

To: Whom it may concern,

RE: Juveniles & Solitary Confinement

Juveniles & Solitary Confinement: These two entities are diametrically opposed to one another and should never intersect or make sense in a civil society, or in any society. It is the BPC's position that the members of this body consider this missive regards to placing young people in solitary confinement. While the BPC holds on to the principles that it is unjust to imprison young people in any fashion, we believe placing young people in solitary confinement within a confined unnatural space isn't conducive towards the alleged purpose of rehabilitation, and only serves to compound trauma, reproduce and reinforce criminal behaviors, while fostering resentment and distrust towards people and systems, whom they deem responsible.

As a society we socialize our young people especially boys not to express their emotions. As boys and men we reinforce this socialization by glamorizing and perpetuating a machismo culture, whereas, we place emphasis on toughness over vulnerability – which implies weakness. So it shouldn't surprise us when these young people who are thrown away into solitary confinement or imposed isolation (antisocial hotpot), believes it's cool and will garner them status and respect from their peers. Once released from this draconian prison within a prison with "war stories" (horrific tales of mental illness and anguish, young minds can't articulate as reality and not fiction), to tell their peers. This experience will further socialize a toxic masculine persona, as well as cultivate a culture of violence, something we profess as a society; we're working towards delivering our young boys and men from experiencing.

Many of us in the BPC have spent decades as juveniles, and as adults in solitary confinement. Many of us testify to you today through this missive, that solitary confinement did more harm than good. Self-introspection in isolation isn't responsible for the changes, many of us have experienced that this change happens post solitary confinement. The BPC believes peer accountability, and belonging to a larger community, is what changes boys and men, and being uprooted and isolated from community, conjures up traumatic memories of America's sin: chattel slavery; subliminally reminding black boys and men of our place in society.

In closing, the Black Prisoners' Caucus calls to action this "body" to do the right thing by these young people – whose brains aren't fully developed – and cease and desist from placing young people in solitary confinement. It serves no purpose to young people, their families and communities, as well as to the greater society and human family, in which we are all imagining, we'd like to make better, and live in together. I would like to leave you with a quote by Sage Crump, "nothing happens in isolation. There is always a squad, collaborators, a body that supports change occurring."

Respectfully,

Black Prisoners' Caucus