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Part 1-Why?

Rationale for Training Police On Youth

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POLICE REPORT

On [date] I responded to [address] in reference to a domestic assault in progress. Upon arrival, I contacted [mother] who stated that I needed to remove her 16 year old son. I observed a broken door inside of the residence. Upon attempting to speak with [youth], he said not to touch him and started walking away toward the open doorway. He stated that he would talk outside and walked past me. Due to concern that he might run away, I attempted to detain [youth] to conduct my investigation. [Youth] told me to remove my hands and shoved me away from him. I use my hands to create distance from [youth] while I radioed for help. [Youth] continued to try to shove me away and did not otherwise try to escape. I pushed [youth] away causing him to back into a wall, while I stated that he was going to jail, attempting to maintain hold of his wrist. I moved [youth] to a sofa in the living room until I was able to place him in handcuffs.

During the assault investigation, [youth] stated that his mother kept requesting him to conduct chores and bothering him. He stated that during the argument he poked his mother in the eye and shoved her. Ms. [X] stated that [youth] placed his hands around her neck but she was able to breathe and he stopped. I was able to obtain a video recording of the incident showing [youth] shoving his mother.



YOUTH'S DESCRIPTION

“I was mad at my mom because she was blaming me for something I didn't do. What she said didn't even happen, and my cousins were telling her that. She called the police on me. I just wanted to get out of there. I just wanna be on my own. I just want to be outside of Virginia. I want to have a life and leave all of this behind. My family is f***ed up on both sides. But I wasn't gonna run. If I was gonna run, I would've done it before the police showed up. The police officer came in. I said I want to talk to you but outside. I told him if I was going to run I would've run before you came. He just put his hands on me. Grabbed my arm from behind. With my past, I can't handle when people do that. He pulled his taser on me. It wasn't right.”



One Case; Two Perspectives

Lots of agreement

- Escalating confrontation between mother and son
- Youth stayed after police were called and did not try to run away
- Youth said to officer he was not going to run away and would talk outside
- Officer prevented youth from leaving, using physical force when needed
- Youth reacted to physical force with resistance



One Case; Two Perspectives

Very Different Perspectives

- Youth knew he would not run; officer did not
- Officer perceived UOF as necessary and appropriate; youth perceived it as unnecessary and unfair... and experienced it in the context of his personal history
- It was about safety and compliance for the officer; first it was about unfair treatment and being heard for the youth, then it was about survival



Contributing to the Youth's Perspective

- His developmental status (e.g., capacity to self-regulate and reason when under emotional load)
- His personal history of abuse and trauma
- His mental health functioning
- ...and other aspects of his world-view, perceptions, and beliefs



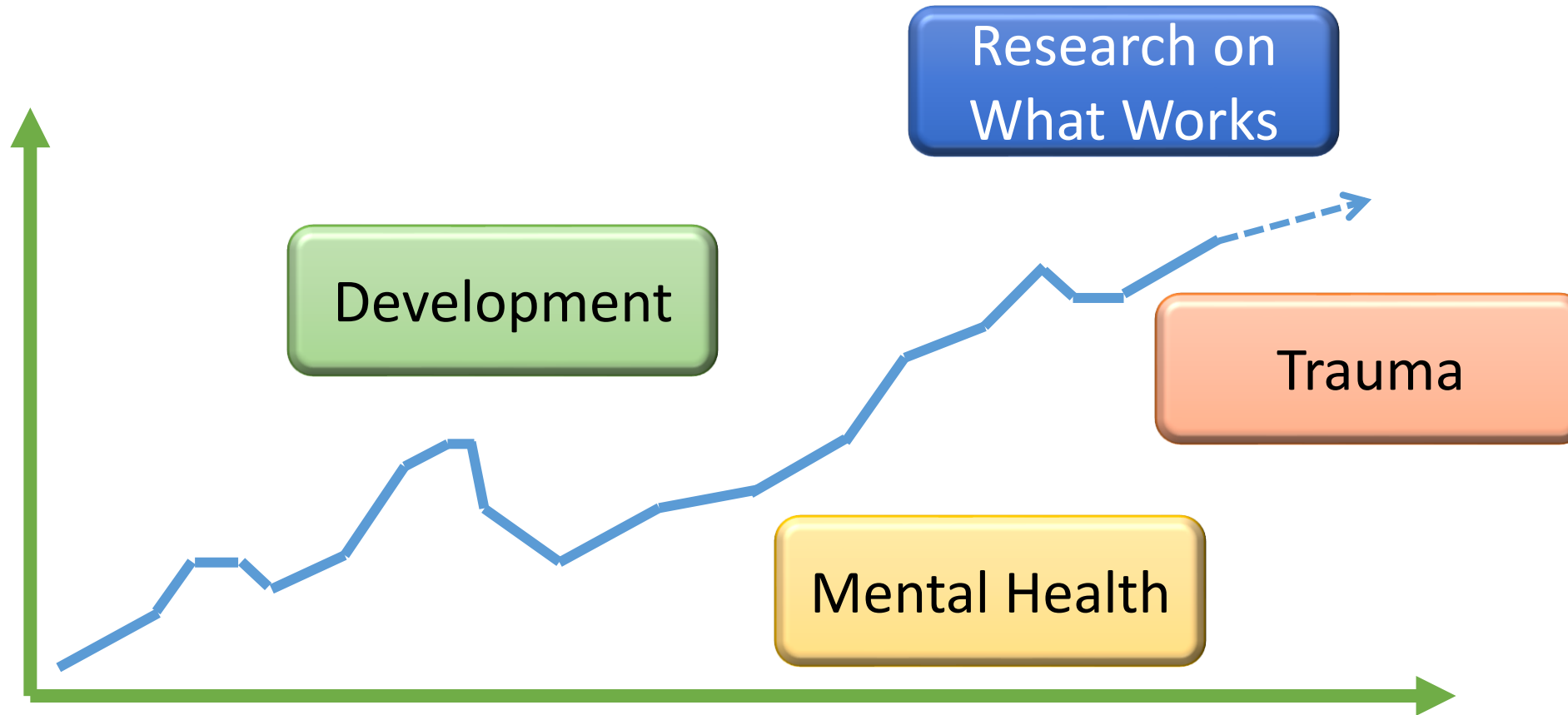
The Juvenile Court (est. 1899)

A New Philosophy

- Kids are different...and they need different responses
- *Parens patriae*: the state as parent
- Guide kids back on a health trajectory
- Meet their needs (their best interest)



124 Years of (Overall) Progress



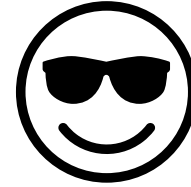
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How Effective Has It Been?

- Metric 1: Comparison to the adult system



- Metric 2: Comparison to no court involvement



(Just to be Clear)

- There are innovative and effective juvenile court programs
- There are committed and effective court, CSU, JDC, and DJJ staff
- Some youth get excellent and effective intervention in the juvenile justice system

- Also, overall (when diversion is possible*), diverted youth do better than comparable processed youth



WHY???



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Perhaps because...

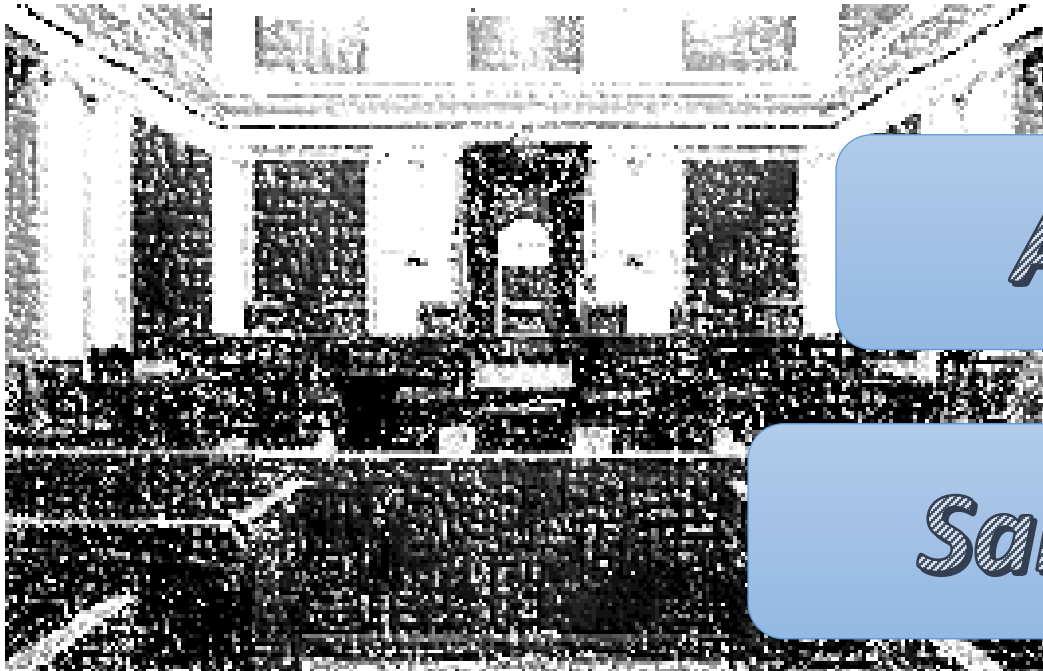


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Perhaps because...



Adversarial

Sanction-based



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What Works for Kids?



- Collaborative engagement
- Done with, not to

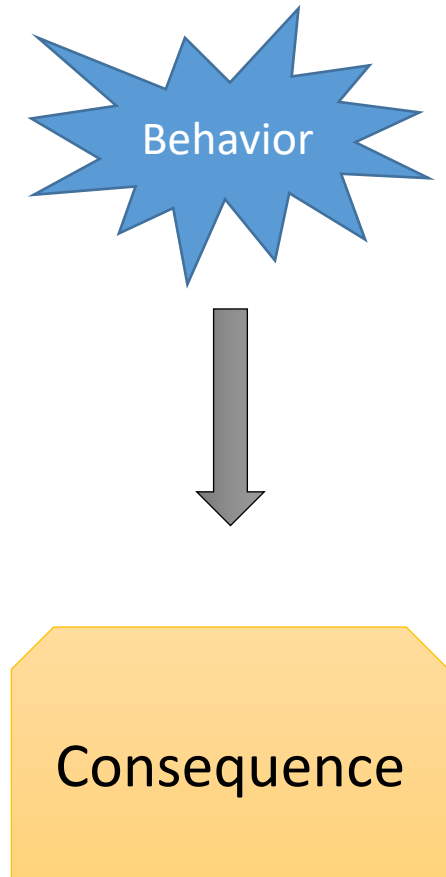
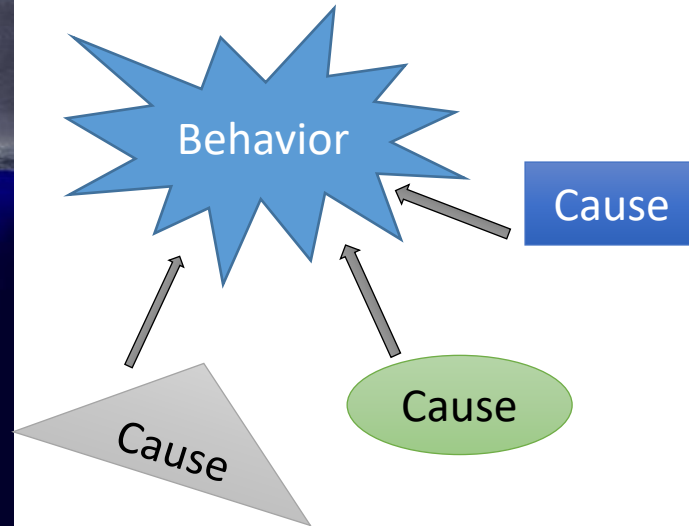


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What Works for Kids?



- Understand behavior as having meaning
- Address causes and underlying problem
 - ❑ MH, SU, trauma, family issues, disenfranchisement...



What Works for Kids?

- Early intervention
- Timely responses
- Proportionality
- Fairness

Legal Protections

- Due Process Rights
 - Trial
- Beyond Reasonable Doubt

(Not speedy trial)



Often

Months to resolution
No services in interim
No intervention at all



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JJ Philosophy



JJ System Structure



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So What Should We Do?

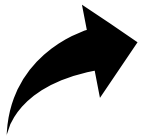
- Improve the System
- But meanwhile...Minimize system involvement
 - Broader community-based supports (e.g., health care, education, safety, etc.)
 - Early prevention and engagement of at-risk youth
 - Early intervention when problems emerge
 - Divert when possible
 - Prevention of deeper system involvement once involved

...At intake
...Whether to detain
...How long to detain
...Whether to transfer
...Whether to commit



So What Should We Do?

- Improve the System
- But meanwhile...Minimize system involvement
 - Broader community-based supports (e.g., health care, education, safety, etc.)
 - Early prevention and engagement of at-risk youth
 - Early intervention when problems emerge
 - **Keep situations from escalating at first point of justice system contact**
 - Divert when possible
 - Prevention of deeper system involvement once involved



Police as the Gatekeepers – Key Points

- Most first contact with the justice system for youth involves police contact.
- Police are often left out of the planning, research, policy, and training discussions when it comes to the juvenile justice system.
- Often, police and youth intersect at the beginning of what Taylor Neuvelle describes as the **“trauma-to-prison pipeline”**. This limits the ability of our police to positively influence outcomes.
- Without the proper tools (training) and professional role orientation, police are left with the adult offender response alternative.



By the Numbers

- Most states offer 6 or fewer hours in their basic training academies for new officers on working with “juveniles”.
- With training being sparse, the juvenile justice system is often seen as complicated, frequently causing officers to avoid engaging with youth and further viewing youth as “problematic”.
- This lack of training and exposure results in a myopic view of adolescents by police and increases the potential for high-intensity, escalated interactions in older teens and young adults.
- In Virginia, just 32 hours of additional training on youth development, adolescent mental health, trauma, and de-escalation of youth in crisis improves perceptions of police toward youth*.



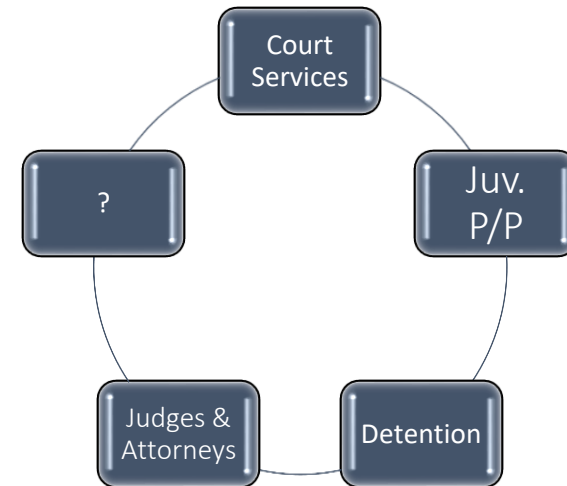
The Current Conundrum – To Train Or Not To Train

- *POINT: If we remove police from early contact, kids won't be in fear*
- **COUNTERPOINT: If we removed police from early contact, first contact likely to be high stress for both officer and youth**
- *POINT: If we remove police from early contact, we will decrease the "STPP"*
- **COUNTERPOINT: If we increase early contact and training, we improve the ability for officers to deliver developmentally appropriate responses prior to high stress encounters and improve their ability to use empathic and proactive tools to support youth and decrease system involvement in the first place**



A Large Missing Piece

- The Juvenile Justice System works to inform court services units, judges, attorneys, probation officers, and myriad other components of the JJ system, but NOT the law enforcement profession. This leaves out arguably the most critical and determinant interaction within the system as a whole.



Why it comes down to training

- Because the data – both qualitative AND quantitative – shows it makes a difference!
 - Virginia SRO training
 - Virginia From the Case Files Of training
 - National studies show attitudes towards youth improves with training



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Collaboration: LE & MH

Challenges

- Buy in from LEOs
 - Relevance of the topic
 - The validity of the ideas
 - Being trained by non-LE
- The perception of each discipline that the other doesn't get it
- Training styles
- Different knowledge bases, skill sets
- Genuine understanding of the other discipline's perspective, realities



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Collaboration: LE & MH

Solutions

- Partnership and collaboration
- Acceptance that the other discipline really does know things you don't
- Mutual learning (for real)
- Co-responder models
- Handle With Care (or similar)



Part 2-What Is Virginia Doing?

- Updating content for the law enforcement basic training minimum compulsory training standards in areas around
 - Juvenile law
 - Mental health
 - De-escalation
- Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
 - Training
 - Model MOU
 - Resources



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Virginia as a Model: S-LEP and SRO

- SRO legislation, program history, current state of the practice and training
- Training mandates
- Certification mandates
- Model MOU



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From the Case Files: A Scenario-based De-escalation Training for LEOs

RATIONALE

- Many police-youth interactions occur outside of school
- These interactions may be highly consequential
- Little training on youth for non-SROs



From the Case Files: A Scenario-based De-escalation Training for LEOs

APPROACH

- LE/MH Partnership: benefit for content and delivery
- Scenario-based: limit didactics, focus on skills
- Interactive and mutual



From the Case Files: A Scenario-based De-escalation Training for LEOs

CONTENT

- ❑ Didactic content: adolescent development, mental health, trauma, de-escalation
- ❑ Scenarios for each, with opportunities for discussion, role-play



From the Case Files: A Scenario-based De-escalation Training for LEOs

LE RESPONSE

- ❑ 8 Trainings Between 10/20 and 4/23; 100+ Officers
- ❑ Very positively received:
 - Instructor 4.89/5; Content 4.72/5; Value 4.79/5
 - Only 3 individuals rated any item below a 4/5



Handle With Care: First Responder & School Partnership to Support Students Who May Have Experienced Trauma

- Rapid notification from 1R to school: “Handle With Care”
- Protections for confidentiality; One-way communication
- Helps schools be more ready to provide support and understanding
- Simple and low-resource needs



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Handle With Care: First Responder & School Partnership to Support Students Who May Have Experienced Trauma

- 28 localities Have HWC up and running
- 2 localities trained, not yet up and running
- 5 localities with training scheduled
- Currently gathering post implementation data



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Virginia as a Model: Upcoming Training Requirements

- Legislation passed in 2020 mandating the state POST agency (VA DCJS) to develop “uniform lesson plans” for entry-level, in-service, and advanced training topics to be used by all law enforcement training academies across the state.
- Subject matter experts served on review panels to assess and inform the curricula developed by the state’s vendor.
- Proposed contents include significant increases in hours for working with youth, responding to people in crisis, and de-escalation.
- Implementation date TBD



Distinguishing from Crisis Co-responding

- Our focus is on both crisis and non-crisis responses specific to youth
 - ...that makes use of the distinct but overlapping knowledge and skill sets across professions
 - ...that improves LEOs' understanding of youths' behavior
 - ...that decreases the likelihood of escalation or confrontation, and
 - ...that improves the likelihood of positive and supportive interactions



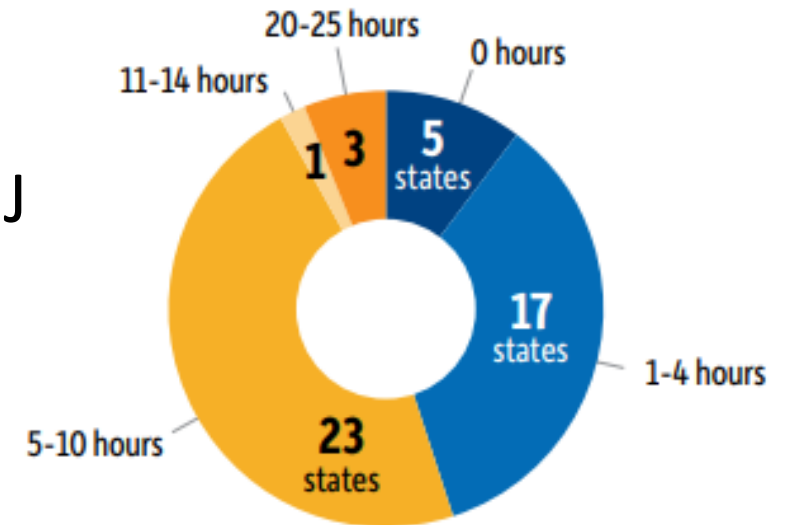
How Is Virginia Doing?



National Trends

Strategies for Youth, 2013

- 2 states covered adolescent development
- 9 states taught skills for identifying and responding appropriately to adolescent mental health issues.
- 8 states taught best practices for communication and interventions with youth
- On average, about 1% of academy time spent on JJ
- Most of that focused on juvenile law



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National Trends – SRO Training

Strategies for Youth, 2022

States' SRO Curricula, Seven Critical Areas for Instruction

1. Adolescent Development
2. Adolescent Mental Health
3. Trauma
4. Special Education
5. Juvenile Law
6. Diversity and Equity
7. Community Resources



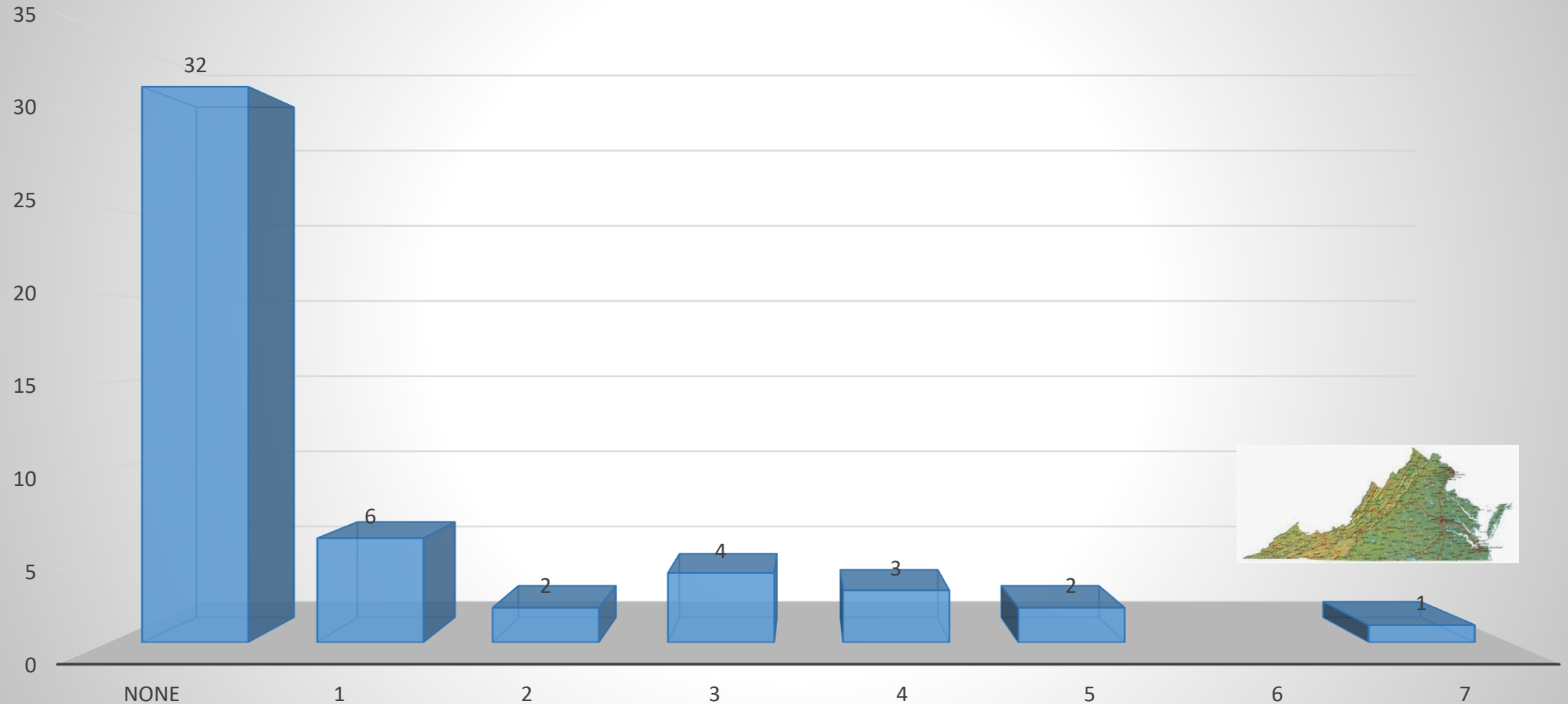
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National Trends – SRO Training

Number of Areas Trained



Virginia as a Model: Data Collection and Collaboration

- School Safety Audit Program includes the Secondary Schools Climate Survey



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Part 3: What Should Come Now?

- Groups: by locality, with representatives from different agencies/sectors
- Tasks
 1. Introduce yourselves!
 2. Identify a scribe/spokesperson for the group
 3. Address the following questions
 - How much effort should be spent diverting youth from the JJ system; is this happening as it should in your locality?
 - Is there a role for police training on youth in your locality?
 - If so, is it occurring? Should more occur, and if so, what should it look like?
 - Anything else?



What Do You Think???



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