

The Urban Child's Trauma and the Law: How Can the Justice System Help?



MELANIE D. SHAPIRO, ESQ.
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER
BALTIMORE CITY JUVENILE DIVISION

Children in the Juvenile Justice System



Perception

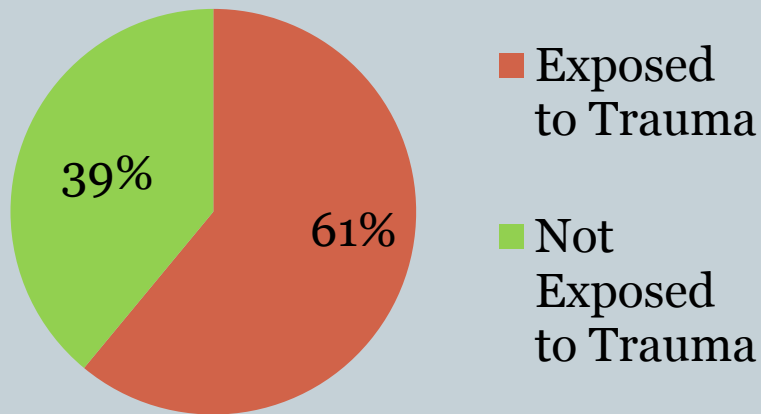
- Angry
- Defiant
- Indifferent

Reality

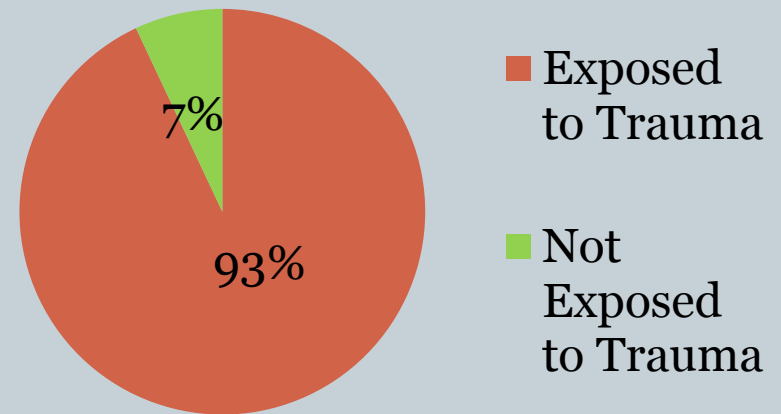
- Fearful
- Depressed
- Lonely

Children's Exposure to Trauma

Total Population



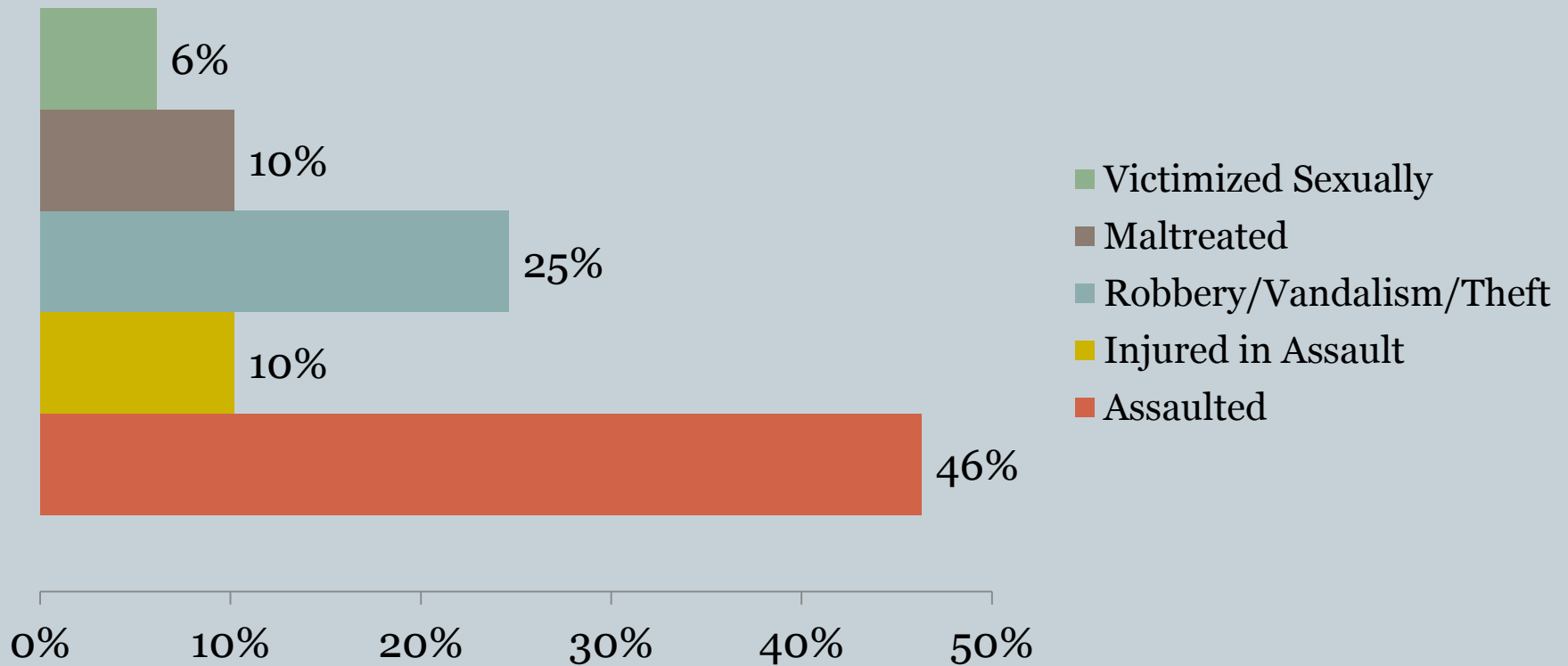
Juvenile Detention



Victimization in the Past Year



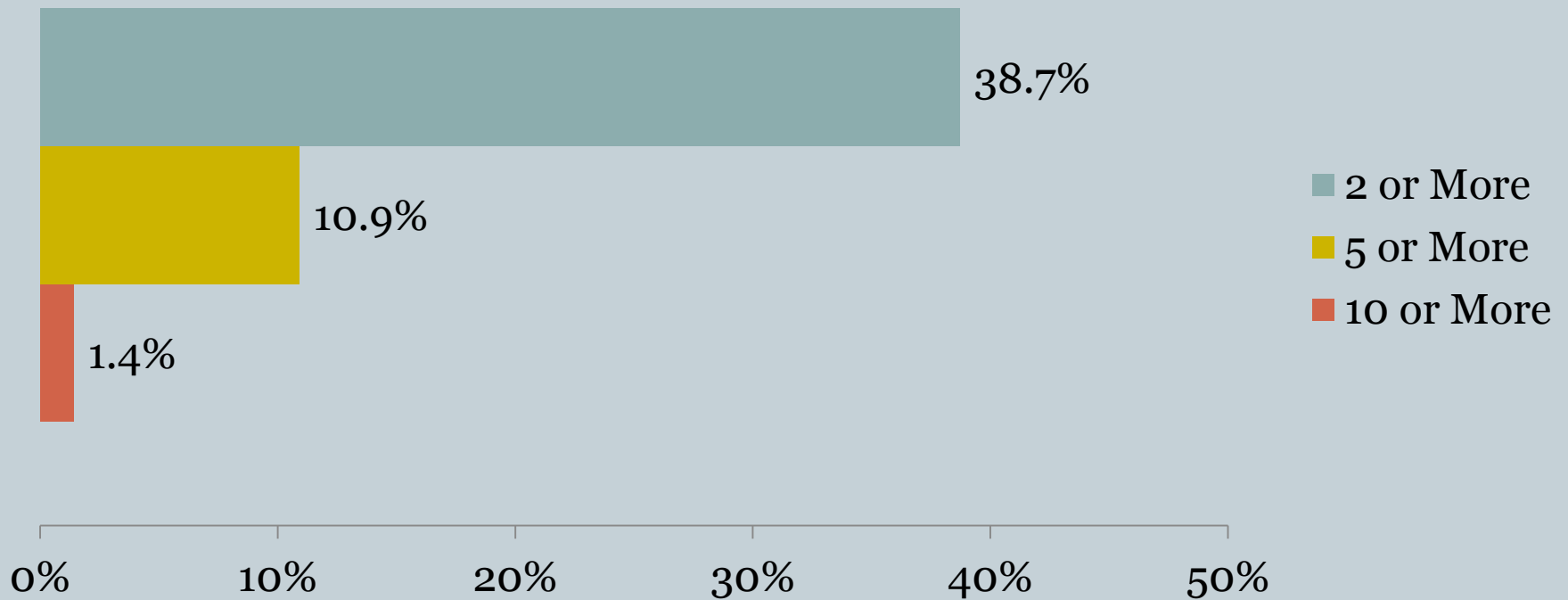
Percentage of Children Exposed to Violent Acts



Multiple Direct Victimizations



Percentage of Children Exposed to Multiple Victimizations



Effects of Exposure to Trauma



Source: Buffington, K., Dierkhising, C.B., & Marsh, S.C. (2010). *Ten things every juvenile court judge should know about trauma and delinquency*, Reno, NV: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

The Supreme Court Recognizes Juvenile's Brains Are Different



- *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005): Eliminates death sentence for juveniles
- *Graham v. Florida*, 130 S. Ct. 2011 (2010): Eliminates life without parole for juveniles in non-homicide offenses
- *Miller v. Alabama*, No. 10-9646 (2012): Eliminates life without the possibility of parole for juveniles

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



**BETWEEN 3% AND 50% OF
CHILDREN IN THE JUVENILE
JUSTICE SYSTEM SUFFER
FROM POST-TRAUMATIC
STRESS DISORDER**



Symptoms of PTSD

- Re-Experiencing
- Avoidance
- Numbing
- Arousal
- Attachment Issues
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Impulsivity
- Conduct Problems
- Dissociation
- Self-harm
- Oppositional Behavior

What Can We Do?



Screen

Assess

Implement Trauma-
Informed Services

Collaborate

Educate

Baltimore City Juvenile Court Division

300 North Gay Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

Main: 443 263 6360 Fax: 443 263 6395

Email: baltcityjuvenile@opd.state.md.us

<http://www.opd.state.md.us/districts/dist1/jcdhome.aspx>