

Promoting Positive Relationships With Youth in Our Communities

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[Webinar Recorded on August 15, 2020]

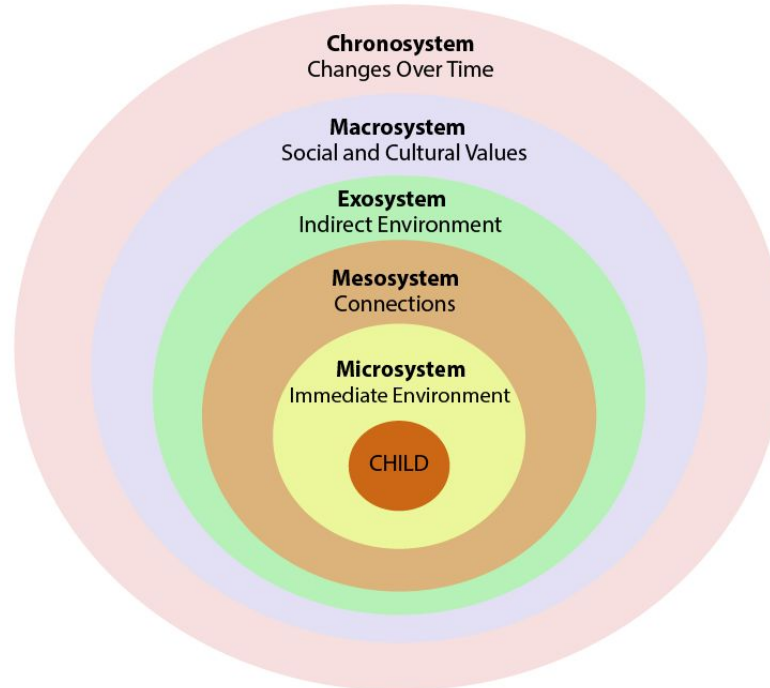
Objectives

- During this webinar, participants will:
 - Understand importance of positive and supportive relationships between at-risk youth and adults in the community
 - Learn about current research on the benefits of these relationships
 - Review approaches adults can use to cultivate relationships
 - Discuss barriers and challenges that arise in developing these relationships with these youth

This webinar was hosted by The Illinois Association
of Juvenile Justice Councils
&
The Southern Illinois
Violence Prevention Project

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



Examples of Students' Interactions Within Ecosystems

Example:

13-year-old Latina student Anna lives in middle-class neighborhood with her parents and siblings. Parents have lived in the U.S. for 10 years, and she has a good relationship with them. She has a good friend group at school but often gets bullied for being an immigrant. Anna has good relationships with her teachers and is in after-school programs. Her parents are worried about their immigration status.

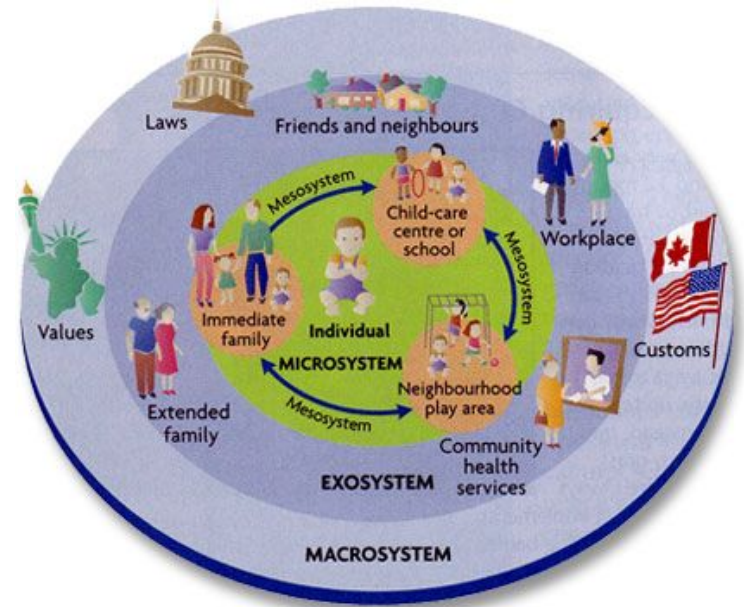


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)

Common Barriers to Developing Positive Relationships with Youth

- Trauma
- Biases



What is Trauma?

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse

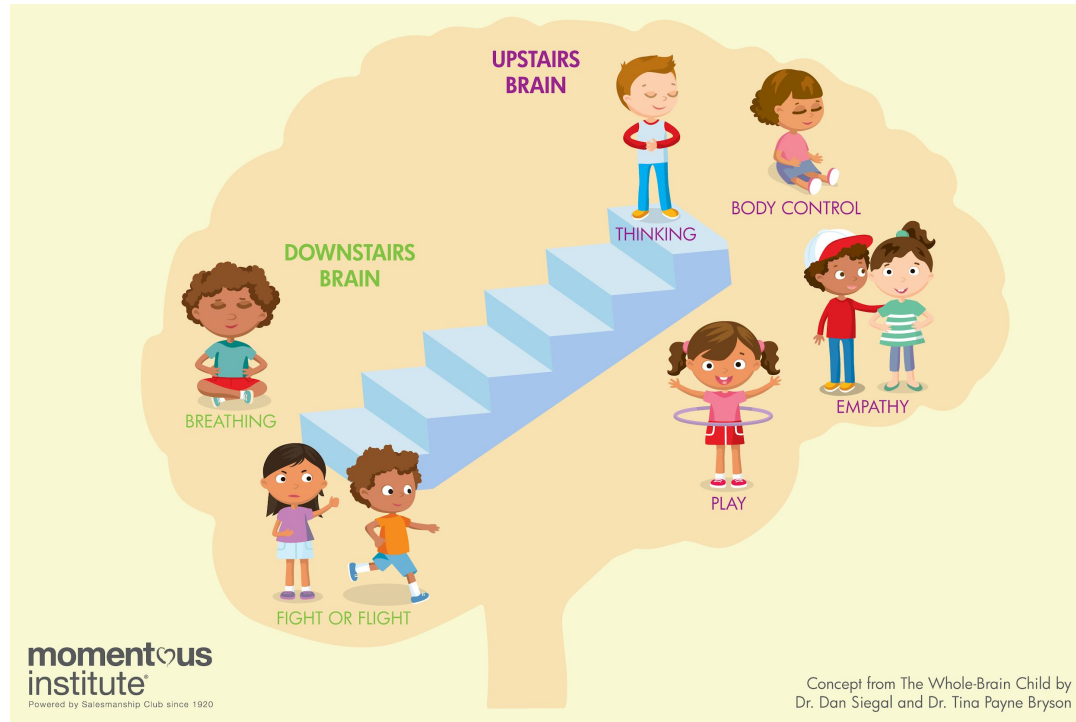


Divorce

Traumatic Stress

- ▣ Overwhelm capacity to cope
- ▣ Feelings of terror, powerlessness, and out-of-control responses
- ▣ Impact:
 - ▣ Sense of trust
 - ▣ Sense of personal safety
 - ▣ View of world and self
 - ▣ Ability to navigate stressful events/changes

Trauma and the Brain





The excessive or prolonged activation of the physiological system in the absence of the buffering protection afforded by stable, responsive relationships.

Biases - What Are They and Why Are They Important?

- Racial and ethnic biases
- Implicit and explicit biases
- Prejudice versus discrimination



Inequality

Unequal access to opportunities

1

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Equality?

Evenly distributed tools and assistance

2

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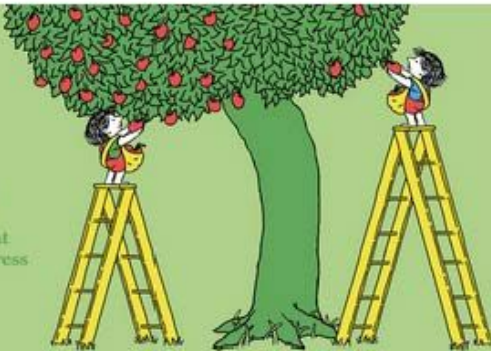


Equity

Custom tools that identify and address inequality

3

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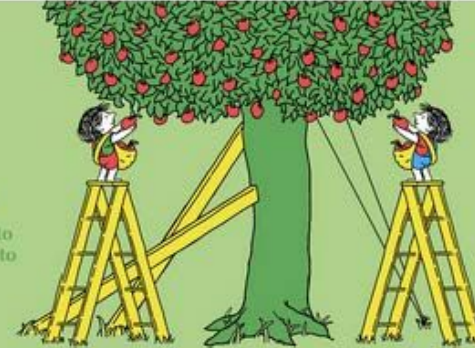


Justice

Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities

4

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Privilege and Bias

What is privilege? What does it entail? How do we discuss privilege with our staff, our students, and others?

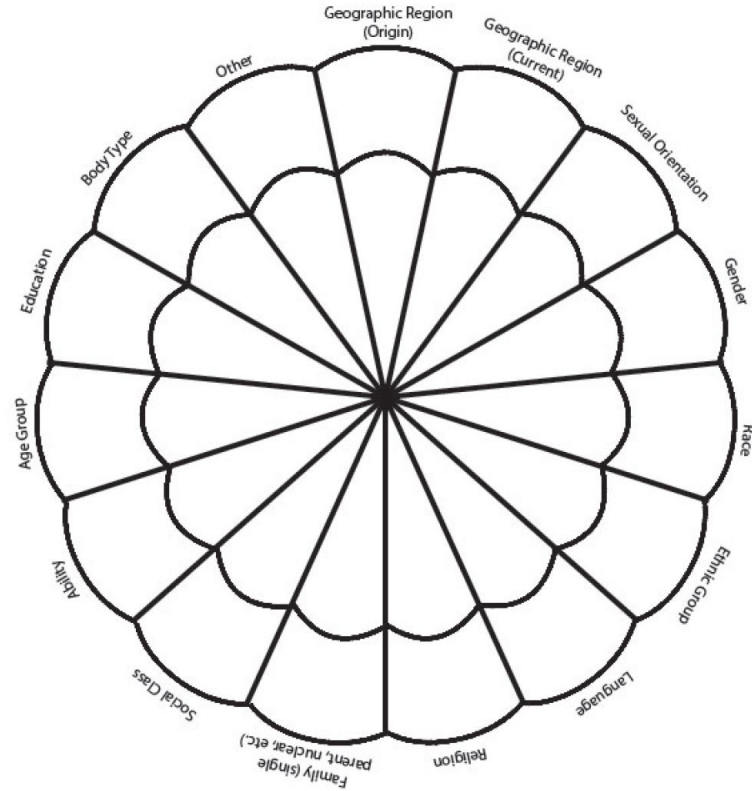
Activity (10 minutes)

On the next page, this is an activity that can be used with youth to help them engage in a discussion about privilege.

STUDENT HANDOUT 2: POWER FLOWER

Fill out the outer section of the petals to identify the socially dominant group for each category.

<https://ccdi.ca/media/1588/toolkit-2-exploring-my-power-and-privilege.pdf>



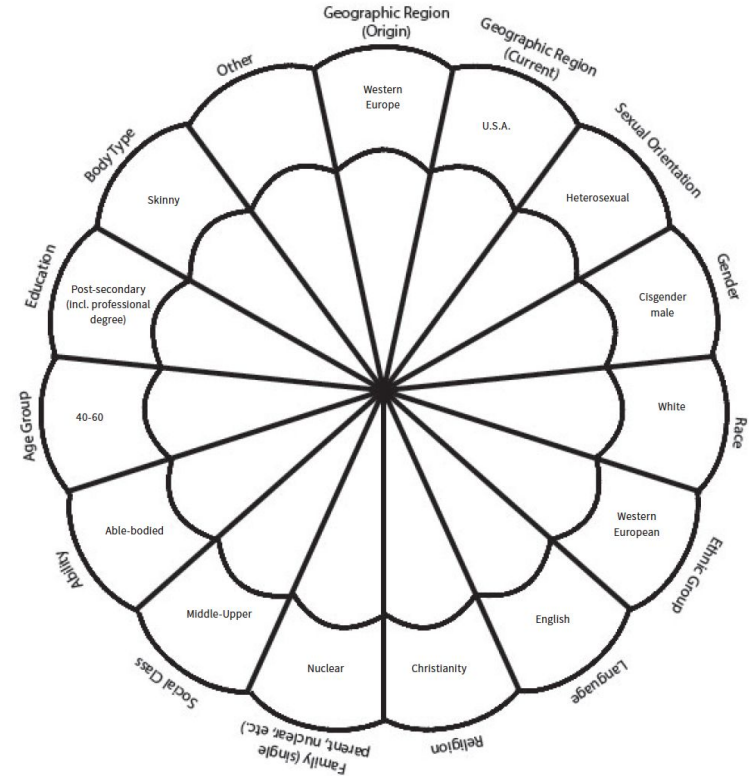
Featured in the Access to Media Education Society's "Racism for Reel" resource guide (2002), this activity was invented by Enid Lee and developed by members of the Doris Marshall Institute in Toronto. It is from the book *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression* by Anne Bishop. (Halifax NS: Fernwood, 1994).

FACILITATOR GUIDE 3: POWER FLOWER

Some suggested outer petal categories (these can change!).

This time, in the inner petals: fill out your personal identity. For example, if you can speak English then you write English-speaker in the inner petal.

What are your thoughts, reactions, and/or reflections with this activity? Things you were surprised about?





Why is the School-to-Prison Pipeline Important?

- Positive student relationships can end the cycle
 - Promoting positive behaviors and intervening in ways that support students in alternative ways (social skills, mindfulness, anger management, and so on)

1.7 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no counselors**.

3 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no nurses**.

6 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no school psychologists**.

10 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no social workers**.

ACLU

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015-16

How Do We Foster Positive Relationships With Our Youth?

Brainstorm ways you personally work on improving your relationships with your youth. What works best? What methods have you wanted to try?

What is a Mentor???



Mentoring Relationships - Characteristics

Relationship Characteristics

- Safe, nurturing, supportive environment to foster development of youth
- Emotionally close and safe
- Trusting
- Instrumental and reciprocal help

Mentor Characteristics

- Warm
- Empathic
- Encouraging
- Positive

Why Should We Promote Mentoring Relationships?

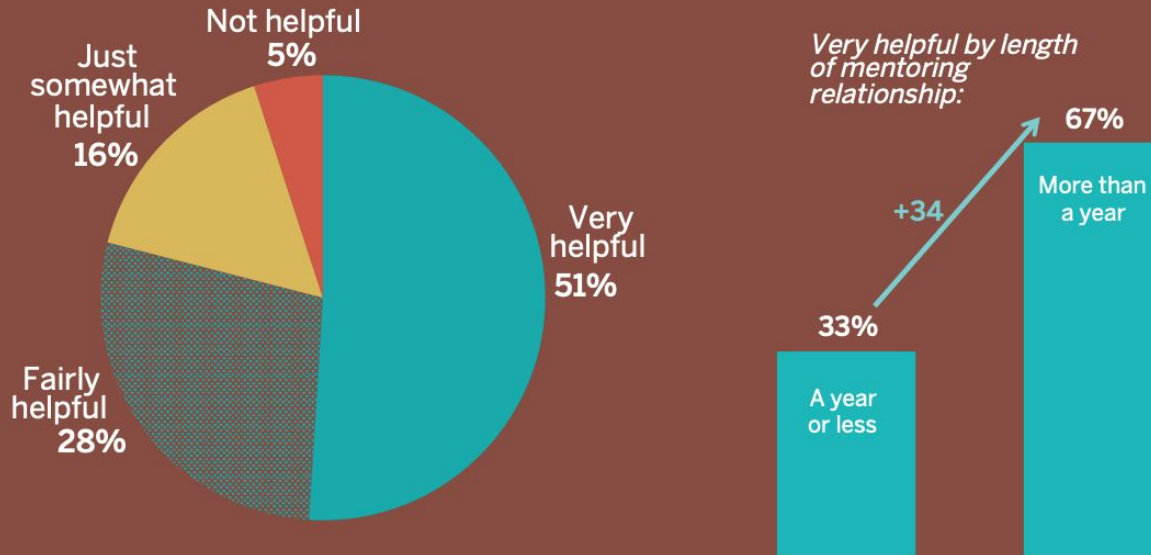
Chart 4: Having had a mentor is correlated with engaging in more positive activities for at-risk youth.



* At-risk youth surveyed who had a mentor = 32% of all young adults; at-risk who did not have a mentor = 20% of all young adults

Chart 6: A large majority of those who had structured mentoring relationships found them helpful. Those in longer relationships even more so.

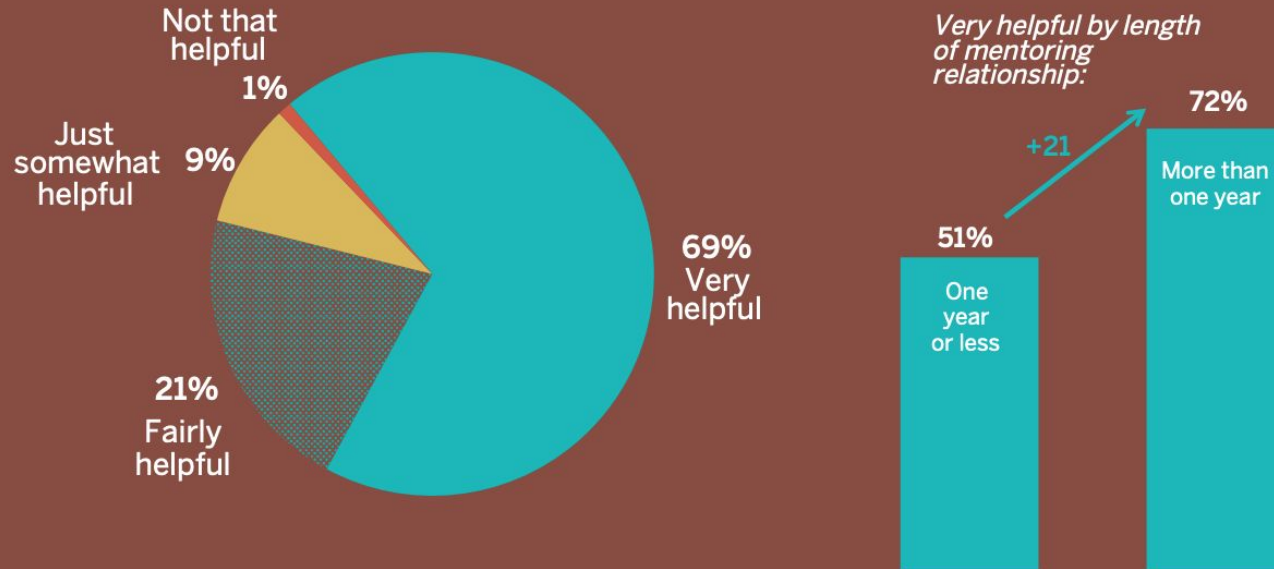
How helpful were your relationships with your mentors in a structured program?*



* Among young adults who participated in structured programs (15% of all youth)

Chart 7: Young adults also found their informal mentoring relationships overwhelmingly helpful.

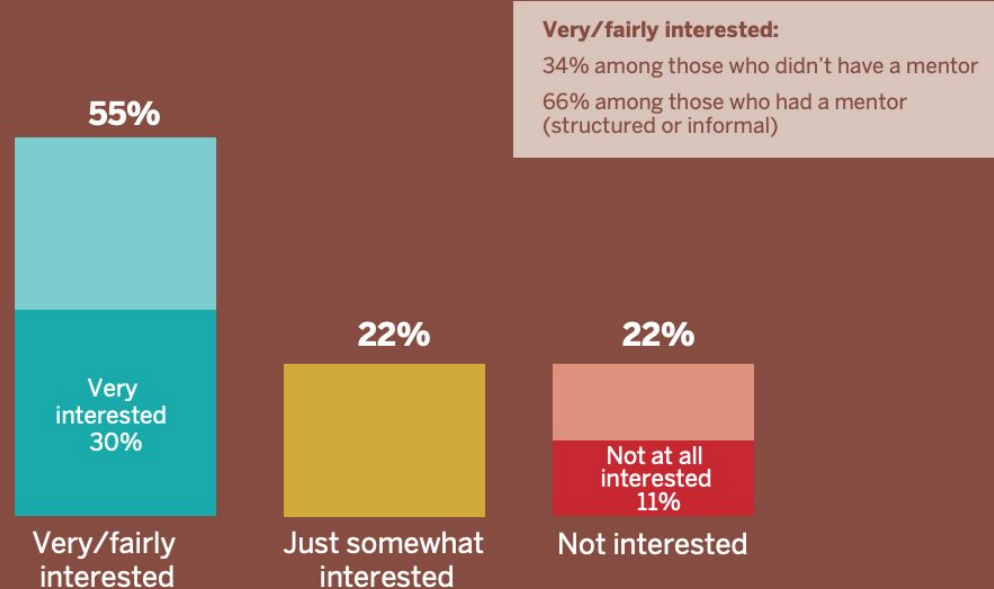
How helpful were your informal mentoring relationships?*



* Among young adults who had informal mentors (62%)

Chart 8: Many young adults are interested in becoming mentors themselves, especially those with first-hand experience of having been mentored.

How interested are you in becoming a mentor to a young person either now or at some point in your adult life?



* Among young adults who had informal mentors (62%)

In Conclusion

- At-risk youth likely experience traumatic events (which can impact their behaviors)
- Historical and systemic circumstances can lead to racial and ethnic bias and discrimination
- Youth interact with multiple systems in their environments, and thus “social change agents”
- As social change agents, we can have significant impact on these youth through informal mentoring relationships

Thanks!

Any questions?

Comments and feedback:

<https://forms.gle/YyYHkpKR4m7oUwBc6>

You can find me at:

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Advocacy
Takes
Courage.



EVERYONE

deserves

A CHANCE TO

bloom



Listen.
Support.
Learn.
Advocate.

BE A
VOICE
NOT AN
ECHO



*Be the
Rainbow*
in someone else's cloud

-Maya Angelou

BE THE
CHANGE
YOU WISH
TO SEE IN
THIS WORLD.

Don't Stand By



Be an Ally

"Be the rainbow
in someone
else's cloud."

Maya Angelou



Unpack
Your
Biases
Learn & Grow

THE TIME IS
ALWAYS
RIGHT TO DO
WHAT IS
RIGHT.

-MLK, JR



UNITED IN
DIVERSITY

**WE
ARE
ONE**



Listen.

Support.

Learn.

Advocate.

Advocacy Takes Courage.





**WE
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Be the Rainbow


in someone else's cloud

-Maya Angelou



**"Be the rainbow
in someone
else's cloud."**

Maya Angelou

The image features a bold, graphic design. The background is a solid red color. On the left side, there is a vertical lime green bar and a horizontal teal bar. Centered on the red background is the text "BE A VOICE NOT AN ECHO" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in four lines: "BE A", "VOICE", "NOT AN", and "ECHO". A long, dark red shadow is cast from the text towards the bottom right corner.

BE A
VOICE
NOT AN
ECHO



Unpack Your Biases

Learn & Grow



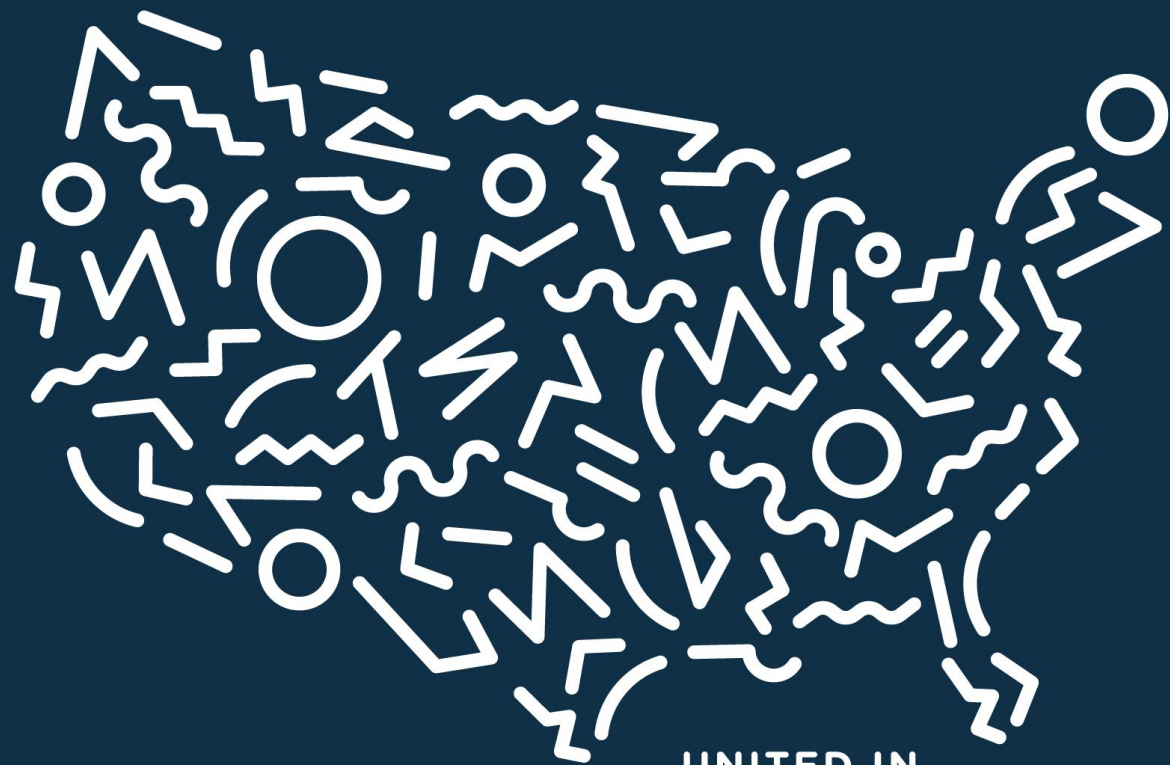
**THE TIME IS
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- MLK JR

Don't Stand By



Be an Ally



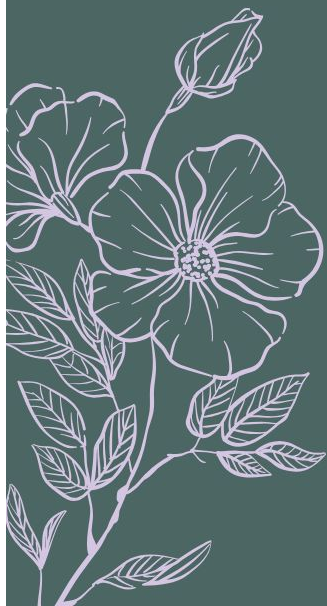
UNITED IN
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EVERYONE

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bloom





**WE ARE
NOT FREE**

UNTIL EVERYONE

IS FREE



BE THE
CHANGE
YOU WISH
TO SEE IN
THIS WORLD.

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Credits

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