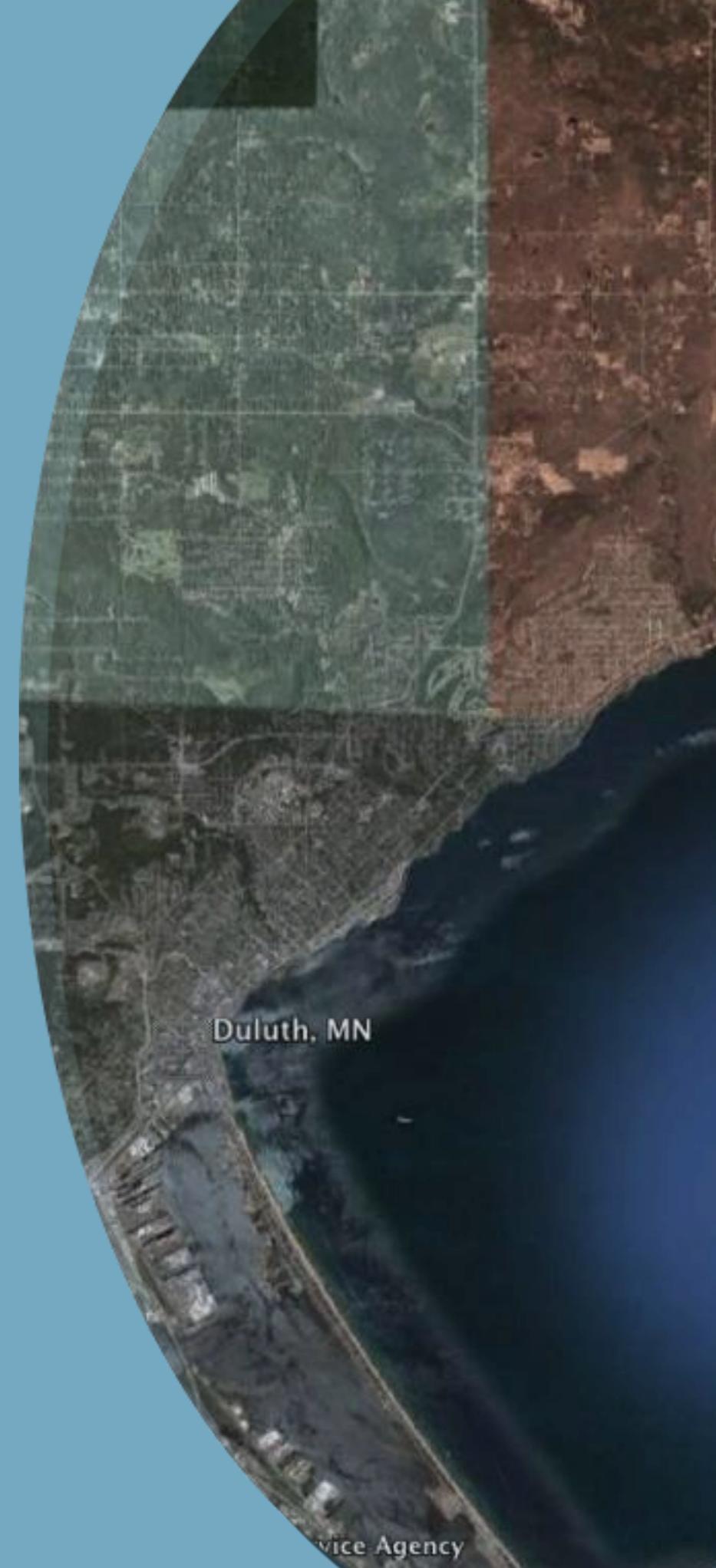




# Permanency Values & Best Practice

Bob Lewis 2010



# Our Shared Goal

- To make permanence as intuitive as safety:
- No children will come into care who need not
- To preserve a youth's culture
- No child will age out of our care



*To every child we take into care  
Minnesota makes a promise...*



***“In loco parentis”***



*For them it is just as urgent*

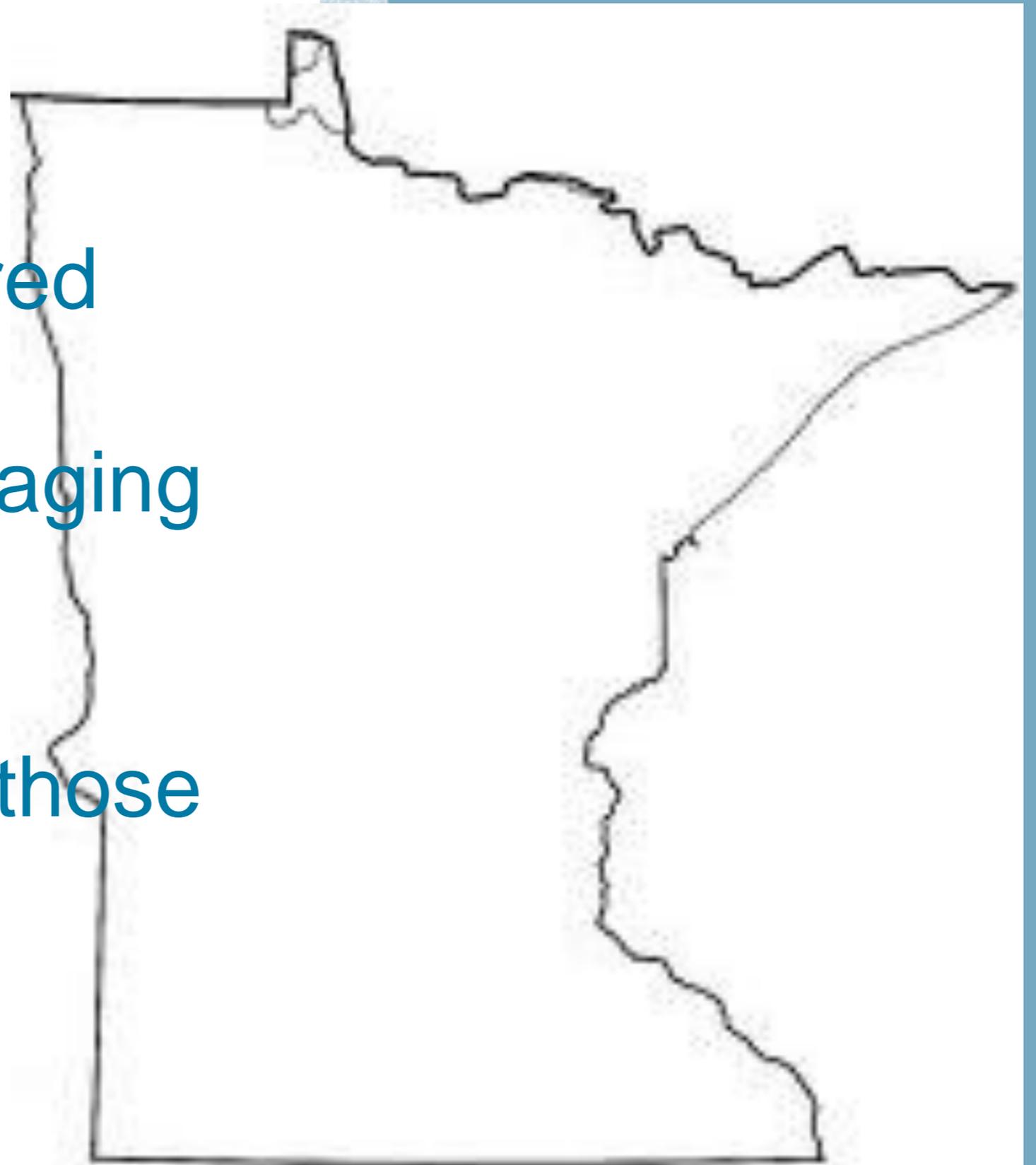
# Changing Perspective





# Today

- Concurrent Permanency Planning/Shared Parenting
- Finding & engaging fathers (both parents)
- Reaching out those who love the child(ren)
- The courts involvement
- Teen permanence



# Permanence is...

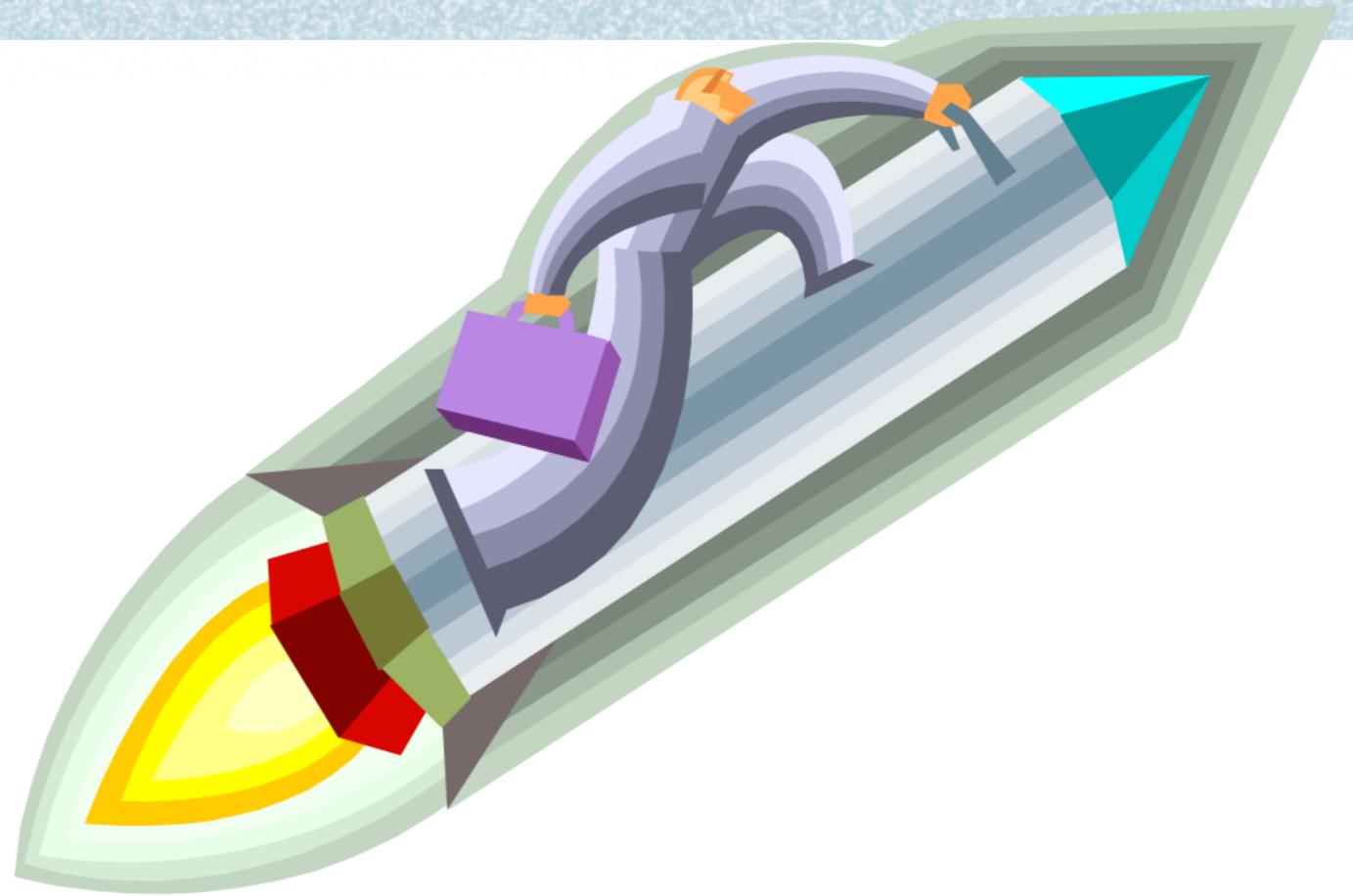
- What is the most common form of permanence?
- What does permanence look like when you think of it?
- What is the most unusual permanence situation you've seen?
- Belonging

# What About...

- Return home?
- Living with relatives?
- Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
- Independent Living?
- College
- Job Corps
- Permanence is NOT the consequence of failure
- A placement is not permanence; permanence is not a place

# We measure permanence by....

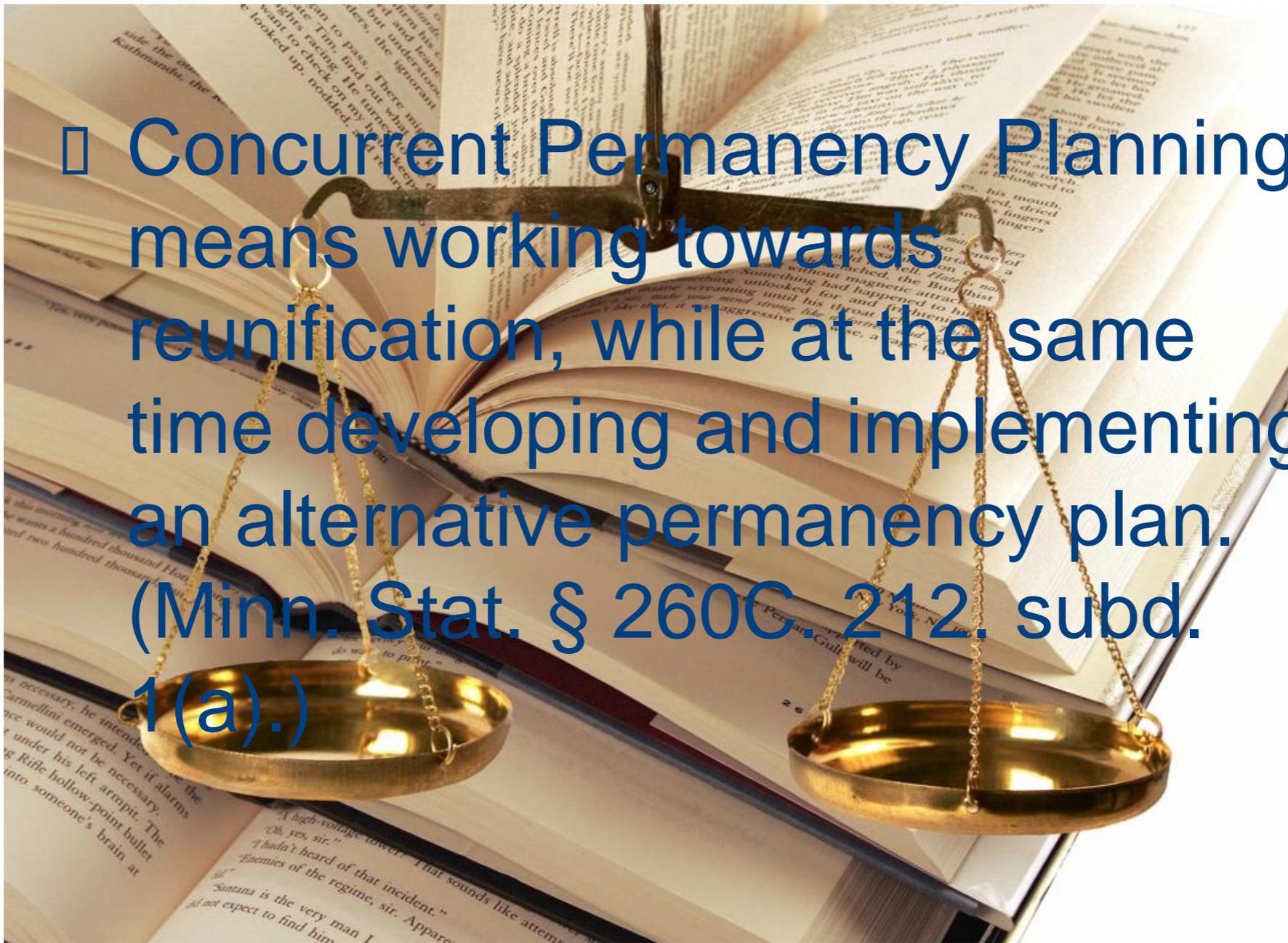
- **Intent**
- **Commitment**
- **Belonging**
- **Status**



It's Not Rocket Science ...

# Concurrent Permanency Planning

- Concurrent Permanency Planning means working towards reunification, while at the same time developing and implementing an alternative permanency plan. (Minn. Stat. § 260C. 212. subd. 1(a).)



# Shared Parenting

- When have you ever had someone else's child for a while? What did you do for your child?
- What does shared parenting mean to you?
- Thinking beyond yourself...

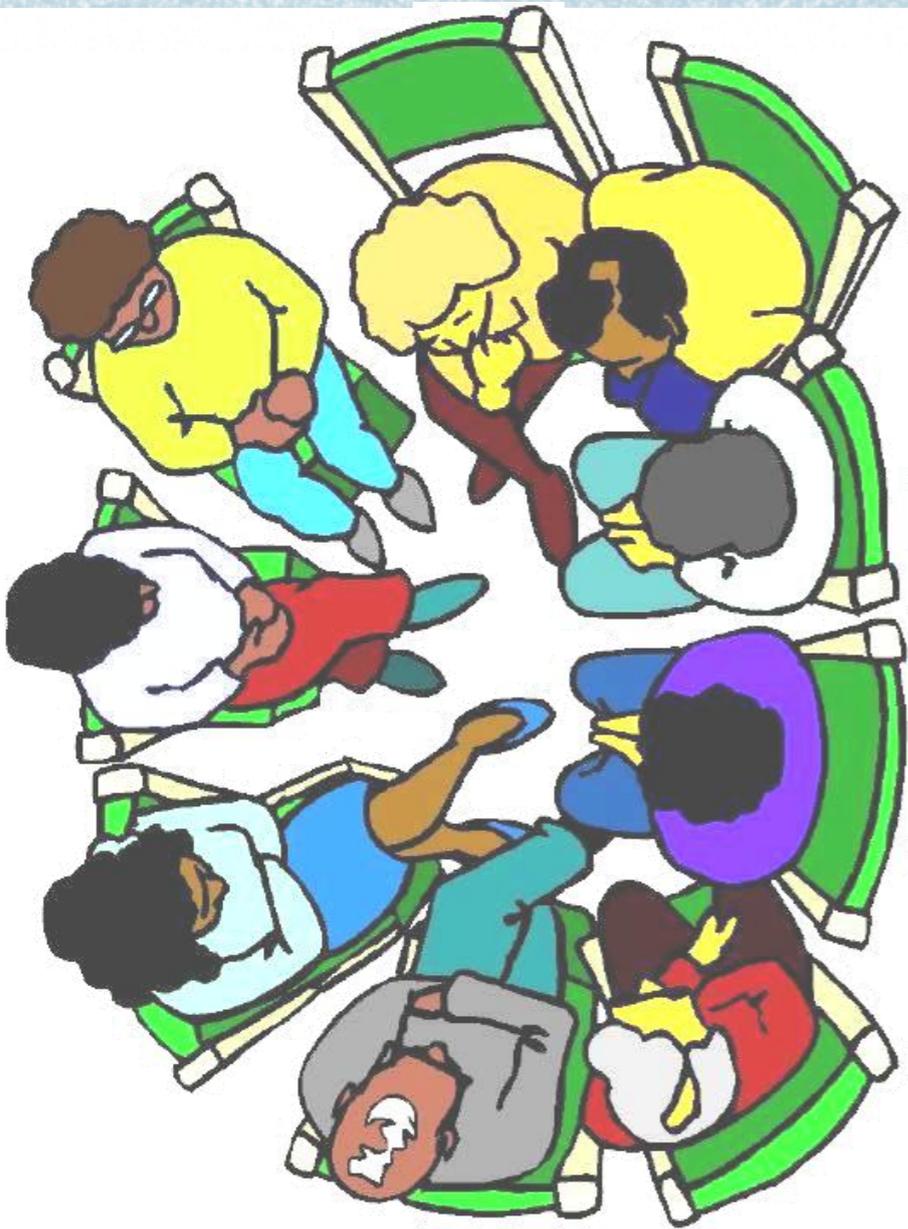


# Shared Parenting

- ...is a vessel  
that holds the whole process  
of parenting:
- The eyes and ears and hands for **safety**,
  - The connections for **permanence**,
  - The nurturing for development and **well-being**.



# Elements



- Two or more caring adults, each taking a significant and substantial responsibility.
- Primary & urgent focus on the child or young person.
- Dynamic, developing relationships<sup>4</sup> expect change.
- Child welfare initially takes power, shares power, invests resources, cedes power to new vessel of safety, permanence and wellbeing.
- Everybody sharing and holding responsibility.

# Elements

- Youth voices heard and respected.
- Clarity of process: responsibilities, power, communication and authority within the vessel.
- Support from formal and natural helping networks.
- Respectful, collaborative relationships between the adults, e.g. “cooperative colleagues” \*
- Determination to hold the vessel together: mutual respect and collaboration may be less than ideal.



Highest degree of legal security possible.

# Shared Parenting

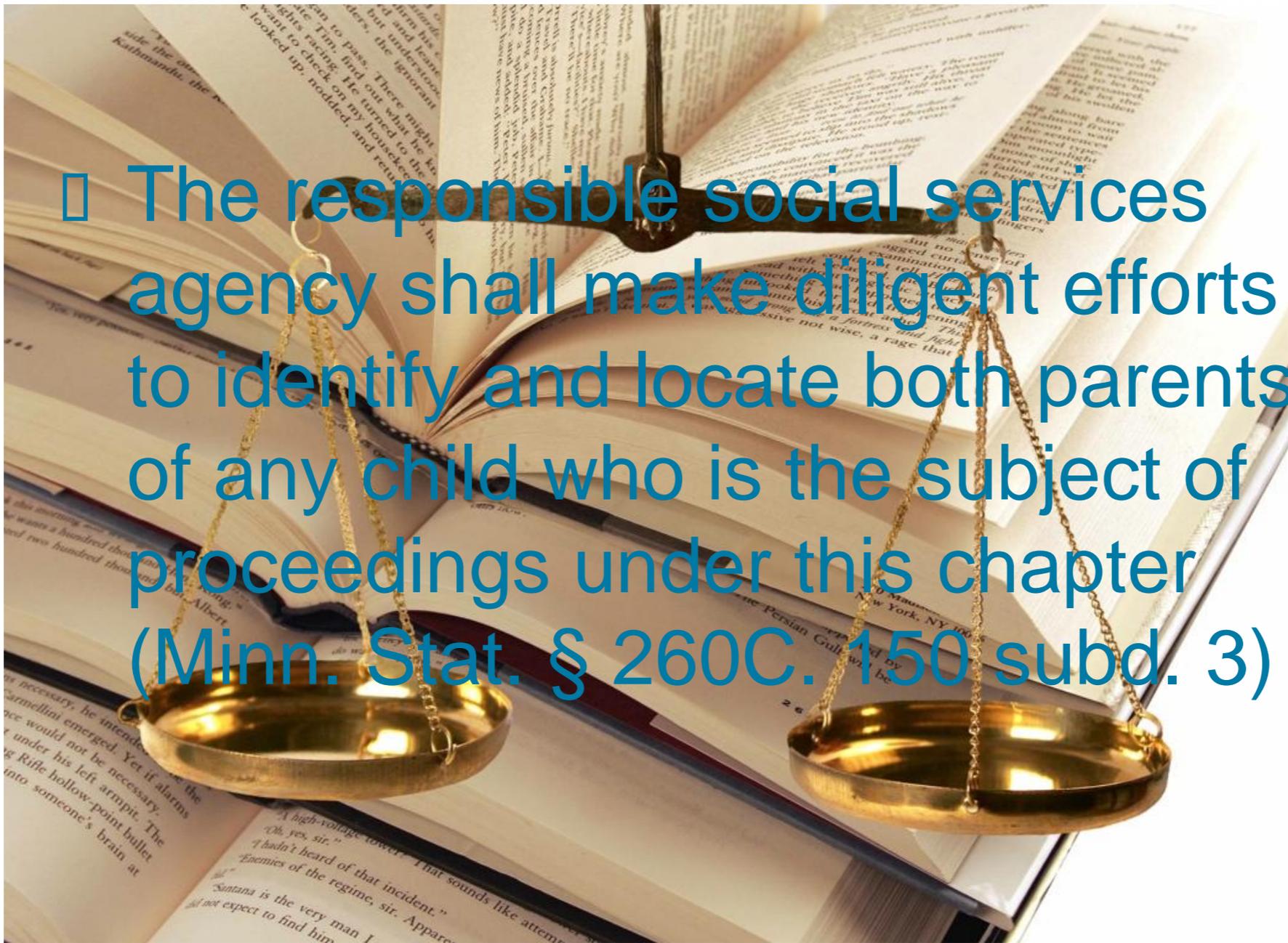
## Where to Begin\*

- Assessment
- Education
- Advocacy
- Facilitation of negotiations
- Continuing support & troubleshooting.



# Identifying Parents

- The responsible social services agency shall make diligent efforts to identify and locate both parents of any child who is the subject of proceedings under this chapter (Minn. Stat. § 260C.150 subd. 3)



# Fathers



# Continuum of Permanence

- Support, formal and informal
- Recruitment (everyone's business)
- Systemic Approaches
- Preparing for (Re)Connection
- Talking with Children & Teens
- Child & Youth Development
- Making & Convening Connections
- Recognizing & Preparing Resources
- Finding Connections/Shared Parenting
- Recognizing the Urgency

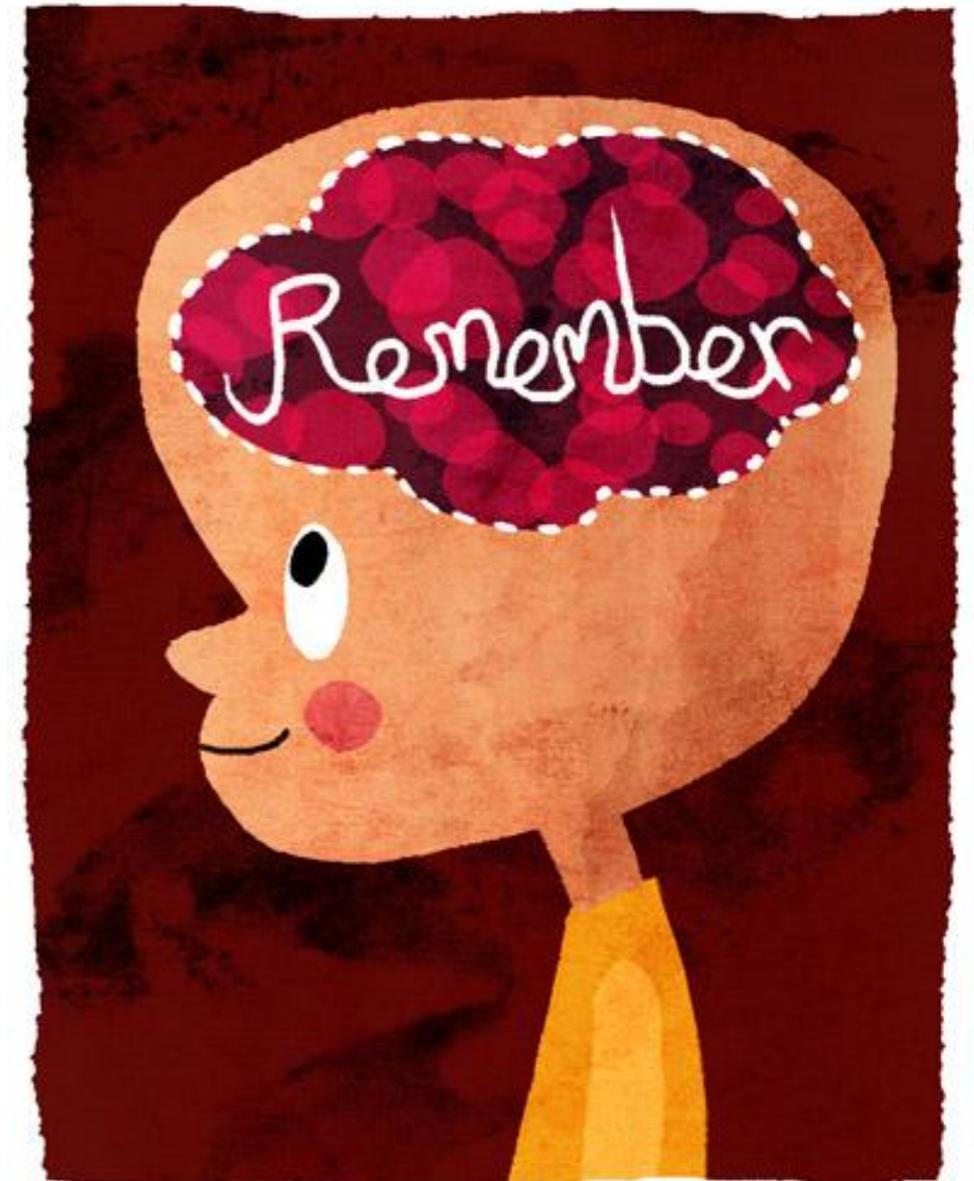


# Relative Search

- The responsible social services agency shall exercise due diligence to identify and notify adult relatives prior to placement or with in 30 days after the child's removal from the parent.... the search shall be reasonable and comprehensive and may last ... until a fit and willing relative is identified. (Minn. Stat. § 260C.212 subd. 5)

# Finding Connections

- Helping parents/children/youth identify connections
- Making contact with potential connections
- “Family Finding”
- Record review/mining



# Don't leave anyone out



- ← Birth family & kin
- ← All other important people
- ← Connections across “professional” boundaries

# Finding Connections to



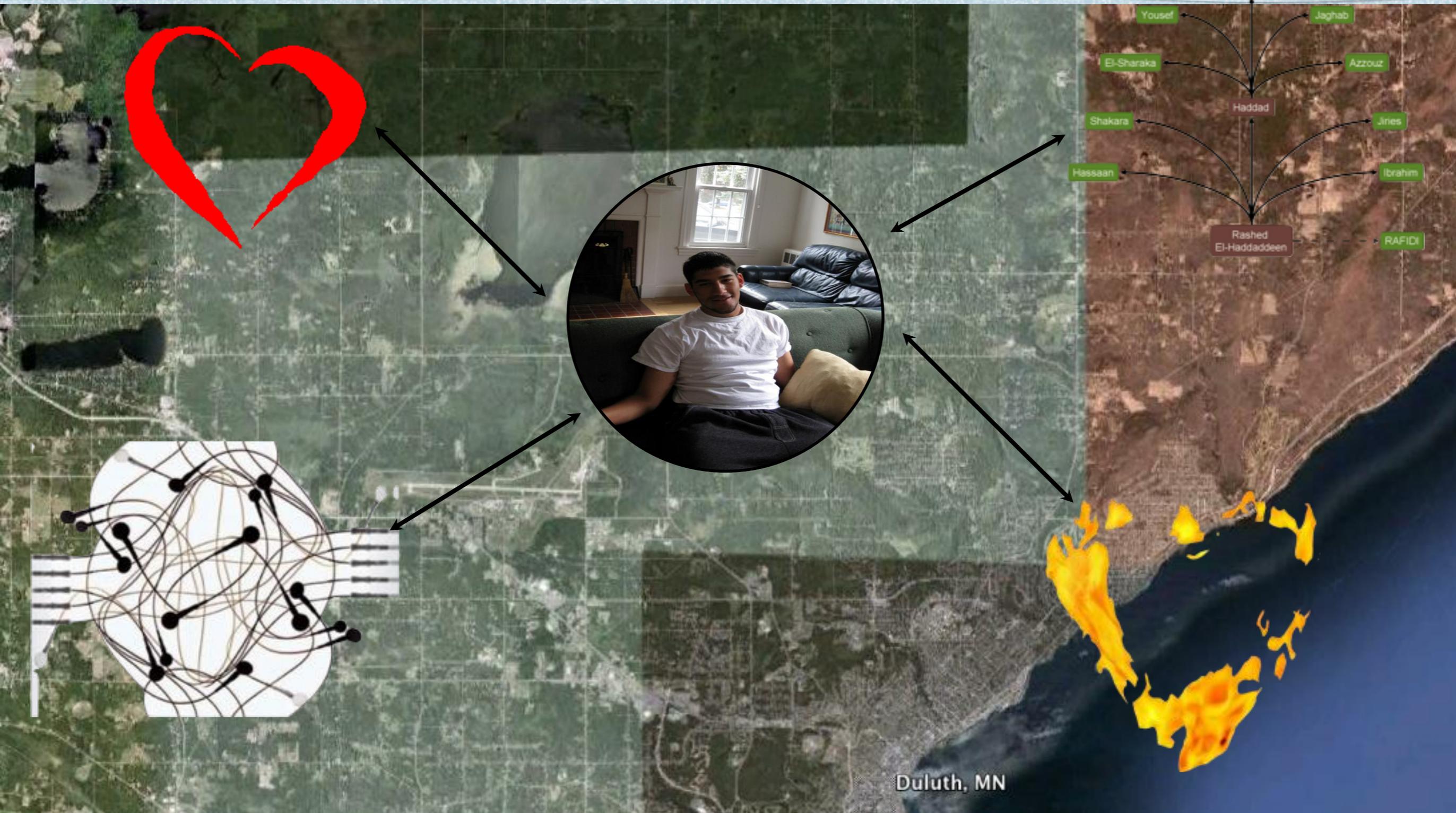
 **Heart**

 **Windle**

 **Bodlyg**

 **Berson**

# Connections Mapping



Duluth, MN

# The Remembered People Chart

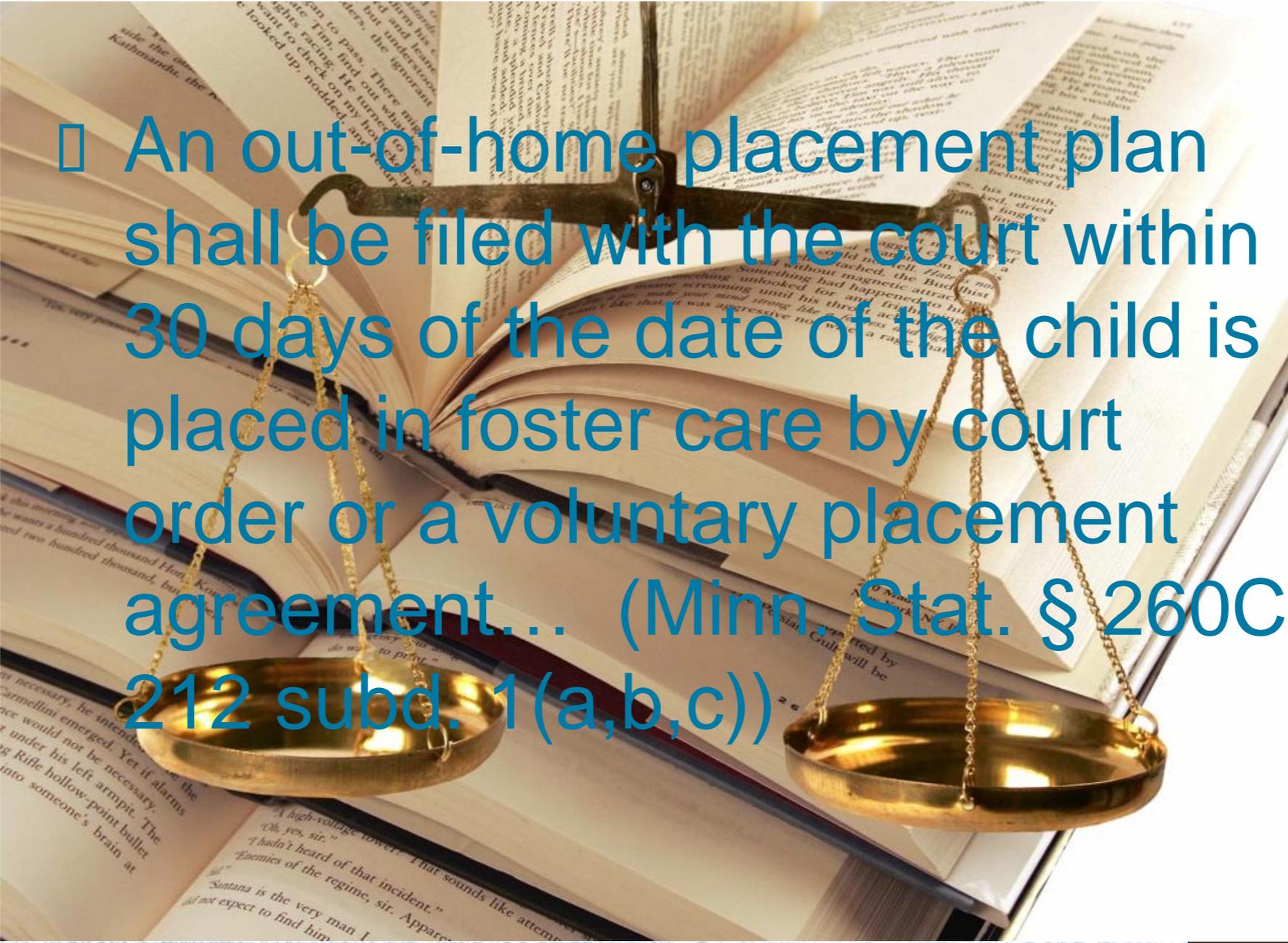
Age	$\leq 2$	$\leq 11$	$\leq 15$	$\leq 19$	
Where I lived					
Who I remember					
What I miss					

# Asking (calling) the Questions



- Everyone needs to be “somebody’s special someone”.
- 👉 Are you the one?
- 👉 Will you help find the one?
- 👉 How will you stay connected?

# The Court & The Plan

- 
- An out-of-home placement plan shall be filed with the court within 30 days of the date of the child is placed in foster care by court order or a voluntary placement agreement... (Minn. Stat. § 260C.212 subd. 1(a,b,c))

# Incorporating Permanency

- Shared Vision
- Shared Responsibility
- Shared Action
- Shared Parenting
- Weaving Family Ties



# A Variety of Relationships

## ◆ Building

◆ Birth father never involved

◆ Child care worker  
other staff

◆ Sibs foster/adoptive  
family

◆ Friend's parents

## ◆ Mending

◆ Grandparents: not seen  
in 5 years

◆ Mother now sober/drug  
free

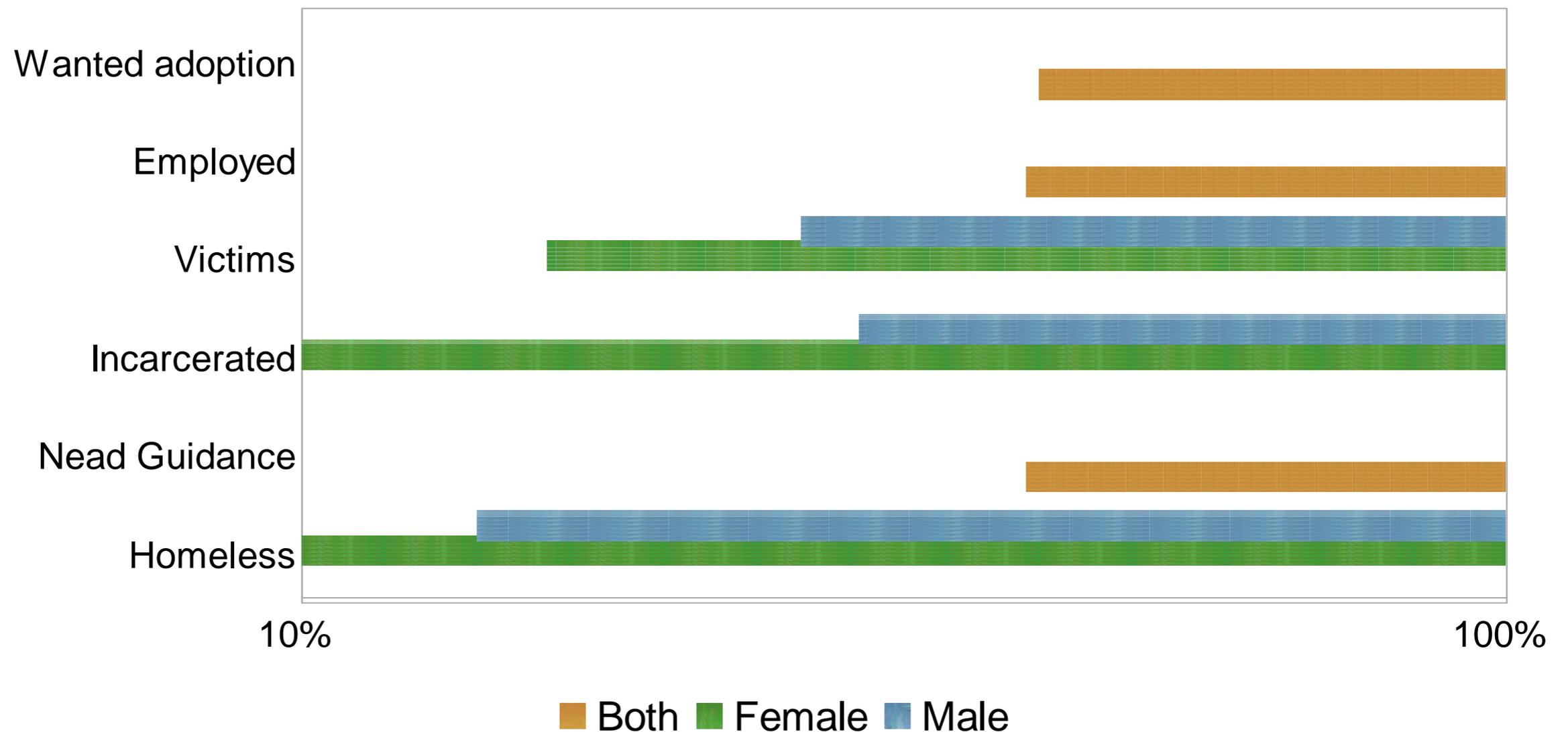
◆ Parents previously  
abusive, neglectful

◆ Past foster/adoptive  
families

# For older youth...

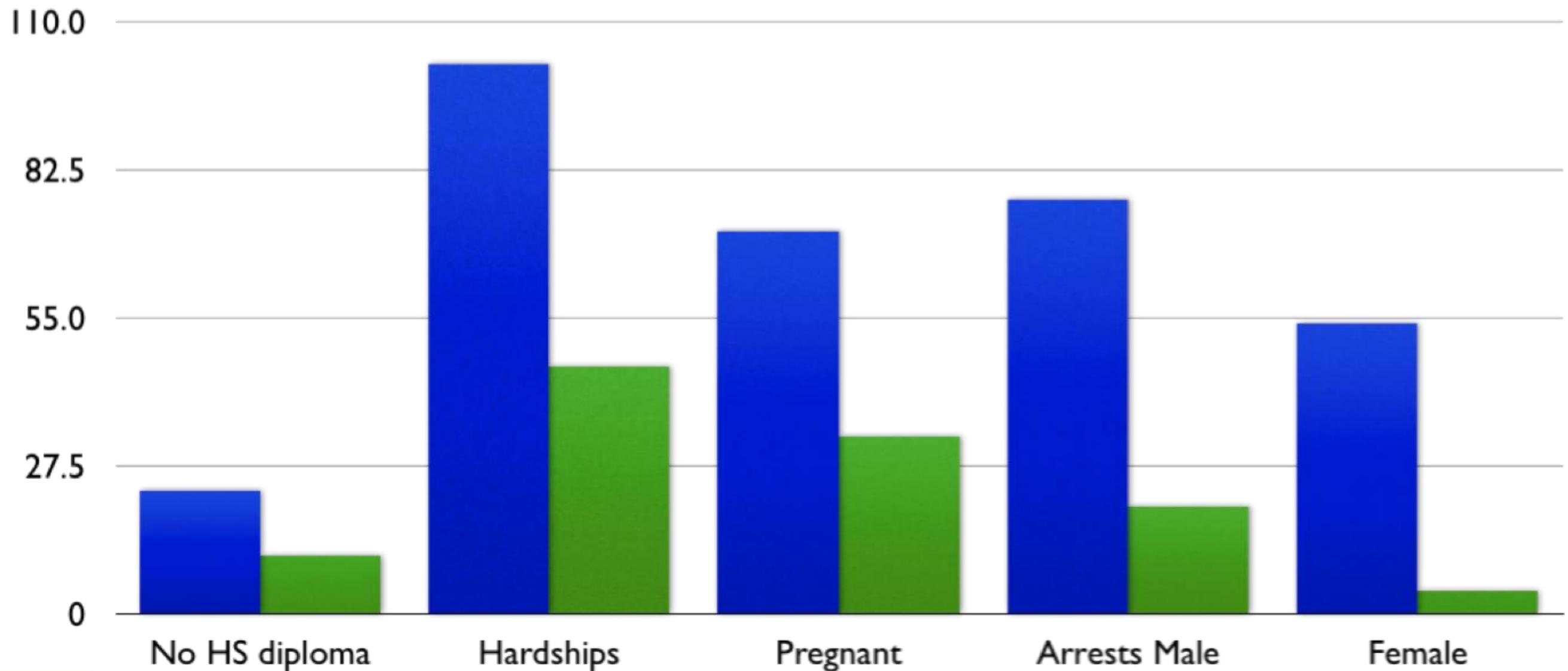
- When a child is age 16 or older, at the the required in-court hearing the court shall review the independent living plan and the the provision of services to the child related to the well-being of the chid as the child prepares to leave foster care. (Minn. Stat. § 260C. 212 subd. 7(d))

# Former Foster Youth: 12-18 months. after aging out



# Midwest Study '07

Midwest Study Add Health

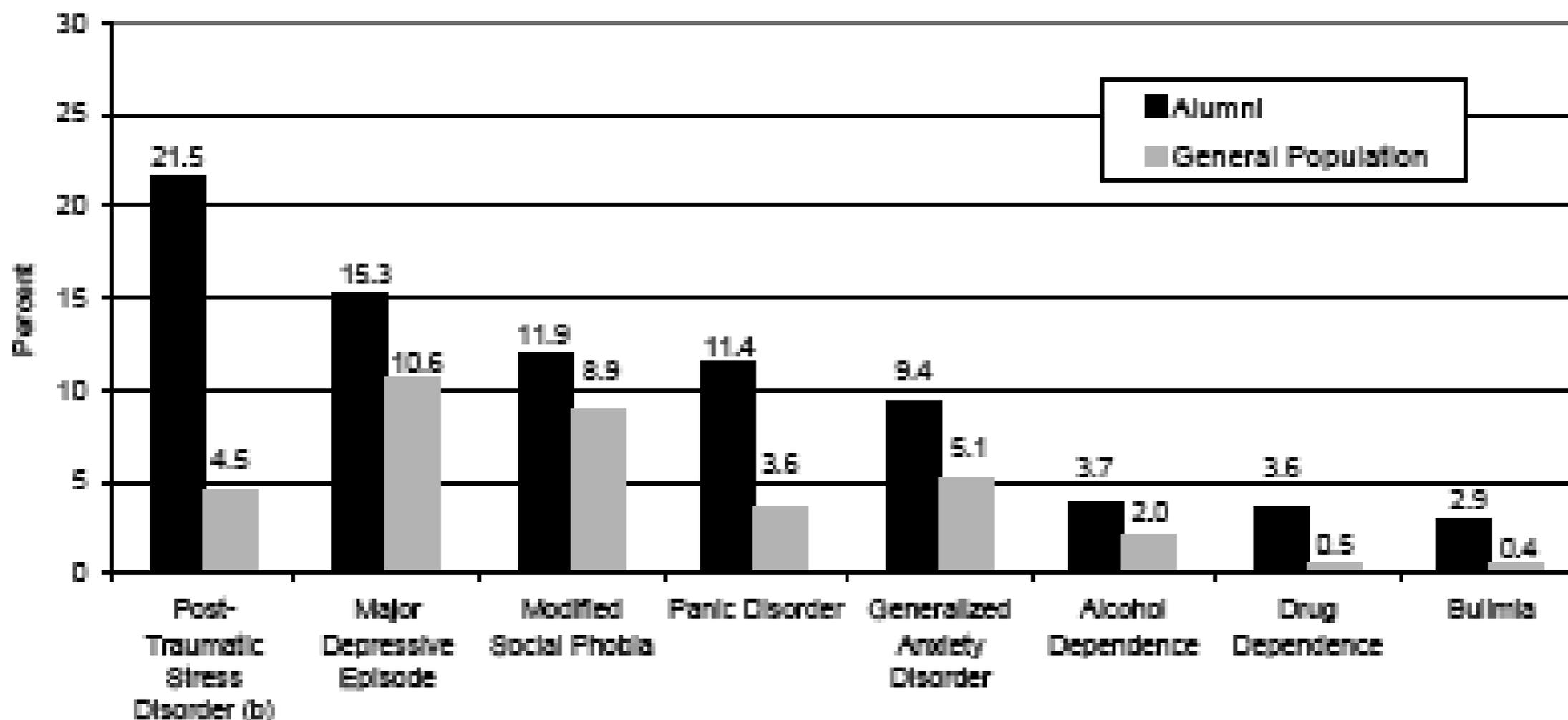


# Mental Health Needs

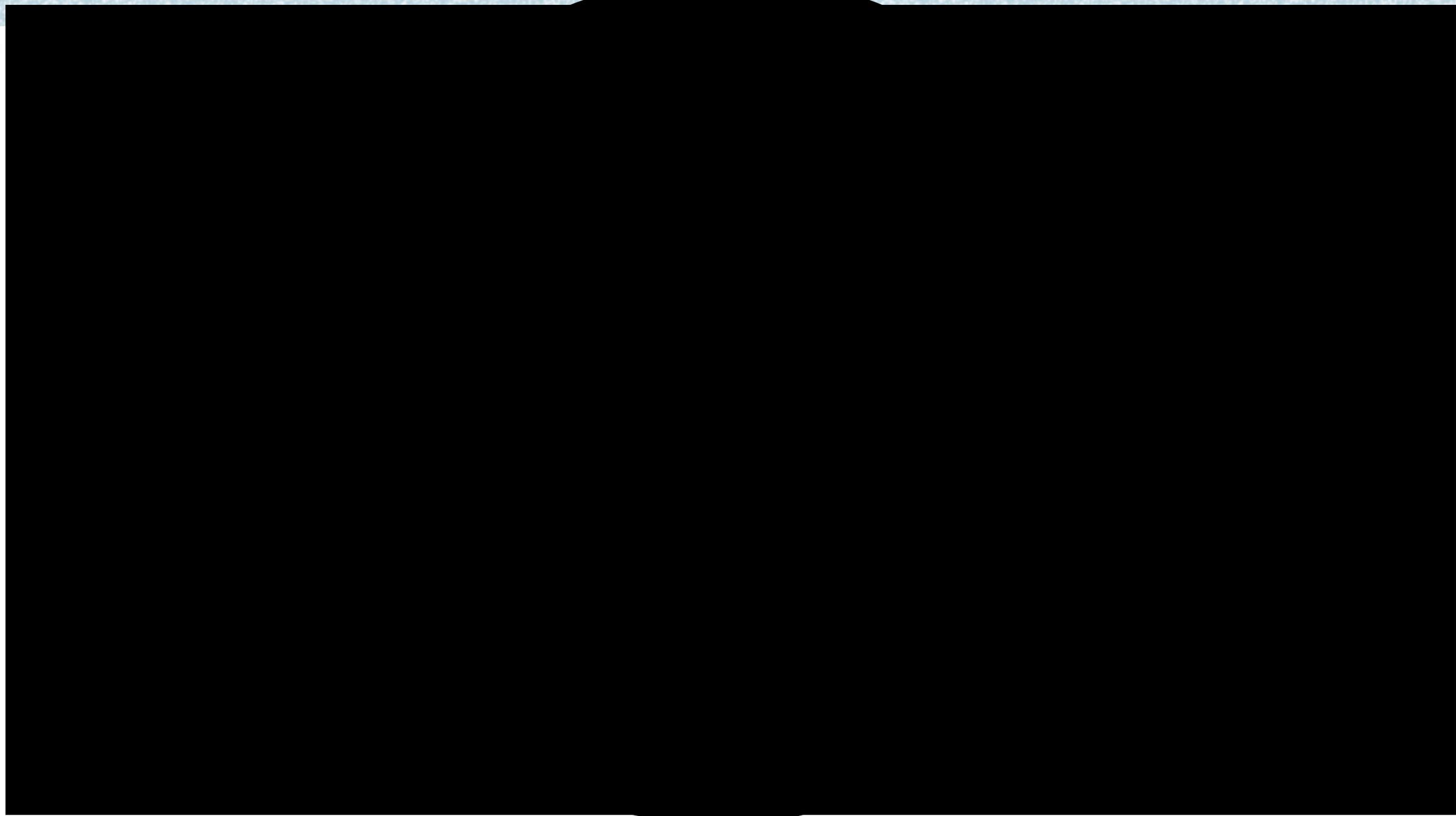
## Key Mental Health Findings

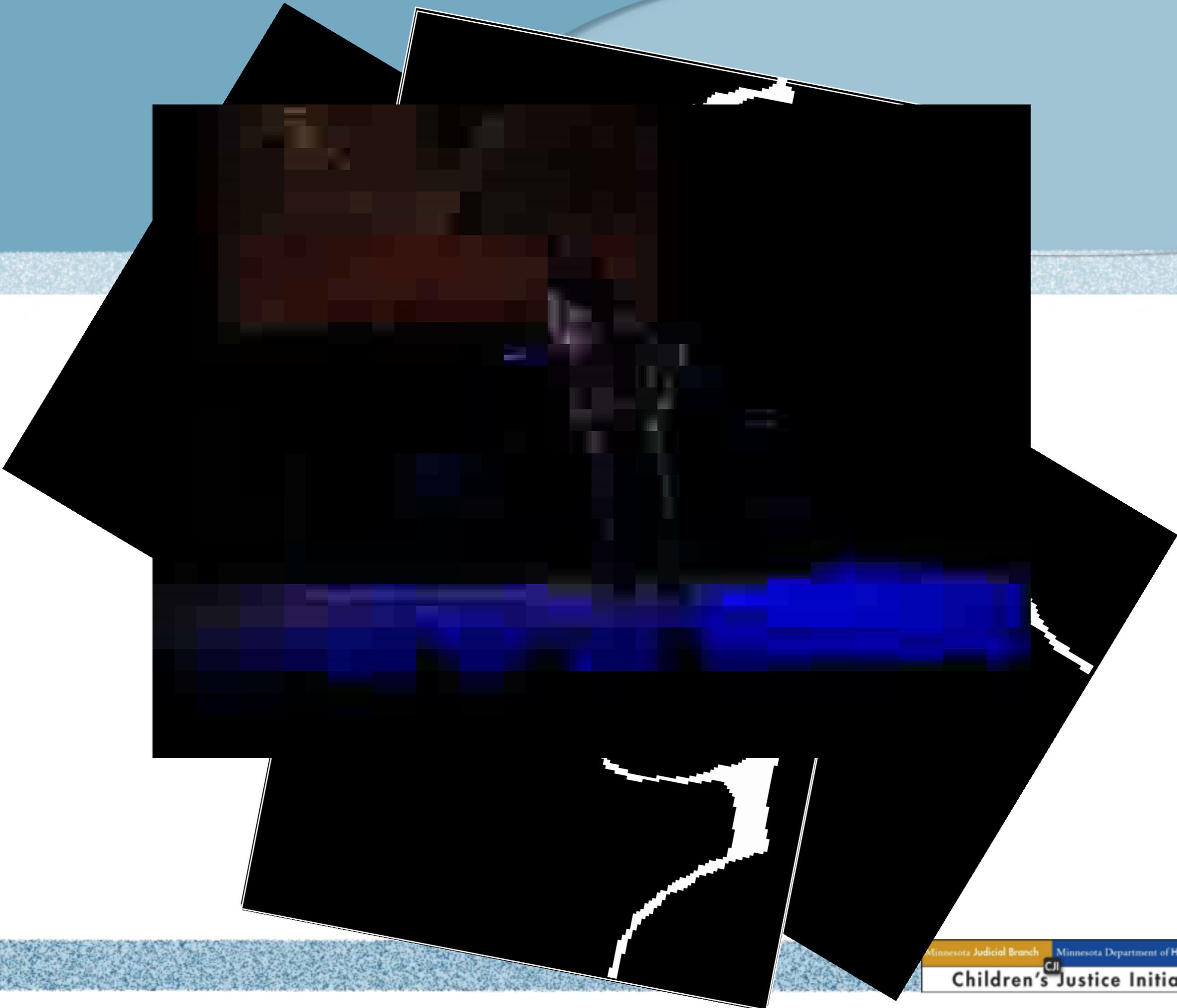
Figure 1 compares the rates of current mental illness (diagnosed within the past 12 months) of 1,087 Casey alumni and 3,547 adults from general population matched for age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Fig. 1. 12-month Mental Health Diagnosis among Casey National Alumni and the General Population<sup>(a)</sup>



# Right now in our care...

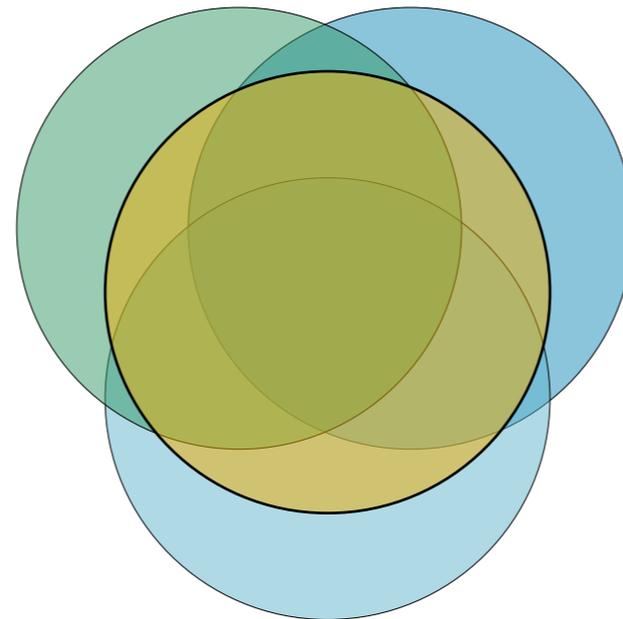




# Development for Success

Belonging

Usefulness



Power

Competence

# Development in our Care



**Abuse/Trauma**

**Neglect/Limits**

**Multiple Moves**

**Identity Formation**

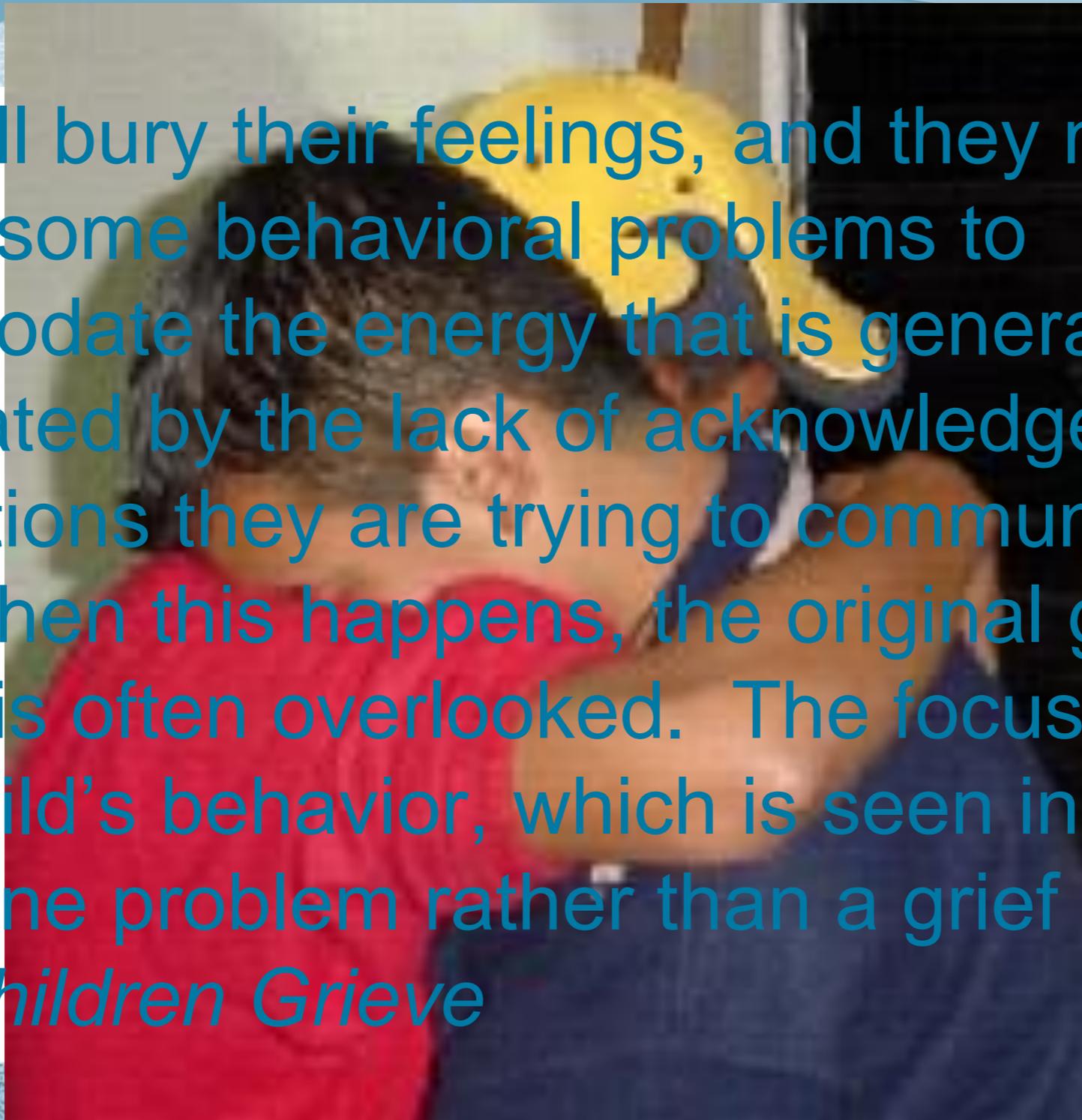
**Adolescent Mourning**



# Helping Children Grieve

- “They will bury their feelings, and they may develop some behavioral problems to accommodate the energy that is generated and regenerated by the lack of acknowledgement of the emotions they are trying to communicate. Sadly, when this happens, the original grief incident is often overlooked. The focus is shifted to the child’s behavior, which is seen incorrectly as a discipline problem rather than a grief issue.” -

*When Children Grieve*



# Youth Development

Raising Teens

Child Trends

Search Institute & 5 Promises

Network on Transitions to Adulthood

Brain Development

# 10 Tasks of Adolescence

1. Adjust to sexually maturing bodies and feelings
2. Develop and apply abstract thinking skills
3. Develop and apply a more complex level of perspective taking
4. Develop and apply new coping skills in areas such as decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution
5. Identify meaningful moral standards, values, and belief systems
6. Understand and express more complex emotional experiences
7. Form friendships that are mutually close and supportive
8. Establish key aspects of identity
9. Meet the demands of increasingly mature roles and responsibilities
10. Renegotiate relationships with adults in parenting roles

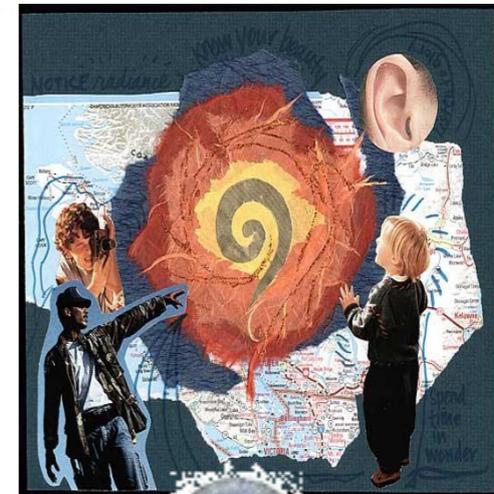
# Talking with teens

3LT

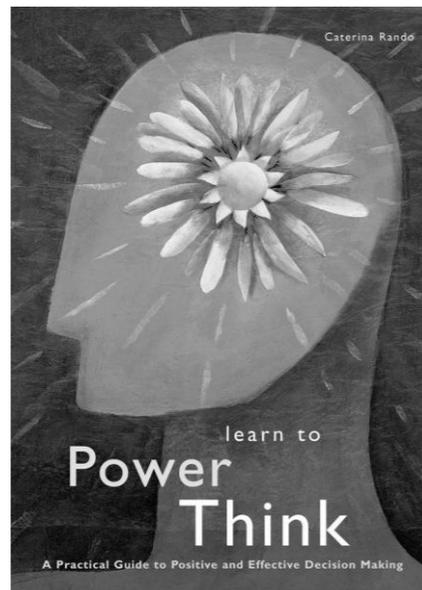
Love



Listen



Learn



Teach



# Listen with Respect

- Listen beyond the words
- Repeat actions and messages of empowerment
- Allow for disagreement without triggering oppositional behavior
- Find areas of agreement
- Don't expect full buy-in
- Keep at it



# The Permanence Conversation

- Plant the seeds
- Talk softly & often about family connection.
- Engage those in their living space
- Make opportunities
- All the time & everywhere
- Listen to their stories
- Don't expect them to take all the risk
- Partialize the process to a yes
- Keep at it
- Use their media.

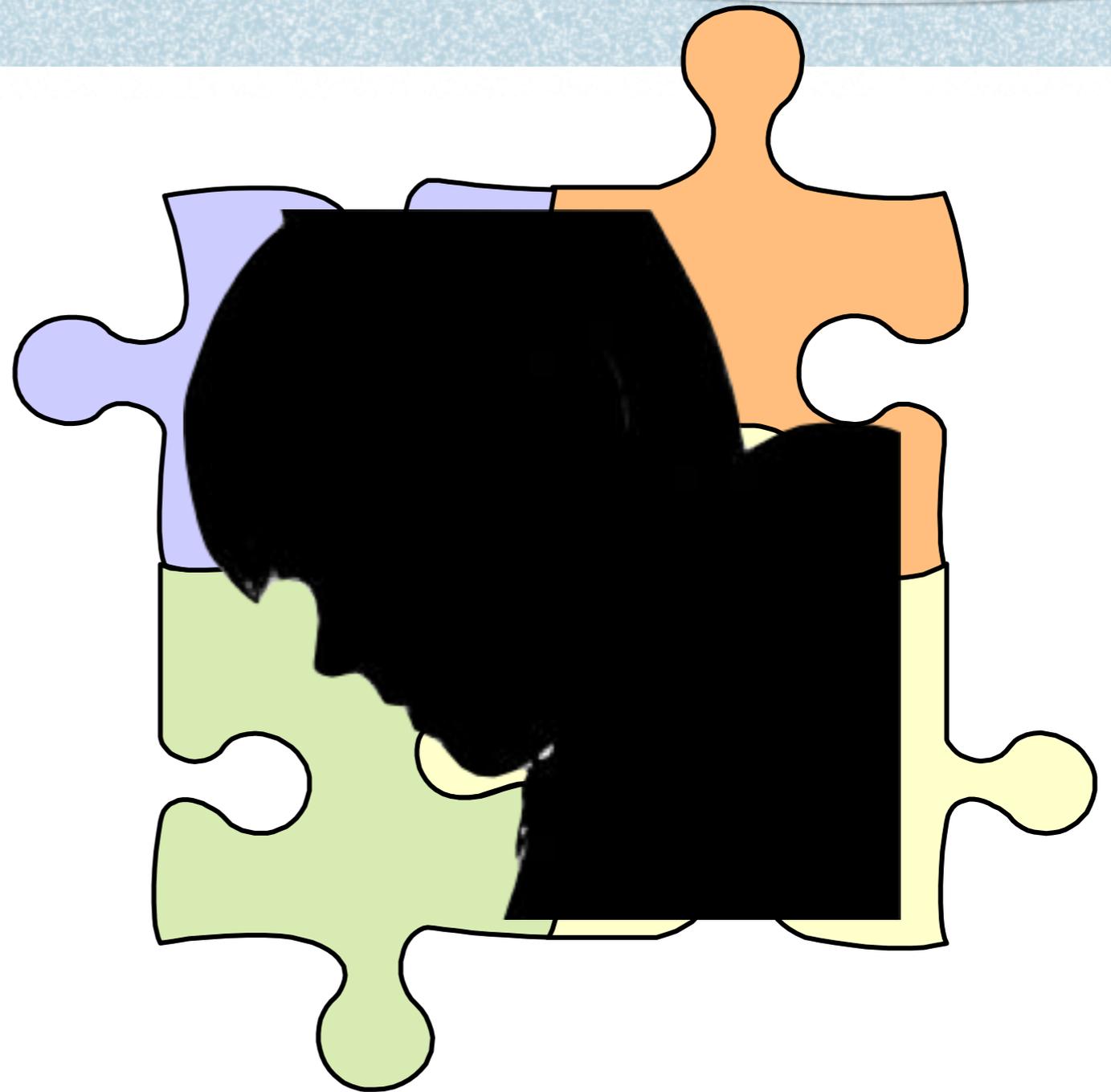
# Using the Media

WIDESCREEN EDITION



# Preparing for (re)connection

- Loyalty
- Loss
- Self-Esteem
- Behavior Management
- Self Determination



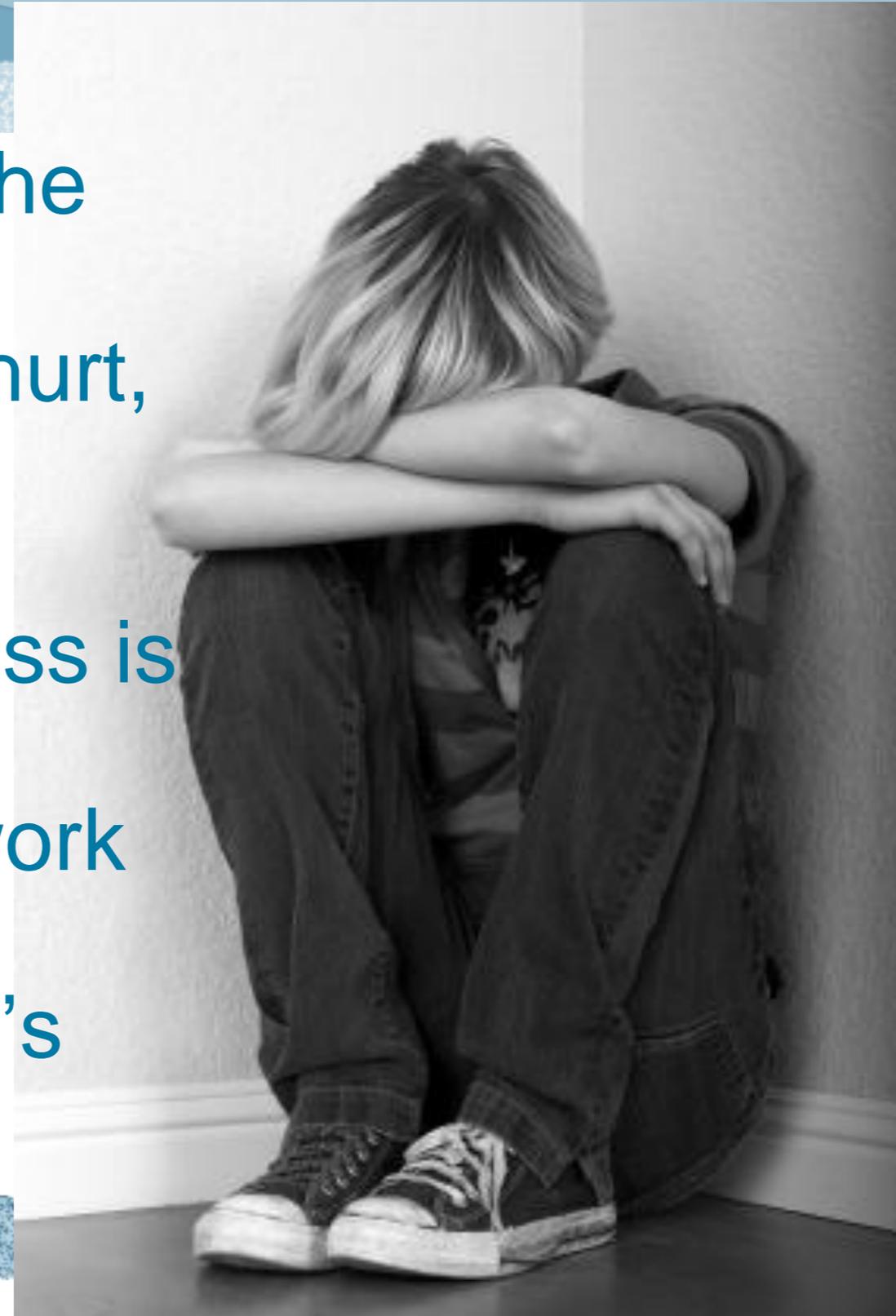
# Loyalty



- Many teens believe they have to give up their parents in order to make new ones.
- They need to learn that they can have both.
- It happens all the time – parenting is shared.
- Teens don't want to call it parenting...

# Loss

- Teens are struggling to understand and cope with the loss in their lives.
- Understanding that anger, hurt, bargaining, denial, and acceptance are part of everyone's experience of loss is essential.
- Painful as it is to do, grief work is a learned skill.
- Grief is not just traumatic, it's also developmental.



# The Stages of Grief

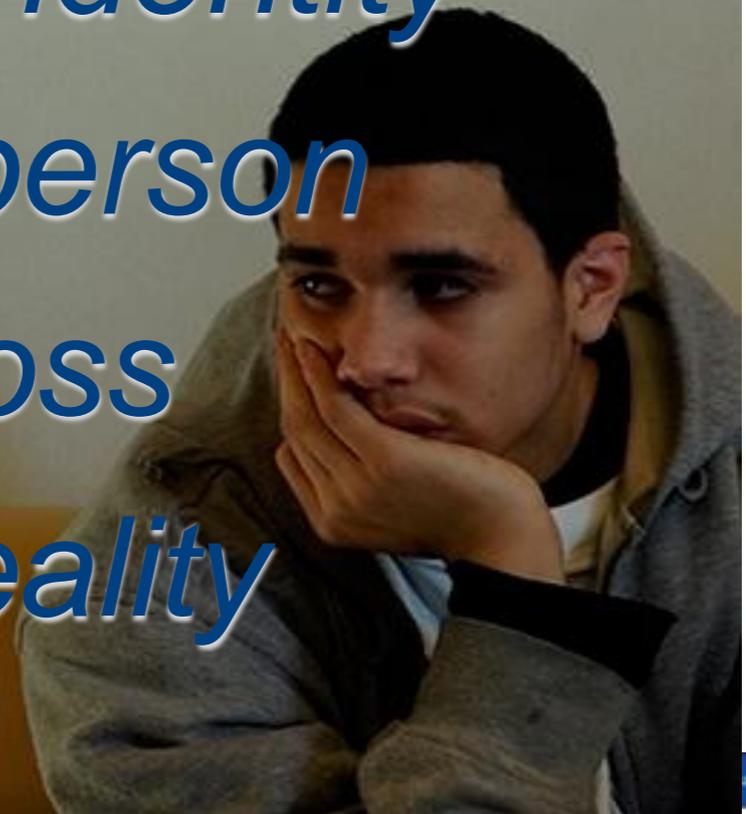
- ➔ Understanding/Acceptance
- ➔ Despair/Depression
- ➔ Hurt/Anger
- ➔ Bargaining/Guilt
- ➔ Denial/Shock



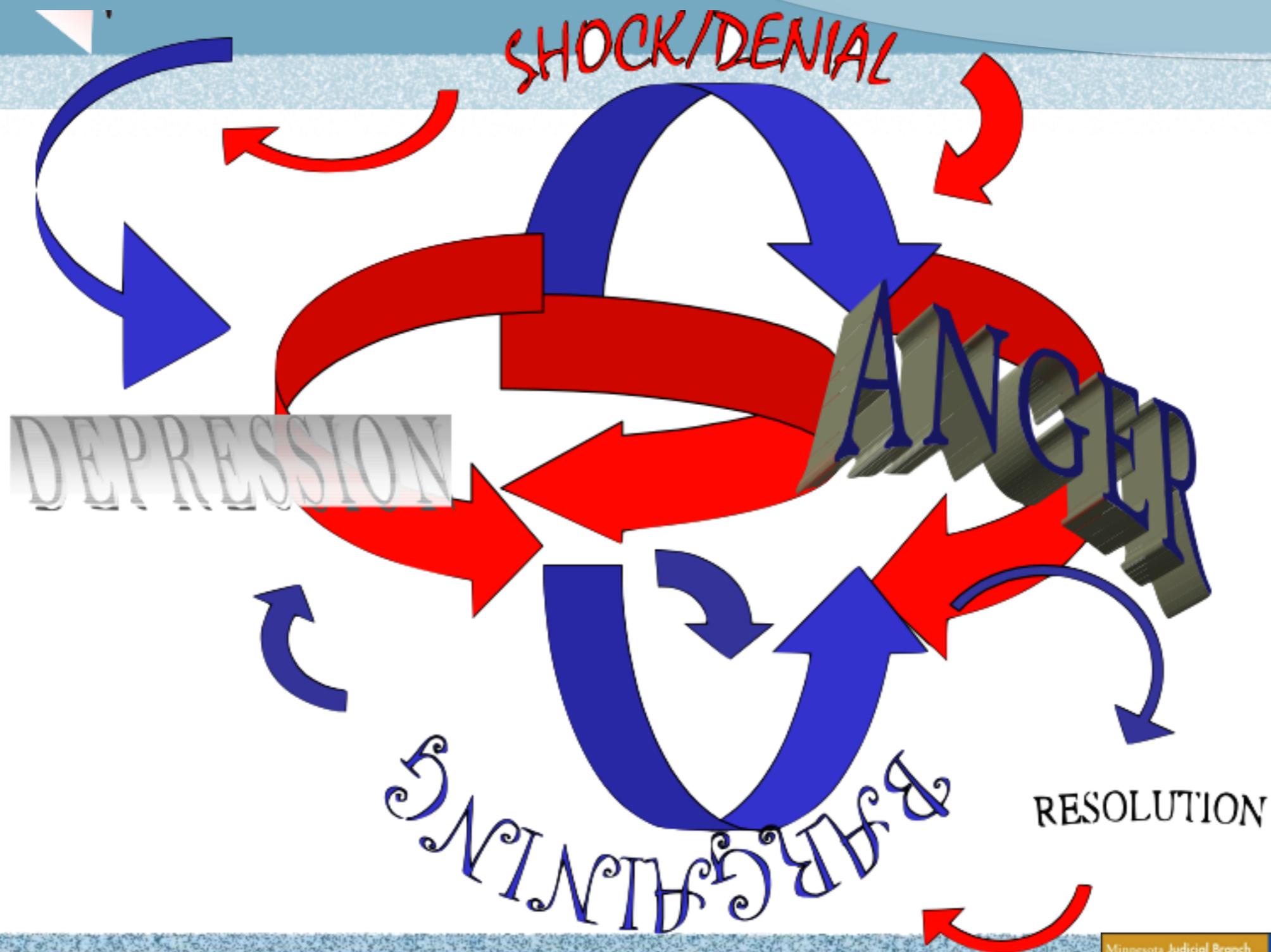
# Mourning Needs

Alan Wolfelt

- ↻ *Ongoing support from others*
- ↻ *Search for meaning*
- ↻ *Develop a new self-identity*
- ↻ *Remembering the person*
- ↻ *Embrace the pain/loss*
- ↻ *Acknowledge the reality*



# Grieving Cycle



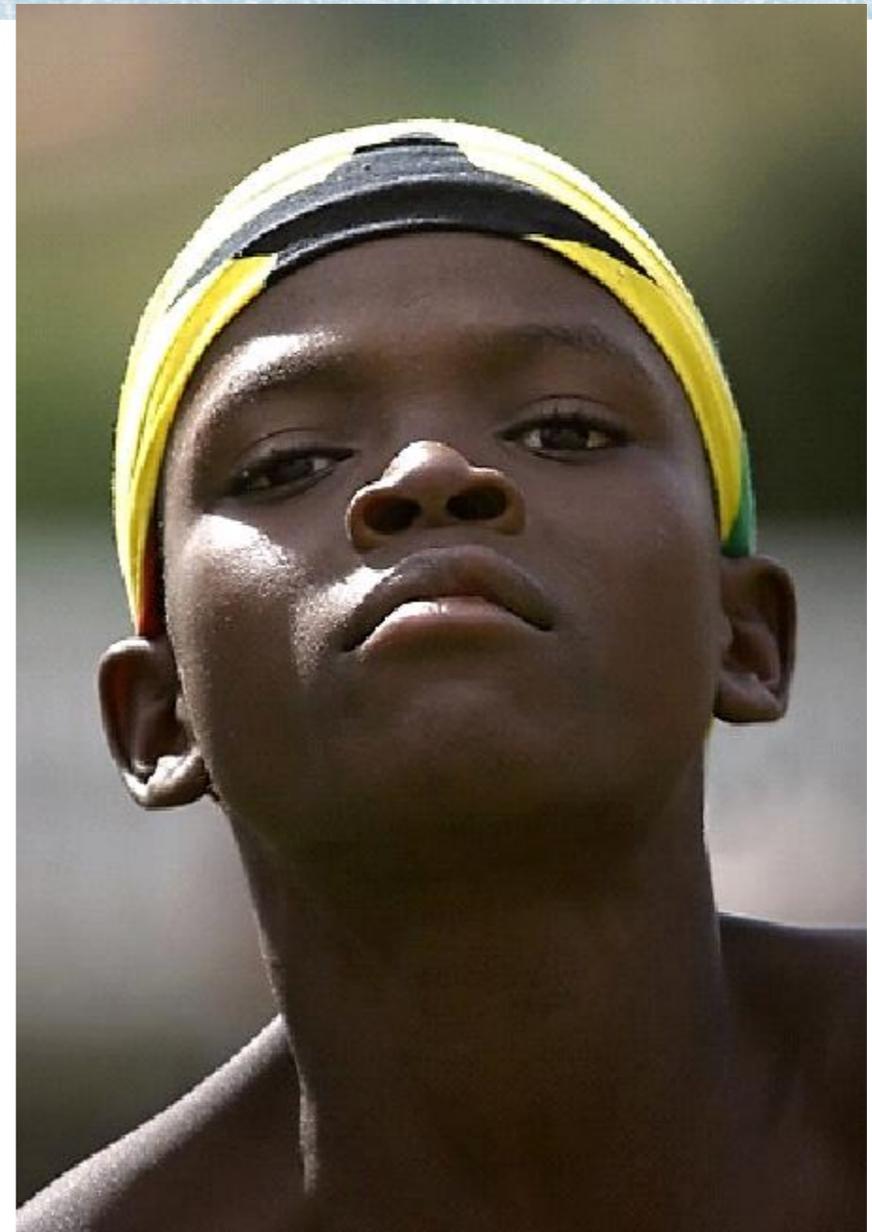
# Self Esteem

- Each young person needs to develop self-esteem him/herself.
- Self-Esteem makes it possible for kids to accept attachments.
- It also makes them more attractive to families.
- What challenges do they want to face?



# Behavior Management

- Survival (mis)Behaviors
- Misbehavior is often born of anger and misperception.
- Survival Behavior cannot be extinguished if one is still in survival mode.
- If a youth is one mistake away from being moved again...



# Self Determination



- No teenager is going to be placed against his/her will, but "NO" does not mean, "I don't want a family".
- They need to own the process and to be involved every step of the way.

# Really FULL disclosure

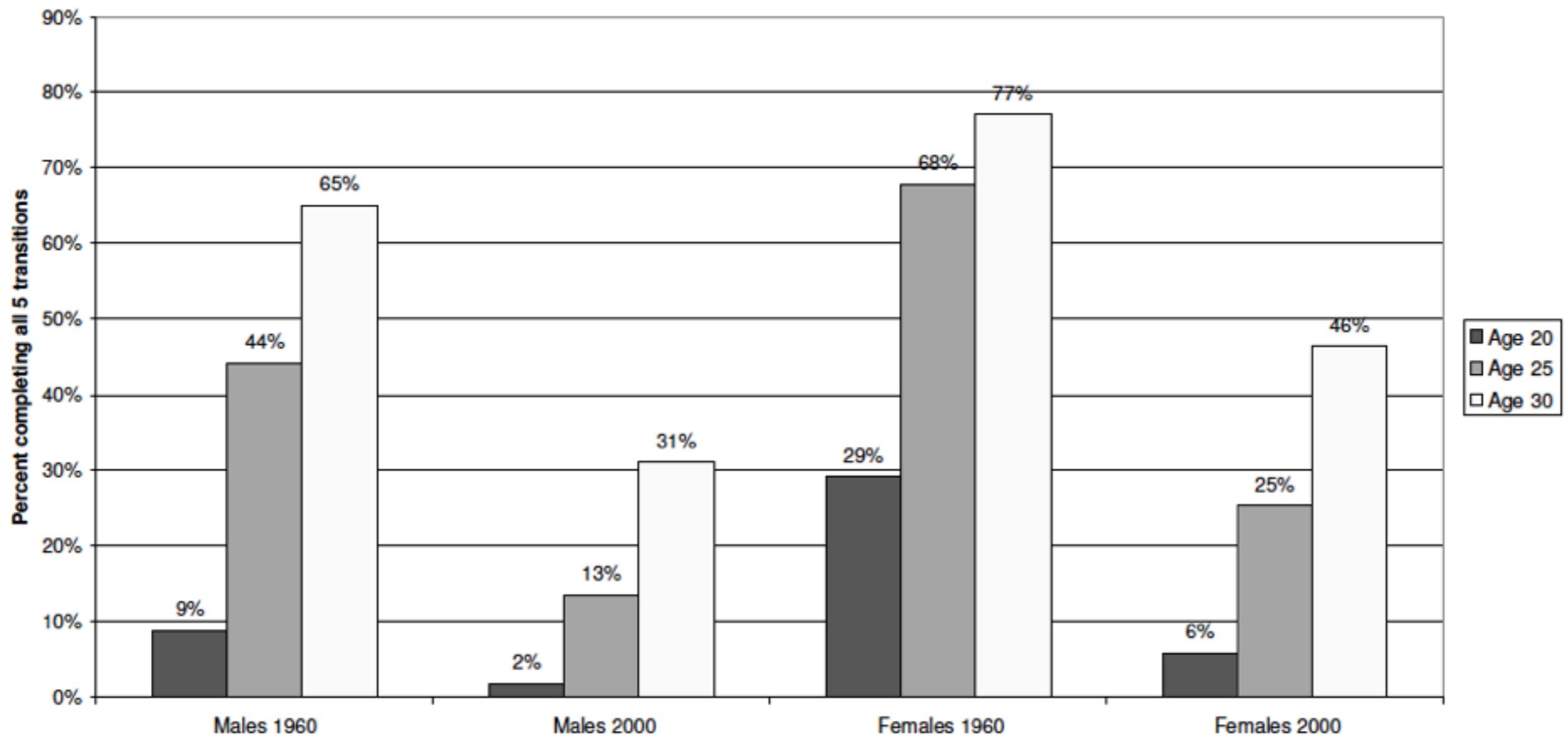


The truth is that all of us are selfish to a certain degree. Sometimes parents are also driven by self-interest. In other words, when we are wrong, we blame the situation. When others are wrong, we blame their character and negative intentions. - Dr John Ng Swee Kheng

- **Recasting by Development & Grieving**
- **Belonging, Power, Competence & Usefulness**

# Transitions to Adulthood

**Figure 1. Completing the Adult Transition in 1960 and 2000**  
Leaving home, finishing school, becoming financially independent, getting married, and having a child



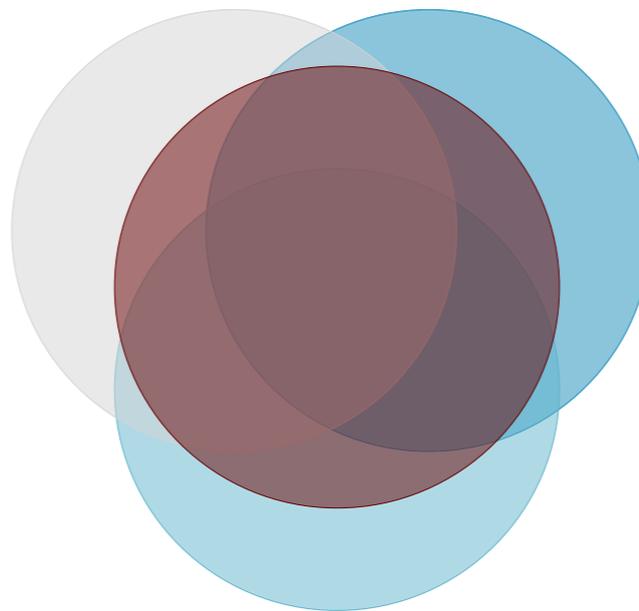
# What will it take....?

- What will it take to make permanence is as intuitive as safety for everyone involved in child welfare?
- What will it take here in Minnesota?
- What will you do?

Focus x competence x passion  
= Success

Belonging

Usefulness



Power

Competence



# Persistence

# To Keep Our Promise