



# FAMILY INTERVENTION & RESTORATIVE SERVICES

A new approach to addressing adolescent family violence and providing an alternative to court involvement and juvenile detention.

Stephanie Trolen – Legal Services Manager

King County Prosecuting Attorney

Jeremy Crowe – Restorative Justice Programs Supervisor

King County Superior Court

# Youth Family Violence - Scope

- The largest category of violent juvenile offenses in King County.
- Represent 15% of ALL cases handled in juvenile court.
- Account for 32% of all NEW bookings into juvenile detention.

# The Parent/Caretakers Experience

- In nearly 90% of DV incidents, the youth has been violent toward a family member, 70% are mothers.
- Majority of parents report that they refrained from calling the police until the behavior has occurred for a duration of time and had increased in severity
- In King County, many parents report that the police did not arrest until they had called multiple times
- By the time they come to court, the violent behavior has often become an engrained pattern

# The Challenges with the Former Response

- Families in crisis receive services only when triggered by arrest and/or formal charging creating little benefit from involving the criminal justice system.
- Parents often decline to assist or participate in the formal court system because they do not want proceedings to result in a criminal record for the youth.
- The youth's most important protective factor (the parent) is diminished when parents are afraid to parent. The longer we wait to intervene- the higher risk that youth becomes.

# *The FIRS Response*



# FIRS Process

1. Social Worker contacts Parents/Caregiver to complete a Violence Risk and Safety Assessment in order to identify service needs and safety concerns
2. FIRS JPC meets with the youth to gather information and complete Risk/Needs Assessment
3. A safety plan is developed with the family as a tool to prevent further violence in the home
4. The family is engaged in a restorative process supporting accountability, making amends and relationship repair
5. FIRS Agreement is completed and service referrals made
6. A field JPC will follow up with the youth and family

# FIRS Agreement

- Following restorative inquiry , the probation counselor, social worker, youth and parents discuss the service plan for the youth.
- Service plans are created with a focus on identifying what services will support the youth/family in preventing re-offenses, increasing safety and improving family relationships
- These services may include: substance abuse eval & counseling, mental health evaluation & tx, in-home family counseling, or other court offered interventions such as Step Up.



**STEP UP**

Building Respectful  
Family Relationships

***A Behavioral Change Intervention for Adolescent  
Violence in the Family***

Lily Anderson and Greg Routt, Program Developers



# What Parents Are saying

**Parent:** *Thank you so much Cecilia... As traumatic as this was, the result is already much improved at home. I am so grateful for FIRS - I wish this program existed everywhere. The flow into the prison pipeline for young black males is definitely slowed by this program! Juvenile court should be a prescription for kids getting back on track. Thank you! Barb*

# What Youth Are Saying

Dear, Firs staff

Jacob D.

11/5/16

I would like to wish you all good buy but I would also like to thank all of you guys for the experience that you guys have given me and I would like all of you to know that I will never forget you guys of the chance you all have give me to change my life around and keep my record somewhat clean. Also I would like to thank you all for keeping a nice attitude while I was here because I believe that all of you people will put on the earth because you are all truly good people. The experience I have had here has helped me realize that what I have been doing my whole life is truly not right and that the few short days I was here was because due to the nice workers and nice inmates. I just hope all of you know that you helped change my life for the better and I would like to thank you all. ps. advice if the program stays get better food lol. I also I promise never to come back because I was accepted. ☺

Sincerely yours,

# Things We've Learned

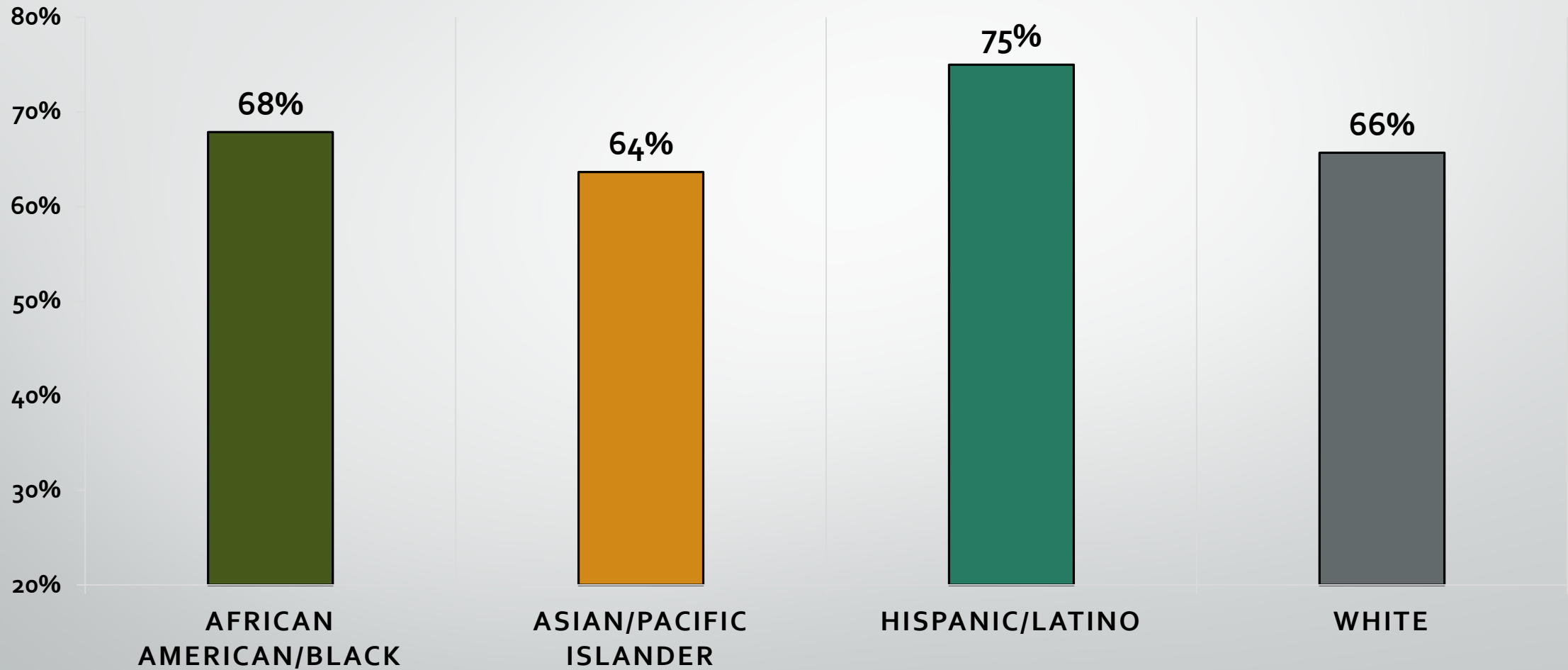
## Challenges

- FIRS is not for every youth
- High risk youth who have had multiple prior offenses are not a good fit
- For youth who choose not to comply with their agreement, there is no consequence – parents have to call the police again to re-enter the system. This is disappointing and difficult for parents.
- Screening carefully is important

## Successes

- ❖ Parents feel supported and validated by the immediate response
- ❖ Youth take it seriously because they are receiving high attention in a supportive manner
- ❖ The opportunity for families to have a break with time to rest and re-group after a violent incident in the home helps everyone make better decisions
- ❖ A therapeutic environment, instead of detention, can reduce youth's resistance to services and mitigate negative impacts experienced by detainment

# Engagement Rate by Reported Ethnicity



# Key Findings

- FIRS maintains a remarkably equitable rate of engagement with youth and families across all reported races/ethnicities.
- 79% of youth arrested for a family violence incident in 2017 avoided secure detention due to the FIRS Respite Center. (229/290 youth)
- In 2017, referrals for domestic violence cases jumped 25%. However, there was only a 2% increase in charges filed.

# Key Findings

Dr. Sarah Walker, University of Washington

- Of the youth referred to the FIRS program who did not enter into a FIRS agreement, 40% had a follow-up law enforcement referral (of any type) within 12 months.
- Of the youth referred to the FIRS program who entered into a FIRS agreement, only 22% had a follow-up law enforcement referral (of any type) within 12 months.