



QUESTIONABLE REASONS FOR INCARCERATION

Youth become involved in the juvenile delinquency system, and are pushed deeper into that system for reasons that are unreasonable, unjust, or for circumstances beyond their control.

SURVIVAL CRIMES



Youth are charged with criminal cases as a result of **working in the underground street economy** to meet their basic needs.

... Youth acquire food, clothing or personal items from stores without paying.

... Youth engage in **sex work to make money**, while some are forced against their will.

INCARCERATION

Many youth are in the foster care system or living in poverty. They do not have their basic needs met and they pick up criminal charges in attempts to meet these needs.

ABUSE OF POWER



Youth are **unfairly detained and charged** by law enforcement and the court system.

... Youth receive trumped up charges and gang enhancements.

... Youth are forced to plead guilty and are detained without reason.

INCARCERATION

Youth with gang enhancements or trumped up charges receive more serious charges and longer sentences. Lacking sufficient explanation by the court system, youth feel forced to plead guilty when innocent or when it is against their best interests.

PROBATION VIOLATIONS



Youth are pushed deeper into the criminal legal system because they are **set-up for failure**.

... Youth are too closely surveilled through juvenile probation.

... Youth are given excessively restrictive requirements.

INCARCERATION

If youth violate the terms of their probation they can face incarceration, a longer probation term, or additional charges.

INSTITUTIONS



SCHOOL

FOSTER CARE

... School staff call police for issues inside of schools. Youth are charged in the juvenile delinquency system.

... Foster youth acquire new criminal charges related to their status in the foster care system.

INCARCERATION

Youth in group homes pick up new charges following incidents in their group home. Some run away to stay safe. Foster youth awaiting placement are incarcerated at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC).

NEGLIGENCE ON THE INSIDE

While incarcerated at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC), youth experience unnecessary harm that causes long-lasting trauma in their lives.

HEALTH:

Youth health concerns are not properly addressed while incarcerated.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Youth requests for medical attention are ignored and care is provided too late or is sub-par, often escalating their conditions.



PREGNANCY

Youth are incarcerated while pregnant and the conditions of detention make it impossible for them to care for their unborn children.



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is not adequately addressed and, in some cases, made worse by the care that youth receive.



Medication: Youth are mandated to take psychotropic medication without their consent or their families' approval.



Therapy: Youth do not feel comfortable receiving therapy from the delinquency system because they believe it is designed to compile evidence against them.

DISRESPECTFUL INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS:

Staff from the juvenile delinquency system speak to youth in a **degrading and disrespectful** manner. These interactions reinforce negative and harmful stereotypes.



ISSUES WITH MALE OFFICERS IN UNITS:

Youth express **extreme discomfort with male officers** inside of JJC, especially when male officers can see them while using the restroom, undressing, and showering.

EXCESSIVE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE:

Incarcerated youth are **physically harmed by staff** inside of JJC while being forcibly restrained. For example, youth are placed at increased risk of physical harm while unnecessarily shackled.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

Youth are **isolated in their cells** for extended periods of time through a de facto practice of social isolation.

ENDURING IMPACT OF INCARCERATION

Youth share the enduring impact that being involved in the juvenile delinquency system caused them.

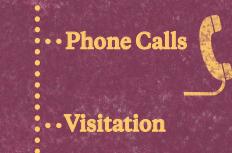
FAMILY SEPARATION

While incarcerated, youth are **isolated from their families** during a time when they need the support of loved ones the most.

Youth want to **stay connected to loving family members** as they navigate the difficult realities of incarceration but experience system-imposed barriers.

EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

Youth experience **long-term impact** from being incarcerated during their childhood.



JAIL IS NOT A PLACE FOR KIDS

Juvenile detention is a **developmentally inappropriate** place for all children.

- Staff treat **phone calls as a privilege** not a right
- Youth experience **inconsistent access to phone calls** and limitations as to who they can call
- Youth experience **visitation restrictions**
- Youth experience **humiliation** during visitation procedures



SYSTEMS RECOMMENDATIONS - VOICING NEEDS

Youth recommendations for transforming the juvenile delinquency system into one that would better support their needs.



PLACEMENT SELF-ADVOCACY IN FOSTER CARE



When youth are placed in an out-of-home placement, they want to be **part of the decision making process**. They want to remain as close to their community as possible to maintain ties to loved ones.

RETHINKING PROBATION

Youth recommend improving juvenile probation by focusing on their own **self-determined goals**.



1. REDUCE EXCESSIVE MONITORING

Probation officers should **reduce excessive monitoring** of youth's lives because this actually increases youth risk of recidivism.



2. LOOSEN REQUIREMENTS

Requirements that probation officers place on youth impede their ability to be successful because they are time-consuming and do not align with youth's own goals.



3. ECONOMIC STABILITY

Youth identify **economic stability**—securing reliable and well-paid employment—as their most important goal post-detention.

WHAT COULD HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

Youth reflections after navigating the juvenile delinquency system.

POSITIVE, AFFIRMING, AND EMPOWERING INTERACTIONS



Adults working with system-impacted youth need to **center their strengths** and provide them with positive reinforcement.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PROVIDERS



Youth want adult providers to **visibly demonstrate that they care** for them and are invested in their wellbeing.

SERVICES THAT ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES



Youth recommend that programs and services **address the root causes** of their system-involvement related to poverty and trauma.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Youth desire receiving support and services through **community based organizations** located in their communities where they feel safe and trust the adults they're working with.

