



The Inside Lives of Children with Incarcerated Family Members

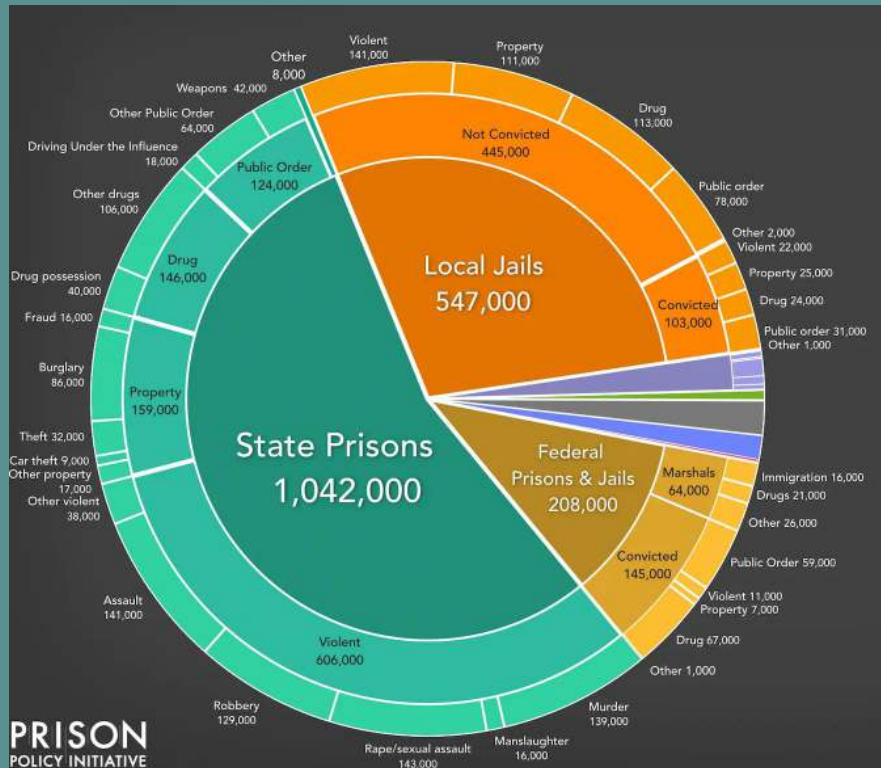
An interactive session to build awareness of the impacts of family member incarceration on children.

Far more people are impacted by mass incarceration than the 1.9 million currently confined.

Mass incarceration directly impacts millions of people
But just how many, and in what ways?



Compiled by the Prison Policy Initiative from 2020 Bureau of Justice Statistics data; Shannon, et al. (2017) *The Growth, Scope, and Spatial Distribution of People With Felony Records in the United States, 1948-2010*; SEARCH's Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems, 2018 (estimate of criminal records created according to the methodology of NEI.P's 65 Million 'Need Not Apply'; and FWD.us (2018) *Every Second: The Impact of the Incarceration Crisis on America's Families*



TURN AND TALK

❖ Have you ever had a experience with incarceration?

❖ Have you known a child that has been affected by incarceration?

❖ Have you ever been to prison? What was the impact to your surrounding family system?

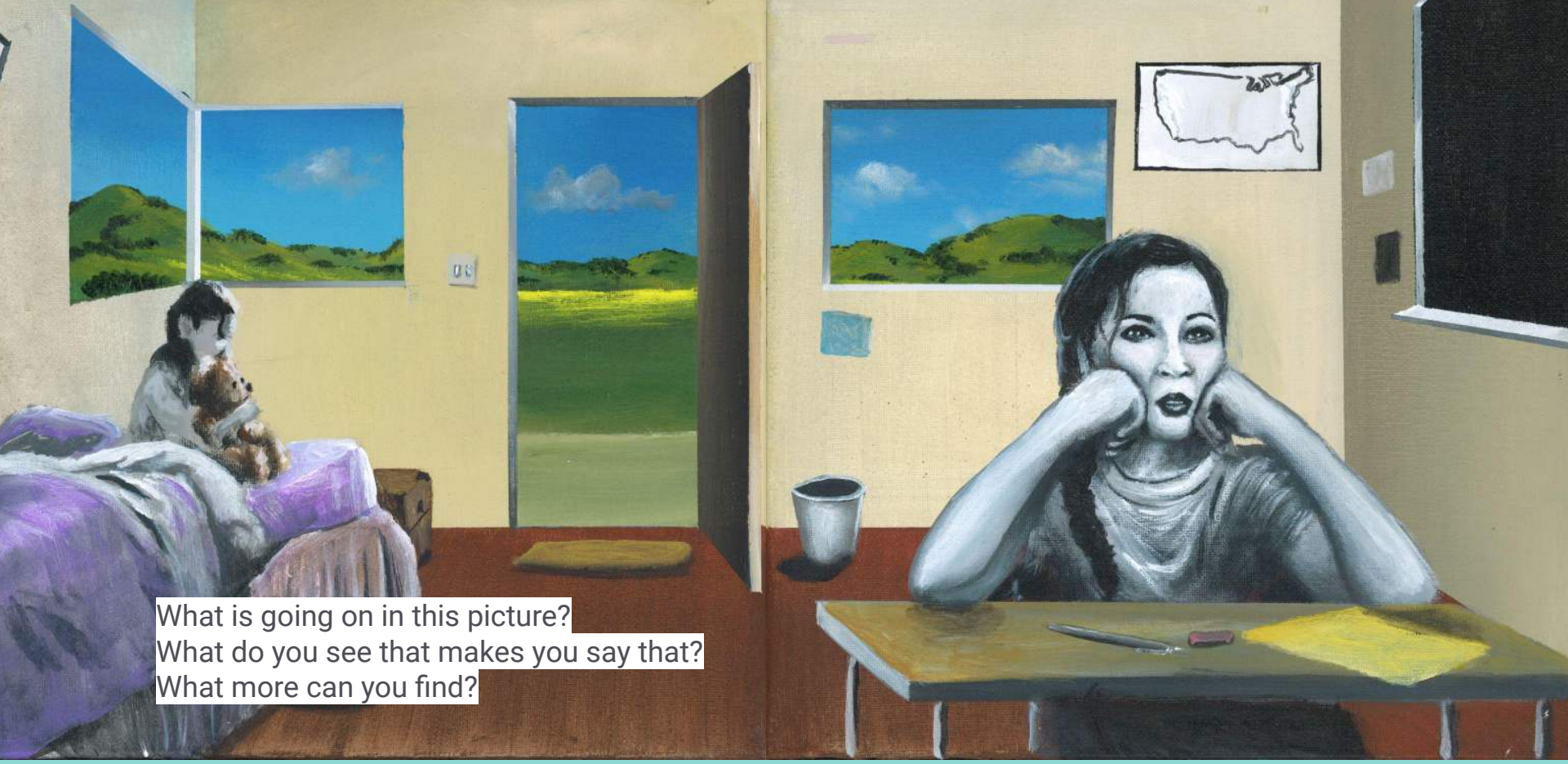


Identifying feelings of students who experience



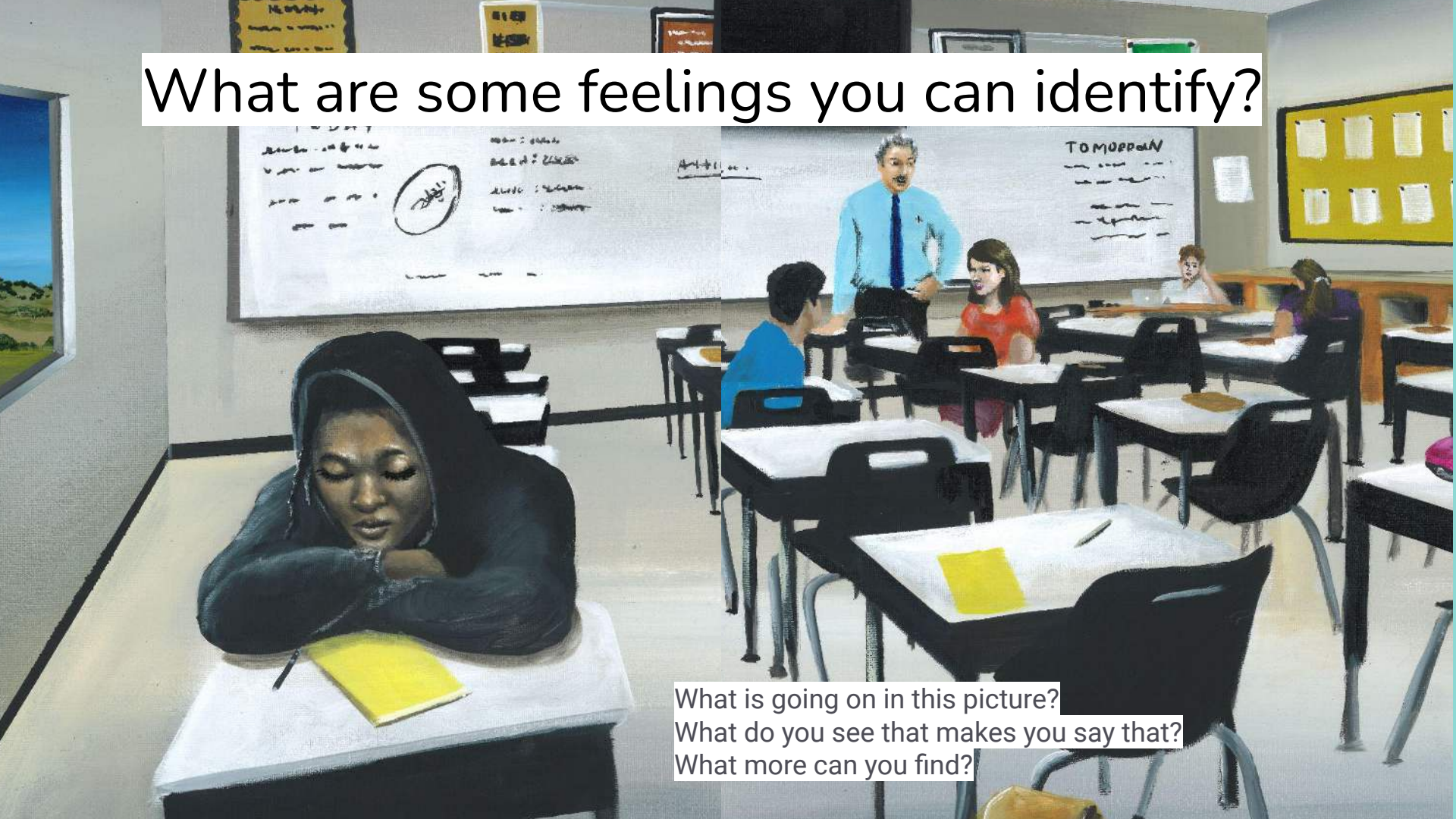
the trauma of family incarceration.

What are some feelings you can identify?



What is going on in this picture?
What do you see that makes you say that?
What more can you find?

What are some feelings you can identify?



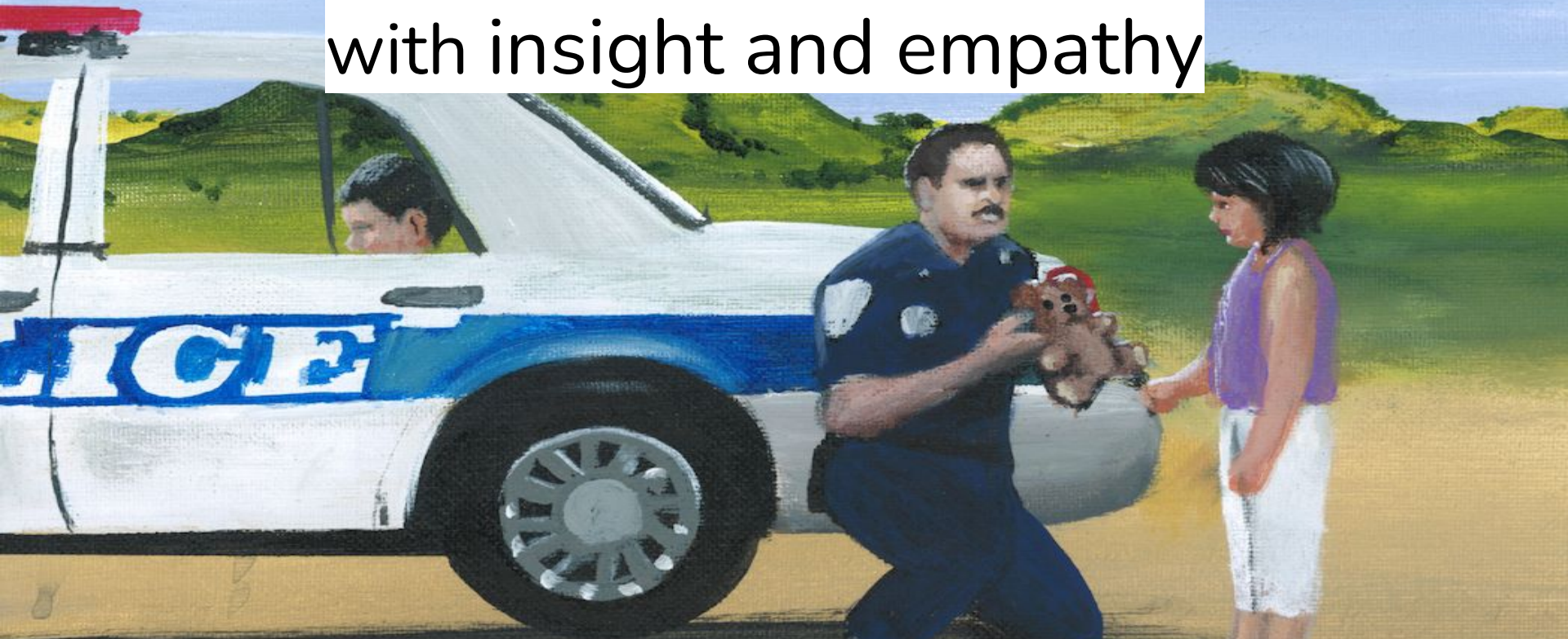
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What more can you find?


Facilitating conversations with students
with insight and empathy



Listening. Acknowledgement. Care. Action.

Be The One

- To be Present and Listen.
- To understand behaviors as an expression of emotions being felt and needs to be met-not to be punished.
- To acknowledge, name and validate feelings for children. They may not know the names of their feelings or how to talk about them.
- To use inclusive family language (instead of parents): family, loved one, dear one, grown up, caregiver, adult, or family member.
- To reassure the child that they are not alone.



Scenario: A child tells you about her father, who got arrested yesterday for yelling at her mom. She is confused and doesn't know where her dad is and when he is coming home. Her mom won't discuss it with her.

Tips to discuss

Listen to the concerns and ask questions

Reassure the child they are safe and it is not their fault

Remind the child they are not alone and many other children feel this way

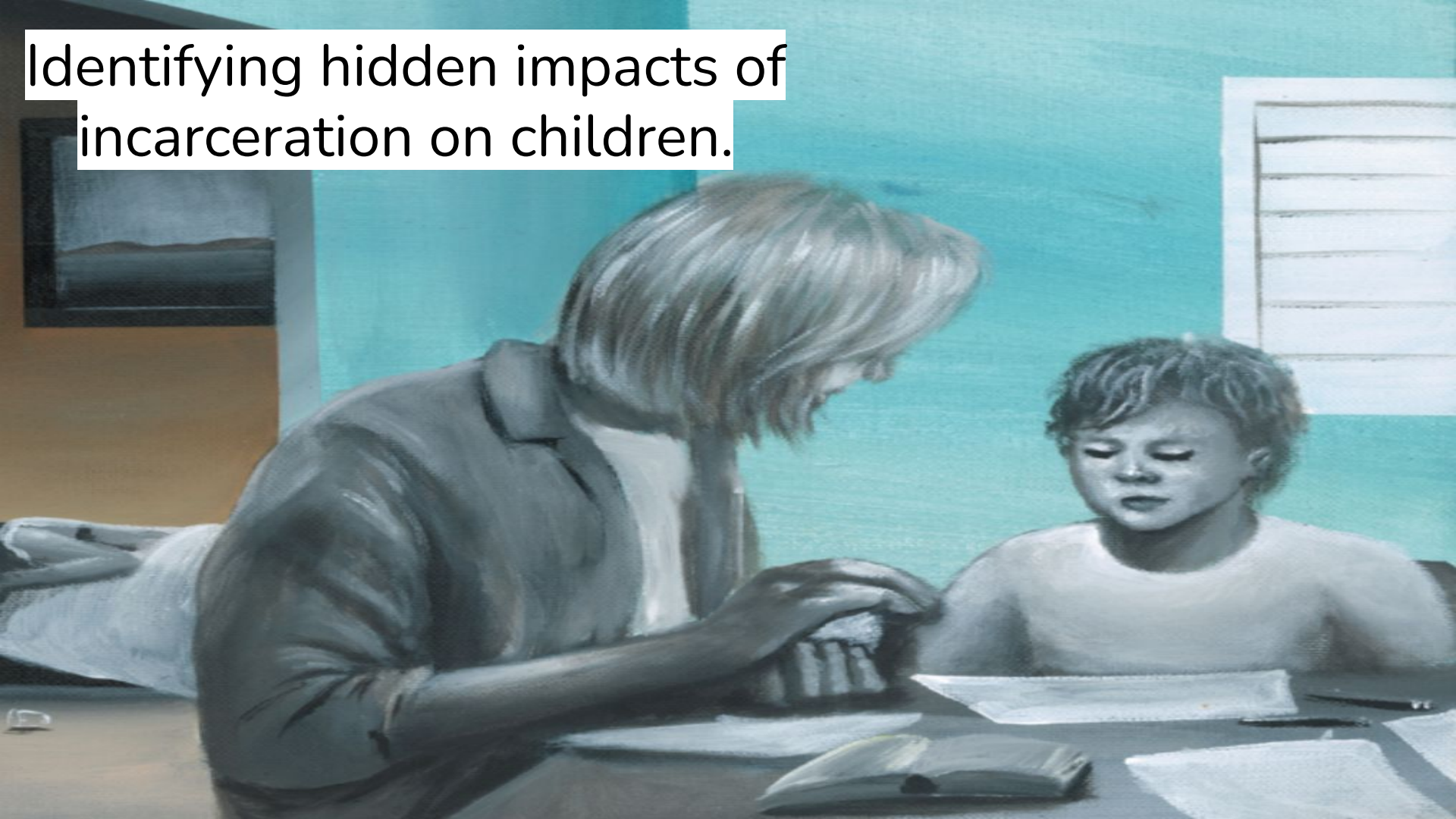
Conversation

“What emotions are you feeling?”

“That is normal to feel like that, do you have any questions?”

“How can I help you feel less confused?”

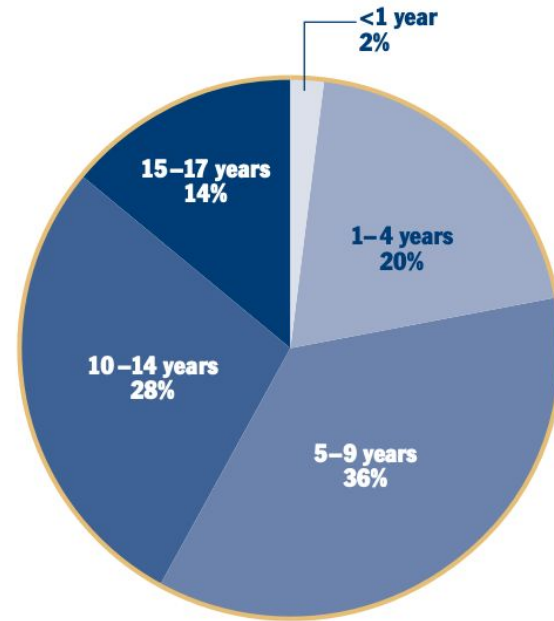
Identifying hidden impacts of incarceration on children.



- Uncertain and Shifting Living Arrangements
- Weakened Supportive Networks in Families and Community
- Mental Health: Depression, Anxiety
- Behavioral Needs: Antisocial behaviors, higher school suspension and expulsion which affects educational attainment
- Financial Strain Creates Uncertain and Shifting Living Arrangements
- Increased risk for criminal activity and incarceration
- Increased risk for addictions
- Increased risk for early sexual activity
- Increased risk for suicide
- Foster care/adoption in some cases when no family caregivers are present
- What else???

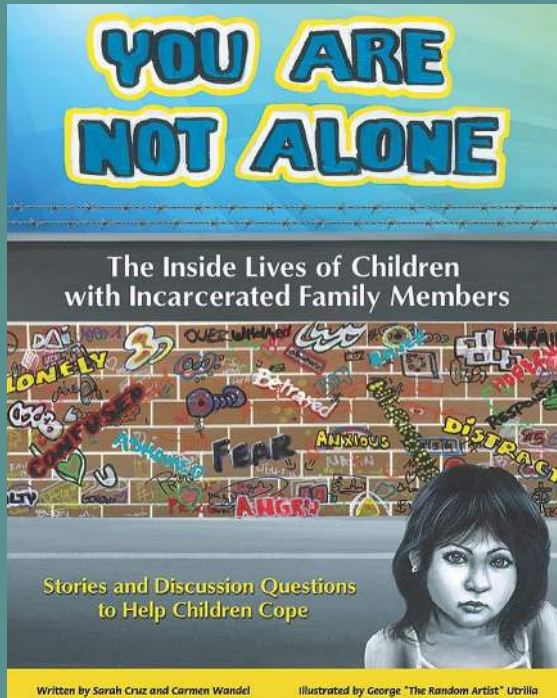
[The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry](#)

FIGURE 1. Age Distribution of Minor Children with Parents in State or Federal Prison, 1997



Source: Adapted from Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 182335, 2000).

Questions/Feedback



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Resources/References

[HIDDEN CONSEQUENCES: THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION ON DEPENDENT CHILDREN](#)

[Visual Thinking Strategies Method](#)

[Families Left Behind: The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry](#)

[Bill of Rights for Children with Incarcerated Parents](#)

Sarah Cruz

Sarah Cruz was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is currently working as an elementary school teacher in Santa Rosa where she lives with her husband and son. She is a fierce advocate for children and received her Master's Degree in Education from Sonoma State University. She loves to read and has always dreamed of publishing a relevant and thought-provoking children's book.



Carmen Wandel

Carmen Wandel is a published author, elementary school counselor, and educational consultant. She is also a counselor and adjunct faculty at Sonoma State University. She has volunteered and worked in public elementary schools for 25 years. Her passion is focused in early intervention with students and families, as well as providing support and guidance to educators who are working directly with students in the classroom. She is honored by the trust children and families place in her as a school counselor. She has two adult children and lives in Northern California.

