

# Uncommon Ground

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Health & Safety of Justice-Involved Young Adults

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# Quick Stats



- 313,000 adults age 18-26 in state or federal prison (sentenced  $\geq 1$  year) at 2011 year-end
- $\cong$  335,000 (about 21% of 750,000) in local or county jails on an average day
- 93% male
- $\approx$  61% black or Hispanic

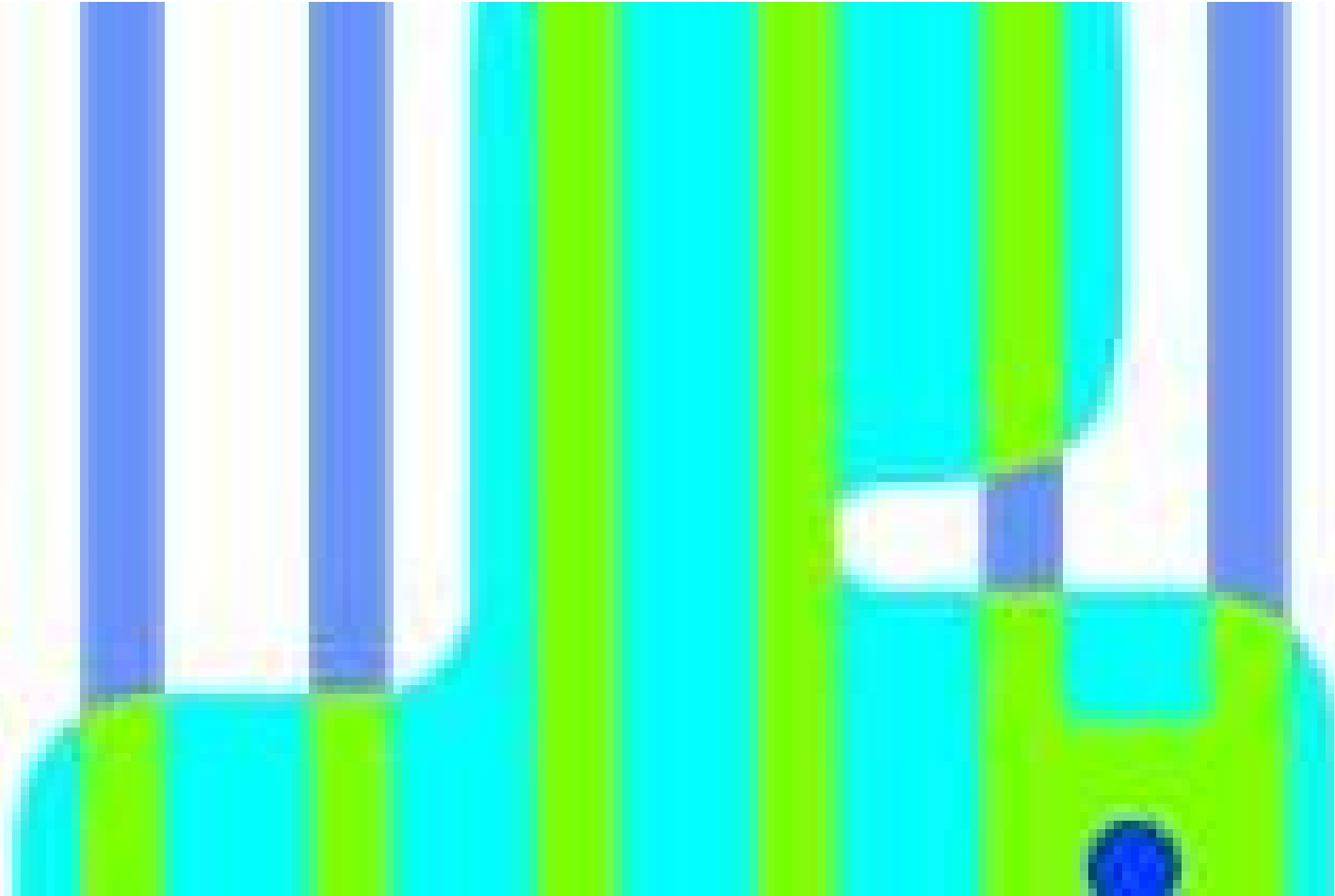
# Paucity of research



- Scant age-specific literature
- Uninformed policy
- Generally, young & old treated the same
  - Rigid & barren fortresses
- Retributive vs. restorative justice



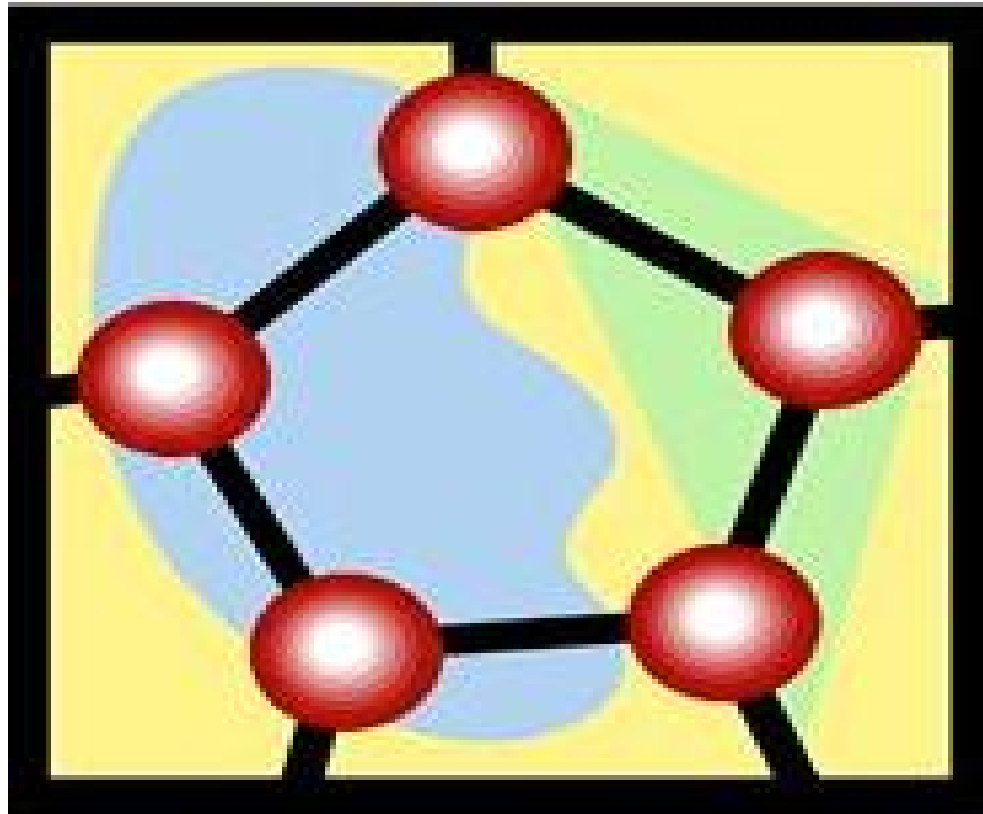
Imagine a 19 year-old first timer



# How did he get there?

- Mass incarceration through law and strong economic drivers
- High incarceration rates concentrated in a few impoverished communities
- Few alternatives to incarceration
- Meager community-based prevention and treatment programs for addiction and mental illness

# Structural Challenges





- STI, HIV, Hepatitis C
- Suicide (>400/year in jails alone—all ages)
- Asthma
- Future burden of other chronic disease
  - Hypertension, diabetes, elevated lipids, HIV, hep C
- Pregnancy & parenthood
- Social impact of parental incarceration
- Damaged social capital in communities & reduced social control



# Challenges unique to prison



# Affordable Care Act Opportunities for Change?



# Research & policy challenges

- Evidence-based data on young adults behind bars
  - Scant extant data on STI, risk behaviors, mental illness
  - No data on suicide, nutrition, immunity, chronic disease
  - No data on effectiveness of risk reduction, minimization of harm, continuity of care on release

# Research & policy challenges

- Drive public policy through high-level leadership
  - Reduce mass incarceration through alternatives
  - Reduce risk of damaging social capital and improved social control in 3-4 neighborhoods in each city
  - From what we know
  - From what we learn

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