

Prison Reform

Liberty and Justice... for all?

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Reflection

What is **mass incarceration**?

Mass incarceration is a term commonly used to identify the way that the United States has a massive prison presence. In regards to race, mass incarceration in this country encompasses a vast majority of black men.

“In 2010, a third of all black male high-school dropouts between the ages of 20 and 39 were imprisoned, compared with **only 13 percent** of their white peers” (Coates).



Disparities in the Prison System

NUMBER OF WHITE MEN

Arrested for a violent assault related crime



vs.

NUMBER OF BLACK MEN

Arrested for a non-violent drug related crime



“So many aspects of the old Jim Crow are suddenly legal again once you’ve been branded a felon. And so it seems that in America we haven’t so much ended racial caste, but simply redesigned it” (DuVernay).



Disparities on a Local Level

West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale



“The imprisonment rate of residents of Boston’s communities of color – areas of Dorchester and Roxbury – are consistently double and triple the city average” (Smith).

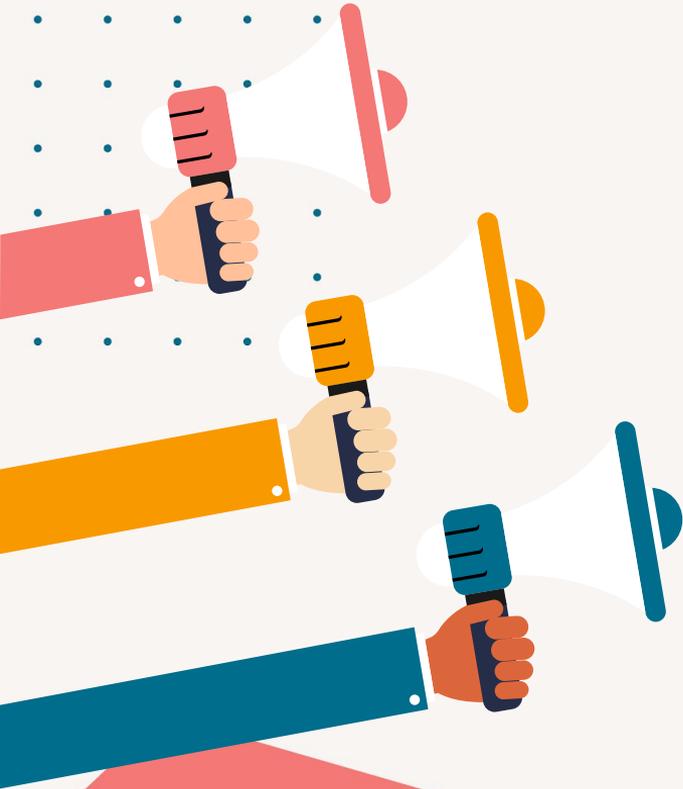
Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan



How is **mental health** dealt with in prisons?

United States prisons hold a very significant amount of mentally disordered and mentally ill people. Instead of getting treatment before being put into these morbid facilities, the convicted are often incarcerated and must also suffer being a prisoner of their own minds.

Rather than immediately criminalizing the mentally disabled, there should be a better system in place so that the convicted can be properly evaluated and treated. By all means should the consequences for a crime be served. However, it is important that they are being served by all criminals without the burden of poor mental health negatively affecting one over another.



Solitary Confinement

Solitary confinement is often used for either the protection of other inmates, as a behavioral discipline, or even because the guards in the facility cannot handle the inmate.

Anxiety

Racing Fears

Depression

Suicidal Thoughts

Addiction

Withdrawal

Schizophrenia

Voices & Delusions



About one in seven prisoners have some sort of psychotic illness, and are more vulnerable to developing mental health problems in prison. (Birmingham)

How can we **get involved?**

Criminal Justice Policy Coalition

YOU can volunteer to write for, or intern with CJPC, network with other organizations, or promote media.

End Mass Incarceration Together

YOU can volunteer to court watch: “document and publicize the decisions judges and prosecutors make every day about criminal punishment” (EMIT).

National Alliance on Mental Illness (MA)

YOU can volunteer at many NAMI events, attend a NAMI walk, or simply advocate for the rights of those incriminated with mental health issues.



TOGETHER WE CAN.

How does this issue affect **you**?

Injustice

For many, it may not seem like the mass incarceration of black people along with the amount of mentally ill people in prison should have anything to do with them.



Justice

However, if you live in a country where liberty and justice for all is promised, you should be in favor of making that possible for everyone.



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The End.