

A row of school lockers is shown in a black and white, slightly blurred photograph. A teal-colored rectangular overlay is positioned across the middle of the image, containing white text. The lockers have a textured surface and a small circular lock on the right side. The overall composition is clean and modern.

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

November 2019

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [3 / Introduction](#)
- [5 / Context: The State of School Discipline](#)
- [9 / Improving School Discipline: Key Concepts](#)
- [13 / What is Implicit Bias?](#)
- [17 / What is Cultural Competence?](#)
- [20 / What is Restorative Justice?](#)

*To navigate to these sections in slideshow mode, click the slide numbers or the subsection text.  
In edit mode, CTRL+Click*

# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

This presentation examines inequity in school discipline and strategies to address it. Major topics include:

- ❖ National trends in disproportionate school discipline
- ❖ Key concepts and definitions
- ❖ Individual/relational factors: Implicit Bias and Cultural Competency
- ❖ System-level reforms: Restorative Justice

**CONTEXT:  
THE STATE OF SCHOOL  
DISCIPLINE**

# NATIONAL TRENDS IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

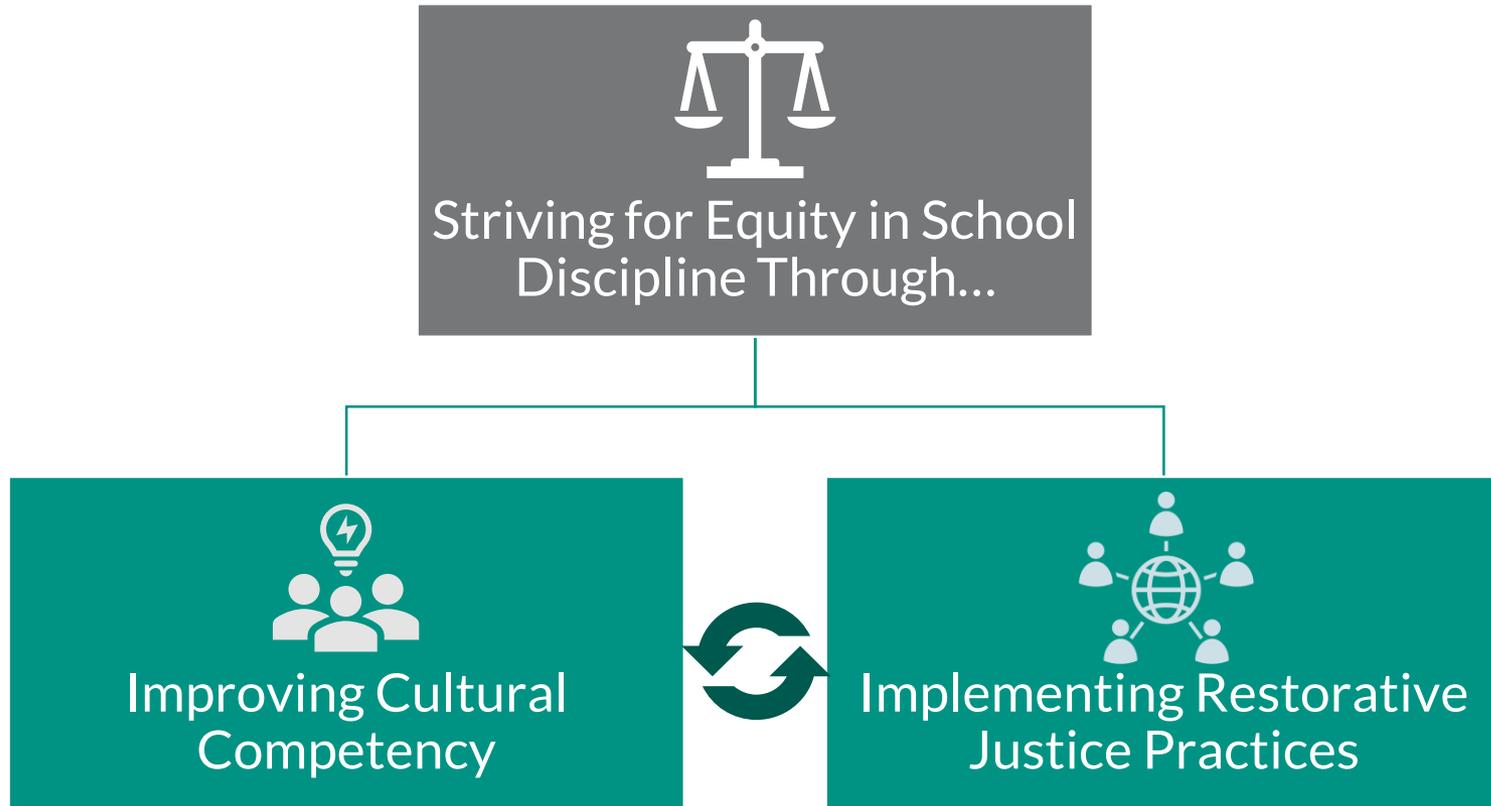
- For decades, students of color and students with disabilities have been more likely to experience disciplinary consequences at school than their peers (McIntosh et al, 2014).
- As emerging research reveals that out-of-school suspension can be harmful and counter-productive, schools have generally decreased suspension levels over the last five years. However, disparities by race and ethnicity remain unchanged (Harper et al, 2019).

## Exclusionary Discipline and School Safety

*A 10-year longitudinal study by the American Psychological Association concluded that exclusionary policies like suspension and expulsion **do not improve school safety** (Teasley, 2014).*

# POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

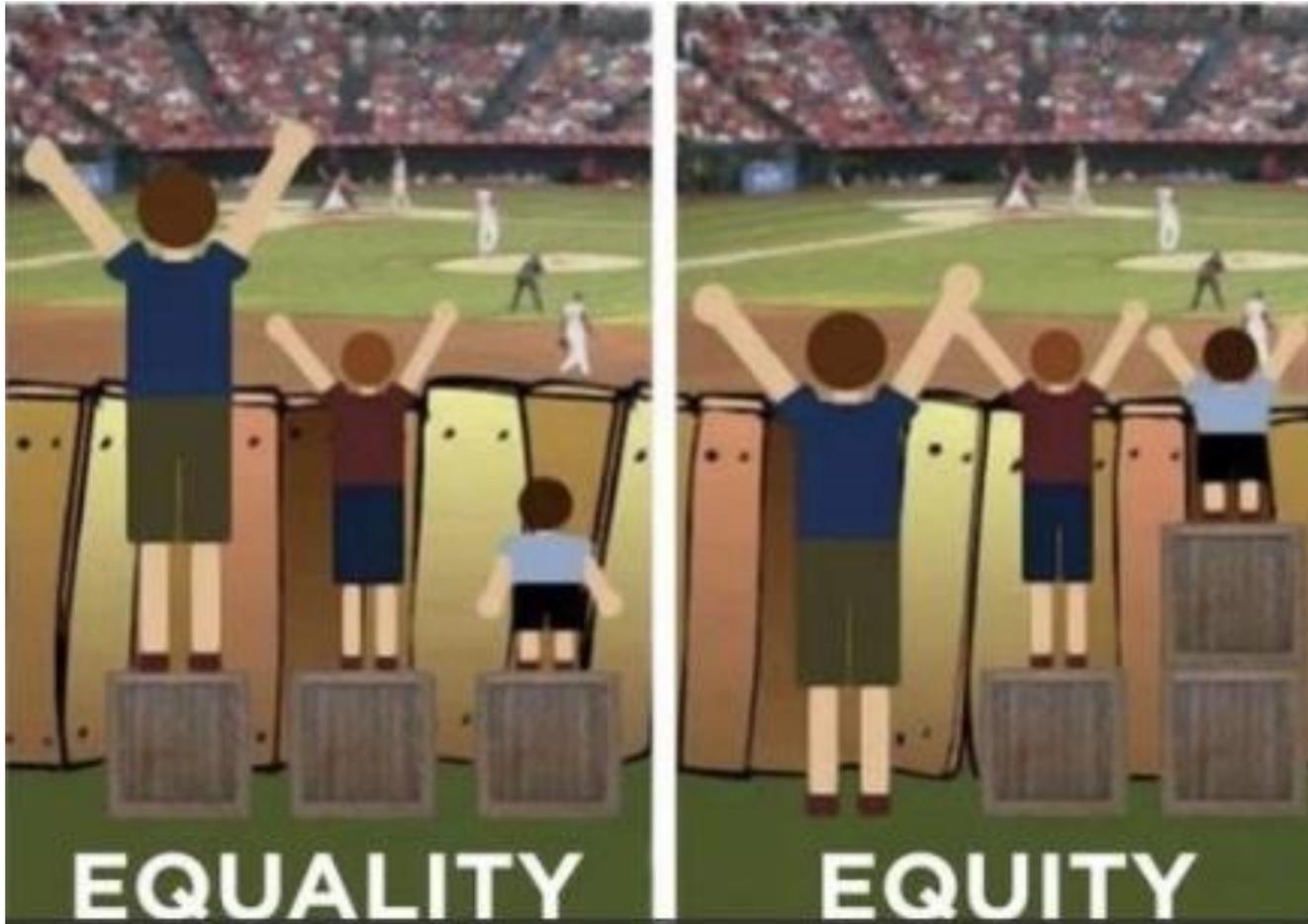
What are potential solutions to address inequity in school disciplinary practices and outcomes?



# IMPROVING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: KEY CONCEPTS

# KEY DEFINITIONS – EQUITY AND EQUALITY

The terms “equity” and “equality” are often used interchangeably in K-12 education, but these terms are actually distinct.



**Equality** means every student and school gets the same access and opportunity to reach set goals.

**Equity** recognizes that some students and schools need additional supports to help them reach the same benchmarks of success.

Language verbatim from: ASBA.

# KEY DEFINITIONS – EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Equity can be considered in several ways:



## Equity as a Principle

“In education, the term equity refers to the principle of fairness.”



## Equity as a Process

“Equity is the necessary path to achieve success for each student in our schools through the fair allocation and application of resources, based on need, to address gaps in access and outcomes.”



## Equity as a Destination/Goal

“Educational equity is achieved when all students receive the resources, opportunities, skills, and knowledge they need to succeed in our democratic society.”

Language verbatim from: Glossary of Education Reform; Arizona School Board Association; American Institutes for Research, respectively

# KEY DEFINITIONS – FACTORS IN EQUITY FOR SCHOOL DISCIPLINE



Individual/  
Relational  
Factors

## Implicit Bias

Ideas and stereotypes that exist in our unconscious and can affect our thoughts and actions

## Cultural Competency

An individual's awareness and understanding of cultural norms within themselves and others

## Zero Tolerance Discipline

School disciplinary policies that dictate punishments and quickly escalate consequences

## Restorative Justice/Practices

A concept drawn from the criminal justice system that focuses on acknowledging harm and repairing relationships



Systemic  
Practices

Both individual/relational factors and systemic practices play a role in **equity in educational settings**, including equity related to school discipline.

# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

# DEFINING IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit biases are “... attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner” (Staats, 2014).



## Implicit Bias...

- Affects everyone
- Affects real-world behavior
- Operates outside of our conscious awareness and may not align with our stated beliefs or values



## For teachers, Implicit Bias...

- Can play a role in classroom instruction and/or student relationships without the teacher’s conscious awareness

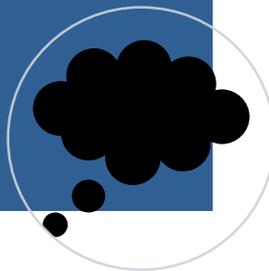
Sources: Staats, 2014; Flannery, 2015; Garcia, 2018

# IMPLICIT BIAS – LEARNING AND SELF-REFLECTION

In general, the goal of successful implicit bias training is to increase self-awareness, rather than to eliminate implicit biases.

- Doubt Objectivity
- Increase Motivation to be Fair
- Improved Conditions of Decision-Making
- Count (Use Data)

**Reducing the Effect of Bias on Decision-Making**



Source: Johnson et al, 2014 p. 47-48

- Counter-Stereotypic Training
- Exposure to Counter-Stereotypic Individuals
- Intergroup Contact
- Accountability
- Perspective-Taking
- Deliberate Processing

**Reducing Implicit Bias**



Source: Staats, 2014, p. 20-21

# IMPACT OF IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING

What can we gain as educators from examining our implicit biases?



Short-term interventions demonstrate immediate reductions in implicit bias



At least one example of a long-term intervention demonstrates long-term reductions in implicit biases



Implicit bias awareness is one piece of the puzzle

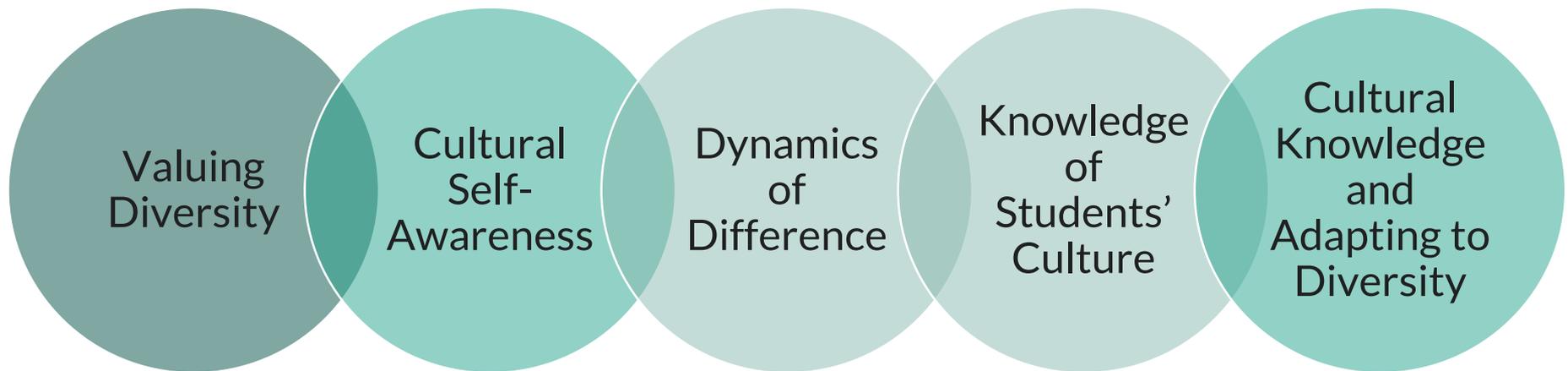
Sources: Devine et al, 2012; Forscher et al, 2018; Lai et al, 2016; Rudman et al, 2001; Whitford & Emerson, 2018.

# WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

# DEFINING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence encompasses skills, knowledge, and attitudes. For educators, cultural competency “is the ability to successfully teach students who come from a culture or cultures other than our own” (NEA).

Studies suggest that cultural competency for educators can be conceptualized across five basic skill areas:



# ASSESSING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Sample statements to consider when thinking about your own cultural competence:

I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity.

I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting.

I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based upon facts or upon stereotypes about a group.

I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences.

I advocate for the marginalized and voiceless in my school/district among my colleagues, the students, and their communities.

# WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

# DEFINING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Concept developed in the criminal justice system
- Applied to educational settings as “restorative justice” or “restorative practices”
- Alternative to “Zero Tolerance” policies and other punitive disciplinary measures

In K-12 education, restorative practices...



Address and discuss the needs of the school community



Build healthy relationships between educators and students



Reduce, prevent, and improve harmful behavior



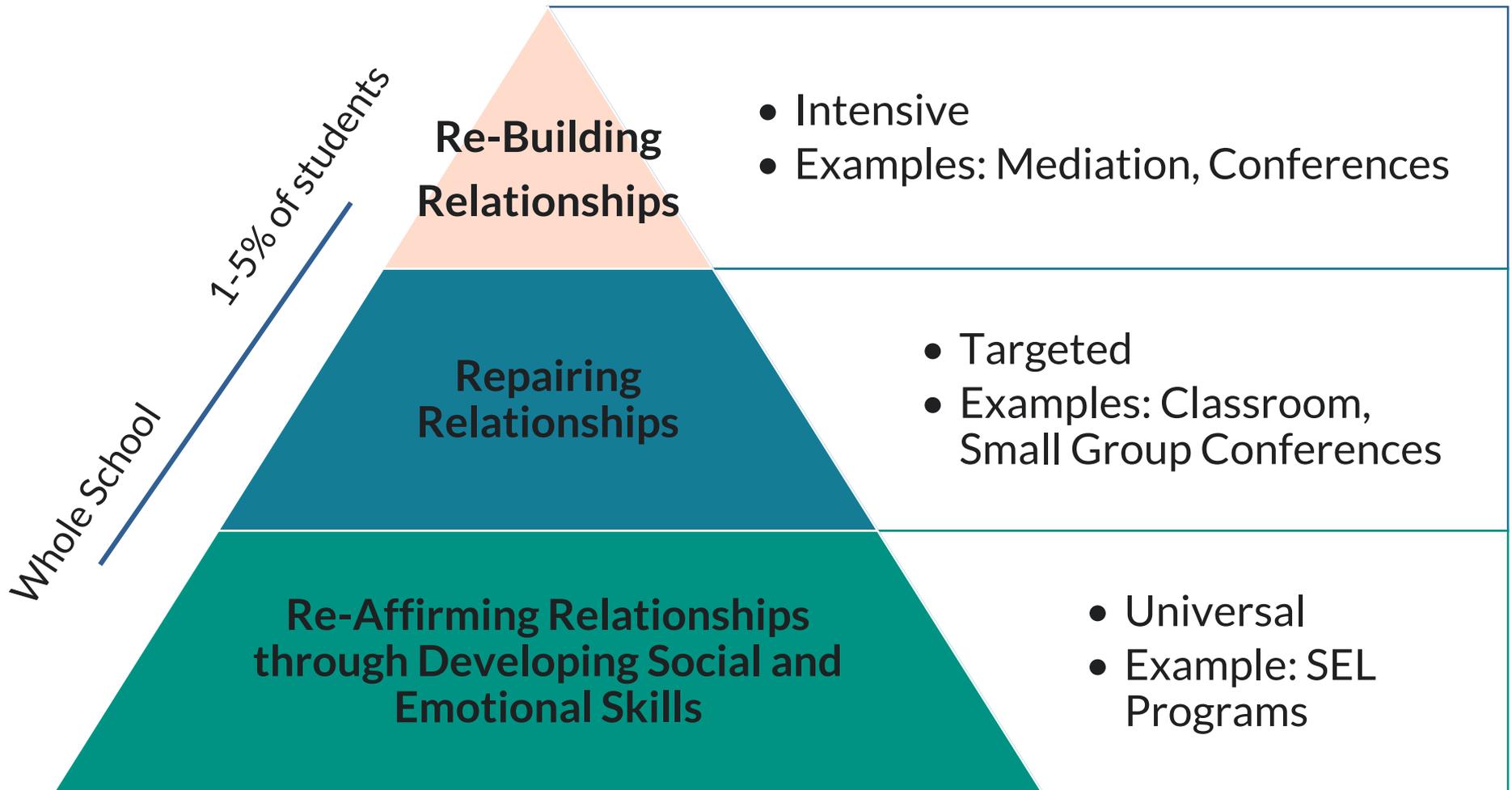
Repair harm and restore positive relationships



Resolve conflict, hold individuals and groups accountable

Language verbatim from: Advancement Project, 2014, p. 2..

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE – TIERS OF SUPPORT



Adapted from: Morrison, Blood, Thorsborne, 2005, p. 350.

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE – WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Some common practices associated with Restorative Justice include...

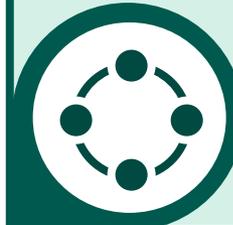
## Relational Practices and Routines

- ✓ School-wide community-building
- ✓ Teach students how to relate to one another based on school values



## Circles

- ✓ Circles allow students and staff to speak and listen to one another in a safe setting
- ✓ Can be proactive (check-in) or reactive (problem-solve)



## Conferences

- ✓ Informal – allow educators to engage with a student or group to address a concern
- ✓ Restorative – allow for accountability and give voice to victims of harm



## Peer Involvement

- ✓ Involves students in the process for disciplinary consequences
- ✓ Peer mediation for disputes between two students, peer juries for more serious offenses



Sources: International Institute for Restorative Practices; Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2015; Kilde & Alfred, 2011; Lane, 2005.

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE – GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Compared to Zero Tolerance policies, which may alienate students who experience punitive consequences, Restorative Justice policies hold students accountable for causing harm as members of the school community.

Zero Tolerance policies are associated with...

- Academic difficulties due to missed school time
- Increased alienation of students, leading to acting out, truancy, and/or dropping out of school
- Psychological trauma and mental health consequences

Adapted from: Advancement Project, 2014, p. 10..

Restorative Justice policies are associated with...

- Reduced suspension and expulsion
- Reduced number and intensity of fights/altercations
- Fewer classroom disruptions
- Improved sense of safety
- Improved communication

Adapted from: Kidde & Alfred, 2011, p. 17.

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is a multi-year, gradual process:

## Creating an Implementation Plan

- Establish shared vision
- Set targets for gradual implementation

## Building Consensus

- Communicating value of Restorative Justice
- Listening, responding, collaborating

## Ensuring Sustainability

- Resource for years to come
- Evaluate, reflect, and improve



## Professional Development

- Seek out strong training programs that cover Restorative Justice and concepts like Implicit Bias and Cultural Competence
- Ensure training is ongoing (not one-and-done)

# QUESTIONS



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Thank you.

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