

# Internal Empowerment

---

COMMUNITIES HEALING THEMSELVES FROM THE INSIDE OUT UTILIZING  
NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN POLICY REFORM EFFORTS

TUNISIA M. OWENS, JD MPA-URP

# No Man is an Island

---

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.

And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

-John Donne

# Agenda

---

Introduction and welcome

Criminal Justice landscape

Grounding values

Criminal Justice reform National Policy and Policymakers

Criminal Justice reform State Policy and Policymakers

Criminal Justice reform Local Policy and Policymakers

Community Focus: where can intervention happen?

Family Focus: where can intervention happen?

Individual Focus: where can prevention happen?

Conclusion/Takeaways

# Criminal Justice Landscape

---

- History
- Bias in arrests and policing
- Pre-trial services
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Death Penalty and Sentencing
- Conditions of Confinement
- Reentry

# Grounding Values

---

-individuals do not experience life in isolation

- individuals have intersectional and overlapping identities that may place them in positions of power or disadvantage through earned and unearned privilege.

-Intervention and Prevention efforts that are not specifically aimed at strengthening families and communities are likely to have limited effectiveness at addressing structural challenges.

# National Criminal Justice Policy Reform

---

- First Step Act
- Martha Wright-Reed Just and Reasonable Communications Act of 2019
- National Bail work
- Ecarceration prevention work

# National Criminal Justice Policy Makers

---

The national CJ landscape has created an opportunity for a more de-centralized approach to reforming criminal justice in states and locales across the country.

- National Bail Work: Law for Black Lives
- Ecarceration: Center for Media Justice
- First Step Act: Dreamcorps/Cut50
- MWR Just & Reasonable Communications Act 2019: Ella Baker Center

# California Criminal Justice Policy Reform

---

- Death Penalty moratorium
- Juvenile Justice removal to Health and Human Services
- Bail Reform
- Fines and Fees elimination
- Sentencing reform



# California Criminal Justice Policy Makers

---

## The Usual Suspects

California Governor- Gavin Newsom

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Public Safety Committee (Assembly and Senate)

## Potential Reformers

-Judicial Council of California

-California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris

# Local Criminal Justice Policy Reform

---

- Pre-trial services
- Pre-trial diversion/Alternative Courts
- Alternative Sentencing
- Family Advocacy/Participatory Defense
- Challenging the school-to-prison pipeline
- 0-5 Programming
- Poverty Alleviation/elimination efforts

# Local Criminal Justice Policy Makers

---

## The Usual Suspects:

*San Mateo County District Attorney- Stephen M. Wagstaffe*

*San Mateo County Administration of the Court: Presiding Judge- Jonathan Karesh, Supervising Judge of Criminal- Donald J. Ayoob, Supervising Judge of Juvenile Court- Susan Irene Etezadi*

## Potential Reformers:

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

San Mateo County Health Department

San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools

San Mateo County Department of Human Services

# Community Focus: Intervention Options

---

- Harlem Children's Zone
- California Endowment, Building Healthy Communities
- Annenberg Foundation, Collaborative Grants

# Family Focus: Intervention Options

---

- Universal Basic Income Finland and Stockton
- 100% pass through of child support to families receiving public benefits
- raising poverty income limits
- Universal family therapy, cultural navigation, and family court ADR

# Individual Focus: Prevention Options?

---

- Conflict Management and Alternative Dispute Resolution training paid for by health insurance
- Shared housing options that employ Housing First values and include cultural navigators
- Partner with houses of worship, local schools, libraries, recreation and community centers to offer empowerment services.

# Conclusions and Takeaways

---

- Solutions must be developed with stakeholders not simply for them
- Stakeholders have both leadership experience and expertise to offer that can improve program implementation and outcomes
- Include family (of birth and of creation) as part of intervention plans with resources and training on best practices.
- Meet people where they are figuratively and literally.