

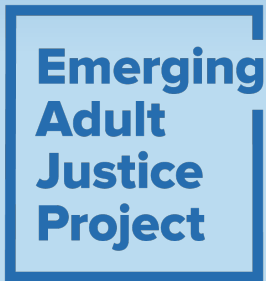


COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | JUSTICE LAB

Youth Justice in the U.S.A:

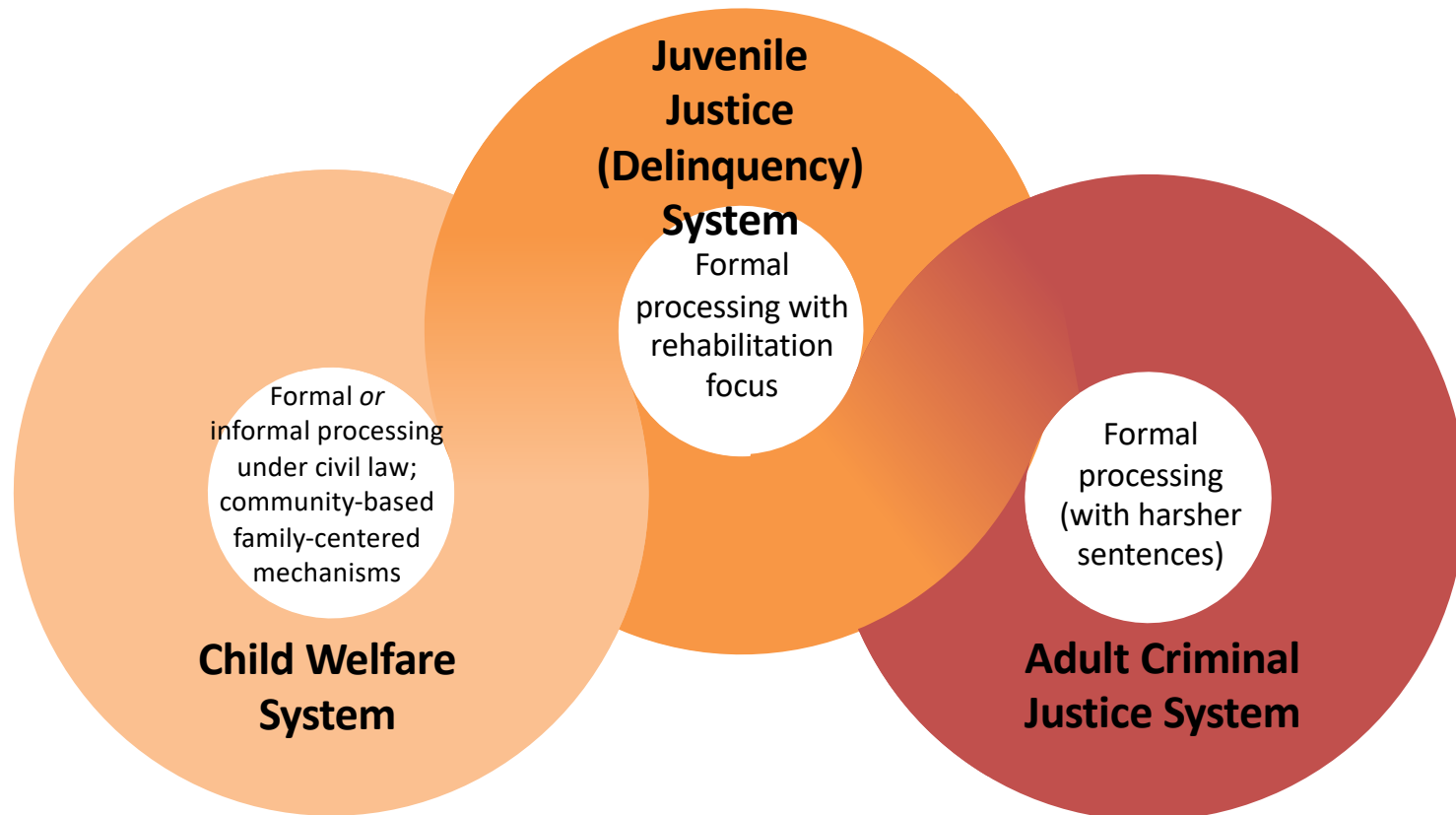
Efforts to Re-define "Youth" To Provide Fair, Effective and Developmentally Appropriate Responses to Both Younger and Older Youth

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3 OVERLAPPING SYSTEMS IMPACT YOUTH



USA

Only Country in the world that sentences juveniles to Life Without Parole

Life Goes On: The Historic Rise in Life Sentences in America, Sent'g Project 11 (2013),
<https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Life-Goes-On.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/H436-6F2U>].

LOWER AGE RANGE of youth justice

NO lower age = 28 states

Age 7 = 1 state

Age 8 = 2 states

Age 10 = 15 states

Age 11 = 1 state

Age 12 = 2 states with exceptions
1 state without exceptions

50 STATES




UPPER AGE RANGE

- **1899**: First juvenile court established in the U.S.; contributes to creation of legal definition of adolescence
 - US states chose **ages 16 - 18** based on norms of the times without any hard evidence



Age trending UP

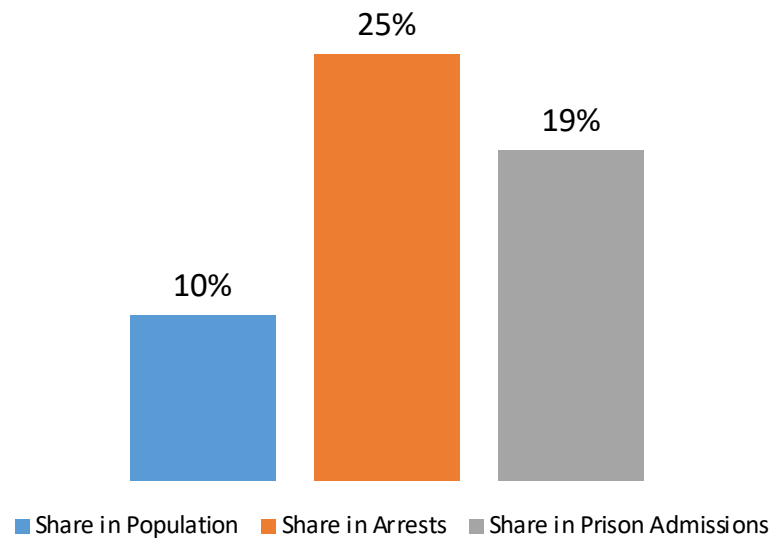
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- States raising lower age range (e.g., Massachusetts)
 - States raising upper age range (e.g., Vermont)
 - States limiting prosecution and sentencing of youth under age 18 in the adult criminal legal system
 - And...
 - Many states serve youth in the juvenile system > age 18 (up to age 25 in OR and WA)
 - Nat'l trend to expand child welfare services > 18
 - Pediatric care guidelines established to age 21 or beyond
 - Legalization of marijuana set at age 21+, alcohol at 21, etc.
 - Youth can stay on parental health insurance until age 26

Why?

- Research in neurobiology, developmental psychology and sociology
- Poor outcomes
- Fairness & equity
- “Peer pressure” – international practices and standards

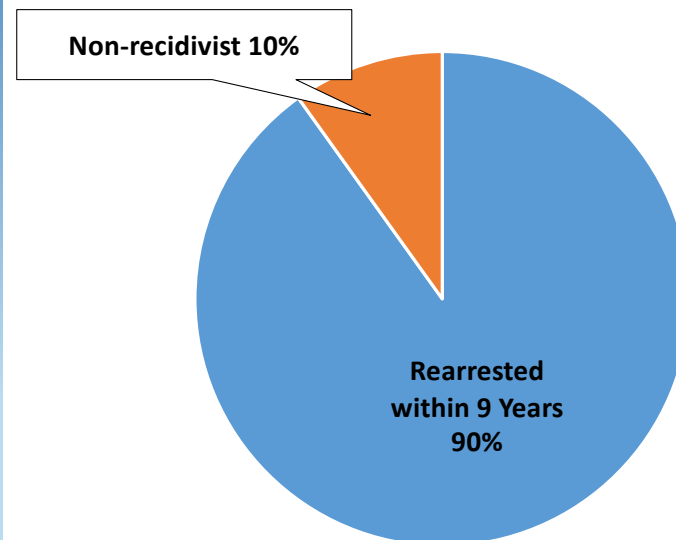
In U.S., emerging adults have a disproportionately large share in adult criminal justice system with poor outcomes.

Share of Emerging Adults in U.S. Corrections, 2016



Sources: Census Bureau, FBI, & National Corrections Reporting Program

9-Year Recidivism Rates 18-to 24-year-olds, U.S.A (2005 Release Cohort)



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

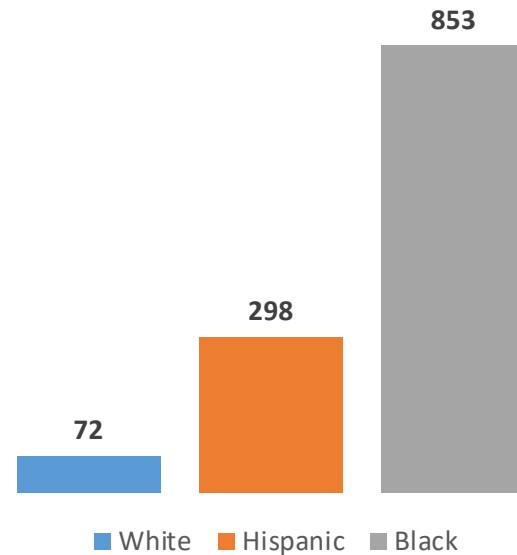


Racial and ethnic disparities of emerging adults in the criminal justice system are stark.

- Black male 18-to 24-year olds compromised 42% of all emerging adults admitted to state and federal prisons in the U.S.A. in 2016.
- Racial and ethnic disparities are highest for younger cohorts (ages 18-19). Black males ages 18-19 are **11.8 times more likely than their White peers to be incarcerated.**

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. "Prisoners in 2016."

Incarceration Rates by Race and Ethnicity
per 100,000 18-to 19-year-old Males,
United States, 2016



Justice involvement **delays and prevents** achievement of key developmental milestones.

A conviction is a barrier to:

- ❖ **Employment:** A felony record cut the employer response rate by half for white male applicants and nearly 2/3 for Black male applicants.
- ❖ **Housing:** Felony convictions restricts access to subsidized housing benefits. Screening for criminal records for rental housing in the private market.
- ❖ **Education:** >90% of college admission officials surveyed consider any felony conviction as particularly negative.
- ❖ **Interferes with elements of desistance**



Recent innovations in **practice**

SPECIAL

- Shift to community investment and community-based responses
- Diversion
- Courts
- Caseloads: Probation, Reentry etc.
- Correctional Units (Jails and Prisons)

Recent innovations in **policies/laws**

- **Raising the age** of juvenile jurisdiction over 18th birthday
- Expanding or creating **hybrid systems** (“youthful offender laws”)
- Expanding or creating opportunities for **expungement**
- Amending **parole laws** (and creating opportunity for re-sentencing)

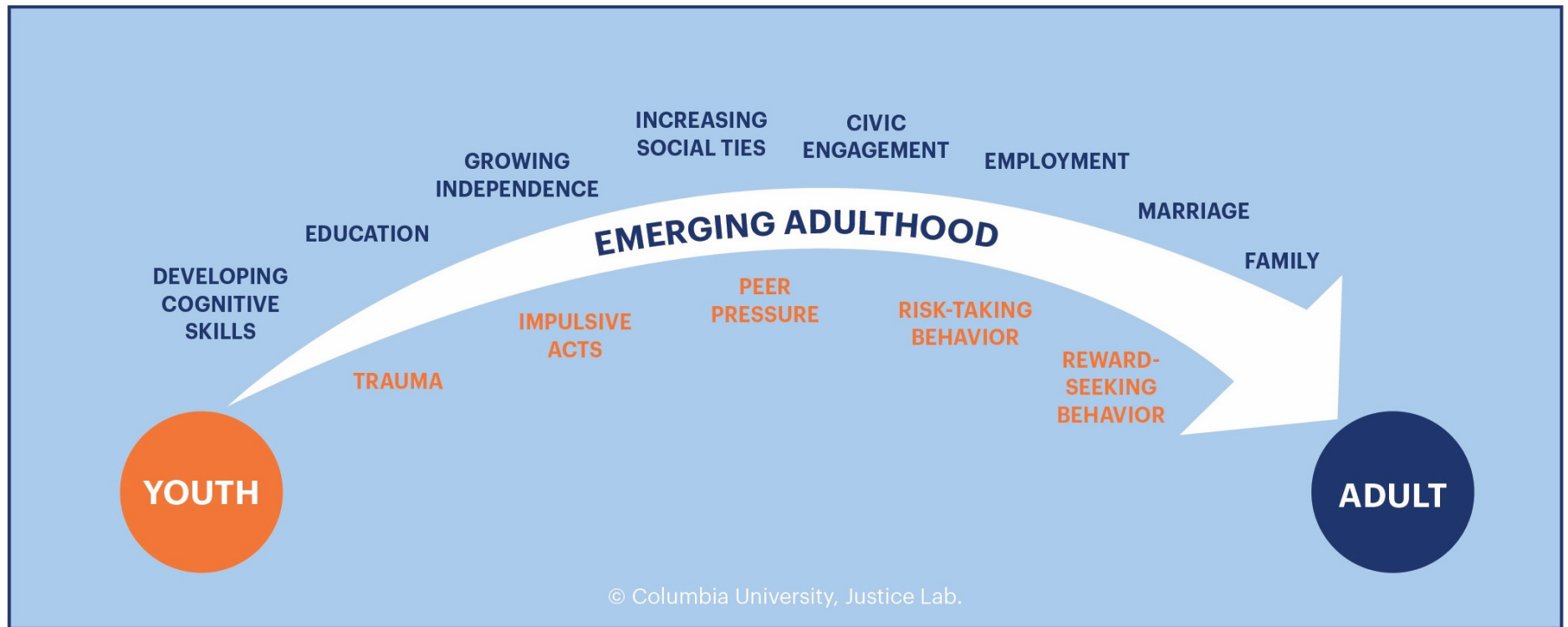


PUBLIC SAFETY CHALLENGE:

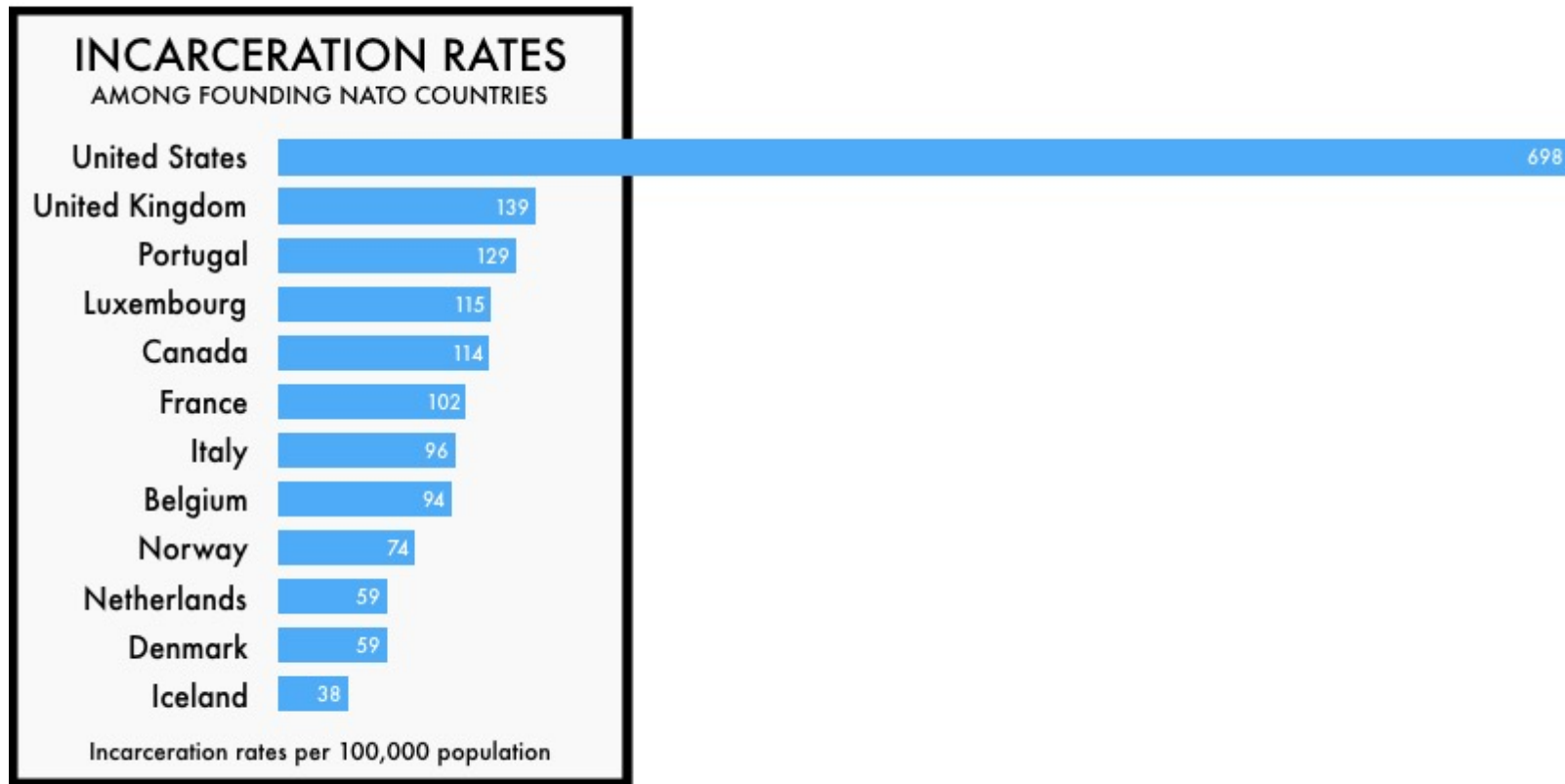
How to support healthy transitions to adulthood & promote positive youth outcomes?



Developmental factors and milestones in transition to adulthood



U.S.A. incarcerates at a substantially higher rate than any other country



Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>