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# SURVIVAL UNTIL REVOLUTION

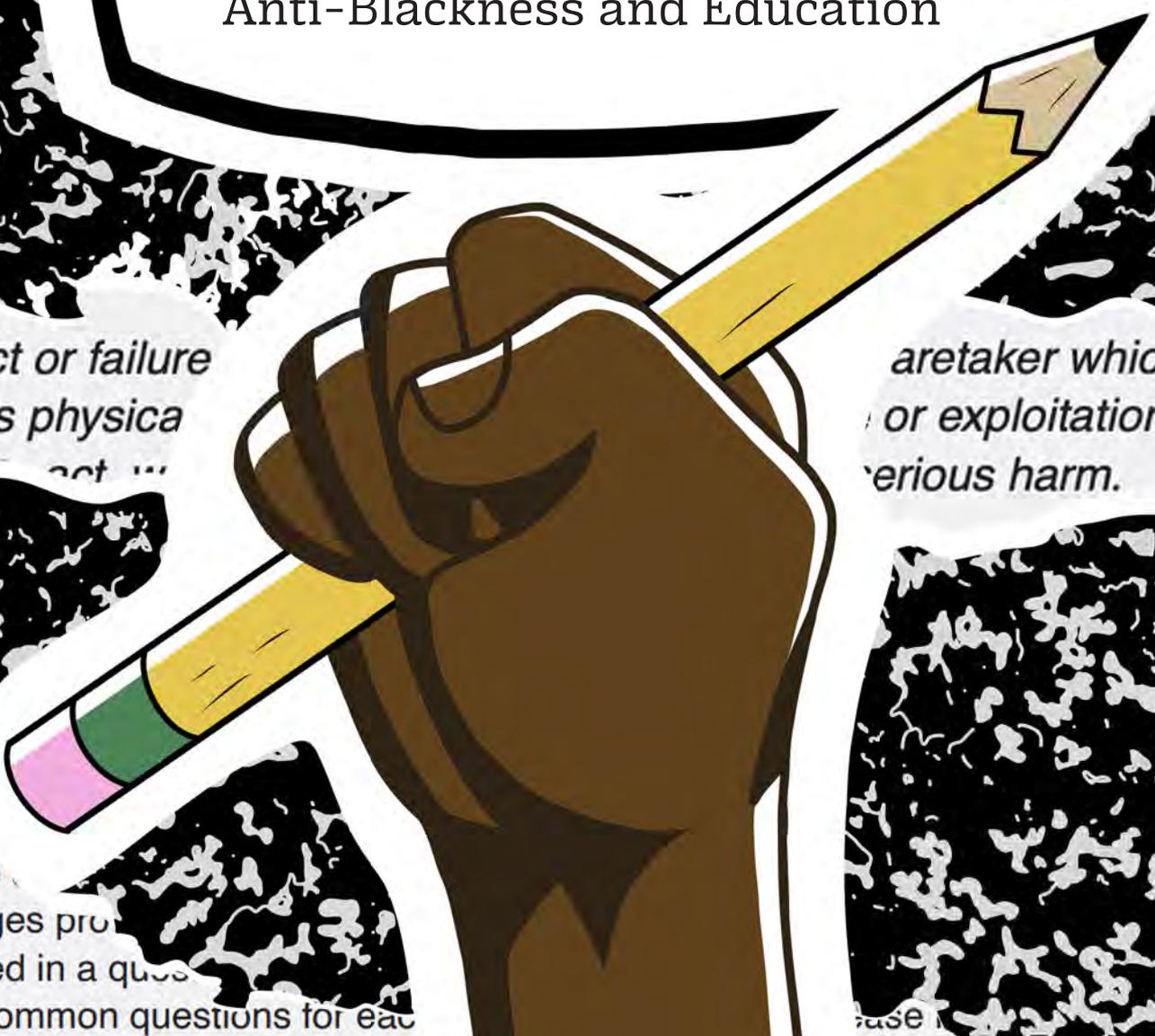
Mandatory Reporting,  
Anti-Blackness and Education

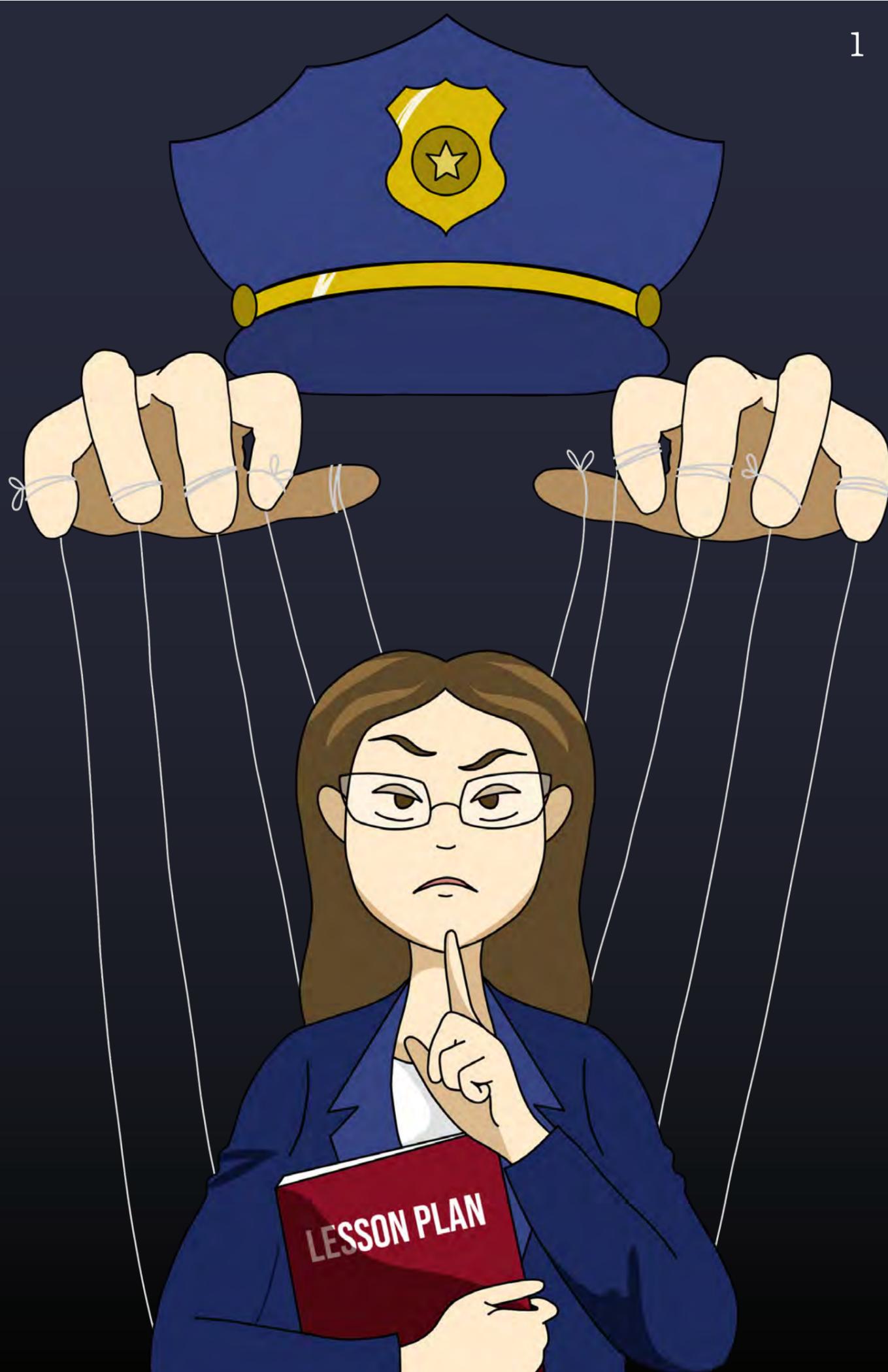
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# INTRODUCTION

Young organizers, BIPOC activists, and allies have ushered in a new era of victories as the rallying cry *Counselors not Cops!*<sup>1</sup> has moved from the streets to decision-making tables at school boards across the US. These successful divestment campaigns have forced policy makers to reconsider their reliance on police officers in schools and build out infrastructure that supports real safety.<sup>2</sup> For example, in 2016, the youth organizing group Philadelphia Student Union won on five demands, of which two aimed to lower police presence in schools across the city and instead hire full-time school counselors and nurses.<sup>3</sup> But, there is still work to be done, **policing of young BIPOC bodies is still happening, and not just by cops. Systems of severe punishment and social control, like the child welfare system (better understood to be the family policing or**

regulation system) inherited carceral features of the police and have exacted their own forms of oppressions which both enhance the functionality of the police, while also serving the goals of racial capitalism. As abolitionists, we must tighten our analysis around the interconnected ways multiple systems contribute to the policing of children, and ensure that any demand to divest from cops, includes a demand to divest from the family regulation system. ✳

As family policing abolitionists, we enter this divestment conversation in order to share our knowledge and expand our political demands.<sup>4</sup> Policing is a culture, and it permeates many professions. For example, mandated reporting deputizes “helping” professions such as teachers, counselors and social workers, and ensures that they are integrated into the carceral state.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, in all 50 states, laws

mandate teachers, counselors and other school based personnel to report their “suspicions” of child abuse or neglect.<sup>6</sup> These “suspicions” are often more closely related to cultural stereotypes, biases, poverty and racism than actual violence or harm.<sup>7</sup> While “reporting” is touted as a positive intervention, the reality is that school based reports often result in family surveillance and forced family separation and rarely in prevention of abuse or neglect.

**In fact, in 2021, 3,987,000 reports were made across the U.S. and over 85% were unfounded.<sup>1</sup> Year after year, education personnel are one of the highest sources of reports.<sup>5</sup>**

This legal requirement to report “suspicious” caretaking has reinforced the police culture of surveillance, compliance and control in schools, when really we should be reinforcing the connections between communities and families. We must divest from police and invest in what really makes our communities safer, and we must turn an equally critical eye to the allegedly “helping” and “caring” professions that are infected by the family policing system’s requirement of mandated reporting. It is critical that everyone recognize that racialized and heterogendered policing in schools is not always done by a person in a uniform with a badge – sometimes the counselors are the cops.<sup>89</sup>

These connections are not new and as authors we make no claim to have “discovered” this connection. To the contrary, we have learned from our own lives,

ancestors in political struggle and the demands of our comrades. Take for example, in 2020, Joyce McMillan, the director of JMACforFamilies, alongside Julia Khadijah Abudrahman of We Be Imagining, and Abolish NYCACS, organized a campaign that proclaimed, “Some cops are called caseworkers”.<sup>5</sup> This rally challenged some of the messaging during the 2020 uprisings that urged replacing cops with counselors, caseworkers and other supposedly “non-carceral” professions.

These activists, together, brilliantly articulated the shared history, intention, and implications



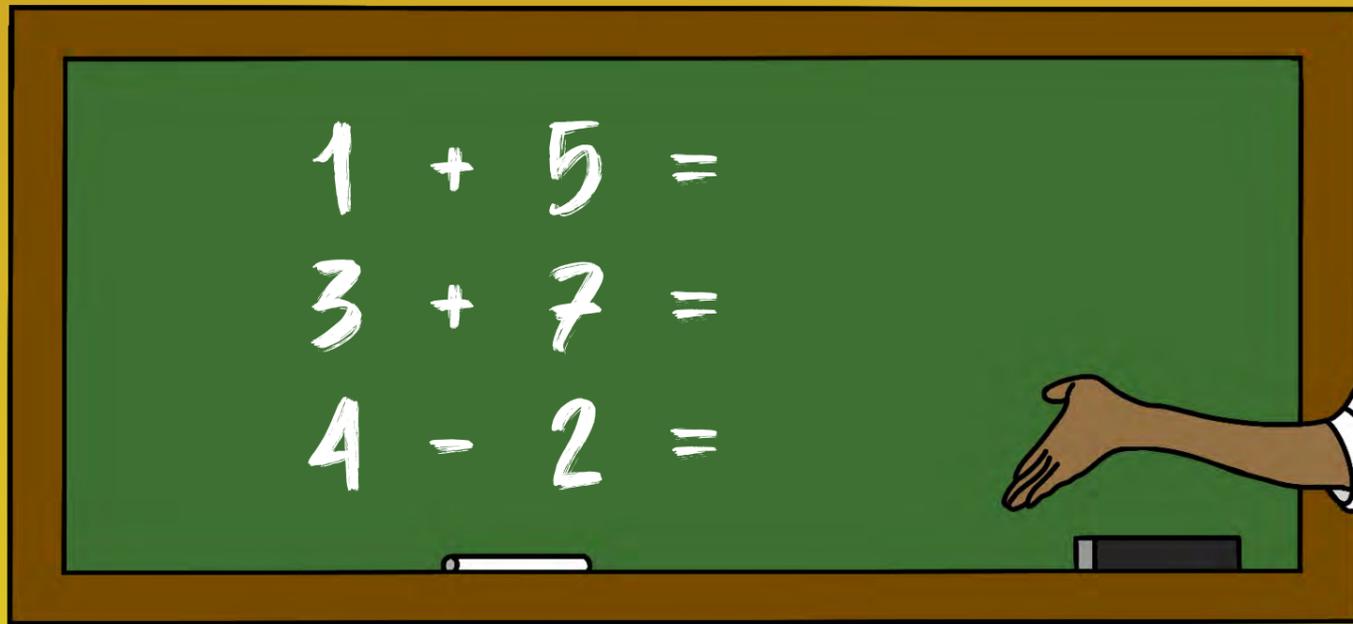
between the carceral and family policing systems and worked to bridge movements that are both abolishing the police and all policing.<sup>10</sup> This type of advocacy exists everywhere. In fact, impacted individuals, families, communities, and organizations have spurred grassroots movements across the country aimed at ending all forms of policing, and we hope that this conversation will contribute to this effort, not supplant it.<sup>112</sup>

**We, Erica Meiners, Charity Hope Tolliver, Shawn Koyano, Shanno Perez-Darby, Jasmine Wali, Van Jordan, Ayla Gelsinger, Erin Miles Cloud, and Alia Russel want the ruthless attacks on families and Black bodies to end.** We gathered on March 24th, 2023 before Beyond the Bars 2023 to meet each other, share a meal, and

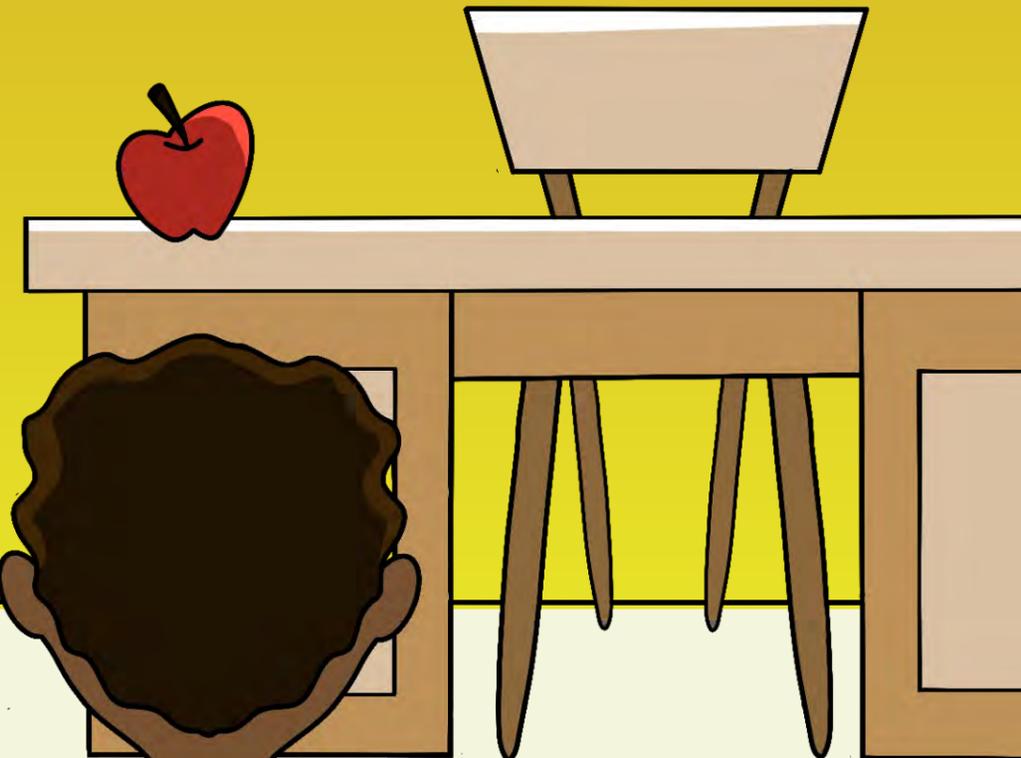


build community around the need to bridge our anti-policing movement analysis. Our collective wisdom spans a hundred years, with some activists budding in the last few years and others with movement activism spanning decades. We could discuss many things, because there is so much expertise shared between us. We choose to have a conversation about the ways mandated reporting and anti-policing efforts could converge, and the radical possibility of ending school based policing in all forms.

We choose this conversation because we know that mandated reporting and school “safety” officers do more to control and punish Black and Brown communities than support them.<sup>13</sup> That both cops and mandated reporters contribute to the forced separation



**“We choose to have a conversation about the ways mandated reporting and anti-policing efforts could converge, and the radical possibility of ending school based policing in all forms.”**



of individuals from their communities causing significant disruptions to family, daily life, and school.<sup>14</sup>

That both mandated reporters and school cops, patrol young people's bodies and space, normalizing cultures of compliance over accountability, and both feed into systems that funnel marginalized children into the school-to-foster system-to-prison pipelines.<sup>15</sup> As

Dorothy Roberts articulated, "Abolishing policing must mean abolishing family regulation."<sup>16</sup> We believe that

schools should be spaces for growth and nurturing, but policing—in all its forms—has turned them into spaces that inflict surveillance and punishment on young people and their families. We must invest in support, not surveillance.

We gather on this day, during a pandemic, after a period of heightened organizing and we are a bit weary. We are also hopeful, and remain clear. We must build a

"WE MUST BUILD A  
WORLD WHERE PEOPLE  
CAN THRIVE, ALL  
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AND SOLUTIONS ARE  
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NOT PUNISHMENT."

# MEET THE ACTIVISTS



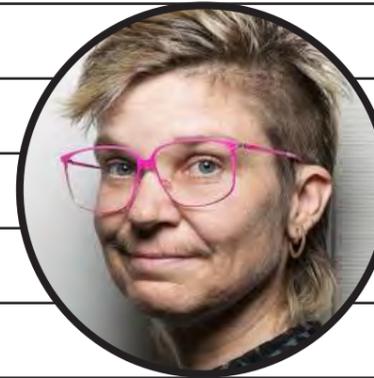
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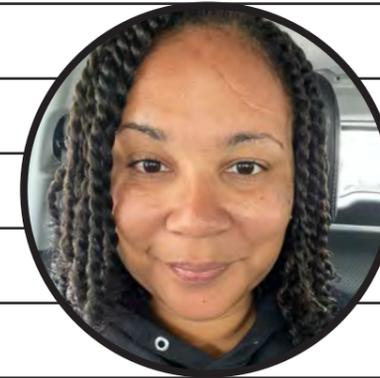
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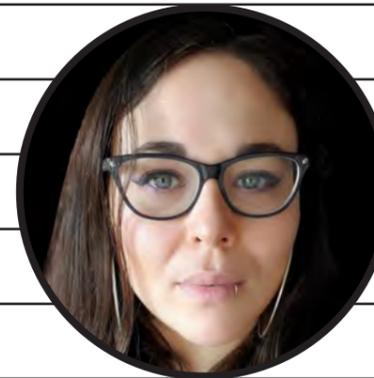
ERICA



ERIN



JASMINE



SHANNON



SHAWN



VAN

FEATURING ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY ALEXIS  
(@PIZZAGIRLLEX)



March 24, 2023

Columbia School of Social Work

3pm EST

**ERIN**

Hi, my name is Erin Miles Cloud<sup>17</sup>, and I use she/her pronouns. I want to welcome everyone to this conversation around abolishing policing. We are focusing today, on schools as a site of police violence. We want to explore a few questions we have been pondering for years.

**How do we end all forms of policing— this includes cops and mandated reporters?**

**How do we ensure that our movements to divest from police in schools are also talking to our movements to end all forms of surveillance?**

We center these conversations around these questions.

To start in this conversation I was just hoping to go around and have people introduce themselves including why they're here, and what is their connection to the fight to end mandatory reporting. I'm gonna start with you, Jasmine.

**JASMINE**

My name is Jasmine Wali.<sup>18</sup> I use she/her pronouns. I am relatively newer to the broader social movement to abolish mandated reporting. I've been working at a nonprofit called [JMACforFamilies](#) for over 2 years. Prior to that I had worked in agencies and system oriented organizations and was a mandated reporter.

As a mandated reporter, I went through the training multiple times, then I went to social work school. At

social work school, I got connected to JMACforFamilies after I asked one of my professors: if state and federal governments know that implicit bias exists in mandated reporting, why is the only solution put forth to retrain individuals?

My professor connected me to Joyce McMillan who now runs JMACforFamilies, and I started working to make changes around the family policing system. Right now I am helping to lead the New York State initiatives to bring legislative change to mandatory reporting in New York State. I helped to create and replace the training at Columbia School of Social Work from “mandated reporting” to “mandated supporting,” which reframes the way that students work with and listen to families. I also organize with Mandated Reporters Against Mandated Reporting, which provides informal case

scenario support to mandated reporters and organizes to change agency practices and policies. I will pass it on to Shannon to introduce herself.

### **SHANNON**

My name is Shannon Perez-Darby.<sup>19</sup> I use she/her pronouns. I am the co-founder of Accountable Communities Consortium and an Activist in Residence with [Just Beginnings Collaborative](#). My formal connection to this work began in my early 20s when as a survivor of domestic violence I started working at an anti-violence organization supporting queer and trans young people who were experiencing violence in all its forms including domestic and sexual violence, hate violence, violence from the cops and family violence.

What we did was talk to young people about what they

needed and what got in the way of what they needed.

We showed up for them as advocates. What we saw was that the reality of mandated reporting stood in the way of what we knew young people needed.



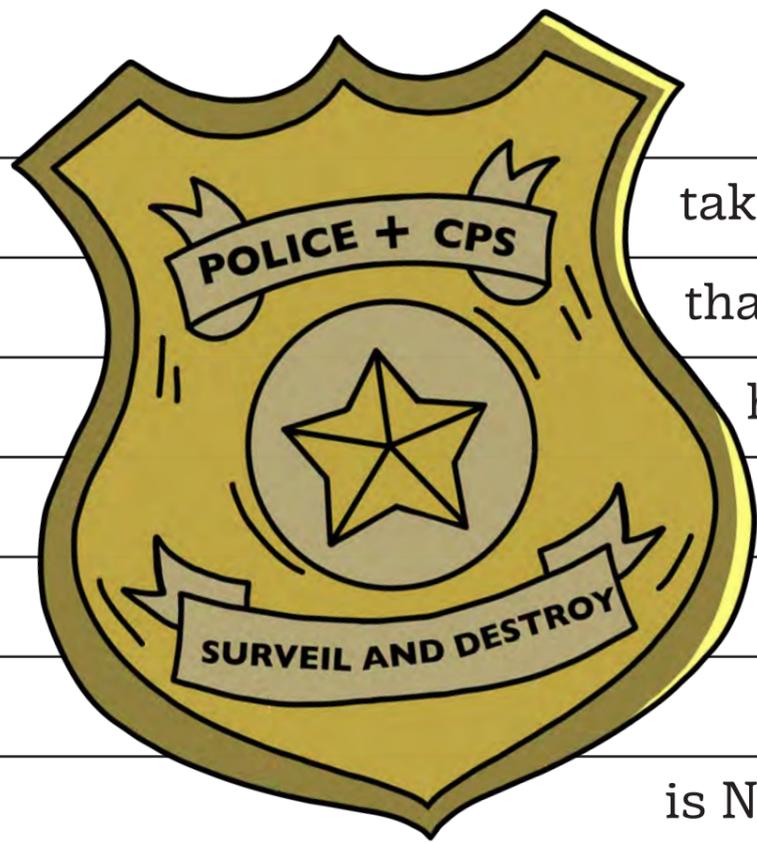
"WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE NEEDED WAS MORE CHOICE. WHAT THEY NEEDED WERE MORE RESOURCES. EVERY TIME WE WERE IN A PLACE WHERE WE HAD TO MAKE A MANDATORY REPORT IT MADE THE SITUATION WORSE. NEVER ONCE DID IT MAKE MORE RESOURCES FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE WERE SUPPORTING."

“THE REALITY WAS THAT MANDATORY REPORTING WAS STANDING IN THE WAY OF WHAT WE KNEW HOW TO DO BEST, WHICH WAS TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE IN THEIR SELF-DETERMINATION.”

What young people experiencing violence needed was more choice, what they needed were more resources.

Every time we were in a place where we had to make a mandatory report it made the situation worse. Never once did it make more resources from the young people we were supporting. The reality was that mandatory reporting was standing in the way of what we knew how to do best, which was to support young people experiencing violence in their self-determination. That was 15 years ago.

Eventually, in 2019 a group of anti-violence advocates came together and started the Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral Project. Many of us had already been doing the work for over 10 years and we weren't seeing any changes. We kept running into the same walls over and over again. We started asking ourselves what it would



take to change the conditions that lead to so much of the harm we've seen related to mandatory reporting.

The Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral Project does work helping people shine the light

on the crushing nature of mandatory reporting and helping people understand that not only is mandatory reporting not neutral but it's actively crushing our communities. Most mandated reporters think "when in doubt, report," it's not that big of a deal. That is wrong.

It is a big deal. **Not only is mandatory reporting not neutral but it's actively harmful.** I will pass it on to

Erica.

## ERICA

I am Erica Meiners<sup>20</sup>, she/her and they are great as pronouns. Also a Scorpio, that's very important. I came to think about mandated reporting more critically through our comrade Charity. Prior to working with Charity, my personal and political histories - maybe 20 plus years - are in both feminist - loosely anti-violence work and prison justice/anti-prison industrial complex organizing. When I moved to Chicago I also started to work with people in the K-12 educational contexts; removing police from schools, building up restorative justice practices. Also site specific campaigns to stop jail expansion, all kinds of what we would call abolitionist or proto abolitionist work.

I had paid attention to the wonderful scholarship and organizing of people like, Dorothy Roberts, who's

been doing this work for a long time. However, the organizing was really siloed. There were people doing anti-expansion or abolitionist campaigns, and then there were a few people doing radical feminist anti-violence work and this was often disconnected from organizing against punishment and policing. There were also people doing K-12 justice work, and a small crop of people that I began to meet through Charity, who were doing work around the foster care system; kind of dismantling it. I thought that one of my roles as somebody who has a university-based day job was to try to support some connecting.

I came to mandatory reporting because Illinois was trying to pass legislation to criminalize co-sleeping. That was maybe 10 years ago. At that moment it was interesting to see who showed up for the thinking, the campaign work, or the discussions around the

potential criminalization of co-sleeping and then also the next step which was the expansion of the mandated reporting laws in Illinois. Who showed up for that was largely Black women who were already doing organizing against the poverty industrial complex. Who did not show up, of course, was people who were doing the anti-expansion and prison justice work. It was such a deep reminder of the persistence of gendered and racial logics about what counts as abolition.

It's been a commitment of mine, and my thinking, my practice to always try to make those connections.

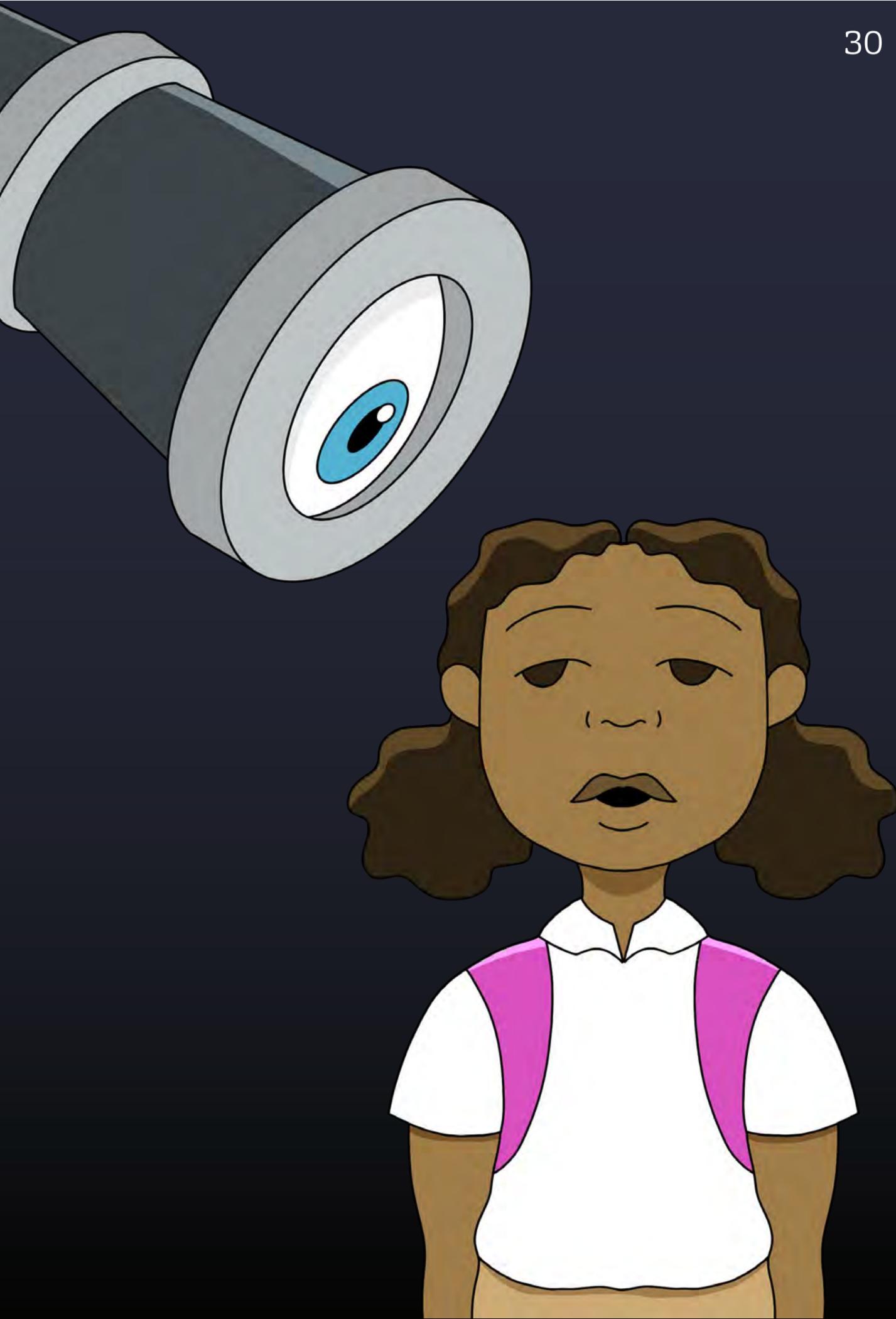
We know that organizing against the family policing system is abolition. We know that it's important and it's central but how is it that when it comes to campaigns and analysis somehow, here we are in 2023, and people have been doing the analysis and organizing for

decades but when you talk to people about abolition, it's often the least obvious, or the least remembered, or the least amplified. Not that it's a hierarchy or a competition, but it's really a problem structurally for our movements if family policing gets dropped out both in terms of how we think about and do abolitionist organizing. I will pass it on to Van.

## VAN

My name is Van.<sup>21</sup> I am the team Coordinator for Movement for Family Power. I came to this work, as an intern with MFP in 2020. I started my master's of social work program immediately after that internship. I realized that social work is not my jam, and that it was very triggering and traumatizing. As an adoptee, adopted from birth, it was just not a system that I could see myself in long term. I actually walked out of

"IT'S REALLY A PROBLEM STRUCTURALLY FOR OUR MOVEMENTS IF FAMILY POLICING GETS DROPPED OUT BOTH IN TERMS OF HOW WE THINK ABOUT AND DO ABOLITIONIST ORGANIZING."



my internship, and called a friend and was like, I'm quitting my job, can you pick me up?

I've seen how mandated reporting doesn't work and how being on zoom court is cacophonous and doesn't really make any sense. There's no support for families. That's how I come to this work. I'm here as a notetaker but also just someone who just wants to learn from people who have been doing work a long time. I'm not sure what's coming next but I would like to see mandated reporting end as a practice, because on the whole, we all know it doesn't really work, but it's still a standard practice. I don't believe that anyone deserves to be surveilled by the state. I will pass it to Alia.

**ALIA**

My name is Alia. I'm a Capricorn. I have 3 foster

siblings who were family, extended family, with extenuating circumstances. As a family that was heavily surveilled, the inhumanity that I watched my siblings go through just did nothing for me as a kid; watching them be treated as second class citizens, and watching people wanting a reason to have something to write down just to say that they cannot be here anymore. It's a very particular and sobering kind of feeling. I'm really looking forward to sitting in on this conversation.

It's really encouraging to watch people do the work because we are constantly sitting around asking ourselves, what is there to be done? You look around you and if you're not in the nonprofit space, you're not in those organizing spaces, if you're not in those advocacy spaces you get demoralized really fast.

There's a sense of dread and hopelessness, so it's really important to me to get the opportunity to meet people doing the work.

**ERIN**

It's an honor to have you here. Charity do you wanna introduce yourself?

**CHARITY**

Hi! My name is Charity, Charity Hope is my first name.<sup>22</sup>

I usually just go by Charity. I'm gonna start in this part of my life going by my full first name. I use they/them pronouns. I'm an organizer in Chicago. Oh, shit, the short version of the long version? But I also think it's the political version or the personal version that brings you here? There's always a little bit of both. As someone who grew up in a family of 15 siblings, poor

and Black on the south side of Chicago, there's all these ways in which my family has interacted with systems. We've been impacted both by the family policing system and mandated reporting; just hearing it constantly as a child, it was referenced and weaponized as a tool both by external people and also family members. There were times when my mother felt overstressed, and she would be you know, "That's it, I can't do it!" Growing up hearing family policing weaponized both as a tool of control and managing a people, a person. As a parent and someone who's also fostered folks both formally and informally, engaging with the system as a child, and as an adult, and then as a Black bodied person and a very femme body and having had different situations where having family policing has been used.

For example, when the father of my twins set my house on fire we had no other tool but to go and say that this is happening and we need some protection. Instead of following up, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was at my door the next day trying to take my kids away from me because "we couldn't protect them." All these ways in which we've engaged in and then were harmed by a system that supposes to care for people, or as a system, or a practice that is supposed to be altruistic and heroic, that in and of itself is not often, but always a harmful tool of policing and violence. That's the personal and the political part is that I've been organizing in Chicago, that's where some of my work starts, and it's funny because of this moment that we're in, my work started out doing comprehensive sexual education work with young people and graduated to doing work

around the juvenile detention center doing this larger abolition work. That work then graduated to juvenile justice and shutting down the juvenile detention center. I noticed that the young people who stayed the latest, who were down, we couldn't get them out of the youth center, doing things like making posters at night. They were awesome, you know? We were like, why aren't you going home. Those were the ones who were the most engaged both in the youth center and also in the juvenile detention center. They were also the ones who were most directly impacted or dual system involved.

Over time watching both the neighborhood change, the demographics of young people change and our campaigns change we noticed it wasn't just the juvenile detention center that we were having conversations about, it was their foster parents or their group homes.

Although those stories were always there we never made the connection. We often assume it for young people, for young Black people, it's not that there's a connection here but that it's just what happens to Black people. We are never able to make that connection because it's an expected condition of our living.

As Erica highlighted this thing about abolition and family policing abolition being so disconnected, has so much to do with the ways in which we've gendered our movements, in which we expect certain conditions for Black femme people, that we're okay with those. We're willing to assume a narrative about Black women that we've countered several times about Black men. We get to this place where we have movements calling for abolishing the police without recognizing the

"WE GET TO THIS PLACE WHERE WE HAVE MOVEMENTS CALLING FOR ABOLISHING THE POLICE WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE FAMILY POLICING OF BLACK BODIES AND BLACK WOMEN AS INHERENTLY CONNECTED BECAUSE WE ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE WORST TRUTH ABOUT BLACK WOMEN AND NEVER CHALLENGE THOSE "TRUTHS.""



family policing of Black bodies and Black women as inherently connected because we are willing to accept the worst truth about Black women and never challenge those “truths”.

### ERIN

I just feel really grateful to be in this room right now. One thing I was really feeling is that I’m here today because I really learned from literally everyone in this room. I guess you could say I started this work as a lawyer—that was the professional training that I had. However, when I first started doing that work as a family defense public defender, I didn’t have a political analysis. I think that the analysis I bring now has less to do with my legal practice than my learnings from activists like Dorothy Roberts, Erica and Charity who deeply impacted my understanding of this system.

In fact, I remember reading this blog that Charity had, [Black on Both Sides](#), talking about Black mamas organizing in Chicago to fight against DCFS. They were really articulating that this is a system of racial control, and that the solution was collective action.

As I gathered a political analysis, the reality of public defense— while necessary— seemed insufficient on its own to attack the family policing system. That brought me to doing work with my partner, Lisa Sangoi, starting this organization called Movement for Family Power. We started, Movement for Family Power to support activism in a time where we were feeling deep isolation in this movement hoping we could use some skills we had learned to support movement building and organizing.

I am also a mom, and all parents we live inside both our memories as a child as well our role as a caretaker. I can't always rectify the two experiences of being a child and being a parent at the same time, and I can't always explain how those intersections bring me to this work but it does.

As my kids grow up, ages 6 and 7 now, I will say the urgency to end school policing— in all its forms feels most closely related to my role as a mother.

I recently had to tell my 2 kids about this system. We've talked so much about abolition. They truly do have some analysis around police, but I haven't been able to tell them that they could get taken away. I just couldn't bring myself to have the talk in the first place. I realized people talk



about having the “talk” with your kids, and I had the talk about cops, but when I talked about the family police my 6 year old—was in tears, crying, frightened, and continues to be frightened. They were like, so they can come to your door, take you, and that

sometimes it happens when you tell a teacher at school about something private? Then

they were confused and ask, “So I shouldn't tell my teachers anything?” I am just thinking, how am I explaining to a 6 year old why you can't talk to your teachers? The same person I say to them is often a safe adult for

them— but maybe I have to? Until teachers refuse to be complicit in a cop nation, and until we build better safety systems—maybe I have to? I guess, because, I know that for my Black kids they have a l



and 2 chance of being surveilled by this system, and in my neighborhood in the South Bronx our families chances of being policed increases to about 80%. I guess if I'm honest that is really what brings me to this conversation today. I'll pass it to Shawn.

### **SHAWN**

Hello! Thank you my name is Shawn.<sup>23</sup> I use she/her pronouns, and I appreciate the opportunity to sit with you all and have this conversation. I have been connected with mandatory reporting at different times. I grew up with a Black single mother who was reported on multiple times. We had people in the neighborhood that we were connected to and could count on for support.

I also found myself interacting with the system when I

was a caretaker from my aging grandparents; they both had dementia, alzheimer's and had many unsettling interactions with Adult Protective Services (APS). This also impacts me with two young children, as well. My oldest is in public school in fourth grade, and I see the connections of mandatory reporting in school and punishment.

Professionally I've supported families to connect and build community, and get connected to resources. This includes having conversations around race, identity, community, and equity while in peer space with other parents that have similar experiences. I've been doing that work and got connected through a good friend of mine to the Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral group, and that's how I connected with Shannon.

I went back to school in Fall 2021 to work with survivors. I started a dual masters program which includes a master's of social work with a master's of education in human sexuality. There is truly a lack of understanding and teaching around the colonial and anti-black history of social work in the United States. This has lead me to meet in peer space with black women and femmes who are in the perinatal stage, and I have heard from parents about mandatory reporting and how it's impacted their families. I will pass it back to Erin.

### **ERIN**

We all have a grounding in this work, but Jasmine, can you bring everyone reading this together and ground us with an understanding of what mandatory reporting is, where it came from and why it is a problem that now

we have to address?

## JASMINE

Sure, the origins of mandated reporting as we know it today began in the 1960s. In 1962 Henry Kemp and colleagues published the Battered Child Syndrome<sup>24</sup>, which, medically described and diagnosed parents who physically abused their children to the point of hospitalization. Kemp encouraged reporting because he had found that physicians were not disclosing abuse when parents were wealthy or influential. Just to give you a sense of how influential this report was Barbara J. Nelson writes that in the decade prior to 1962<sup>25</sup>, child abuse was published about in social work, journals and medical journals 9 times and after he published this report the researchers published 260 articles about child abuse.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, mass media rarely touched

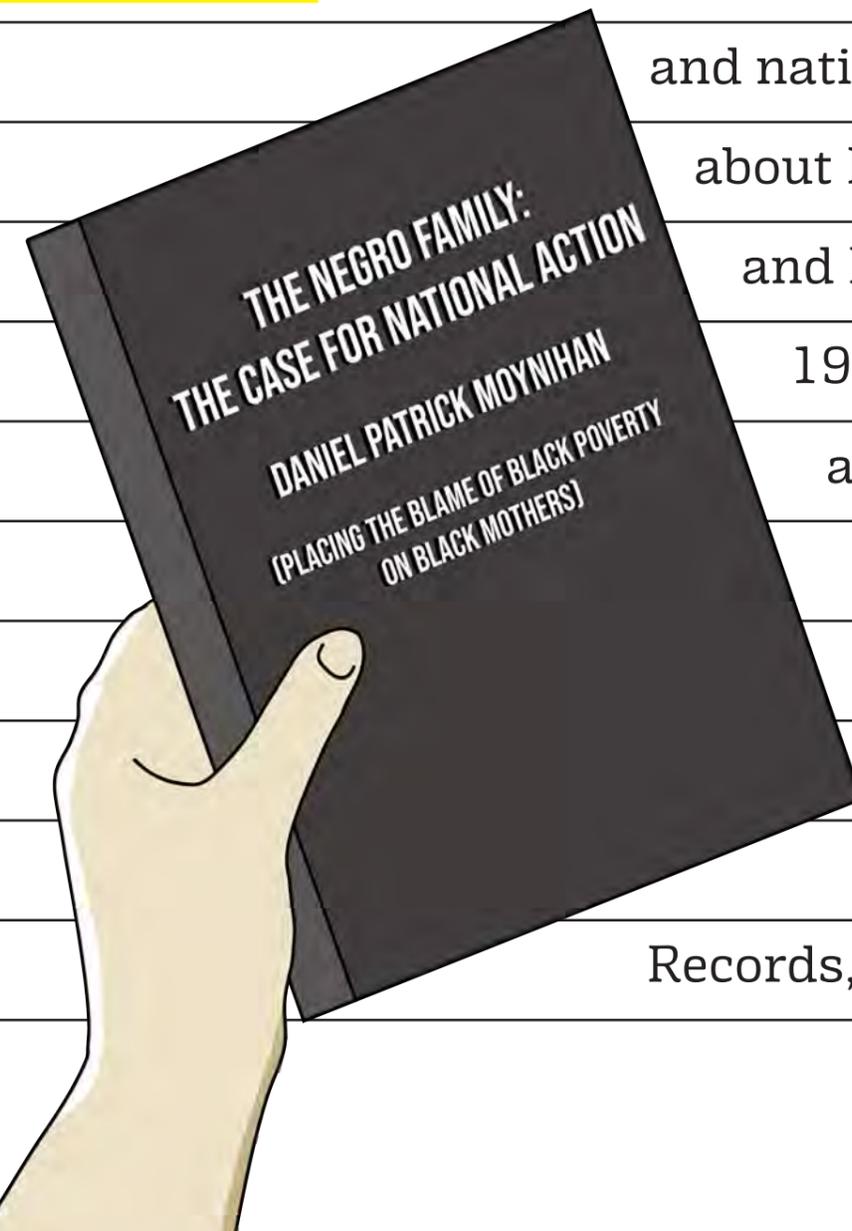
on child abuse in the decade prior to the report. In the decade after the report, however, child abuse was being talked about in magazines, in newspapers, on soap operas, in mass media productions so it really started to put the public attention on this supposed epidemic of child abuse.<sup>27</sup> Because of this report all 50 States adopted their own state-based practice of mandated reporting to address the issue of parents with more power essentially physically abusing their children and not facing a consequence of not being held accountable.

What's also important is that in the report he also describes the supposed personality traits of parents who physically abuse their children as being impulsive, alcoholics, abusing substances, immature; words and phrases that were intentionally set up to capture wealthy people abusing which actually end

up becoming weaponized, racialized and a part of the family policing system's design. This is in part because this report was published in the 60s, where there was a deep narrative campaign to undermine economic and civil rights for Black people, in particular Black caretakers. One must remember that in the early 1960s, when this report was being published, less than 33% of eligible families were receiving what they were entitled to through welfare. By 1970, over 90% of eligible families were receiving what they were entitled to,<sup>28</sup> and this is not because there were more poor families, it's that there were activists working for Black families to obtain what they were entitled to. In other words, welfare reform was on the national agenda at the same time as child abuse. Segregationists and conservatives did their best to tie issues of welfare with anti-Blackness – we see this codified in The Moynihan

Report.<sup>29</sup> Specifically, Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" about Black families and the supposed welfare crisis. In this report, he details and pathologizes a supposed "deviance in the Black family structure", and places blame on Black mothers for poverty that Black families experienced. This also created an explosion of articles

and national discourse about Black families and Black children. In 1967, the US News and World Report<sup>30</sup> published an article, which was then put into Congressional Records, that described



the typical welfare recipient, as a young Black girl in Chicago, and used specific coded terms like “immature” and “unsophisticated;” words and themes that Charles Kempe had used to describe parents who physically abuse their children. The Battered Child Syndrome and the Moynihan Report were prominent reports at the time, and used the same language to describe and conflate these two groups of people in both politics and mass media.

This impacted the way that society understood child well-being. There was mass hysteria around “welfare babies” and the media constantly asked: “what are we gonna do about all these children?” One of the “warnings” that these two reports made, that mass media publications amplified, was that: unless we do something, these children are “gonna grow up to drain

more government resources” ; they will “physically abuse their children and commit crimes.” That put an emphasis for the public to demand that we need to create policies to intervene in the lives of children. This kind of discourse infiltrated dinner tables. It infiltrated the news. It infiltrated Congress.

As the 1970s approach, we see the fruits of this rhetoric. The government defunds welfare benefits, we see anti-poverty programs like universal childcare subsidies, that would help all families, being vetoed by President Nixon.<sup>31</sup> The Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1971<sup>32</sup> passed with bipartisan support. Nixon vetoed it and said: “this is the most radical piece of legislation that’s ever crossed his desk. This is a communal way of raising children. This has family weakening implications<sup>38</sup>, and really taught,



brings in this cold anti Communist anti-communist, anti-cold war rhetoric, and anti-Black rhetoric into this veto speech. This happens at the very time, Black people, for the first time were truly able to access public benefits.

In response to this veto, the bill's author, Senator Mondale proposes the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Acts (CAPTA) of 1974, understanding that the public was demanding legislation to address supposed child wellbeing, but that anti-poverty measures would not pass through Nixon. CAPTA

individualizes the issue of child wellbeing – it moves us away from understanding that it takes a village to raise a child, and places the blame for lack (of food, housing, childcare, medical care) on individual parents – which really resonates with American rugged individualism

and ideas of personal responsibility. CAPTA conflates abuse with neglect. And most relevant to this conversation, CAPTA federally codifies mandated reporting<sup>33</sup> – and places the onus on everyone in a “helping profession” to report any vaguely defined

suspicion of child abuse or neglect, a practice that state and federal governments have acknowledged is wrought with implicit and explicit biases.

**ERIN**

Thanks so much Jasmine, that’s super enlightening. I think we don’t often

talk about the ways racialized tropes were integral to setting up family policing systems and what actually influenced CAPTA. We – at least in this room– have learned from critical race activists that these types of systems are designed to create race and race is a social construct. These systems– policing systems– then create, reinforce, and construct what we normalize as the identity of what a Black mama and Black family is. How wild is that! The family policing system uses racial tropes that were embedded in the Moynihan Report to make people fear the same languages. It also relies on segregationist rhetoric from conservative anti-welfare rights activists. Whew! What a design.

The truth is that the family system was racist in design and is also explicitly segregationist.<sup>34</sup> As you bring up Jasmine, the mid 20th century was a time of important

REPEAL  
CAPTA!

activation. Not only were activists trying to achieve access to public benefits, it was also the same time that *Brown vs the Board of Education* was being decided. We can debate all day long about why *Brown* was picked as a case, and why they did it, and all of these things are important to understand— however, I think about the fact that *Brown* was a school case, and to move integration forward, the imagery of children and Black families was central.

There are these iconic pictures<sup>35</sup> of Black mothers, and Black kids used to capture the hearts and minds of people in the U.S. to support integration, and in fact progressive people did that on purpose. This was a strategy to make a “palatable” form of integration, because who could resist cute kids. Well, racists certainly can, and they certainly did.

Segregationists, in order to undermine the push for integration, would continue to push hard against Black moms, Black families and Black kids,<sup>36</sup> and they wouldn’t have to work that hard to do it. Racial tropes around Black mamas were readily available and already swirling in the air. In the late 1950s, there was a fascination with children born out of wedlock, and publications like *Ladies Home Journal* writes that “illegitimacy is menacing our society. . . weakening of the family . . [and] merits public anxiety”<sup>37</sup> What is unsurprising but important, is that much of this discourse connects out of wedlock reproduction with Blackness. So racists politicians—in particular in places like Louisiana, Florida and Mississippi—capitalized on this. They created a packages of pro segregation laws that were intended to attack integration at all levels: public benefits, public school, public accommodations...

everywhere.<sup>38</sup> They made it clear that white people should not want to send their kids to school with these children raised by “unfit” and “sexually immoral moms”, and they also demanded to gut the recently implemented social security benefits for “unfit” moms as well. All the while, “unfit” and “immoral” is really code for Black.

Their plans were pretty successful, at least in the welfare context. They were able to successfully cut off public benefits from swaths of Black families, because they determined that state funds should not go to “unfit” or “unsuitable” parents. They were able to make these determinations, because they sent social workers to assess parental “fitness”. Sound familiar? Well it is—this actually becomes the modern foster system. What ends up happening is that, people protest that this is



and family in the United States. While they were building this carceral child removal system, they were simultaneously filling public schools with cops. While they were divesting from welfare systems, they were attacking Black mothers who were demanding child care stipend.

Mandated and school policing were both innovations of the same politicians, rhetoric, and these new features of public school education were rationalized as necessary, and were directly tied to racist propaganda that criminalized Black families.

## ERICA

Building on your point, another consequence of the Brown decision was the loss of jobs for Black teachers.<sup>39</sup> Almost concurrently police were put in schools, in

part to respond to the so-called “juvenile delinquent” and to manage and police Black students. Having that historical trajectory is so important to recognize these interconnected threads.<sup>40</sup> We often view the installation of police in schools, the whitening of the teaching force and the mainstream moves to “desegregate” schools (and the whitelash to these meager efforts) as siloed but they have intertwined origins and consequences.

When you were talking about lawyers lacking a political analysis that’s also true for teachers. I’m not demonizing teachers or school-based social workers but about 80% of teachers are white folks and about 70% are women.<sup>41</sup> That’s imperative to start with, because those bodies are the ones who are on the frontlines, who are doing the work to naturalize the carceral or punitive practices in schools. They’re the

ones who are not naming these kinds of interconnected systems. They're the ones who often start with a deficit based lens on non-white communities, particularly Black families and/or migrant families. They're the ones who are conflating poverty with harm and neglect and are less able to do some forms of risk assessment and are less able to understand how the prison industrial complex manifests in their everyday working lives. That is crucial to name and to connect.

A whitewashed profession struggles to recruit and retain teachers of color. We have this huge loss - engineered right after the Brown decisions - and still we are hemorrhaging Black teachers. Of course it is not just teaching that is racially isolated - and most white people live in engineered racial isolation - and there's often not much about living a white life that gives most

white people the capacity to see these interconnected carceral systems. Teacher training usually doesn't involve politicization - particularly related to the prison industrial complex. The professional associations that are around, like teachers unions, until very recently, didn't do work to politicize teachers. It is really not a surprise that the work the teachers are doing is reproducing carceral systems. They're the ones who have naturalized police in their neighborhoods and who view mandated reporting as "race neutral."

That's really important to start with, because teachers are the largest professional group that actually reports allegations of child harm and neglect.<sup>5</sup> And, this is largely because teachers weaponize the system. If we don't name the whiteness and the hetero-gendered nature of teaching, what a comrade and I call "white

lady bountiful” - we can’t understand how these so-called “good intentions” just keep reproducing and reinforcing carcerality.

## CHARITY

Exactly, this brings me to this idea of, who are the folks reporting? What’s the bodies and context of the people who get to say when a child is in danger? One of the things that Dorothy Roberts burned into me is this idea of what is safety and who gets to define safety.<sup>42</sup> The world has been created to make a white woman feel safe, whose experience of safety and also danger is manufactured by a society that constantly tells them to be on the lookout to be on alert, that Black women are violent. Especially the Black woman who yells at you about sitting their kid in the back of the classroom. [Those white women say] “I’m on high alert they have a

violent temper...” They are the ones who report.

It’s not missed on me that white women are also most likely to be partnered with police officers too. How that informs safety and reminders of who is not safe.

The other point that I was thinking about when Erica was talking is the sensationalization of heroism. This idea of a good guy with a gun has led to these vigilante moves, the ones that get put on CNN and on Fox news are the guy who does stop the bad guy right? But the ones that get missed are the ones that happen more often, which is the guy who actually gets injured in the process. Those are similar stories to the stories that we had told about mandated reporting, the teacher who spots the small little signs of a child in distress and reports that thing and then becomes teacher of the year, and gets the golden apple and all of those things.

There is a narrative that white women, particularly white young women, are extra altruistic, kind and gentle hearted. Feminization and what is softness, and what is kindness, and what is their heartenedness comes through the lens of what is a white womanhood. We take all of those things into context and it helps explain the rampant reporting. They think, "I'm the good guy and I'm going to do the good thing" because "I am good." All those narratives fit into a neat storytelling of an American hero narrative that we all want to exist inside of. It is a hero narrative that white women have always gotten to play the role of in society.

When we consider this, It helps bring more meaning to the question of what is policing in the schools? When the teachers act the like the cops, and they can only see themselves as good– it actually reveals a lot about



"WE DON'T GET ASKED WHAT WE NEED,  
OR WHAT WE FIND HELPFUL WHEN  
MANDATORY REPORTING IS HAPPENING  
IN A SCHOOL SYSTEM."

what policing actually is.

Also, we don't think of children as autonomous beings.

Because we don't think of children as autonomous beings, we don't think of the surveillance and restrictions of their bodies as actual policing. Similar to the role of policing in every other sector the role of policing is not to protect, but to control. The result is not safety, but suspicion.

Strategy wise it's a critical moment to engage people in what it means to obfuscate our responsibilities as mandatory reporters. What does it mean to resist the system that asks you to control and monitor? I've engaged with teachers who are like "that's ridiculous. I would never tell the parent that." I was like well that's also ridiculous that you're reading children's poems

and reporting those. Where's the lifeline because you get to be a hero at this moment. You need to be a hero in how you defy the system, and when you choose to comply with the system that is based on who you think is deserving of both forgiveability and accountability in those situations.

### ERIN

Shawn, I'm going to turn to you. I want to flag these things that we're saying. There really is this history of the development of mandatory reporting and development of police in schools that really exists parallel to each other. They grow together. They seem to be enforced by a similar white hero narrative of teachers that have been protected by police. We see, as Charity and Erica were talking about, this extraordinary weaponization around what it means to

be a family, child, parent at school. I wonder if you have some thoughts around what systems of safety and care can be built outside of mandatory reporting and policing or if you want to take on some of the questions that were just kind of brought up in the room?

### SHAWN

I was thinking about this, especially this question around how does mandatory reporting impact parents and their ideas of safety. The first thing that came to my mind was mandatory reporting as a system guarantees that parents and students aren't safe, it promises that they aren't. Because of that parents and families absolutely don't feel safe.<sup>43</sup> I think about myself and other parents that are connected, essentially in the school system we don't have power. There's no autonomy or self-determination. We often don't get

asked what we need, or what we want, or what we find helpful for our family when mandatory reporting is happening in a school system.

When you have the State giving school personnel; teachers, social workers, administrators and staff functioning literally as police who can decide on their own with zero to almost no training, that they have even a suspicion to report it, and never have a single conversation with a parent or a student ever then, that literally relies on those people to police black and brown families.

Mandatory reporting is not providing support, it's not resourcing families. Reports are more allegations against parents that get investigated, and whether they're substantiated or unsubstantiated, this process

is not designed, nor does it function to get parents and families what they need. Speaking to what Jasmine shared, mandatory reporting functions to criminalize and remove black and brown children from families.

As a parent, safety what does that mean for me as a parent? What do I do as a parent? It criminalizes parents. You risk having your child removed from your home or losing your parental rights. It criminalizes even our children. What parents do is we isolate. We don't get the support that we need because we can't trust school personnel who are functioning as police and schools to work together to get what we need. Parents are often left with making a decision about whether they want to even engage in schools because they have fear around being separated from their children. Essentially this mandatory reporting system is really cutting parents off from resources

and it actually moves them away from the very people who could probably help support them. It then allows those people [making reports] to never have to take responsibility to community to show up for them in a way that they should be. Parents don't seek out support because they fear these systems.

One thing that's coming up that Erica and Charity were sharing is that this type of policing in schools is 100% rooted in punishment. What is heartbreaking to me is that it normalizes the policing of black and brown children's bodies. Then what happens to our children is they internalize this human degradation that's rooted in anti-blackness, that teaches them from a very young age that they're meant to be policed. So they internalize all that and they think it's normal to have police in schools, or it's normal to be questioned, or

**What do we really need to do to get cops out of schools and to get policing out of schools?**

**How do we tie together the movements to end mandated reporting and youth incarceration?**

**How do we build safety together?**



it's normal that my parents are questioned. We know that because we know that half of black children will have an investigation<sup>44</sup> by the time they turn 18. So we know that's happening. We think family policing is functioning separate from criminal law enforcement like policing in the streets but it's actually just mirroring the same thing.<sup>45</sup> It's part of that system. It's just existing within school. I personally feel like it's designed this way, and mandatory reporting 100% is harming families and should be completely abolished.<sup>46</sup>

**ERIN**

I think we're all here for that, that we need to be abolished. I wanna take this to a hopeful moment to end this conversation, which has been so brilliant. Charity Hope, you mentioned that we have a movement opportunity, we have comrades that are working to

end policing, and they have been successful and are winning getting cops out of schools, and I wanna highlight their success and highlight that we are here to say we want to build with you.<sup>47</sup>

What do we really need to do to get cops out of schools and to get policing out of schools? How do we tie together the movements to end mandated reporting and youth incarceration? How do we build safety together?

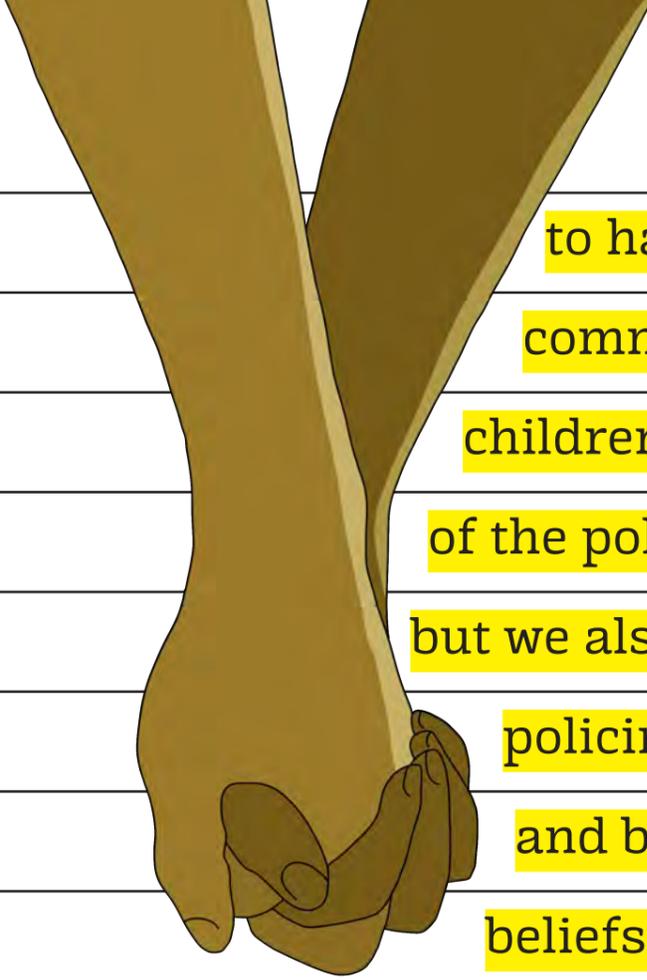
### JASMINE

I was recently talking to a parent, whose kids' school had laundry machines in the basement to help families out because there were so many children coming to school without access to washing machines.<sup>48</sup> The school was helping kids wash their clothes, but they

were still reporting kids for coming to school with dirty clothes.

Even in schools that have identified a problem and developed a solution to support families are not immune to the rugged individualism that this country is founded on, and exemplified by policies like CAPTA. The cop in our own heads that says: "We have the resource, but you're not using it in the way or at the time we want you to." "You can only use this housing voucher or free transportation service for so long, and then you have to find your own way." "You can only use this existing resource so many times, and then you're taking advantage."

As educators, we have to see ourselves in the communities we work in, and know what it means



to have an obligation to our community, which includes the children and parents. We can get rid of the policy of mandated reporting, but we also need to understand that policing is so ingrained in our minds and behaviors – it's generations of beliefs that are codified by policy.

There are a number of initiatives in cities, states, and counties to redirect public funding to grassroots community-based groups, not even nonprofits, that are already doing the work, that do not have mandated reporting policies.<sup>49</sup> The issue is that government funding is so complex and complicated to access, and provides funding on a reimbursement basis – so it's nearly impossible for small, trusted groups that reflect

the communities they work in to access that funding. Part of the work we can do as educators is to identify those groups, and amplify initiatives to redirect funding and change procurement practices.

### SHANNON

The key question of my life has been, what do we do when violence happens? Many people think mandatory reporting is the answer to that question. We know that it's important to have a meaningful strategy for how we are addressing violence and harm without relying on harmful systems of policing. We know that the majority of harm people are experiencing is never reported to the police or child protective services.<sup>50</sup>

Like Charity was saying, when we talk to people about abolishing mandatory reporting people panic. They

“MANDATORY REPORTING IS NOT NEUTRAL. MANDATORY REPORTING IS NOT, DESPITE WHAT MANY PEOPLE THINK, A RESOURCE.”

start saying things like “What about child abuse? What happens when children are abused?” I always respond the same way; we should care deeply about the violence children are experiencing. That question should be urgent for us. The rates of violence, especially child sexual abuse,<sup>51</sup> in this country are astronomical. The systems we have in place now are not preventing children from experiencing harm. Not only are the current systems not preventing harm but when harm happens mandatory reporting is making the situation much worse.<sup>52</sup> Mandatory reporting is NOT neutral. Mandatory reporting is not, despite what many people think, a resource. At its core mandatory reporting is the means to an investigation by the state.

If we really deeply care about the answer to that question, let’s get busy answering it. We know that

the core harm of domestic and sexual violence is objectification. When harm happens to your body and personhood what you need is support in self-determination. For people of any age who experience violence, but especially for children, it's our job to make sure that they get a say in what happens. You said it so brilliantly, Charity, that if we don't believe that young people deserve autonomy, that they get to be in charge of their bodies and lives, it's really hard to make a plan to end the violence and abuse that children experience.

Supporting young people in self-determination not only helps when violence occurs but it meaningfully helps to change the conditions that lead to violence in the first place.

The crushing nature of all these systems is self-fulfilling. It makes it nearly impossible to have the

energy to try to abolish them because so many people are just trying to survive. You're trying to eat. You're trying to do your laundry. You're trying to help show up for all your people who are also struggling. We can turn the dial down on that struggle by resourcing folks, by keeping the crushing nature of the system at bay so people can have a little breathing room. That is part of what makes the conditions possible to get all forms of policing, including mandatory reporting out of schools.

### **ERICA**

Yes, how do we get policing out of schools? We need to sharpen our analysis and in tandem we need to sharpen our strategy. The problem has many tentacles - which is both sad, and also an opportunity. We need many folks doing the work - and there are many places to intervene and to do work from, as long as we share a

sharp analysis. I am just echoing what everybody else is saying today!

As Shannon said, we need to change the conversation to be about what makes our school strong and safe. This involves, of course, removing police, but it also involves thinking about - I love the "cops in cardigans" whoever came up with that! We have to analyze and anticipate all the other ways in which policing happens. The majority of teachers think that they're doing the right thing, even if they loosely view "mass incarceration" as a bad thing. Teachers do not see child protective services as any part of mass incarceration. Most teachers understand child protection as a social good, and so we need political education, a sharper analysis.

One opening right now is the "cops off campus" organizing and campaigns. There is this moment where more people are paying attention to police in schools.

While we have this moment lets try to make those connections.

**If there is liberal commitment to removing the cops let's push the conversation to look at the wider rules of the policing game: white supremacist, capitalist, ableist, settler colonial heteropatriarchy.**

Are our "cops off campus" campaigns making visible these logics, those oppressive practices that are core to all the policing that happens in schools? Raise the

question - if we remove cops, what other entities are policing in schools? Paula Rojas talks about the “cop in our head and the cops in our hearts” and we need a sharper analysis here!<sup>53</sup> All of us have internalized this logic - and how do we let go of that? We need more political education - more opportunities for people to learn and unlearn safety.

Coupled with ongoing political education we need campaigns that clearly push the divest / invest - move the money from carceral systems! There are so many exciting divest from policing / invest in care campaigns! Young people are doing amazing work, particularly young BIPOC queer people folks are supporting one another in violent school systems.

It is crucial to pay attention to what young folks are already doing to make themselves safer in schools and

communities, and elevate some of those strategies. And on these divest/invest campaigns - I really hear Jasmine’s earlier point. Government money is really tricky to get and use in affirming ways, but this is our money! I have been also excited by the slow shifts of already existing organizations, like some labor unions including the Chicago Teachers Union that have been forefronting political education for their membership and supporting divesting from carceral systems.

Sharpening our analysis needs to be built into our ways of thinking and our practice because organizing is not an end goal but a long term struggle. We need tactics and strategies that are coming out of that.

## **CHARITY**

In the 20 years that I’ve been organizing, people often

think of police as the actual folks like security guards, also the metal detectors, and all of those things that create an institution of fear and suspicion. I appreciate the reframe and re-discussing of what is the role of teachers and other administrative folks, and policing both the freedoms and bodies of people through mandated reporting and other surveillance tools. I was trying to be clever, and was like, what's the opposite of policing? I don't know what the opposite of policing is but what Erica was just saying is if we believe that teachers are acting from this place of concern, "I'm concerned about this child," we know that those concerns are built off false narratives that support people's implicit bias.

What is the opposite of concern, it's care, right? I don't just say that because it's alliterative. I say that because

the best thing for someone who you are concerned about is to care. How do we show up for people when we are concerned? Teachers and other folks inside of institutions are taught that to show up when you're concerned means to report to carceral systems.

How do we reframe that for folks - this idea that you can show up for a person right now and that the way to show up for a person when you are concerned is to care for them. That care can be through providing necessary services but it also can just be to provide care and connection. Part of helping teachers come to a new place is also understanding what happens when you report, that it is not an act of concern and care. It is not an act of care to be concerned about somebody, and then put them in harm's way. To understand that the foster care system is harm's way, that it is rescuing

"THE WAY TO SHOW UP FOR A PERSON WHEN YOU ARE CONCERNED IS TO CARE FOR THEM. THAT CARE CAN BE THROUGH PROVIDING NECESSARY SERVICES BUT IT ALSO CAN JUST BE TO PROVIDE CARE AND CONNECTION."



people from the fire to throw them into the flame. We have to as a really small movement bridge out into bigger movements and get folks from this place of concern to a place of active care and collective care for young people.

The Department of Children's own report about what happens to young people once they go inside of foster care systems is that they're more likely to be sexually abused, they're more likely to be physically abused.

Every outcome for young people on the other side is traumatic and violent. I was engaged in a conversation the other day about resiliency and the importance of connection and resiliency. It becomes a very internalized process when you experience trauma and violence, and then whatever you've experienced has been turned and you and your whole family, your

whole life gets disrupted because of that. You begin to externalize and think that everything that is wrong is because of me, versus a young person who is at home and might be experiencing violence, that it's easier to externalize what's happening. Children who stay in homes, even if they experience violence, have better outcomes. Children who are removed from homes have outcomes that are just worse, because there's a disconnection, and there's less care.

I've been taught that if a young person comes in and it looks like they haven't eaten, feed them. If they're experiencing domestic abuse at home, comfort them. Those are simple things that allow a young person to feel reconnected to the world versus the idea that the response is to disrupt everything. Our movements have done a really negligent job of disconnecting from

what it means to hold each other in hard times, and in not placing rest and restoration as essential to our movement as any other political campaign or action.

What happens if there's a response from a movement?

That children feel safe and protected, not because the system has changed, but because our movements have changed, to cater to the love and protection that's necessary. That is the heart of abolition; how do we

show up for each other the way that we want the world to? How do we reflect the love and care that we want the world to be? Our movements are often really busy doing the work of disrupting and not caring. It's not a strategy answer but it is an answer to the question "if our movements don't show up how do we expect teachers to show up in a caring and concerning way?" If our movements are doing that liberatory work of love,

restoration and care, then how do we go into schools and say the way that you show up is not to call DCFS or CPS. It is to show up and care for people, but we haven't done that as a movement strategy ourselves.

**ERIN**

Shawn, what is your vision for us getting rid of policing in schools?

**SHAWN**

I really appreciate what everybody shared, and in full agreement around it, especially this idea about how we care for each other. If I could wish a thing it really would be that schools would be an extension of community, which, unfortunately, they are not right now. I would love to see that care extended out.

As a parent I'm sitting here listening and thinking about ways in which we can empower parents to have a voice and say in the things that happen; everything from who is in the school to how the school functions and how teachers are encouraged and held in those spaces, and how they connect to community.

I am a firm believer, especially as a parent, and when I think about my own children, we have to ask families what they want, what they envision as a way for them to be able to show up and be whole and be safe. I want parents to feel like they have some self-determination in how they're cared for and what it is that they want so they can be well.

**ERIN**

I've heard so many themes and I get the pleasure of

wrapping up. I keep hearing the word community. One of the action steps is that to end policing in schools and policing everywhere we're going to need community, but community that's not co-opted by a carceral analysis. What we know right now, and the history brings us into this analysis, is that there is a large integrated strategy of carceral systems. Police and child protective workers have an integrated strategy, and logic. They utilize terms like "community" but on their terms. That's not community, that's cooptation. They are using the word "community" to help people disengage from the real obligations of community.

When we look at schools, we have things called the "community schools model" which Children's Aid Society, which is one of the largest family policing agents.<sup>54</sup> But that model was actually rooted in Black

radical tradition, where people knew their neighbors or people knew their community members. You can't just plop an individual who's been trained by Children's Aid Society to come in and then feel there's going to be trust. You also can't manufacture a community by calling it "community". You can have all the coat drives you want, but if you leave the neighborhood every day and turn your back to the actual complications – you're not in community.

As a political strategy we actually have to know what those entwined relationships are, not just the ideology and the politics but the actual political strategies and political memorandums that exist. Once we know them we have to dismantle them and call out where they are failing and then use them in conjunction with things like Jasmine was saying like participatory budgeting

processes.

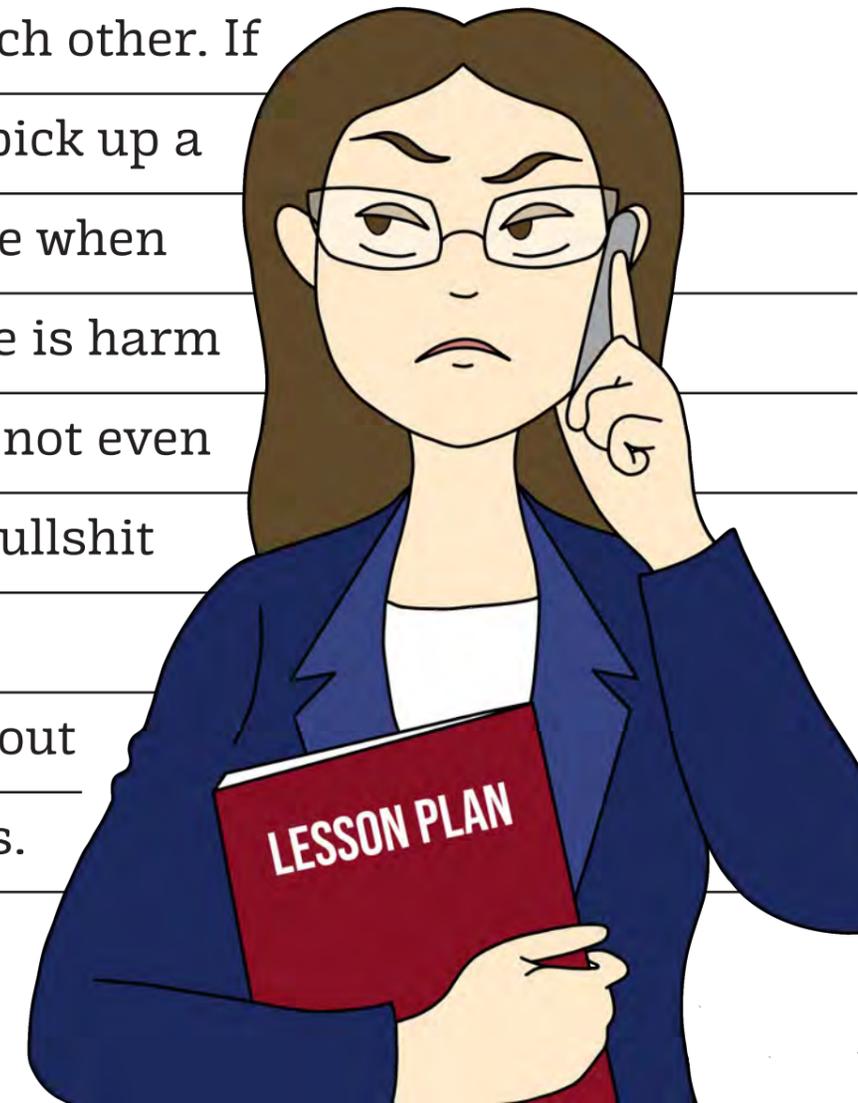
It also requires everyone to skill up on some level of participatory budgeting or political process. Not everyone's going to do every part of the process and that's okay. There are ways that our movements can come together and share successes of how police were gotten out of schools and ways that we can get mandatory reporting out of schools. We also have to carry each other's water, much to what Erica was saying, we are required to carry the water of abolition in every movement. If I'm talking about mandated reporting, I have to actually be talking about getting cops out of schools. Cops out of schools need to be talking about mandated reporting.

It is an analysis we must carry for each other, or no one

else will carry for us. If you're in a teachers union I ask you to make this a part of your union demand.

There are also policy acts like repealing CAPTA that can happen. I hope that anyone who's reading this who is licensed to be a mandated reporter organizes themselves. I look at Mandated Reporters Against Mandated Reporting,<sup>25</sup> which is an organizing space that Jasmine is in, and I get excited about that because it actually isn't going to be me as a lawyer who's going to come in and tell teachers to stop reporting. Teachers are doing a really hard job. They have to talk to each other. They have to organize. Also they have the power to say that they're not mandated reporters. That is an enormous win when that happens. It will happen in my lifetime, believe it. It's going to also require a challenge to the culture of niceness. I don't mean people should

stop being nice to each other. I mean the gendered, white feminist notion of niceness that we have developed over time which has shrouded people from understanding their actual relationship to carceral logic. It has to end. I'm done with the defensiveness to being "a cop and a cardigan." I'm done with the tears and hurts and frustration for someone calling you out for what you're doing, which is creating more reliance on a hotline than on each other. If you're more willing to pick up a phone than to intervene when you actually think there is harm we will not be safe. I'm not even just talking about the bullshit calls, around food and clothing. I'm talking about real harm that happens.



If you believe that meeting the need of actual harm in society is going to be fulfilled by picking up a phone and reporting it. You're lying to yourself. You're lying to yourself and you are failing everyone, your community.

I think back to what Shawn said earlier, which is that people are letting themselves off the hook and we are condoning an abdication of the responsibility to meet each other's needs.

To tie into what Charity was saying, we can model that in our movements and with each other. We must take care of each other as a responsibility, and through that practice of caretaking we start to learn and build the skills of actually how to prevent harm. It's going to be very difficult to end policing when we haven't worked on the skills of preventing harm. We're constantly going to be in a survival mode where people are going

to be calling an entity to intervene when there's harm because we're not preventing the harm from starting. That's a cycle right? It's survival until revolution. We must be practicing those disciplines and those skills.

I really appreciate the opportunity to build shared analysis. We have a great opportunity at this moment in time, and every moment in time honestly. It's always a good time to end policing. It's always a good time to get cops out of school. It's always a good time to end mandated reporting.

So thank you all.



"IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD  
TIME TO GET COPS  
OUT OF SCHOOL. IT'S  
ALWAYS A GOOD TIME  
TO END MANDATED  
REPORTING."

## Endnotes

1 We are grateful to the powerful organizing work and leadership of youth activist, especially femme, queer and BIPOC activists. Learn more about the organizing work by reaching– Blackwood-Foster, A. (n.d.). Counselors not cops: Why should counselors be in NYC schools instead of police? S.O.U.L. Sisters Leadership Collective. Available at <https://soulsistersleadership.org/counselors-not-cops-why-should-counselors-be-in-nyc-schools-instead-of-police/>. This piece is intended to expand the framework built by organizers not diminish the long and important work of organizers in schools.

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11 A non-exhaustive lists of groups that we learn from, and/or organize with include: Just Beginnings Collaborative; Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral; JMacForFamilies; Movement for Family Power; Reimagine Child Safety LA; California Families Rise; REPEAL ASFA; Black Families Love and Unite; Interrupting Criminalization; PLAN; Collective of Child Welfare Survivors; Reimagining Child Protection; Families Matters 1st Boston; Abolish Child Welfare; Mandated Reporters Against Mandated Reporting; Operation Stop CPS; Accountable Communities Consortium; Global Women's Strike; NorCalFamiliesUnited; UpEnd Movement; Mining for Gold Community; We are Holding This; Elephant Circle; Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral Project; Bloom Collective; Ancient Song Doula Services; Bronx ReBirth; Mothers Outreach Rise. We know we have not be able to list everyone's work, and invite people to build out this list in further citations and collaborations.

12 In addition to groups we have also learned from a lot of individual activists and thought leaders. Those like, Khiara Bridges, Michelle Goodwin, Dorothy Roberts, Lamikia Castillo, Victoria Copeland, Jacob Chin, Dessera Wright, Miriam Mack, Shalonda Hackett, Zainab Akbar; Helen Montalvan; Dinah Ortiz; Nila Natarajan; Julia Hernandez; Kima Taylor; Jamila Perritt; Zoe Russel, Lizartistry; Bekura Shabazz; Emma Ketteringham; Fallon Speaker; Lisa Sangoi; AngelaBurton (@SankofaRose) / Twitter– we also were not able to name everyone.

13 Miles Cloud, E., Wali, J., Perez-Darby, S., Spade, D. (2022). Abolish mandatory reporting and family policing [Webinar]. Barnard Center for Research on Women <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/event/abolish-mandatory-reporting-and-family-policing/>; Ayodele Dixon, E., Copeland, V., Perez-Darby, S., Chapman, P.(2022). Mandatory reporting, abolition, and trans and disability justice. *Transgender Law Center*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4k6cwVxSO0>; Dettlaff, A. J., Abrams, L. S., Teasley, M. L. (2023). Interrogating the carceral state: Re-envisioning social work's role in systems serving children and youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 148. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.106920>. As can be seen today, compared

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17 Erin Miles Cloud is the co-director/co-founder of Movement for Family Power, and a former family defense public defender. She is Baltimore born, and Bronx living. She is a Black, mixed raced mother of two beautiful children.

18 Jasmine Wali is the Director of Policy & Advocacy at JMACforFamilies, managing JMAC's city, state, and federal policy advocacy, and projects around mandated reporting and Know Your Rights outreach. She was a Fisher Cummings Policy Fellow at the federal Office on Trafficking in Persons in DC and served on the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse project committee to make program eligibility recommendations for federal funding. She is also a practicum instructor at Columbia School of Social Work.

19 A founding member of the Accountable Communities Consortium, Shannon Perez-Darby is a queer, mixed Latina anti-violence advocate, author and Activist in Residence with Just Beginnings Collaborative, working to create the conditions to support loving, equitable relationships and communities. With nearly 20 years of experience Shannon Perez-Darby centers queer and trans communities of color while working to address issues of domestic and sexual violence, accountability, mandatory reporting and abolition.

20 Writer, educator and organizer, Erica R. Meiners' current books include a co-edited anthology *The Long Term: Resisting Life Sentences, Working Towards Freedom* (Haymarket Press 2018), the co-authored *Feminist and the Sex Offender: Confronting Sexual Harm, Ending State Violence* (Verso 2020) and the co-authored *Abolition. Feminism. Now.* (Haymarket 2022). At Northeastern Illinois University, Erica is an active member of her labor union, and she teaches classes in education, gender and sexuality studies, and justice studies. Most importantly, Erica has collaboratively started and works alongside others a range of on-going mobilizations for liberation, particularly movements that involve access to free public education for all, including people during and after incarceration, and other queer abolitionist struggles. A member of Critical Resistance, the Illinois Death in Custody Project, the Prison+Neighborhood Arts / Education Project, and the Education for Liberation Network, she is a sci-fi fan, an avid runner, and a lover of bees and cats.

21 Van is passionate about the abolition of the Family Regulation, specifically for the sake of adoptees and children everywhere. They graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a degree in Public Policy. During their time at UMD, they researched family policy and education policy, later leading to an internship about underaged marriage in the United States and another with their local government Department of Community Resources and Services. This prompted them to seek out opportunities surrounding how children and families are treated, the institution of parenting, and how the government responds to people they label to be in crisis. Van started working with Movement for Family Power in 2020 as a summer intern, assisting with operations and research. There, they received vital political education explaining the depths of violence caused by family policing and re-contextualizing their own lived experience as an adoptee. That following fall, starting a social work master's program proved to be in conflict with their values. They left their program and rejoined MFP in the summer of 2022 as a Team Coordinator and spent time early in 2023 as a Research Assistant for a project on mandated reporting.

22 Charity Hope Tolliver, a gender-queer, Black mama from Chicago's South Side, most recently served as manager for mental health advocacy at Broadway Youth Center in Chicago. Prior to their work at BYC

Charity worked on a national campaign with Black on Both Sides to advance a national conversation around the foster care to prison pipeline. Charity is the former director of organizing for one of the largest and oldest organizing groups in Chicago, Southwest Youth Collaborative where they were nurtured into organizing by some of the most passionate and sincere organizers in the country. In their almost two decades as an organizer, they have worked on campaigns on a broad range of issues, including fair housing, labor rights, school reform, prison abolition, foster care abolition and LGBTQ youth rights. They are an Alston Bannerman Fellow and received a Soros Justice Fellowship in 2013 for their work on foster care abolition and criminalization of black motherhood. In addition to organizing Charity is mama to four amazing souls and two incredible pups.

23 Shawn Koyano is a Black queer mother, survivor, and advocate for survivors and families seeking community, belonging, and healing from violent systems. Her work is centered and grounded in Black feminist radical care, abolition, and dreaming of possibilities for families to be safe and whole. She is the Program Director of Families of Color Seattle (FOCS) and a student in the dual MSW/MEd in Human Sexuality program at Widener University. She is an advocate for families in the public school system, and has worked to implement equitable practices in parent involvement and teacher hiring. She is a member of Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral (MRNN), Collective Justice, and the Duwamish Solidarity Group in Seattle, WA.

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