



OFFICE OF RESPONDENT
PARENTS' COUNSEL

PRESENTATION TO THE

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE

June 27, 2023

Presented By: Melissa Michaelis Thompson and Tara Doxtater

ColoradoORPC.org



ORPC'S MISSION

The Office of the Respondent Parents Counsel (ORPC) supports Colorado parents in the fight to preserve families, their dignity, and the constitutional right to parent in dependency and neglect (D&N) cases. We recruit and train attorneys statewide, advocate for family-centered policies, and promote equity and transparency in the system through data. As a result of our work, more families are reunified and stronger together.

About the ORPC

Video about the ORPC

"EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO
HAVE THEIR PARENT
REPRESENTED BY THE BEST
ATTORNEY IN TOWN."

- MARTY GUGGENHEIM

32,076

INDIVIDUAL PARENTS
REPRESENTED BY
ORPC

89%

PARENTS IN D&N CASES
WHO ARE INDIGENT
(ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES)

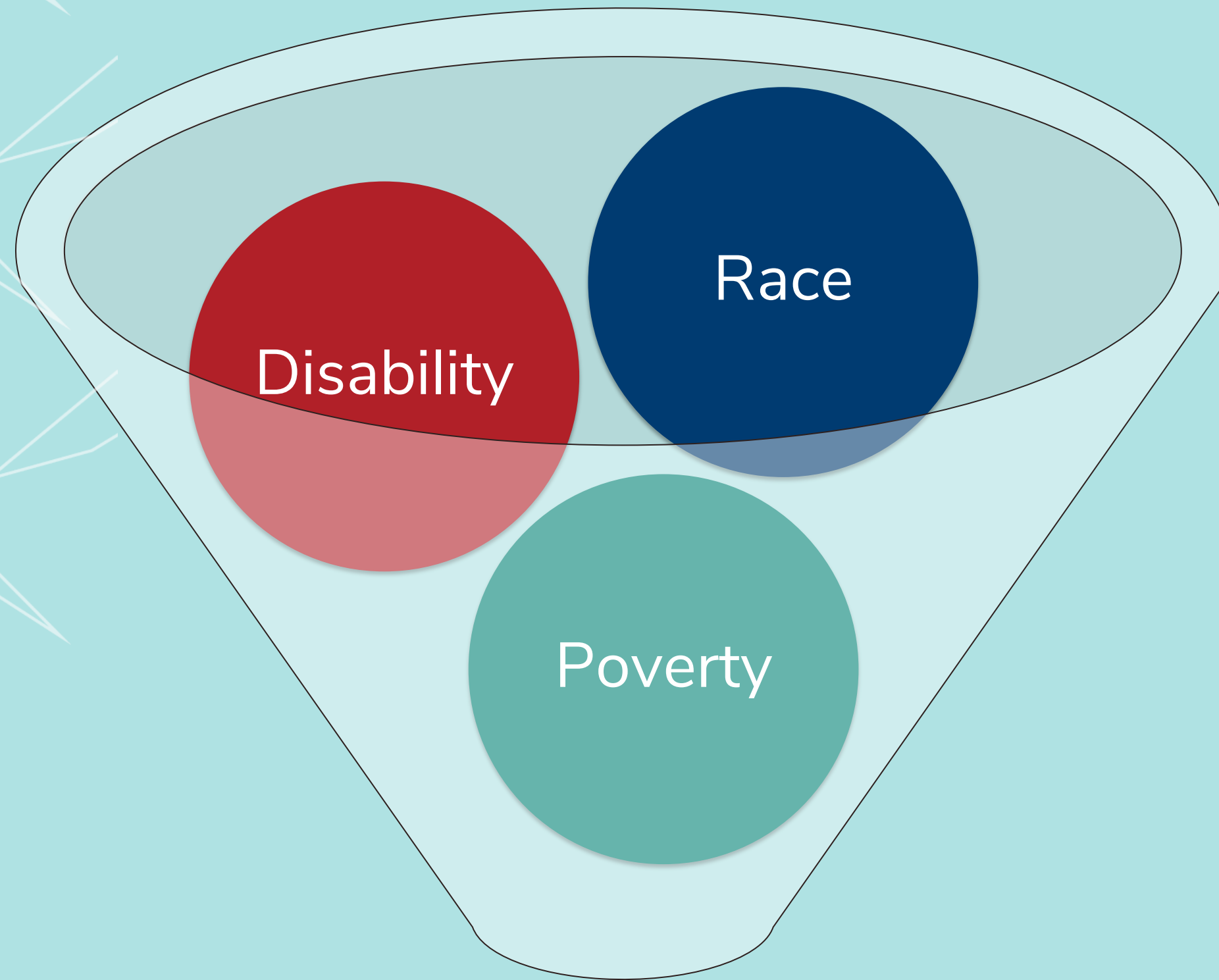




FAMILY VOICE

TARA DOXTATER

ORPC PARENT ADVOCATE



Overrepresentation in Child Welfare

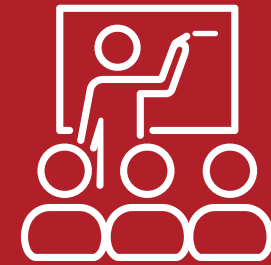
THE SYSTEM IS FAILING

Outcomes for Foster Youth



Disrupted Adoptions

From 2012-2021, 13% of adoptions in CO failed.



High School Graduation Rates

The four-year graduation rate for CO youth is 82%, but for youth in foster care, this rate drops to 30%.



Mental Health Outcomes

Up to 80% of children in foster care have significant mental health issues, compared to approximately 18-22% of the general population.

ORPC IS BRINGING SOLUTIONS



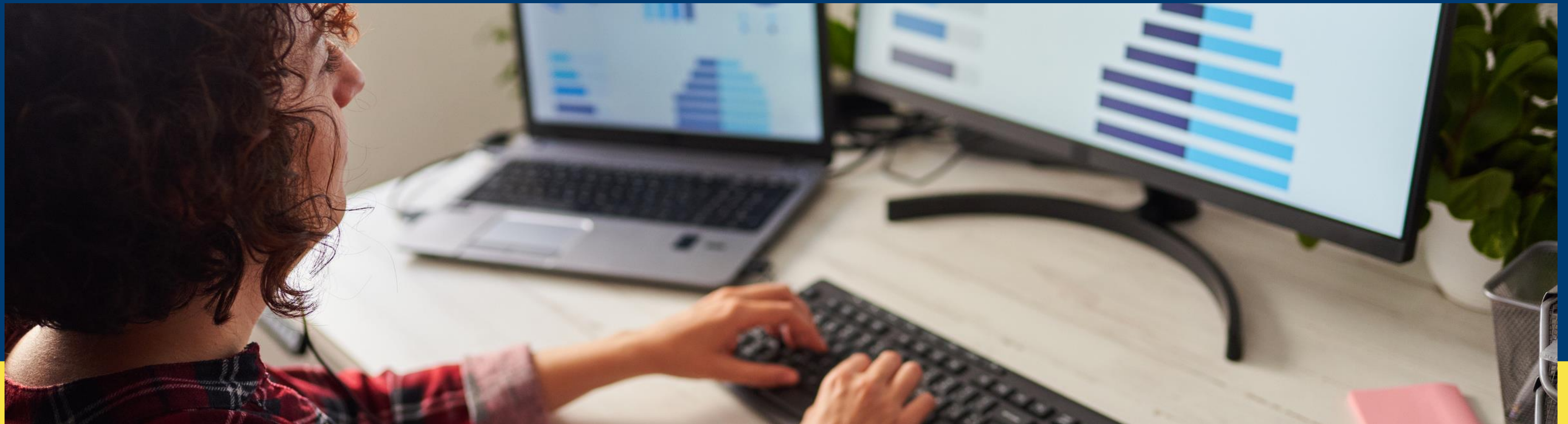
INTERDISCIPLINARY
LEGAL TEAMS



BETTER
COMPENSATION &
SUPPORT



PREVENTATIVE
LEGAL ADVOCACY



REDUCING SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT



REFORMING CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS



PREVENTING REMOVALS & SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT



REPEALING EXPEDITED PERMANENCY PLANNING (EPP)



INTERIM COMMITTEE SUPPORT

ORPC IS HERE TO HELP

- Coordinate presentations from Washington state or New York, both of whom have engaged in substantial reforms
- Present on or submit drafts of possible legislative reforms
- Introduce parents, relatives, kin, and youth with lived experience
- Provide data in response to questions from the legislature
- Educate on federal civil rights laws, including the ADA and Title VI



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