

Don't Call Us "Outliers"

What Organizations Can Learn by Adopting Human Centered Evaluation Techniques

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Who *are* these people?



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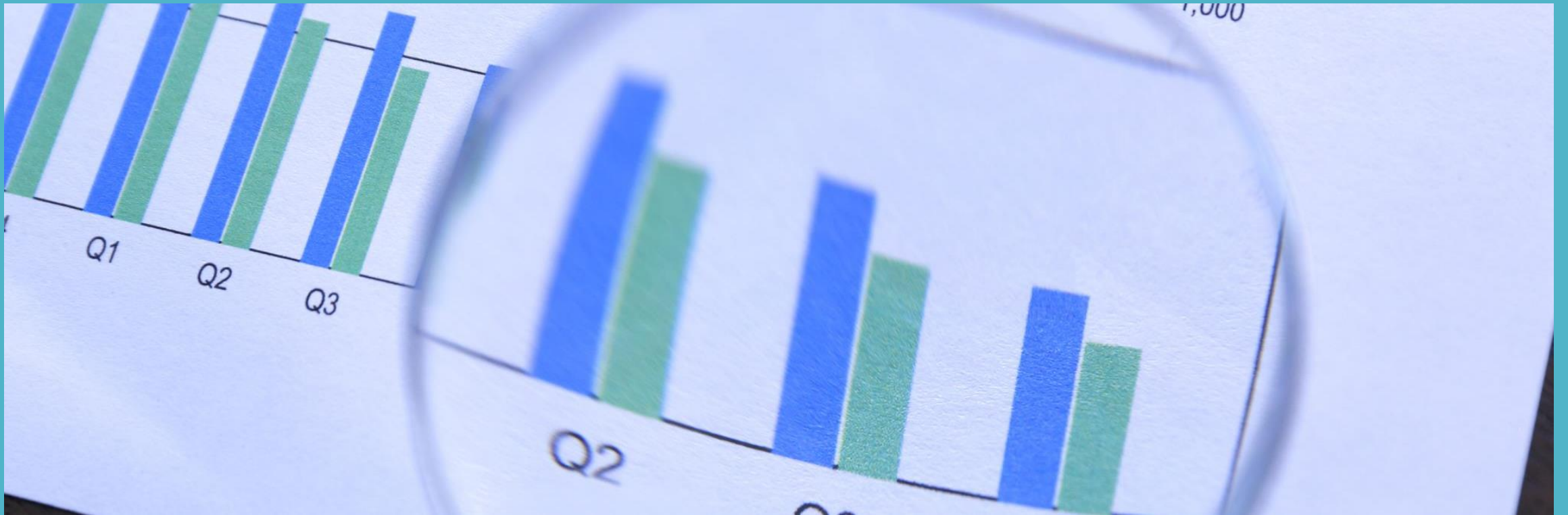
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Presentation outline

- Performance indicators and the danger of emphasizing summary data
- What is an “outlier?”
- Findings from youth and family focus groups
- Engaging youth and families as partners to directly influence services



Summary Data

Pros and Cons

"75% of youth discharged to their biological families..."

"...65% reduction in symptoms"

"71% of youth graduated..."

"80% of youth improved their CAFAS scores from entry to discharge..."

"...91% satisfaction rate"



Satisfaction Surveys

...

73

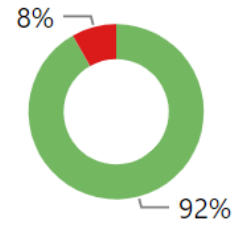
% Satisfied with Services

BENCHMARK - 95%

Answer

● Yes

● No



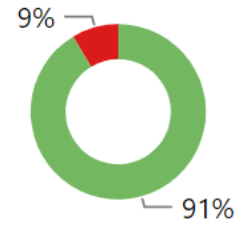
% Well-Being Increased

BENCHMARK - 90%

Answer

● Yes

● No



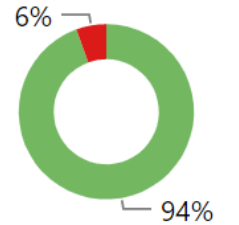
% Family Involved

BENCHMARK - 90%

Answer

● Yes

● No



Discharges

33

Avg Days in Program

792.2

In School at Discharge

BENCHMARK - 80%

76%

Living w/Family at Discharge

BENCHMARK - 80%

76%

Why use summary datasets?



Help us to monitor program outcomes “at a glance.”



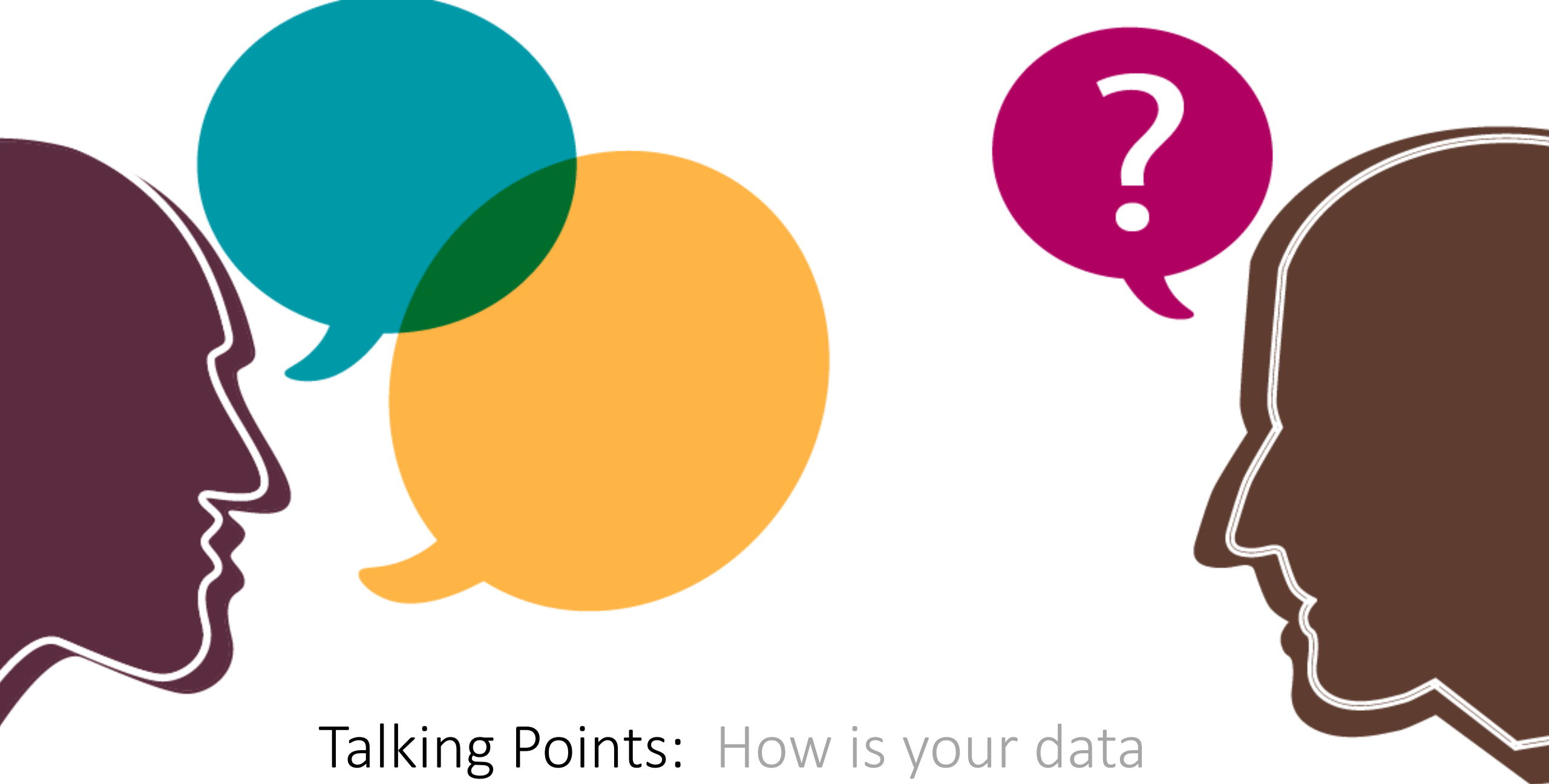
Tell us how *most people* are faring in our programs.



Allow us to communicate the impact we are having on our communities.



Assist in building predictions of likely success / failure cases.



Talking Points: How is your data aggregated?

Whose narrative is this, anyway?



Overreliance on aggregated datasets and techniques that promote “statistical soundness” doesn’t always tell the whole story.

In fact, doing so may simply reinforce a predominate experience and unconsciously promote biased ideologies (Curley, 2019).

Behind every data point, there is a human being. Social and human service providers must pay attention to individual experiences, particularly unique ones (Wexler, Shaffer, & Cotgreave, 2017).

We have: A classroom of 5 students, a classroom of 10 students, and a classroom of 15 students. What's the average number of students?

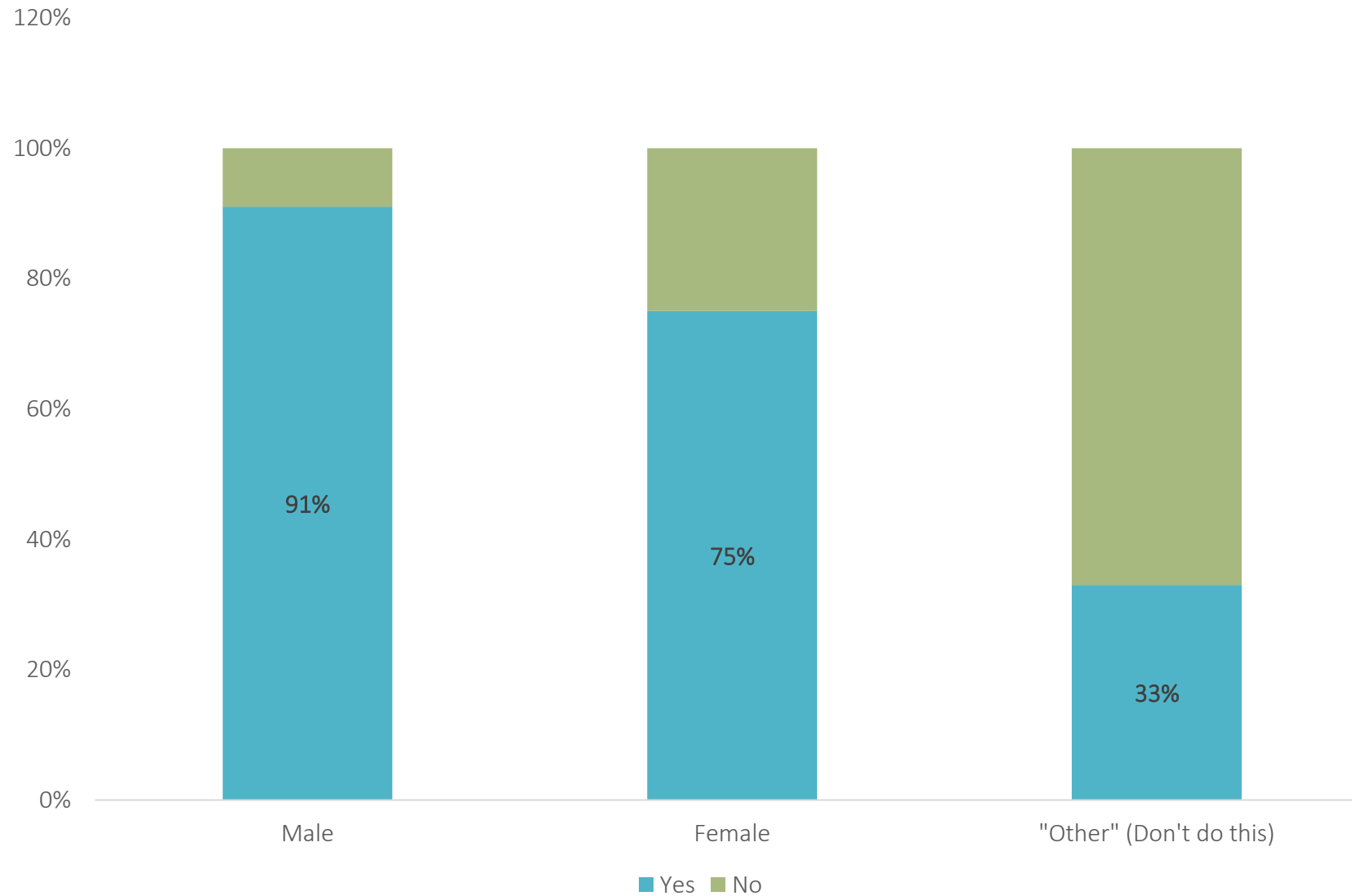
Teacher Perspective:

$$(5 + 10 + 15) = 30 / 3 = \underline{10}$$

Student Perspective:

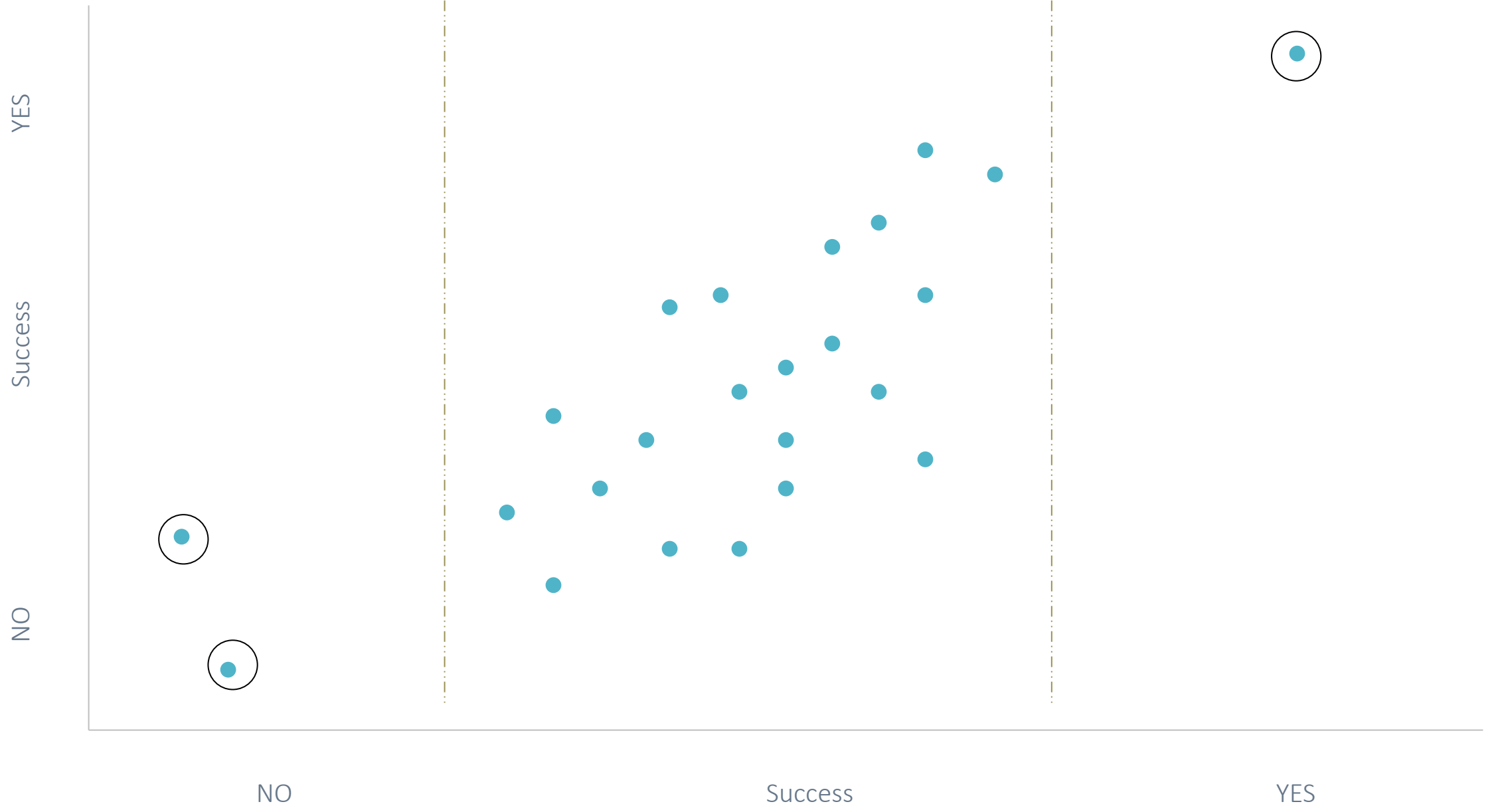
$$(5+5+5+5+5+10+10+10+10+10+10+10+10+10+10+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15+15) = 350 / 30 = \underline{11.67}$$

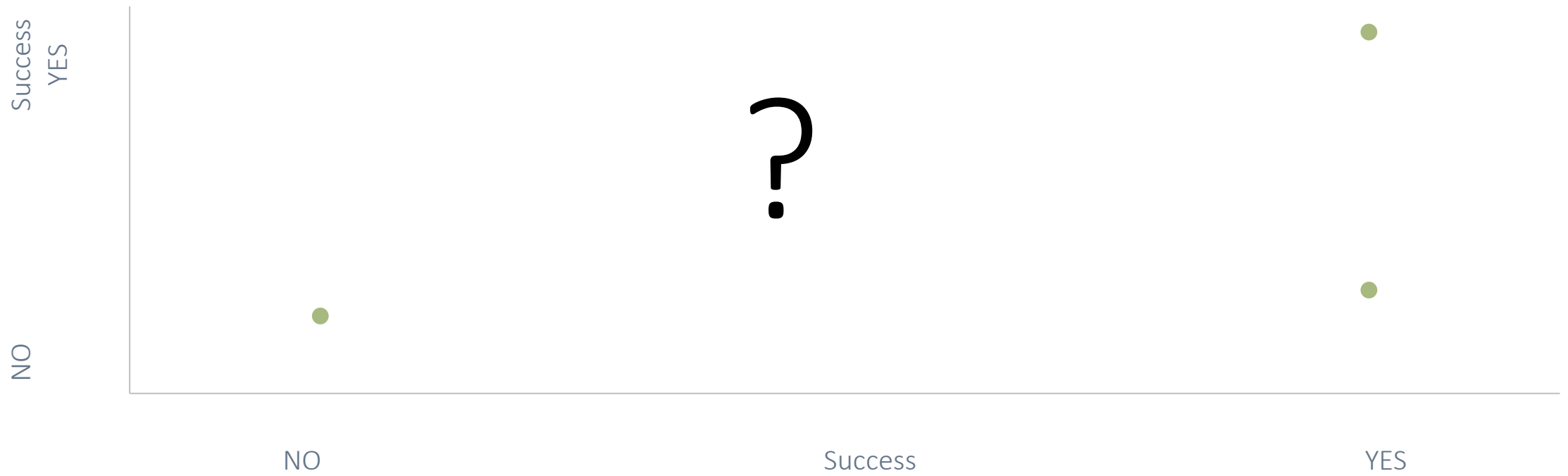
“77% of youth discharged to their biological families...”





What is an “outlier?”





What can we learn from our “outliers?”

How do we understand the unique experiences of our outliers?

Just ask them.



Current Project and Previous Research

Prompt: Everyday Discrimination Scale

(Williams, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997)

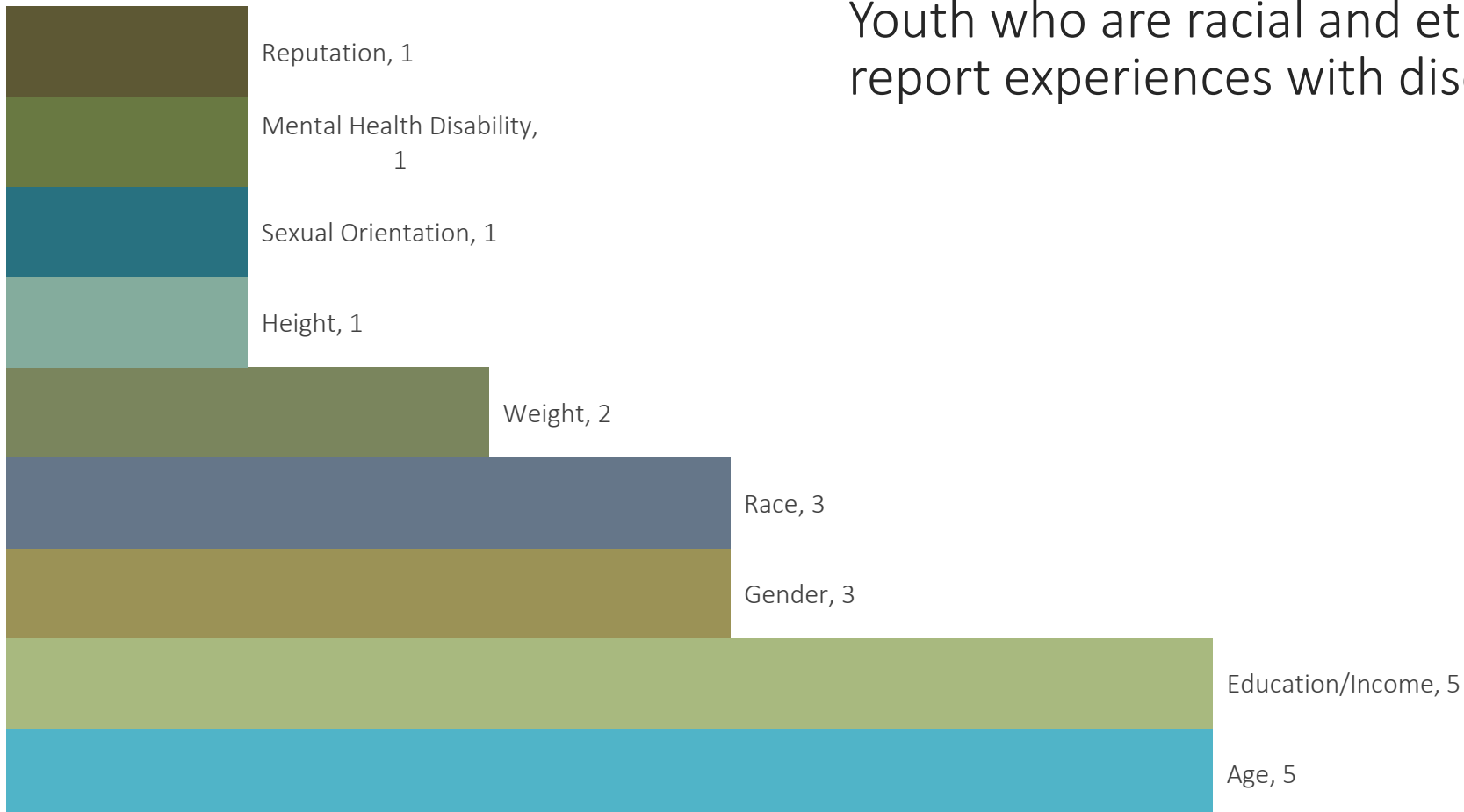
In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you?

1. You are treated with less courtesy than other people are.
2. You are treated with less respect than other people are.
3. You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
4. People act as if they think you are not smart.
5. People act as if they are afraid of you.
6. People act as if they think you are dishonest.
7. People act as if they're better than you are.
8. You are called names or insulted.
9. You are threatened or harassed.

What do you think is the main reason for these experiences? (gender, race, age, sexual orientation etc.)

Why do youth feel that they are outliers?

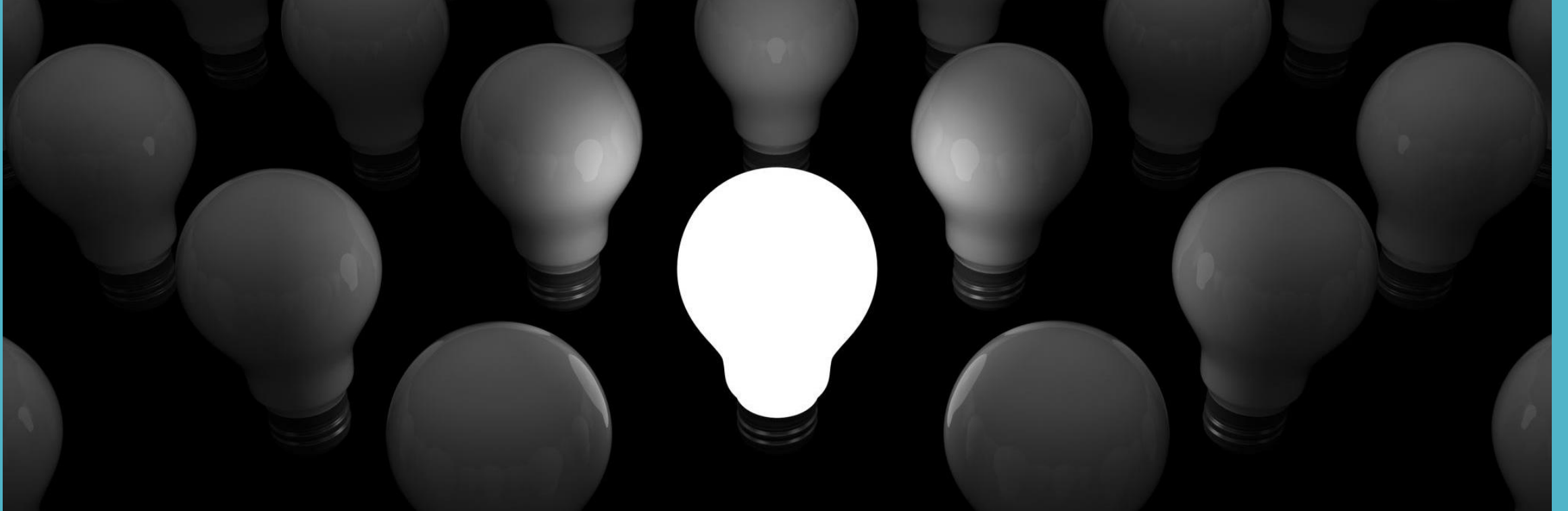
Youth who are racial and ethnic minorities are most likely to report experiences with discrimination (APA, 2016).



“Our society is messed up.”

“People misunderstand me.”

“Assumptions.”



Focus Group Results

Youth and Family Focus Groups

Residential Program
Youth

Alternative Education
Youth and Family

Foster Care Program
Foster Parents

Focus Group Questions

Discrimination

Can you speak to your own personal experiences dealing with discrimination? Do you have any examples where you felt like you were treated differently?

How can we prevent similar things from happening to other kids in your position?

If you could change one thing about how you were treated, what would it be and why?

What questions should we be asking to better understand your experience with discrimination or being treated differently?

Guiding Service

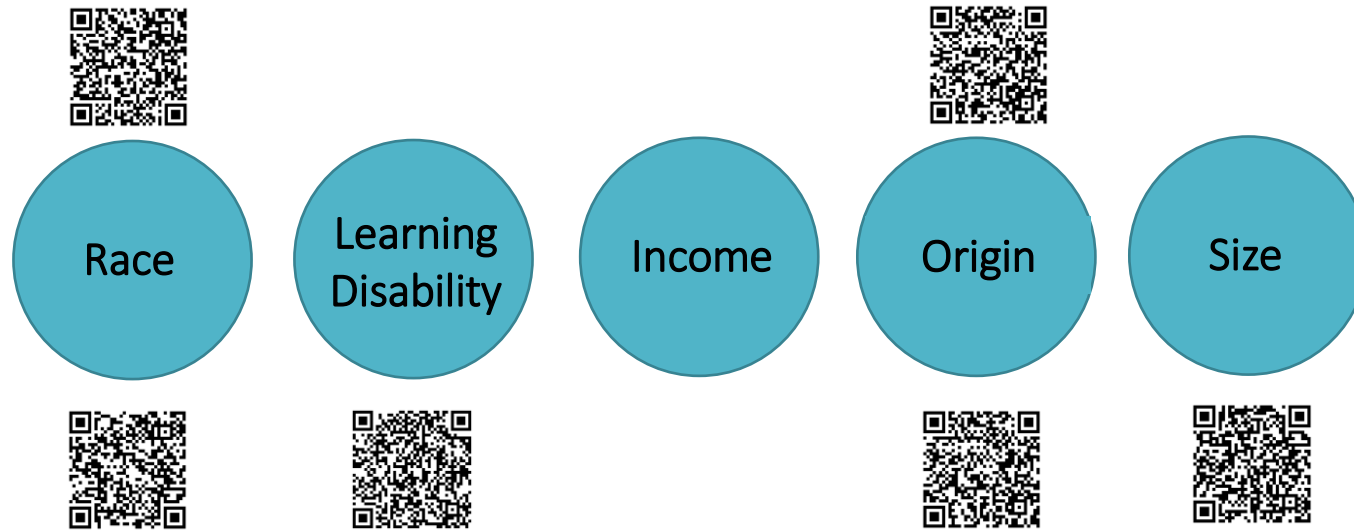
What do you feel you need to be successful in life? While with us?

How can we help or make things better?



Residential Focus Group

All youth had experience with discrimination that they felt contributed to them being in placement



All youth felt that their voices had not been heard and that people make assumptions about them that are not true.



What do you need to be successful?



Support System

“Somebody who would
be there.”

“Someone who
listens.”

“If we ask them to
talk or show up
somewhere, they
will.”

“Someone that
shows they actually
care.”

discrimination in public schools

WHAT STUDENTS AND PARENTS EXPERIENCE

discriminated
against for 'being
different' / 'Ableism'

staff lack
knowledge and
awareness; don't
understand
unique needs

bullied because of:
emotional or physical
disabilities, sexual
orientation, income,
appearance, etc.

parents and students struggle to
get desired resources and
accommodations

Serena,
Parent



Serena,
Parent



Billy,
Student



Donna,
Parent



HOW TO HELP US

Donna,
Parent



**MEET STUDENTS
AND FAMILIES
'WHERE THEY
ARE AT'**

SCHOOLS SHOULD:

- Partner with 'experts'
- Foster relationships with students and families
- Be purposefully inclusive

Donna,
Parent



**STUDENT-LED
IEPS: ASK
STUDENTS TO
EXPLAIN
WHAT THEY
NEED**

Ask youth about themselves! Give them opportunities to share.

*What are you interested in?
What's your identity?*

Carl,
Student



Billy,
Student



Treatment Foster Care Focus Group

Foster parents spoke of discrimination in the foster care system and in the community.



Level of Care



Healthcare



Judicial System



Foster Care Stigma



What can
do to help
or make
things
better?



Listen.



Ally.



Advocate.



Next Steps

How can we help?

1

Listen to us!
Provide
opportunities for
feedback.

2

Trust us!

3

Help us to form
support systems
within our
communities.

4

Check your
assumptions/biases.

5

Help us advocate for
ourselves and our
families.

Questions?

