Conceptualizing Juvenile Justice Reform:
Integrating Public Health, Social-Ecological, and Restorative Justice Models

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Racial and Ethnic Disparities

- RED pervades the JJ system and occurs at every decision-making point
  - Youth of color more disproportionately represented the deeper they move within the JJ system
- Reforms in CT have effectively reduced front end and deep end justice involvement, but rates of disproportionately for youth of color remain high
  - Youth of color make up 20% of CT's population, but 80% of JJ system
- Disproportionate rates of justice system contact and involvement set youth of color up for poorer outcomes

RED Workgroup

- Established to help further the Strategic Plan goal of reducing racial and ethnic disparities within CT's JJ system

- Tasked with collecting, reviewing, and reporting RED data at each point of contact in the JJ system and developing recommendations to effectively address inequities within the JJ system

- Strives to ensure that RED data and strategies to address disparities are interpreted in partnership with communities of color
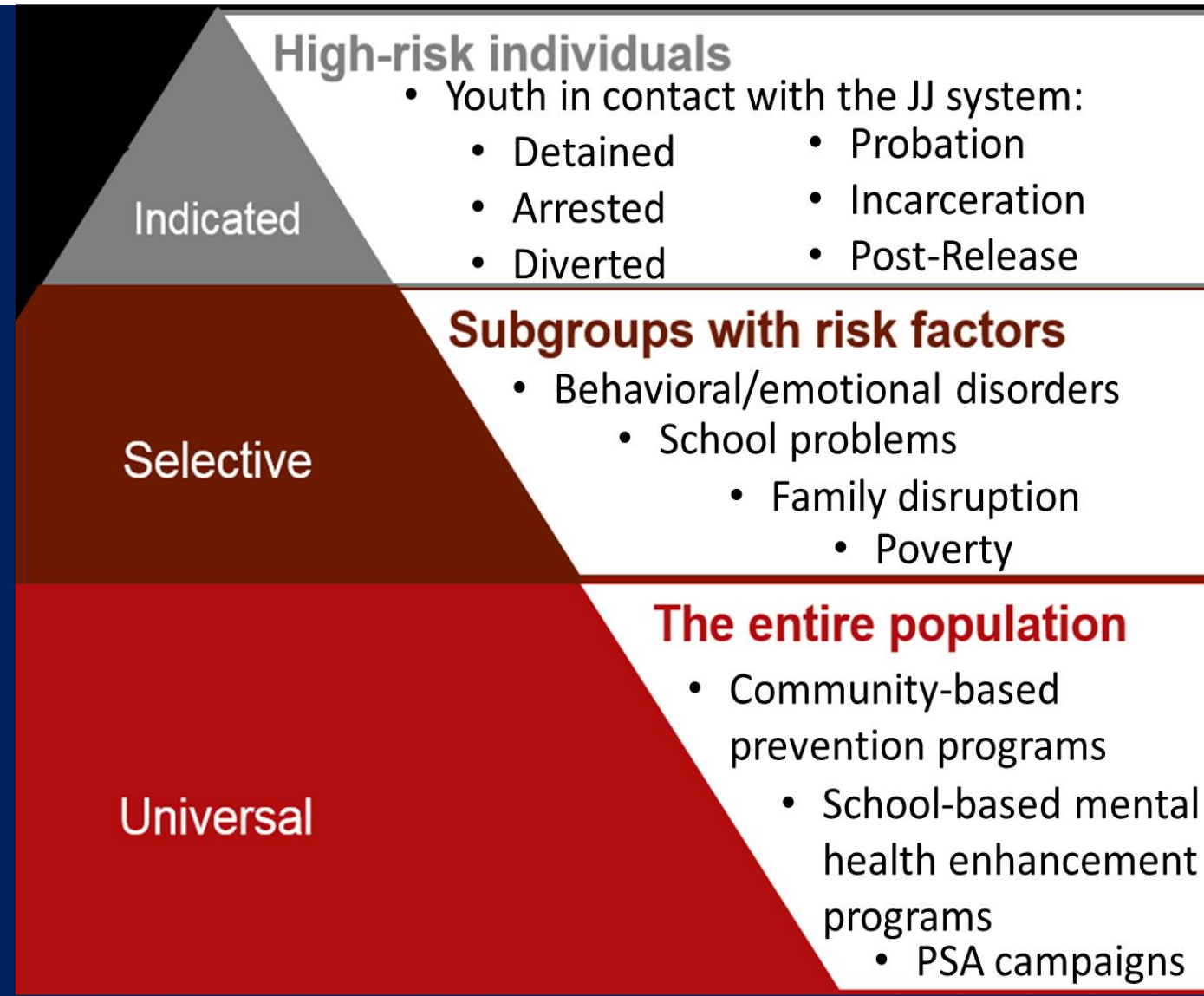
Current Challenges

- Schools continue to be a key entry point for youth in JJ system
    - Many children with untreated behavioral and emotional disorders end up in JJ system
- Youth offending may be function of unmet basic and social needs
- YSBs and JRBs function differently across counties and communities
- Little is known about pre-arrest decision making and what interventions/services youth receive

Models of Intervention – Public Health

- Conceptualizes youth entry into JJ system as reflection of risks, failure of prevention, and lack of community-based alternatives

- Youth offending has implications for individual, community, and society health

- Goal of prevention is to reduce new occurrences of targeted problem (i.e., offending) to promote greater community health

  - Intervenes at three tiers of risk

High-risk individuals
- Youth in contact with the JJ system:
  - Detained
  - Arrested
  - Diverted
  - Probation
  - Incarceration
  - Post-Release

Indicated

Subgroups with risk factors
- Behavioral/emotional disorders
  - School problems
    - Family disruption
      - Poverty

Selective

The entire population
- Community-based prevention programs
  - School-based mental health enhancement programs
    - PSA campaigns

Universal

Models of Intervention – Socioecological

- Socioecological Model—views youth offending through lens of relationships and systems within which offending takes place. Offending reflects disorder/disruption in systems and/or relationships
  - Individual, Interpersonal, Organizational, Community, and Public Policy Systems
- Interventions focus on positive development of youth, building relationships and strengthening youths' competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring
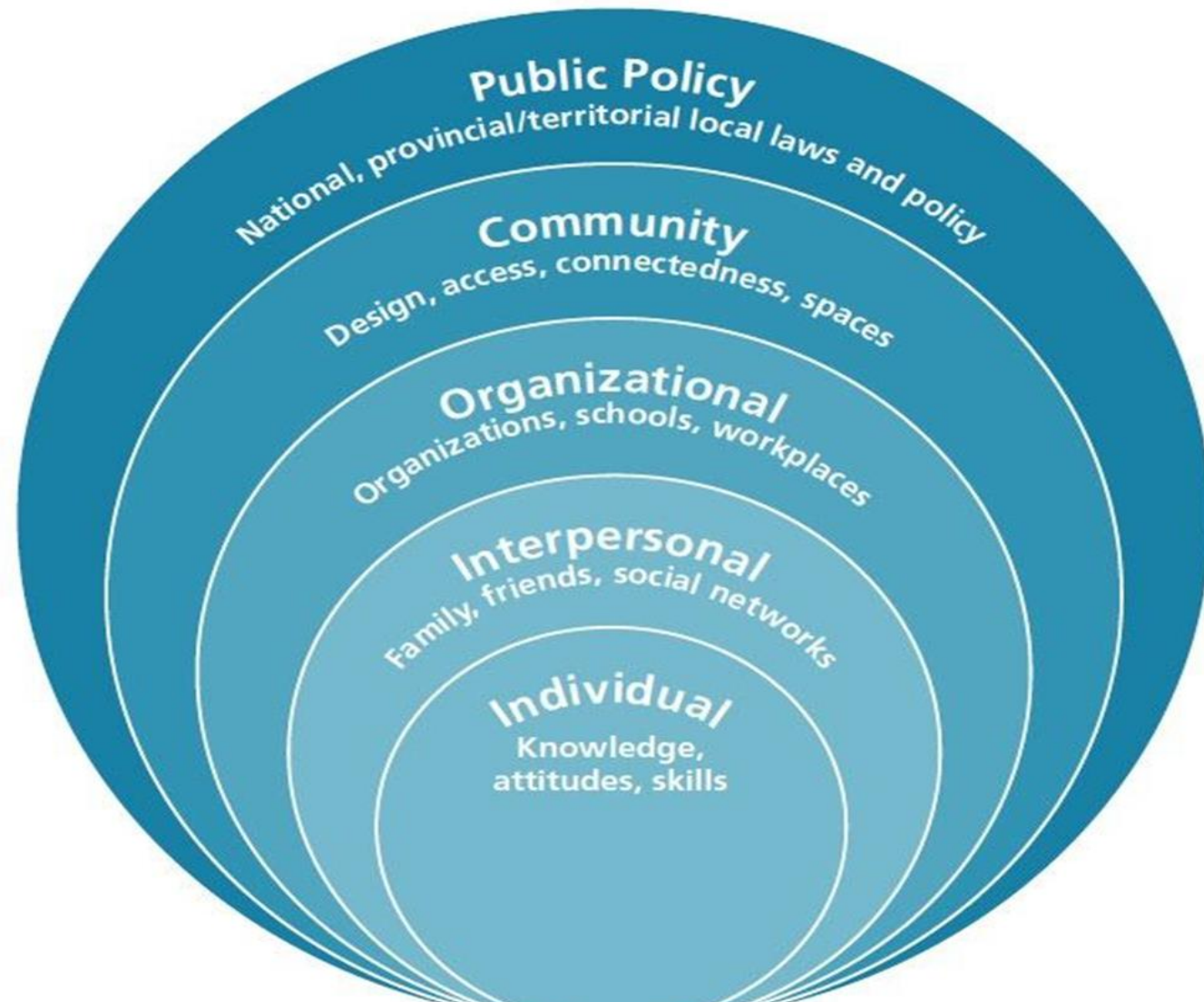
Models of Intervention – Restorative Justice

- Restorative Justice Model—youth offending indicates a break in relationship between youth and community.
  - Brings together victims, offenders, and community stakeholders to discuss how an offense has affected all parties and collaboratively develop modes of redress
- Interventions are community-based approaches focusing on accountability, public safety, and community healing

Types and Degrees of Restorative Justice Practice

victim reparation

communities of care reconciliation

victim support circles

victim services

crime compensation

offender family services

family-centered social work

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

peace circles

family group conferencing

victim restitution

community conferencing

victimless conferences

victim-offender mediation

positive discipline

therapeutic communities

related community service

reparative boards

youth aid panels

victim sensitivity training

offender responsibility

fully restorative

mostly restorative

partly restorative

Goal

- To discuss how to **integrate** three theoretical models
  - Aim: to determine how the integration of these theoretical models can and do impact practices and can lead to a more comprehensive and effective approach to JJ reform in Connecticut

Why the Need for an Integrated Model?

- Understanding of the risks and realities of lives of justice-involved youth support the need for an integrated model
  - Young people come into the justice system with varied levels of public health risks that reflect disorder within their socioecological systems, which can be addressed through restorative justice practices
  - At each level of public health intervention (universal, selected, indicated) there are ecological impacts (individual, family, community, society) that play a role in determining the types of restorative justice approaches that should be used (victim reparation, community reconciliation, offender responsibility)
- Targeting youths' multifaceted needs may help to reduce RED

Integrated Model

Indicated
Society
Community
Family
Individual
Victim Reparation
Community Reconciliation
Offender Responsibility

Selective
Society
Community
Family
Individual
Victim Reparation
Community Reconciliation
Offender Responsibility

Universal
Society
Community
Family
Individual
Victim Reparation
Community Reconciliation
Offender Responsibility

Applied Example: Car Thefts in Connecticut

Universal Level

Universal

Society
Community
Family
Individual

Victim Reparation
Community Reconciliation
Offender Responsibility
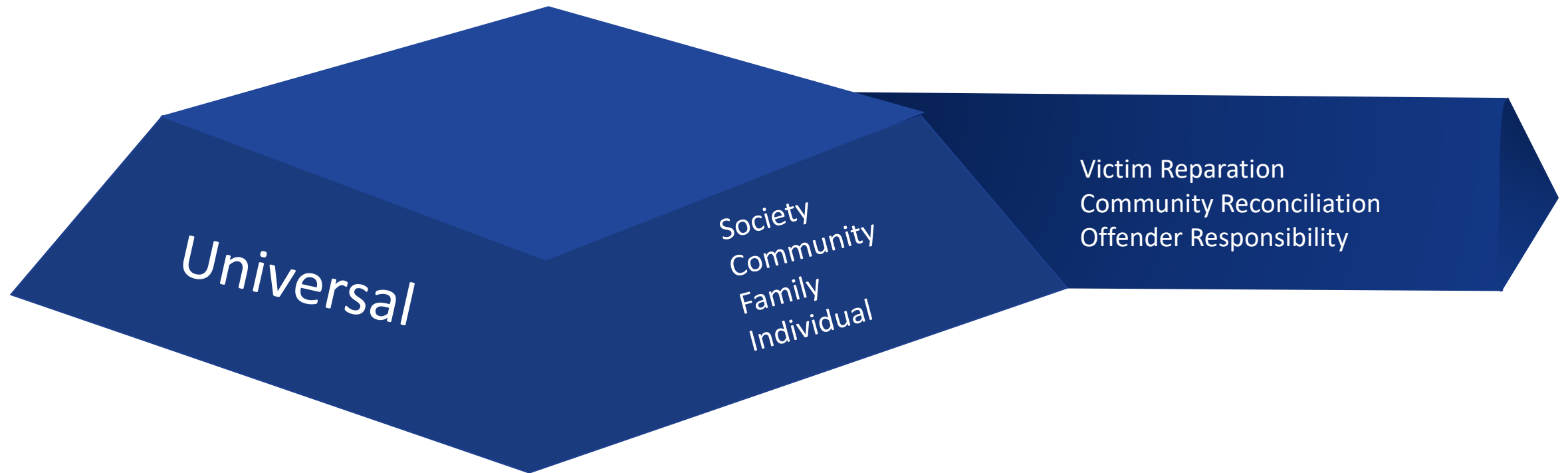
Universal Socio-Ecological Restorative Justice

- Prevention efforts designed to target all individuals, regardless of risk factors, through the use of restorative justice practices with a lens toward the social contexts in which one lives
  - Prioritizes increasing one's sense of belonging in their community
  - Builds relationships by promoting trust and stability in one's environment
  - Fosters investment in the well-being of one's community, neighbors, and resources

Integrated Approach to JJ Intervention

Universal

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Society –

PSAs re: methods to reduce theft

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Community –

individual responsibility to reduce opportunities

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Interpersonal – national conversations with kids; parents asking Q's and listening to kids' views

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Individual –

"we are our community's keeper"
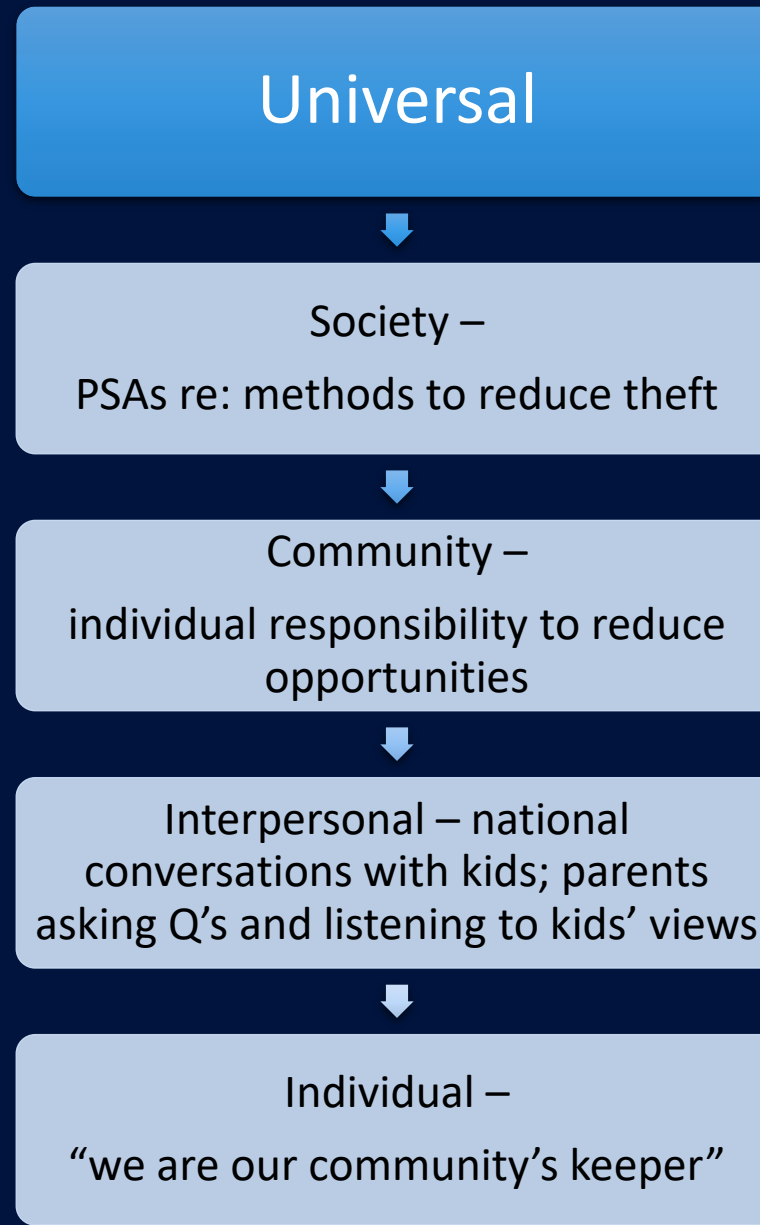
Selective Level

Selective

Society
Community
Family
Individual

Victim Reparation
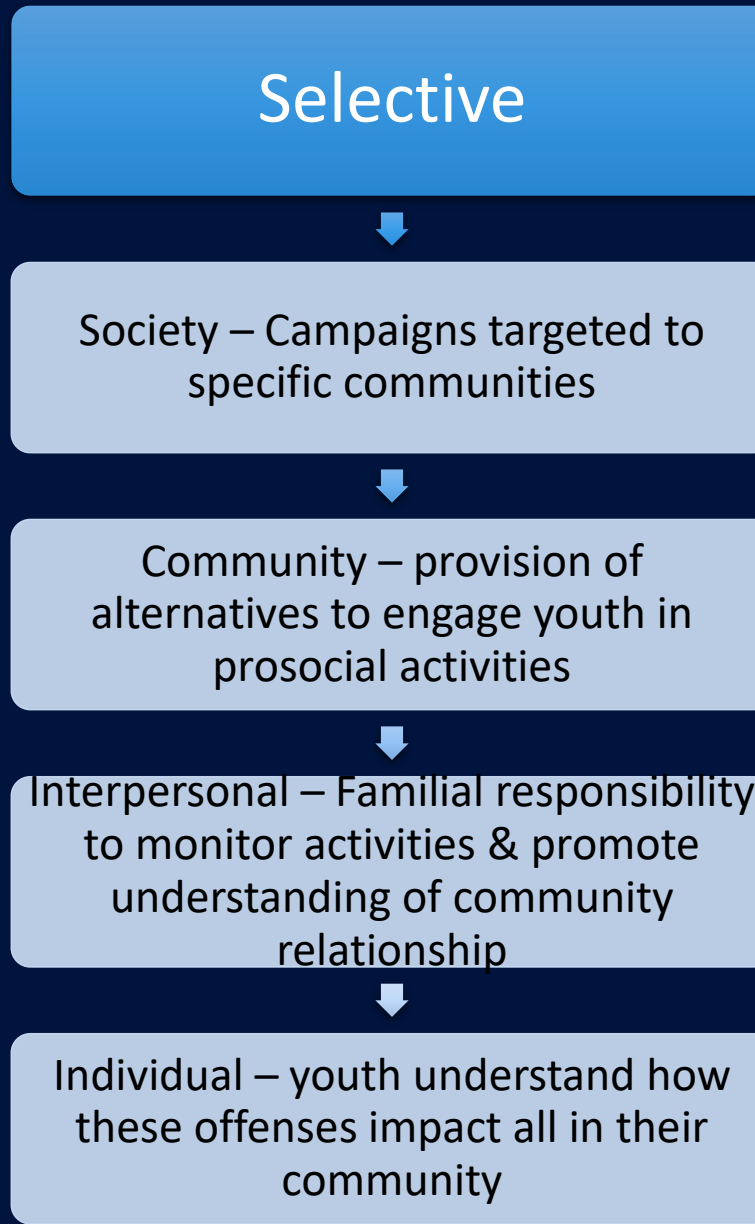Community Reconciliation
Offender Responsibility

Selective Socio-Ecological Restorative Justice

- Restorative justice prevention/intervention strategies targeted toward youth identified as at risk
  - Provides resources and support within community to promote prosocial activities & relationships
  - Helps bolster family unit through provision of environment-specific and targeted services
  - Equips systems/providers within community with training and capacity to best support at-risk youth
  - Tasks community with providing youth with skills to promote positive youth development

Integrated Approach to JJ Intervention

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Selective              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Society – Campaigns targeted to   │
│        specific communities         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Community – provision of         │
│  alternatives to engage youth in    │
│         prosocial activities        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Interpersonal – Familial responsibility │
│   to monitor activities & promote   │
│   understanding of community        │
│            relationship             │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Individual – youth understand how  │
│  these offenses impact all in their │
│             community               │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Indicated Level

Indicated

Society
Community
Family
Individual

Victim Reparation
Community Reconciliation
Offender Responsibility

Indicated Socio-Ecological Restorative Justice

- Ecologically informed interventions targeted at individuals who have engaged in risky behaviors leading to justice system contact
  - Prioritizes helping youth establish or rebuild relationships with community through accountability and capacity building
  - Tasks community stakeholders to determine youths' needs and provide responsive services
  - Allows youth opportunities to make their needs known and learn how their actions impact their communities, families, neighbors, and themselves

Integrated Approach to JJ Intervention

Indicated

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Society – providing resources to offset youth's needs

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Community – JJ stakeholders asking what youth need

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Interpersonal – parents communicating impact to youth

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Individual – youth engage in RJ process with victims, family, and JJ stakeholders

Considerations…

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How do we *measure* whether these initiatives are effective?	• Implementation science?
How can the model be best applied?	• Are there potential challenges that may be experienced by specific systems?
How can we move toward more system integration and collaboration?	• Will agencies/departments need to engage in culture shifts?

Call to Action

- How can the JJPOC apply this model?
  - How can workgroups and sub-committees utilize this?
- How can you think of this as you propose recommendations?
- At what level of the model is your work situated?

Thank You!
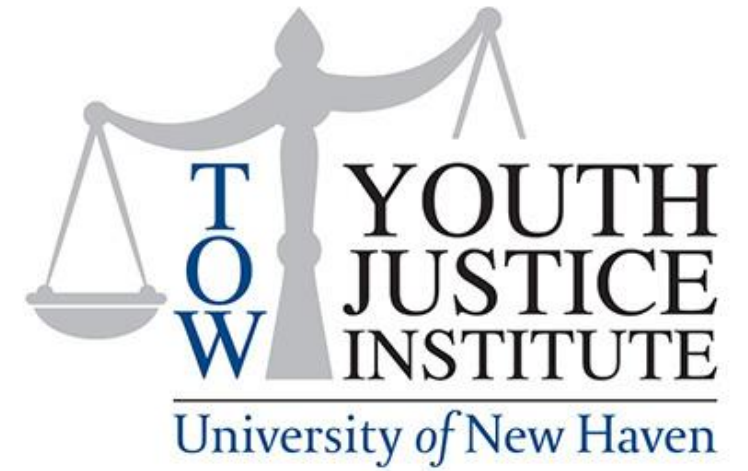
- Questions?
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