HOW WE MAP
A CREATIVE EXPLORATION SPACE

archive and reflection

compiled by
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with support by
upEND Movement

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FACILITATED BY BENJAMIN LUNDBERG TORRES SÁNCHEZ, ARTIST AND ORGANIZER

How We Map was a two-day creative exploration created by Benjamin Lundberg Torres Sánchez for upEND Movement's *How We endUP* conference in 2021. Through this experience the conference community began to collectively map conditions that uphold the Child Welfare Industrial Complex, and consider how their relationships, roles, and work may shift as we realize the abolition of its systems.

The original exploration used a "sand box" format where participants were invited to contribute to many activities according to their own interest, flow, pace, and capacity. This document compiles the activities within *How We Map* as a resource for future organizing, as well as content that was co-created by the conference community through their collaborations within the space.
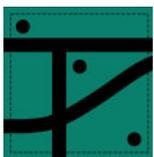
What is an Industrial Complex? The overlapping interests of government and industry...as solutions to economic, social, and political problems (Critical Resistance; What is the PIC? What is Abolition?)

What is the Child Welfare Industrial Complex? A term we use to describe overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, coercion, social stigma, and family separation as solutions to economic, social, and political problems. (Emily Ahn Levy, Liz Latty, Mariama J. Lockington, Benjamin Lundberg Torres Sánchez, Suzi Martinez Carter, Genevieve Saavedra, and Schuyler Swenson; Dream Mapping Adoption and Foster Care Abolition)

TRUE NORTH

Stars are a tool people use for navigation: to chart physical paths and life-ways. As we journey together, it is easy to get lost, sidetracked, disoriented, or tired and confused.

The "True North" space invited conference participants to collaborate in guiding each other towards abolition by co-creating a set of guiding principles. This flexible activity can be an important practice when bringing a new coalition of people or organizations together. In addition to contributing a guiding principle, participants could also elaborate on ideas left in the space, or pose a question to fellow participants. If someone left something in the sky resonates with participants, they placed a star next to that idea.

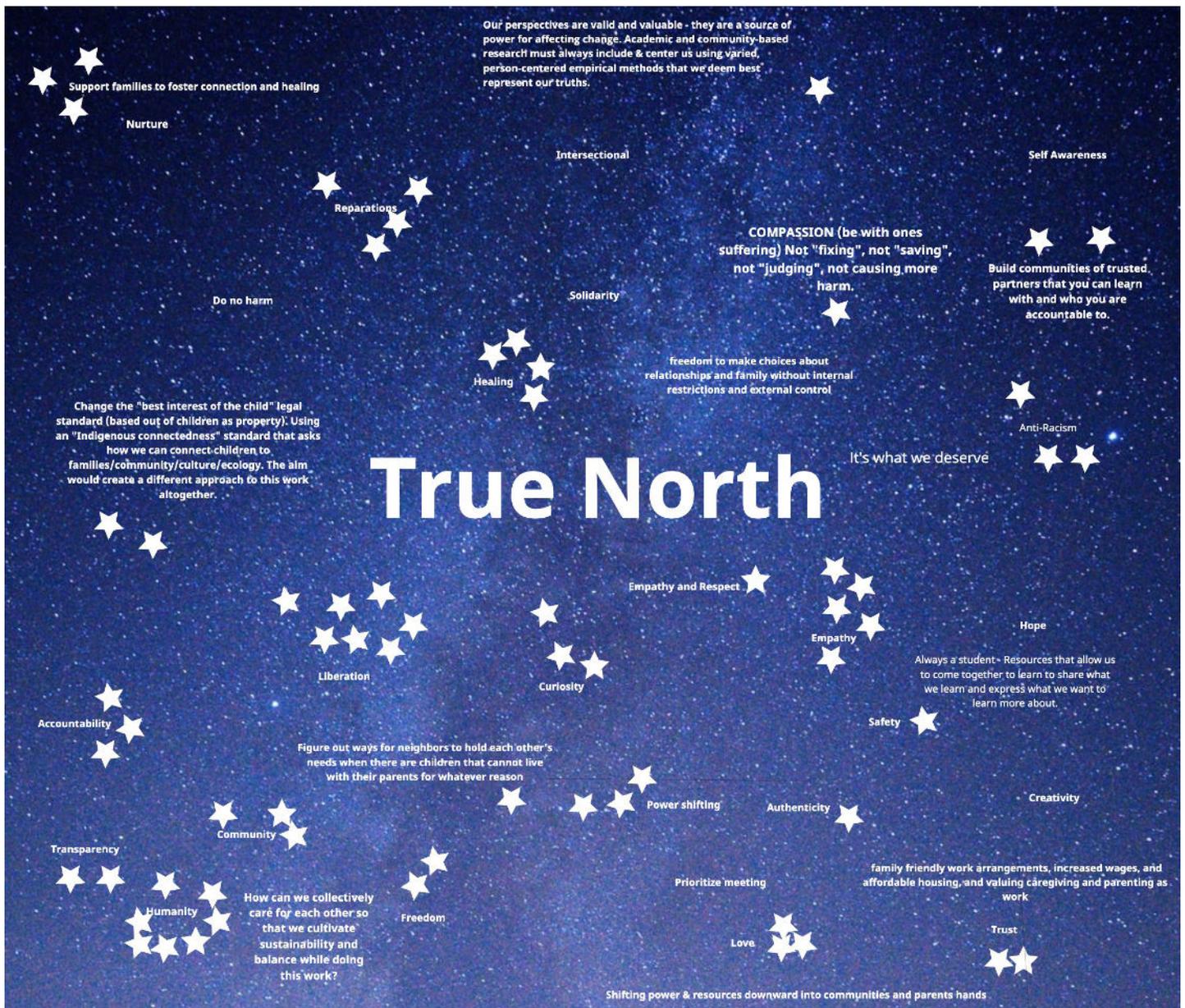Here are some strong contributions from participants at How We endUP:

freedom to make choices about relationships and family without internal restrictions and external control

The movement and its decision-making is lead by directly impacted people. "Nothing about us, without us"

Change the "best interest of the child" legal standard (based out of children as property). Using an "Indigenous connectedness" standard that asks how we can connect children to families/community/culture/ecology. The aim would create a different approach to this work altogether.

family friendly work arrangements, increased wages, and affordable housing, and valuing caregiving and parenting as work

COMPASSION (be with ones suffering) not "fixing," not "saving," not "judging," not causing more harm

Our perspectives are valid and valuable - they are a source of power for affecting change. Academic and community-based research must always include & center us using varied, person-centered empirical methods that we deem best represent our truths.

Support families to foster connection and healing

Nurture

Intersectional

Self Awareness

Reparations

COMPASSION (be with ones suffering) Not "fixing", not "saving", not "judging", not causing more harm.

Solidarity

Build communities of trusted partners that you can learn with and who you are accountable to.

Do no harm

freedom to make choices about relationships and family without internal restrictions and external control

Healing

Change the "best interest of the child" legal standard (based out of children as property). Using an "Indigenous connectedness" standard that asks how we can connect children to families/community/culture/ecology. The aim would create a different approach to this work altogether.

Anti-Racism

It's what we deserve

True North

Empathy and Respect

Hope

Empathy

Liberation

Curiosity

Always a student- Resources that allow us to come together to learn to share what we learn and express what we want to learn more about.

Accountability

Safety

Figure out ways for neighbors to hold each other's needs when there are children that cannot live with their parents for whatever reason

Power shifting

Authenticity

Creativity

Community

Transparency

family friendly work arrangements, increased wages, and affordable housing, and valuing caregiving and parenting as work

Humanity

How can we collectively care for each other so that we cultivate sustainability and balance while doing this work?

Freedom

Prioritize meeting

Trust

Love

Shifting power & resources downward into communities and parents hands

Archive of the "True North" activity at *How We endUP*

Corporations and non-profits often perform their public-facing values in simplistic, digestible ways, shying away from addressing how they will be practiced, or confronting any contradictions between an organization's practices, and their stated principles. Since many of us have been shaped by corporate and non-profit expressions of values there is a tendency for folks to contribute single words to this activity.

What do we mean when we use a word like **Empathy** or **Solidarity**? How do we resist feel-good language in favor of getting specific and concrete? How do we ground our guiding principles in the material realities and lived experiences of impacted people?

WHO ARE OUR MOVEMENT ELDERS AND ANCESTORS?

In this green field, participants were asked to gather our movement elders and ancestors by adding names and images of those who are with us today, and those who have gone before us. The label of "elder" here does not necessarily follow age. Additionally, following Mariame Kaba's quotation, "Nothing that we do that is worthwhile is done alone," participants could also add groups and collectives:

Every Mother is a Working Mother Network

Sandy Whitehawk

Carol Wilson Spigner

Professor Peggy Davis

Malcolm X

Ashley Albert

Angela Davis

Joyce McMillan

Dylan Rodriguez

Mariame Kaba

Isabel Mendes Blake

Dorothy Roberts

Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Concerned United Birthparents (CUB)

Mia Mingus

Adopted, Fostered, and Trafficked Abolitionist Group

Daniel Drennan ElAwar

Who are our movement elders and ancestors?

If someone share an elder or ancestor here who you love, add a leaf ▰ next to their name

Archive of the "Who are our movement elders and ancestors?" activity at *How We endUP*

WHY DO THINGS HAPPEN WHERE THEY DO?

"Why do things happen where they do?" is a question Ruth Wilson Gilmore uses to describe a central question of Geography. Using Ruth Wilson Gilmore's question, participants were asked to make statements about the Child Welfare Industrial Complex in the following format:

(What) happens **(where)** because **(a reason)**

Archive of the "Why do things happen where they do?" activity at *How We endUP*

MAPPING CONDITIONS

Using five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing) conference participants collectively built a collage of the current conditions of the Child Welfare Industrial Complex by placing words, doodles, photos, graphics, data, links, and more. The goal in this activity was to be as expressive as possible, and to not worry about being literal, or making sense. The only limit was our collective imagination.

Archive of the "Mapping Conditions" activity at *How We endUP*

THE MOUTH OF THE VOLCANO

Participants were asked to imagine using the cleansing fire of the volcano in a two-part activity.

First, participants "threw" the laws, policies, practices, and institutions they wanted to burn down, into the volcano. If something that was thrown into the volcano resonated, participants placed a flame next to that idea Second, participants responded to "What will rise from the ashes?" in the gray clouds above the volcano.
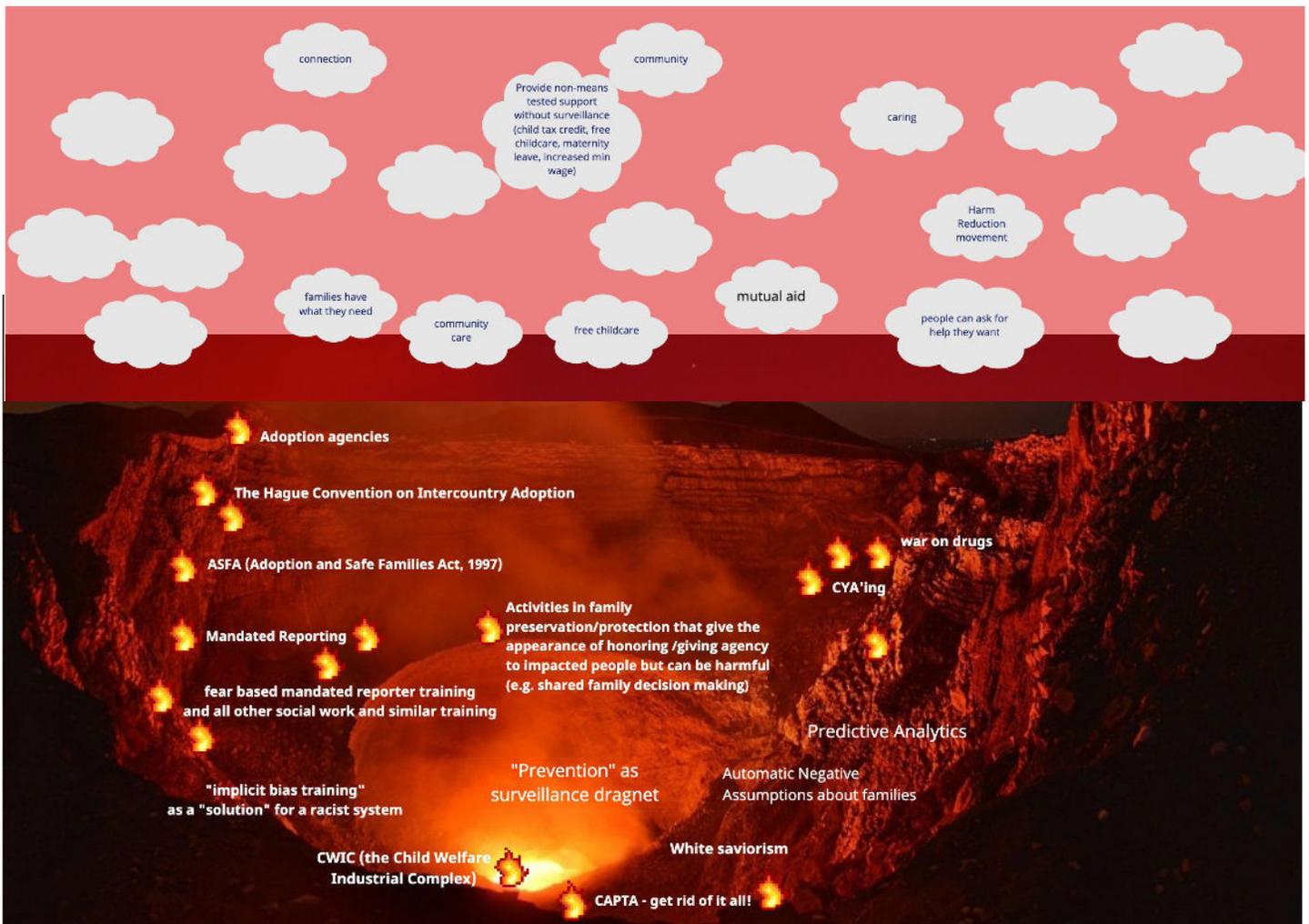
Archive of the "Mouth of the Volcano" activity at *How We endUP*

POWER MAPPING

Using Gloria Medina's Introduction to Power Analysis presentation, participants collectively strategized around how to recognize and shift power towards the goal of abolishing the global Child Welfare Industrial Complex.

Below, participants used sticky notes to sketch out competing agendas ("ours" vs. "the opposition's,") thinking about conditions we want to bring about, and conditions the opposition causes or perpetuates.

Archive of the "Power Mapping" activity at *How We endUP,* excerpt
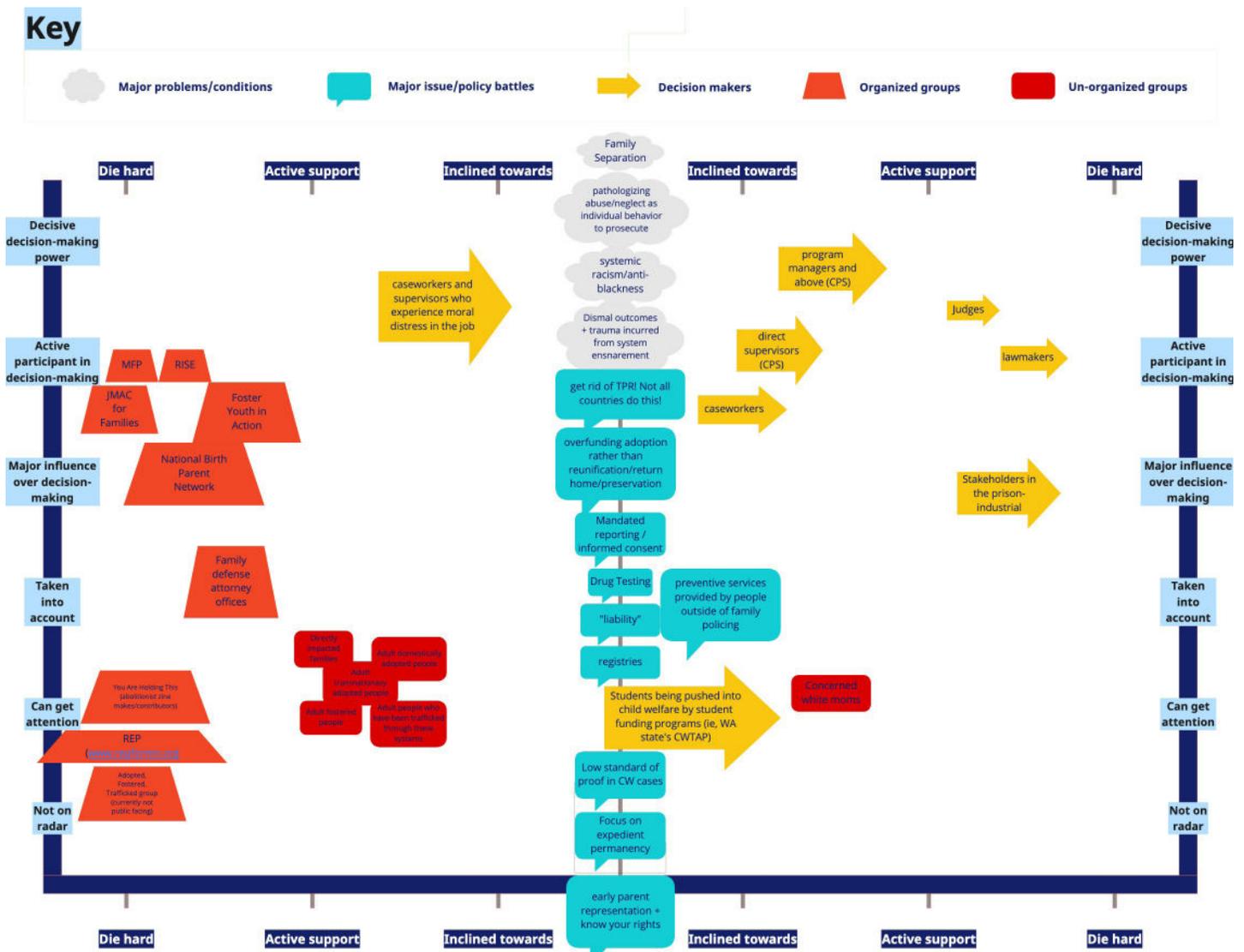
Archive of the "Power Mapping" activity at *How We endUP*, excerpt

With in the map, participants used symbols to map. Grey cloud icons were used to define the major conditions/problems which negatively impact people within the Child Welfare Industrial Complex. Aquamarine speech bubble stand for major issues/policy battles related to problems and conditions. Yellow arrows represent decision-makers; orange trapezoids represent organized groups; red rounded-rectangles represent un-organized groups.

The temporary community of the conference tried to keep in mind that every participant may not agree with one another, and contributed to the map knowing that it is a representation of a plural and collective perspectives, resisting a drive towards "right answers" or "perfection."

ABOLITIONIST STEPS VS. REFORMIST REFORMS

In this three-part activity, participants looked at the work of Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) abolitionists, and the framework of "Abolitionist Steps" vs. "Reformist Reforms."

As Derecka Purnell said during her keynote for *How We upEND*, we should ask ourselves when considering any action, "will this effort undermine and reduce the power of the present system?" Brianna Harvey elaborated this point during the *Repeal Mandatory Reporting Laws* panel saying, "we can't keep funneling money to these reforms, and funneling money to this systems, and think the system is going to save us." Joyce McMillan also spoke about taking actions to "shrink the system" out of existence. This has been expressed elsewhere as "reform to abolish."

Part 1: Participants considered two graphics representing campaigns addressing the Prison Industrial Complex: the reformist campaign, "8 Can't Wait," and the abolitionist campaign "8 to Abolition."

Using sticky notes, participants wrote down observation about the difference in strategies between these two campaigns.

source: https://8cantwait.org

source: https://www.8toabolition.com

Archive of the "Abolitionist Steps vs. Reformist Reforms" activity at *How We endUP*, excerpt

Below is Critical Resistance's *Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps to end imprisonment* poster. Participants spent time reading the introductory paragraph, and at least one example of a Reformist Reform, and one example of an Abolitionist Step before continuing to Part 3.

Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps to end IMPRISONMENT

This poster is a tool to assess and understand differences between reforms that strengthen imprisonment and abolitionist steps that reduce its overall impact and grow other possibilities for wellbeing. As we work to dismantle incarceration in all its forms, we must resist common reforms that create or expand cages anywhere, including under the guise of "addressing needs" or as "updated" replacements. Jails and prisons deprive communities of resources like medical and mental health care, transportation, food, and housing. In our fights, it is critical to uplift and strategically contribute to movements led by imprisoned people, both to address pressing conditions and for abolition. In all decarceration strategies, we must utilize tactics that will improve life for those most affected and make space to build the worlds we need.

DOES THIS...	reduce the number of people imprisoned, under surveillance, or under other forms of state control?	reduce the reach of jails, prisons, and surveillance in our everyday lives?	create resources and infrastructures that are steady, preventative, and accessible without police and prison guard contact?	strengthen capacities to prevent or address harm and create processes for community accountability?
Building jails or prisons to address overcrowding or rising numbers of "new" prisoners (for example, migrants)	NO. If they build it, they will fill it! Building more jails and prisons creates more cages, period!	NO. Building more jails and prisons increases the reach of the PIC and prison and jail infrastructures. Creating more cages means building something we have to tear down later.	NO. Adding cages takes away state and local funding and resources that could be directed to community-led infrastructures.	NO. Building more prisons and jails entrenches the carceral logic of accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.
Building "closer to home," or as "nicer"; "modern," "rehabilitative" alternatives to existing jails or prisons	NO. The history of the prison is a history of reform. New jails and prisons that are proposed as improvements on existing sites or buildings expand the arguments for and lengthen the life of imprisonment.	NO. There is no such thing as a "humane" cage. Construction under the pretense of addressing the harms that imprisonment reinforces the logics of using cages as a solution for social, economic, and political issues.	NO. Arguments for jails "closer to home" reinforce the idea that jails and police create "safety" and take away the capacity to build resources that can create well-being.	NO. Prisons and jails do not enable accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.
Building jails / prisons that focus on "providing services" to address the needs of specific "populations"	NO. Life-affirming resources cannot be provided in spaces of imprisonment. These "services" do not decrease numbers of imprisoned people - they keep specific populations of people imprisoned.	NO. Building jails and prisons that lock up specific populations expands the reach of imprisonment by normalizing the idea that care can and should be coupled with policing and imprisonment.	NO. The argument for these jails and prisons is that they provide specialized services through policing, imprisonment, and control. Environments of control and violence cannot provide care.	NO. Prisons and jails do not enable accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm, and solidify oppressive social expectations around gender, sexuality, and mental health.
Legislative and other efforts to single out some conviction categories as "exceptions"	NO. This strategy entrenches the idea that anybody "deserves" or "needs" to be locked up. Prioritizing only some people for release justifies expansion.	NO. By doubling-down on the "need" for some people to be locked up, these efforts strengthen and expand the reach of prisons, jails, and the PIC.	NO. Manufacturing divisions between imprisoned people, as more or less "dangerous," limits our ability to create real supports and resources that sustain all people.	NO. These efforts reinscribe the idea that some people are "risks" to society and others "deserve another chance," strengthening logics of punishment without engaging the context of how harms happen.
Use of electronic monitoring (home-arrest) and other law enforcement-led "alternatives" to jails and prisons.	NO. Electronic monitoring is a form of state control. It escalates the frequency of contact with the PIC for all members of a household, increasing the vulnerability of people already subject to policing and surveillance.	NO. Monitoring brings the prison, jail, or detention center into a person's home, turning it into a space of incarceration, which takes both a psychological and a financial toll.	NO. E-carceration means that regular daily movements are constantly linked to threats of arrest. This does not allow people to build and maintain community.	NO. E-carceration extends the violence and harm of imprisonment into people's homes and everyday lives. Nothing about electronic monitoring creates systems of accountability or healing.
Public / private "partnerships" to contract services that replicate conditions of imprisonment	NO. These services move people from one locked facility into another facility often with similar rules and with the threat of jail or prison looming.	NO. This expands the reach of imprisonment, by adding to the larger system. This is particularly the case where the partnerships replicate and expand logics and rules of jails and prisons, as opposed to intentionally challenging them.	NO. These programs require moving through the policing and court systems to access any services that might be available there.	NO. Court mandated / police-run "justice" processes hold similar threats for participants as the broader PIC. They do not necessarily include meaningful processes for creating accountability or tools for preventing future harm.

DOES THIS...	reduce the number of people imprisoned, under surveillance, or under other forms of state control?	reduce the reach of jails, prisons, and surveillance in our everyday lives?	create resources and infrastructures that are steady, preventative, and accessible without police and prison guard contact?	strengthen capacities to prevent or address harm and create processes for community accountability?
Decarceration - or reducing the number of people in prisons and jails	YES. Decarceration takes people out of prisons and jails, and out of direct state control, with the aim of supporting people to stay outside.	YES. By de-prioritizing and de-legitimizing jails, prisons, and related systems we reduce the common-sense idea that they are necessary and/or "effective".	YES. As part of abolitionist organizing we must focus on getting people out while building strong infrastructures of support.	YES. When we work to diminish carceral logic, we can pair our work toward decarceration with other ways of responding to and preventing harm. Investing in one will grow our capacities for the other.
Shutting down existing jails and prisons and not replacing them	YES. By reducing the number of cages, we can reduce the number of people inside.	YES. When we close a jail or prison and do not replace it with other carceral systems, we chip away at the idea that cages address social, political, and economic problems.	YES, when we organize for it. When we fight to close jails and prisons we can open the way to defund imprisonment and invest in infrastructures locally that support and sustain people. Abolition is also a BUILDING strategy.	YES. Our work to close prisons and jails and keep them closed is one step toward shifting the focus to addressing and preventing harm without violence and putting resources into that work.
Rejecting government spending for jail and prison construction, renovation, expansion	YES. Nearly all spending projects include enhancements that support arguments for the "benefits" of incarceration.	YES. By rejecting spending on jails and prisons, we counter the common-sense argument that they are necessary and reduce the system's reach.	YES. When we reject funding for jails and prisons this can create opportunities to defund imprisonment and invest in infrastructures locally that support and sustain people.	YES. When we reject funding for jails and prisons this can create opportunities to defund imprisonment and invest in infrastructures locally that support and sustain people.
Reducing policing and police contact in general, and "quality of life" policing, specifically	YES. Policing feeds imprisonment, and is an important part of systems of control. Reducing police contact reduces the number of people caught in the criminal legal system.	YES. Policing is a justification for imprisonment. By reducing police contact, the legitimacy and power of jails and prisons can be reduced.	YES. When we fight to reduce police contact and funding, we can free up state resources. We can organize allocation to community-led infrastructures that are decoupled from policing. We must eliminate all forms of policing from social and community services.	YES. Policing does not prevent harm, but actually causes it. Fighting to reduce policing provides opportunities to invest in systems that prevent harm and create accountability.
Creating voluntary, accessible, community-run services and infrastructures	YES. Access to services that address needs people articulate for themselves can reduce vulnerability to police contact and prevent harm, while building sites for self-determination.	YES. Voluntary services that are community-led and -informed take power away from jails and prisons by removing the focus on imprisonment as a solution to social, economic, and political issues.	YES. When we create services and infrastructures that are de-coupled from policing and imprisonment we develop systems with the potential to engage with people's complex needs in consistent and trust-building ways.	YES. People getting their needs met in community- determined and -led ways prevents harm. By bolstering resources that address harm, without replicating harm, we create opportunities for community accountability, not punishment and isolation.

Check out the *Abolitionist Steps* poster series: criticalresistance.org * CRITICAL RESISTANCE * 510.444.0484   **v.1, 2021**

The space below was designed for participants to practice charting Abolitionist Steps vs. Reformist Reforms. This version of Critical Resistance's tool can help us to develop visions for the future and ways of accessing concrete actions we may take or support with regards to the Child Welfare Industrial Complex and systems of family regulation, surveillance, and policing. Participants were encouraged to use the tool as an opportunity to build understanding with one another, rather than to try to "get it right."

Some ideas that were put forward by participants as Abolitionist Steps were "quality, free legal family defense," "shutting down congregate care facilities and reunify those children with family," "ending mandated reporting," and "Give people who need it money, housing, transportation (not a temporary bus card), food, clothing, jobs, etc."

Some ideas that were put forward by participants as Reformist Reforms were "eliminating all drug screening," and "building family-centered visitation facilities"

We can reflect on whether or not we agree with these ideas.

DOES THIS...	reduce the number of families who are regulated, surveilled, policed, punished, and destroyed by the state?	reduce the reach of family regulation, surveillance, policing, punishment, and destruction in our every day lives?	create resources that are steady, preventative, and accessible without contact with caseworkers and other agents of the Child Welfare Industrial Complex?	strengthen capacities to prevent or address harm and create processes for community accountability?
DOES THIS...	reduce the number of families who are regulated, surveilled, policed, punished, and destroyed by the state?	reduce the reach of family regulation, surveillance, policing, punishment, and destruction in our every day lives	create resources that are steady, preventative, and accessible without contact with caseworkers and other agents of the Child Welfare Industrial Complex?	strengthen capacities to prevent or address harm and create processes for community accountability?

Archive of the "Abolitionist Steps vs. Reformist Reforms" activity at *How We endUP*, excerpt

WHO ARE WE TOGETHER?

In this activity, participants worked collectively to visualize "who is here?" How do individuals imagine themselves and their roles in the collective work that it takes to create a movement?

Using shapes and text, participants mapped themselves and their relationships. In yellow rectangles, participants were invited to make a statement about themselves. It could be related to identity, experience, profession, desire, what offerings they bring, and more. In the blue thought bubble, participants wrote statements about what they imagined their role to be within this movement space. Participants also used dark blue arrows to elaborate what resonance, relationship, or affinity they founds within the conference space.

Here is an example of two participants' responses, reproduced with permission:

I think my role is to disrupt, connect, rescript narratives, hold space for survivors of trauma, and learn/share.

I think my role is to connect people to one another, and to collaborate on creating political education

Sol (they/them/pay)

As an infant, I was separated from my family of origin through the Child Welfare Industrial Complex & adopted through a transnational adoption process.

I am a community facilitator, organizer, & artist. Most importantly, a parent of two children. I am also the co-creator of podcast "Rescripting The Narrative".

My political home is a constellation of adopted, fostered, & trafficked people who are abolitionists/learning about abolition.

Ben is my friend & comrade~

We met in an "adopted from colombia" facebook group

Sol is my friend and comrade

I was separated from my first family for 28 years through a private, transnational adoption process.

I am an artist, educator, and an organizer. My political home is a constellation of adopted, fostered, and trafficked people who are abolitionists/learning about abolition.

I want to build connections between impacted parent organizers and adopted/fostered/trafficked organizers.

Benjamin (they/them/elle)