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BOSTON YOUTH  
SANCTUARY

**November 21,  
2019**

**Helping Children Develop: Innovative Interventions for  
the Cradle, the Classroom and the Clinic**

# Who does BYS serve?

- ❑ BYS serves primarily **Black, Latino, and multiracial-identified child survivors of trauma** ages **6 to 12** who live in the **Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan**
- ❑ BYS youth have been directly exposed to **community violence, traumatic loss, domestic violence, sexual abuse, physical abuse, traumatic neglect, and/or traumatic experiences in foster care**
- ❑ BYS youth present with **behavioral, social and academic challenges, as well as issues with self-esteem and self-advocacy** resulting from exposure to traumatic events and circumstances

# BYS's Current Cohort



**20%** - **family member** that has been a **victim of homicide**

**32%** - lived with a **caregiver** who has **struggled with reported substance use**

**36%** - experienced **homelessness**

**40%** - experienced the **death of a caregiver or family member**

**44%** - experienced **community violence**

**52%** - **separated** from their **primary caregiver**, including **DCF removal**

**60%** - **witnessed** reported **domestic violence**

**68%** - experienced **abuse** (physical, emotional, verbal & sexual) or **neglect**

**92%** of our children have experienced **multiple traumas**

# What does BYS aim to achieve?

## ❑ Short Term Goals

- ❑ develop sustainable coping and social skills
- ❑ build healthy peer relationships
- ❑ increase self-advocacy and self-esteem
- ❑ manage and regulate emotions and behavior

## ❑ Longer Term Goals

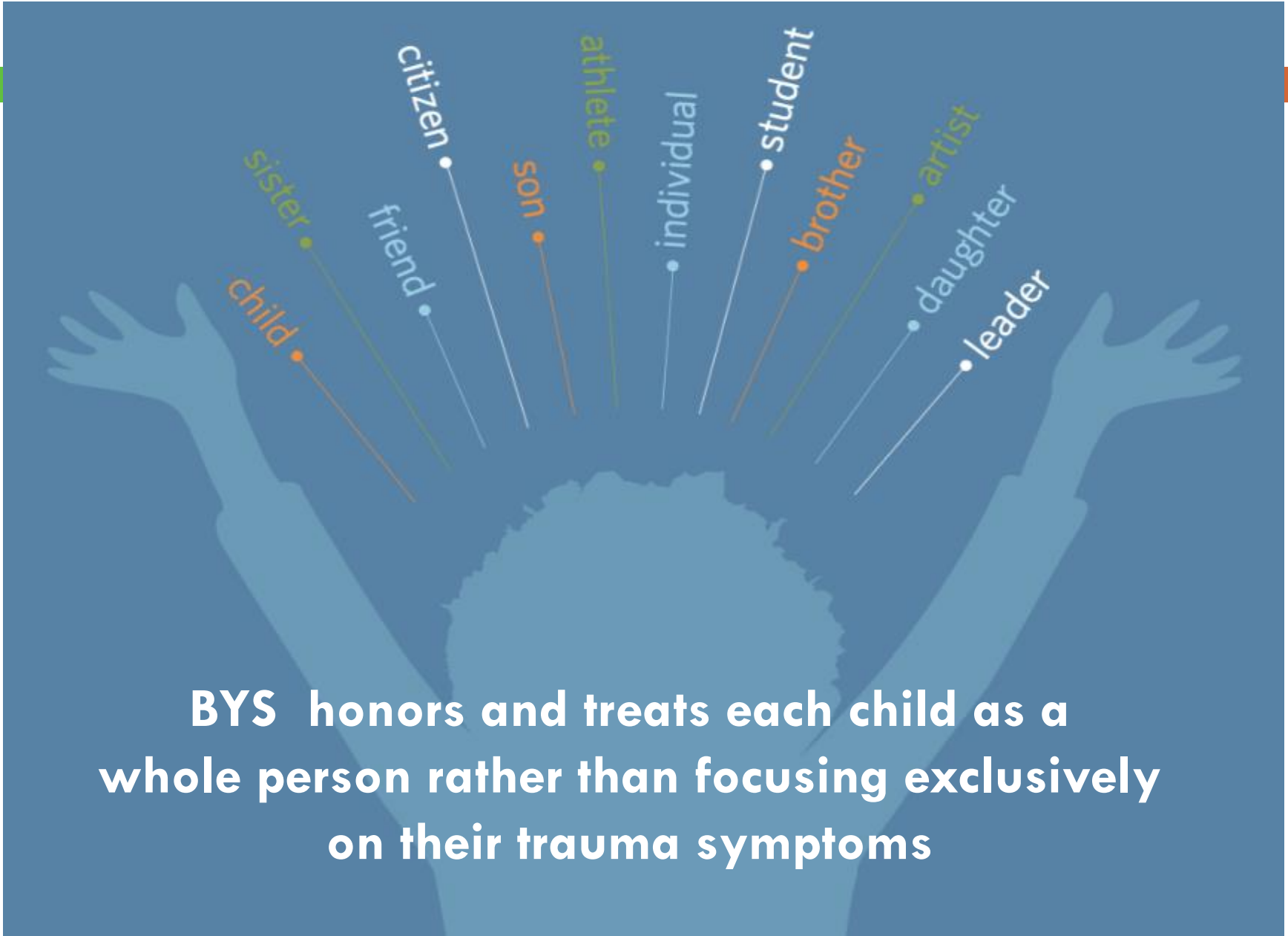
- ❑ process trauma
- ❑ develop identity
- ❑ improve social and communication skills
- ❑ build trust in their community
- ❑ develop into healthy, high-achieving adults

# What does BYS offer?

- ❑ Individual, group, & expressive therapies
- ❑ Afterschool care
- ❑ Pro-social environment
- ❑ Empowerment activities
- ❑ Mentoring
- ❑ Homework support
- ❑ Consistency & Routine
- ❑ Family support services
- ❑ Daily nutritious meal
- ❑ Transportation services



# BYS's Whole Child Approach



**BYS honors and treats each child as a whole person rather than focusing exclusively on their trauma symptoms**

# Traditional Clinical Groupwork

## Topic Examples:

- Grief & Loss
- Boundaries-  
Safe Touch
- Affect Id.
- Coping Skills
- Emotion  
Regulation



# Therapeutic Prosocial Programming

- Gardening
- Cooking
- Drumming
- Drama
- Male & Female Empowerment





# Movement Based Activities

- Gymnastics
- Hip Hop Dance
- Trauma-informed Yoga
- Adventure-based counseling activities
- Freestyle



# BYS youth heal from trauma by:

- ❑ **Processing trauma** with trained professionals
- ❑ Engaging in programming designed to support **positive identity development**, teach **communication, social and coping skills** and by utilizing opportunities to **practice learned skills in a safe space**
- ❑ Exposure to **staff modeling** and encouragement needed to **form healthy attachments and relationships**
- ❑ **Feeling safe, valued, supported and empowered!**

# BYS TSCYC Data 2018-2019

## Trauma Symptoms Checklist for Young Children

	September 2018	June 2019
<i>High Intrusion Rate</i>	33%	8%
<i>High Avoidance Rate</i>	33%	29%
<i>High Arousal Rate</i>	17%	8%
<i>High Overall Post-Traumatic Stress Rate</i>	33%	25%

*100% of youth had at least one score (anxiety, depression, anger, etc.) decrease according to the TSCYC*

# A *Sanctuary*: our unique holding space

Services are delivered after school in a normalized, community-based setting where youth can draw strength and power from shared lived experience, participate in therapy, learn, engage, grow and have fun!



# Multidisciplinary Team

BYS's Team is comprised of Social Workers, Mental Health Counselors, Art/Expressive Therapists, Teachers, Case Managers & Direct Care Workers



# Staff Pathways

- ❑ **BYS has offered 23 undergraduate and 28 clinical graduate internships** to students attending William James College, Lesley University, Simmons College, Boston College, Cambridge College and Fitchburg State University- **8 interns have gone on to become BYS employees**
- ❑ **4 BYS employees** have had the opportunity to receive **financial support in order to access higher education** while employed at BYS



[www.bostonyouthsanctuary.org](http://www.bostonyouthsanctuary.org)

Boston Youth Sanctuary provides a safe and nurturing environment where at-risk youth are encouraged to express themselves positively and gain sustainable coping skills that aid in academic, community and home life success.

Youth that attend BYS After School Program graduate feeling empowered and better equipped to face the challenges that arise in their daily lives.