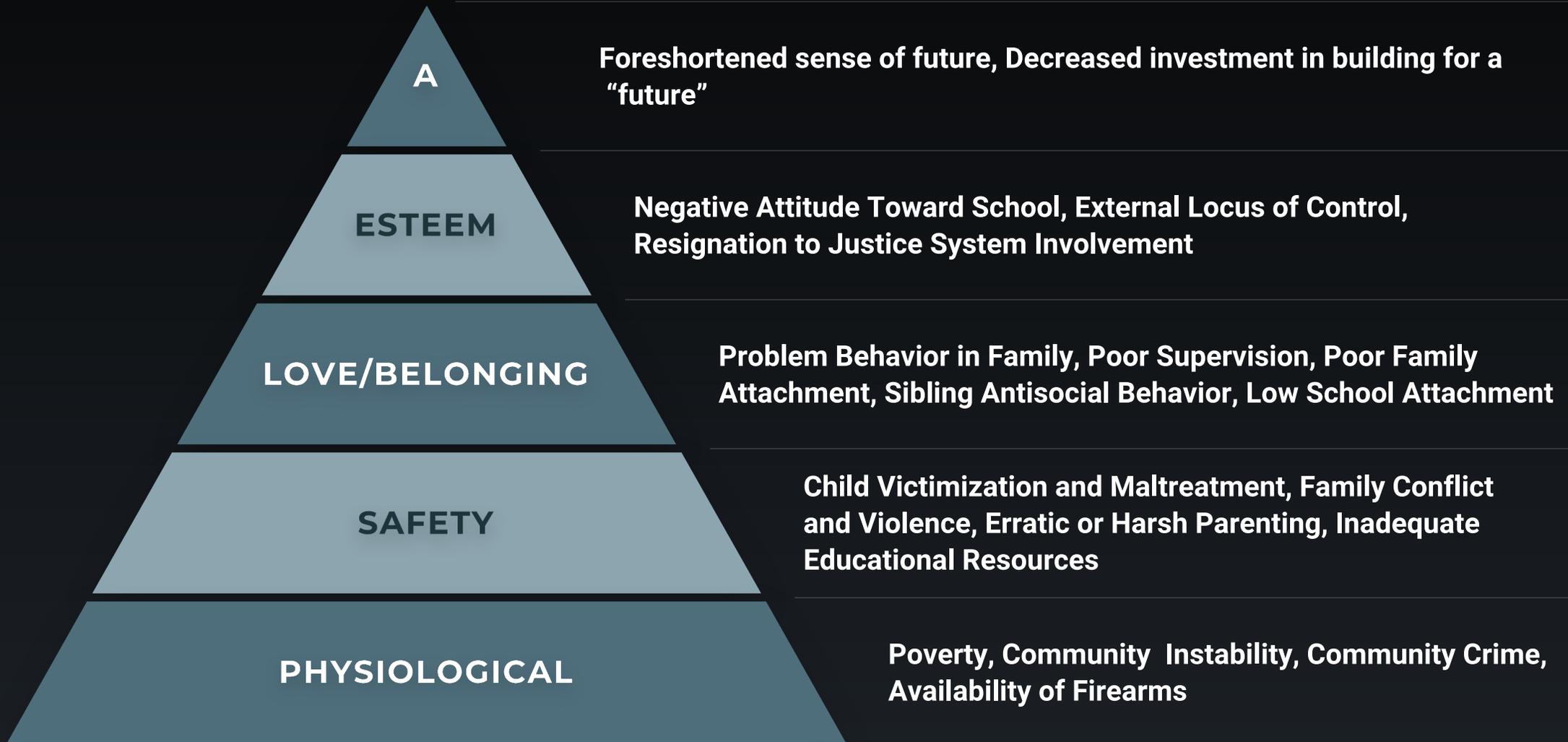
MIGUEL'S RECORD

“I WAS PROUD TO MAKE IT TO 21, EVEN THOUGH I WAS IN PRISON.”

- *Incarcerated from the age of 17-21*
- *Violation of plan after being found in possession of small amount of marijuana*
- *Original charge non-violent*

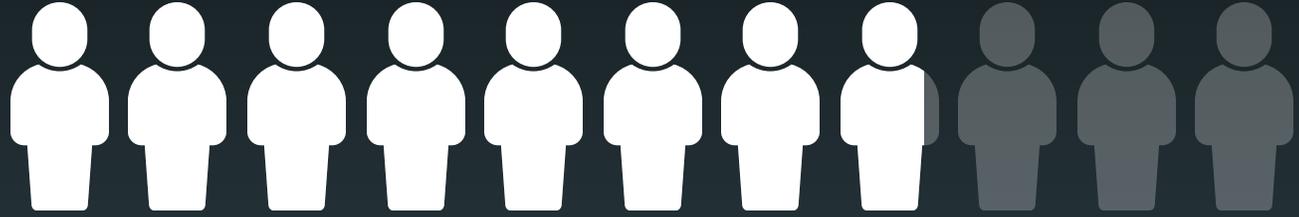
MIGUEL'S ENVIRONMENT





UNMET NEEDS = DJJ RISK FACTORS

70%



Mental Illness

30%



“Serious” Mental Illness

AND SET THE STAGE FOR OVER-REPRESENTATION FOR YOUTH WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

WHEN THE TRAUMA'S NOT “POST”

Video

AND NOT COUNTED



IN OUR DIAGNOSES

No Complex PTSD

The limitations of Criteria A for PTSD

No recognition of racial and structural trauma

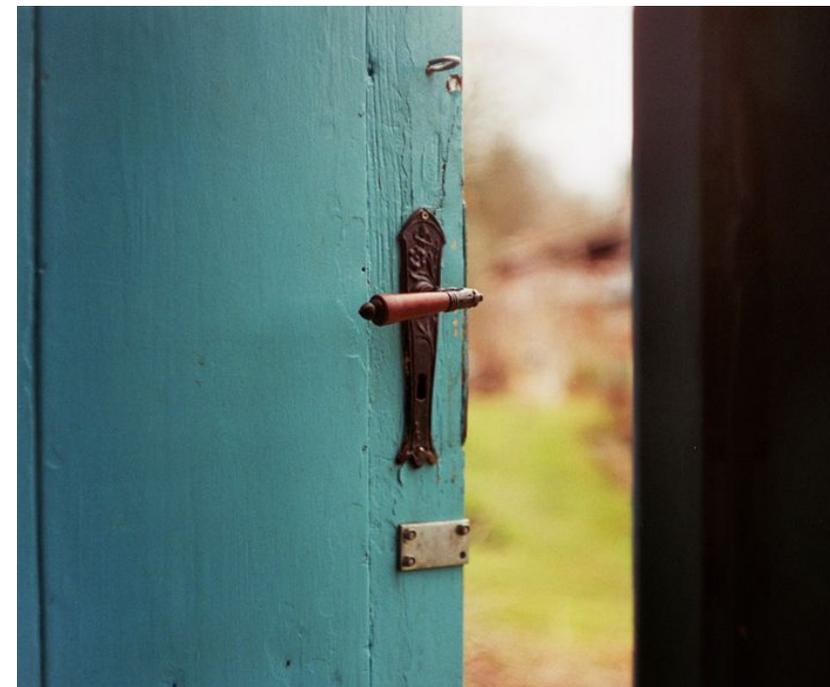
AND NOT COUNTED



IN OUR COMMON INSTRUMENTS

ACE Questionnaire Limitations
Actuarial Risk Assessments
Criminogenic Risk Factors

**...IN OUR
COURTS**



**THE
“CRIMINAL
JUSTICE”
SYSTEM**



RELIABLY RACIST OUTCOMES



- **MOST JUDGES ACKNOWLEDGE THE SYSTEM IS RACIST**
- **80% OF STATE JUDGES ARE WHITE**
- **BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE MAKE OF THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN JAIL**
- **SENTENCING OUTCOMES DIFFER NOT ONLY BY RACE BUT ALSO BY SHADE**
- **BLACKS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE REFERRED FOR M.H. EVALS OR TO DIVERSION PROGRAMS**

MENTAL HEALTHCARE

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INEQUITIES

- **HOSPITALS***

Inequities are the result of a confluence of residential segregation, hospital imperatives to generate revenue, and state policy making

- **HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Inadequacy of private and safety net systems

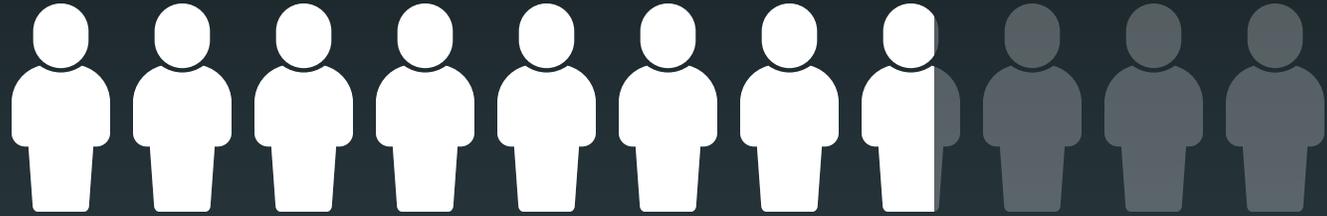
- **OUTCOMES**

Inequities by income, race, engagement, reception of evidence-based interventions, retention, forced hospitalization, stigmatizing diagnoses, early intervention

*Ko M, Cruz A, Cummings J: Social Injustice and the Health Care System. In *Social (In)Justice and Mental Health*, Washington DC, APA Publishing. In Press.

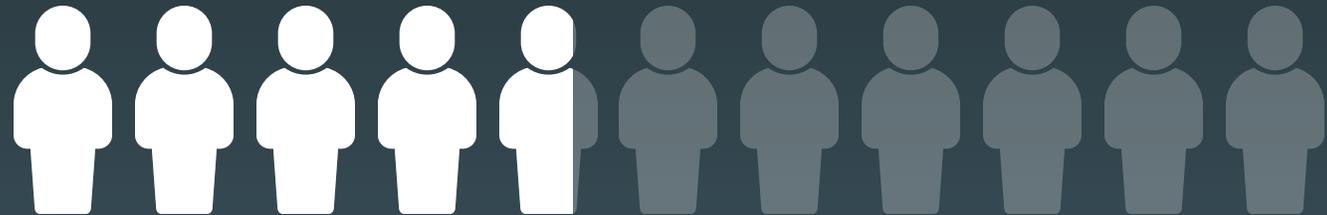
IN 2018,

69%



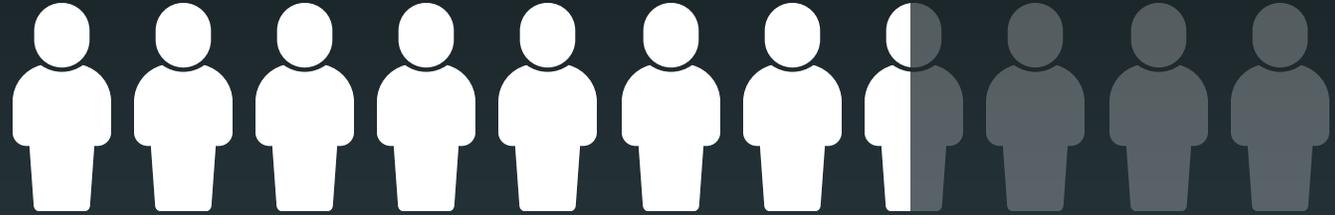
of Black adults with any mental illness received no treatment

42%



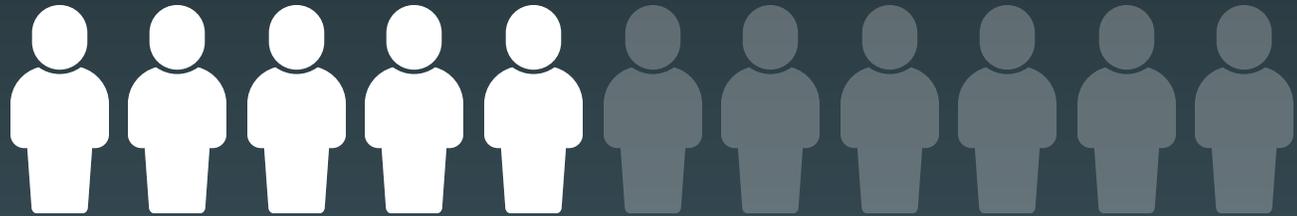
of Black adults with serious mental illness received no treatment

67%



of Latinx adults with any mental illness received no treatment

44%



of Latinx adults with serious mental illness received no treatment

Crack Babies: The Worst Threat Is Mom Herself

By Douglas J. Besharov

LAST WEEK in this city, Greater Southeast Community Hospital released a 7-week-old baby to her homeless, drug-addicted mother even though the child was at severe risk of pulmonary arrest. The hospital's explanation: "Because [the mother] demanded that the baby be released."

The hospital provided the mother with an apnea monitor to warn her if the baby stopped breathing while asleep, and trained her in CPR. But on the very first night, the mother went out drinking and left the child at a friend's house—without the monitor. Within seven hours, the baby was dead. Like Dooney Waters, the 6-year-old living in his mother's drug den, whose shock

Children of the Opioid Epidemic

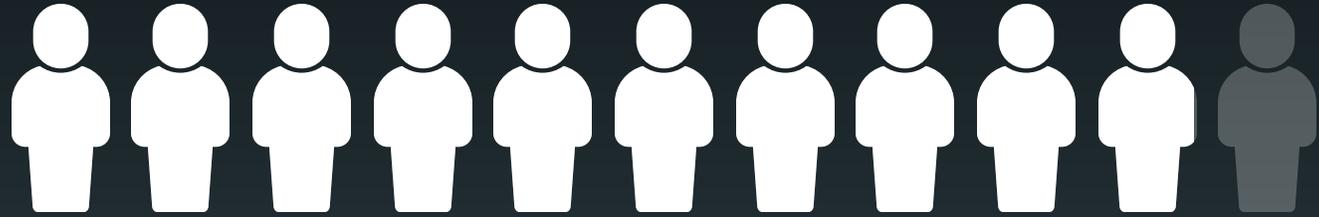
In the midst of a national opioid crisis, mothers addicted to drugs struggle to get off them — for their babies' sake, and their own.

By JENNIFER EGAN MAY 9, 2018



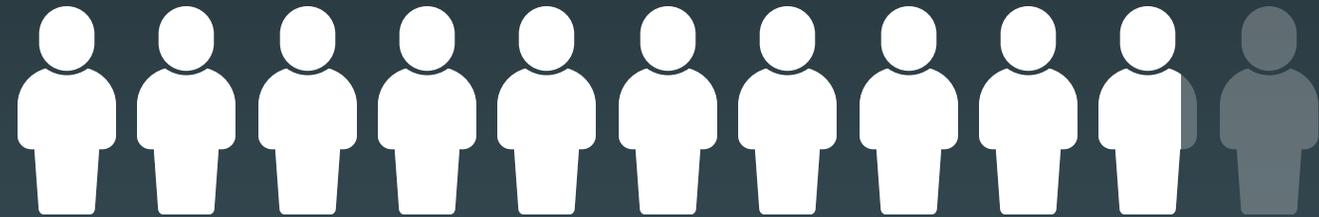
THE NEW DISPARITY - THE EMPATHY, COVERAGE, FUNDING, TRAINING GAPS

89%



of Latinx adults with substance use disorders reported receiving no treatment

88%



of Black adults with substance use disorders reported receiving no treatment

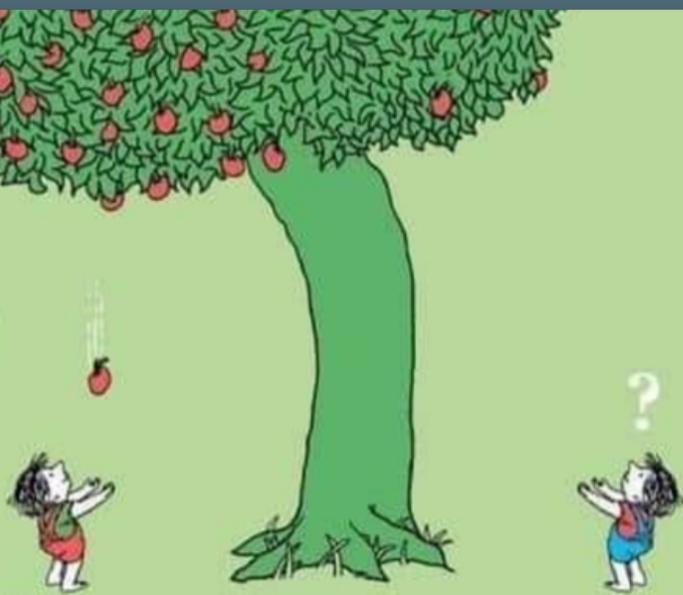
***COST IS THE MOST COMMONLY CITED
REASON FOR NOT SEEKING CARE
TWICE AS OFTEN AS MINIMIZATION
OF SYMPTOMS AND NEARLY FIVE
TIMES AS OFTEN AS STIGMA***

Alang SM: Mental health care among blacks in America: Confronting racism and constructing solutions. Health Serv Res 54:346-355, 2019

BENDING THE ARC

Inequality

Unequal access to opportunities



Source: @GuncHerseth in the 2019 Design in Tech Report

Equality?

Evenly distributed tools and assistance



Source: @GuncHerseth in the 2019 Design in Tech Report

Equity

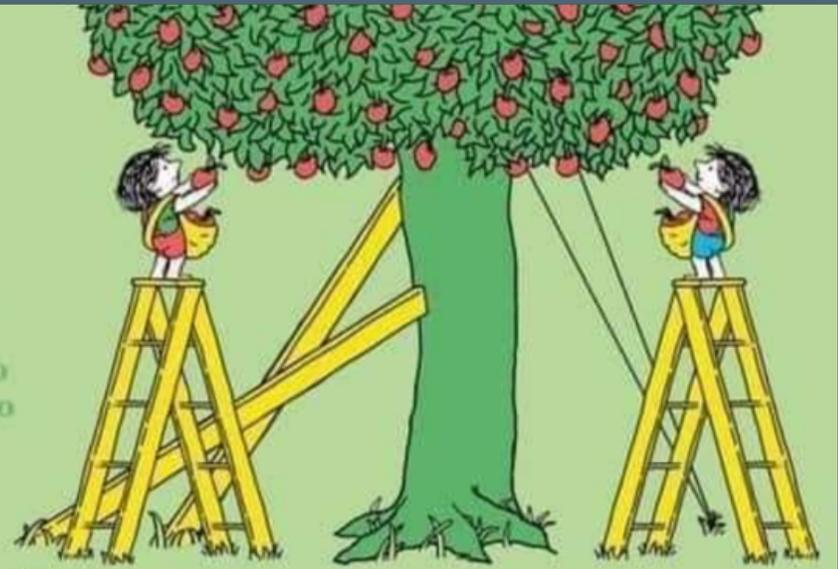
Custom tools that identify and address inequality



Source: @GuncHerseth in the 2019 Design in Tech Report

Justice

Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities



Source: @GuncHerseth in the 2019 Design in Tech Report

**RACIST
SYSTEM**

**+ RACE
'NEUTRAL'
REFORM**

**= RACIST
SYSTEM 2.0**

**HOW CAN
EVERY
INDIVIDUAL
REALIZE HIS OR
HER OWN
POTENTIAL,
WORK
PRODUCTIVELY
AND
FRUITFULLY,
AND MAKE A
CONTRIBUTION
TO HER OR HIS
COMMUNITY...**

**NO
JUSTICE.
NO PEACE.**

**...IN A SOCIETY
THAT FAILS TO
ASSURE EQUAL
ACCESS TO
LIBERTIES,
RIGHTS, AND
OPPORTUNITIES,
AND CHOOSES
NOT TO CARE
FOR ITS LEAST
ADVANTAGED
MEMBERS?**



HOW TO START

1 DEVELOP A KNOWLEDGE BASE

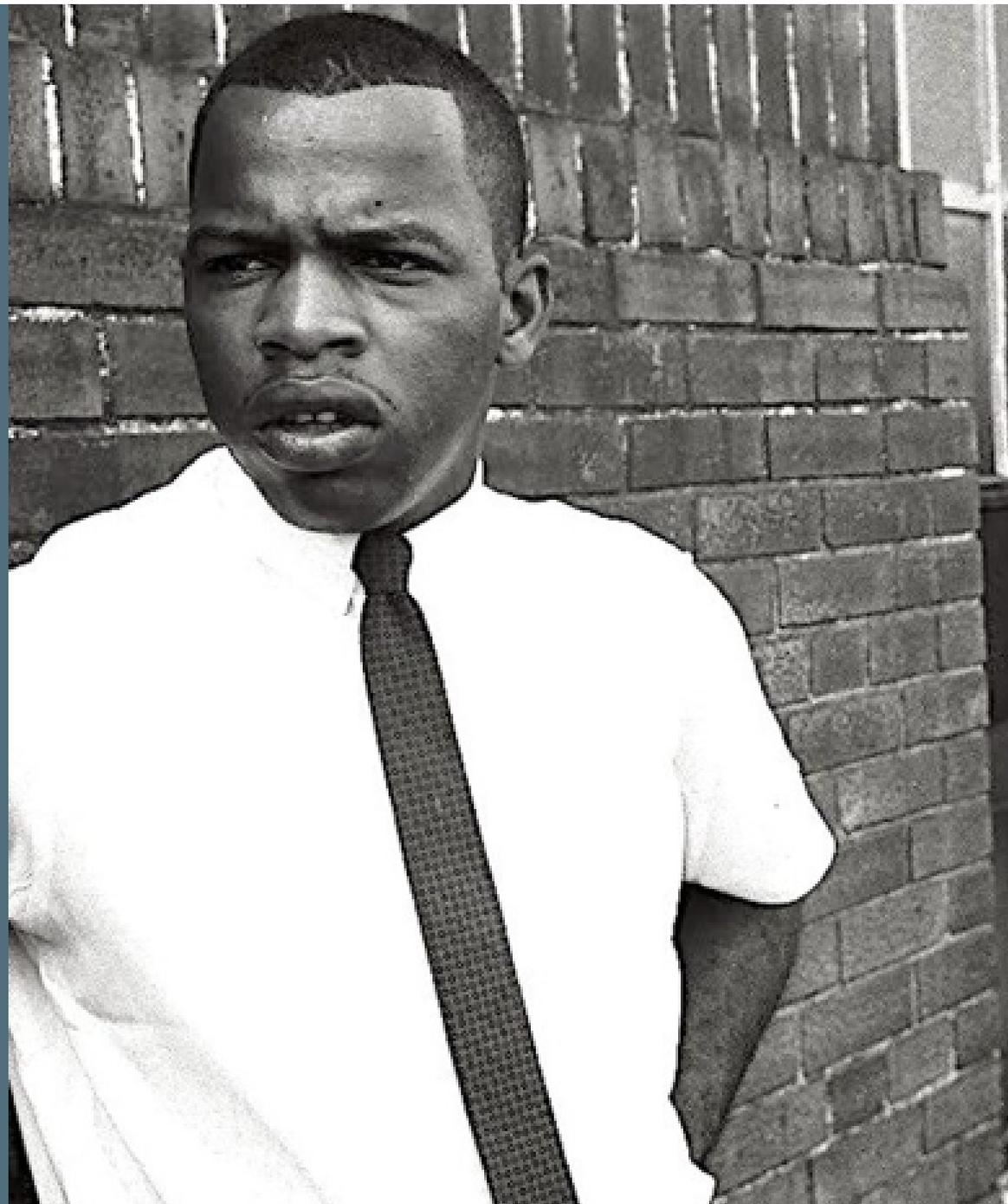
Ownership, self-study, and humility

2 UNDERSTAND INJUSTICE AND YOUR ROLE IN ADDRESSING IT

Counting, Listening, Collaboration

3 RESPOND TO INJUSTICE

Intentional Design, Re-Counting, Iteration



**“DO NOT GET LOST IN A SEA OF DESPAIR.
BE HOPEFUL, BE OPTIMISTIC.**

**OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT THE STRUGGLE OF
A DAY, A WEEK, A MONTH, OR A YEAR,
IT IS THE STRUGGLE OF A LIFETIME.**

**NEVER, EVER BE AFRAID TO MAKE
SOME NOISE AND GET IN GOOD
TROUBLE, NECESSARY TROUBLE.”**



**“IGNORANCE, ALLIED
WITH POWER, IS THE
MOST FEROCIOUS ENEMY
JUSTICE CAN HAVE.”**

- JAMES BALDWIN -

