



PROJECT AVARY

Supporting CIP: A Healing
Centered Approach

projectavary.org

PROJECT AVARY

Project Avary is a national nonprofit organization providing direct service and support to children of incarcerated parents (CIP). We began in 1999 as a summer camp for children with parents in San Quentin Prison in San Rafael, California. Today we are connecting CIP across the country building a nationwide community of support!



LET'S TALK ABOUT IT



- Over **2.7 million children** in the U.S. currently have an incarcerated parent and over **10 million children** have had a parent incarcerated in their lifetime.
- Parental incarceration is the **2nd greatest childhood public health issue** in the US making it a **national crisis**.
- Parental incarceration is identified as one of the ten ACEs (**Adverse Childhood Experiences**). CIP experience **shame, stigma and social isolation**, and have higher rates of anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
- To counter these mental health challenges, children need **social-emotional support** that connects youth with peers and adult mentors who have similar lived experience.

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS



The Children of Incarcerated Parents' Bill of Rights was created by SF CIP in 2005. **Across multiple agencies**, children of incarcerated parents worked together to write a document **recognizing the specific needs and rights** of children who have parents in the justice system. It provides a roadmap for reform to **ensure that a child's well-being** is considered in each stage of the criminal justice process.

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

1. To be **kept safe** and **informed** at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. To be **heard** when decisions are made about me.
3. To be **considered** when decisions are made about my parent.
4. To be well **cared for** in my parent's absence.
5. To **speak with, see and touch my parent**.
6. To **support** as I face my parent's incarceration.
7. **Not to be judged, blamed or labeled** because of my parent's incarceration.
8. To a **lifelong relationship with my parent**.



HOW PROJECT AVARY SUPPORTS CIP

- **A place to belong:** We promote community healing through credible messengers with shared experiences. Youth connect with other youth who have been impacted by parental incarceration.
- **A place to share:** We offer a healing centered safe space providing long term support. Youth can talk about their experience (if they want), in a community free of judgement.
- **A place to give back:** Youth can become PAID leaders and join our youth advisory council, where they find joy in peer to peer leadership
- **A place to have FUN!** We believe that play is necessary to build relationships and communities.

PROJECT AVARY'S PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We've created a judgement-free, safe space for CIP to connect, have fun, heal, and grow. No child should have to go through this experience alone.

- **Zero Cost** thanks to our generous sponsors.
- **National Support Circles**
- **Leadership growth & counselor training**
- **Caregiver Support Groups**
- **Northern CA Programming also includes:**
 - **Family Community Days**
 - **Family Camp**
 - **Year round overnight adventure retreats**
 - **Sleepaway summer camps**



NATIONAL SUPPORT CIRCLES

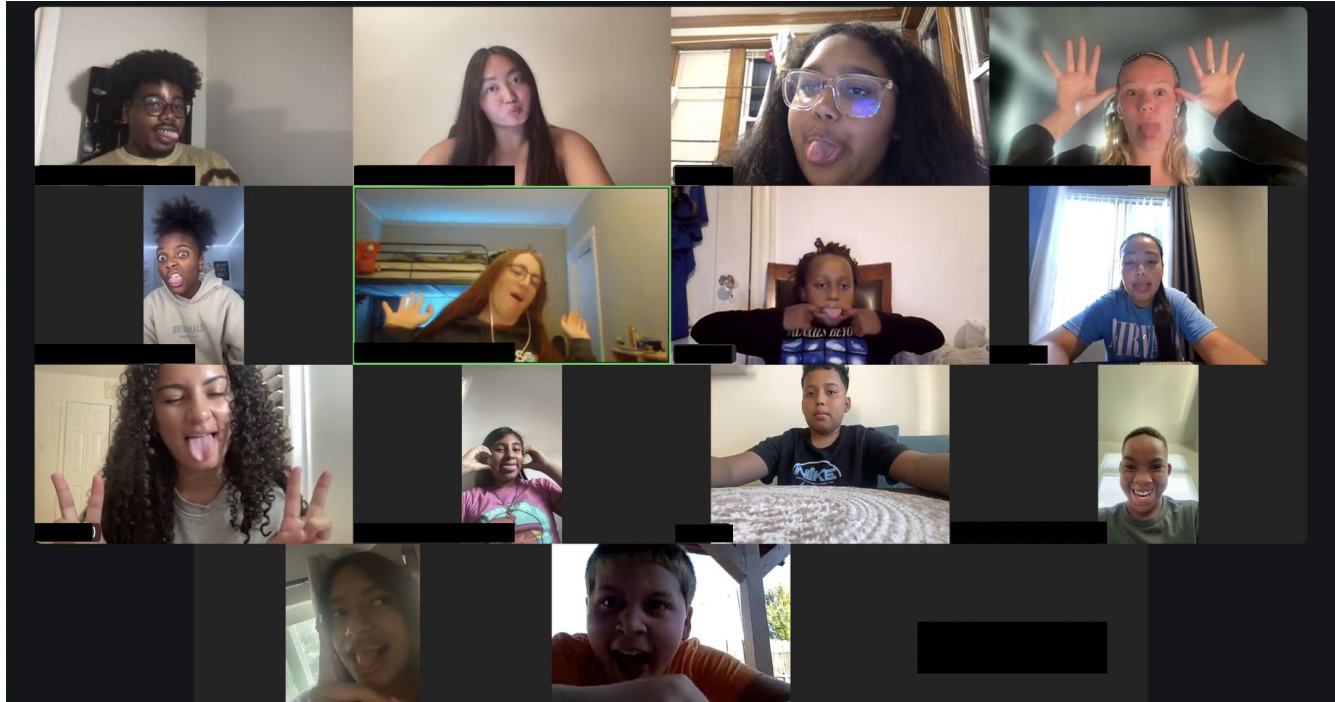


PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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- **Zero Cost** thanks to our generous sponsors.
- **6 Week Sessions:** One afternoon/evening per week, held on Zoom with multiple sessions happening simultaneously and sessions occur throughout the year.
- **Curriculum:** Engaging games, activities and 'real talk', a youth led discussion removing the stigma behind parental incarceration.
- **Trained Counselors:** All counselors have personal experience with familial incarceration and are trained in evidence-based best practices.
- **Leadership Development:** Participants have PAID opportunities to train to be Project Avary counselors themselves.
- **Teen Workshops:** Participants develop more advanced emotional, social, and professional skills.

WHY GROUP MENTORING?



Due to shame and stigma, when a parent is incarcerated, the youth is left in isolation to process this trauma. Project Avary provides a needed community for youth to know they're not alone in grieving the loss of their incarcerated parent.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT

from CIP themselves

- **It's ok to be direct.** There is a stigma around incarceration. Being afraid to speak openly about it can reinforce that stigma. If it's necessary to talk about incarceration, do so directly.
- **Use inclusive language** about family. Caregivers can be an aunt/uncle, grandmother/grandfather, adoptive, etc.
- **Admit you don't know.** Saying things like "I know what it's like..." might be well intentioned, but it doesn't feel good when someone claims to know what it's like to be a CIP. Expressing a desire to understand is helpful.
- **Don't ask about a parent's crime,** this can increase feelings of shame. This isn't relevant to personal healing.
- **Don't judge or speak ill about a parent,** even if there is expressed pain and anger about the parent's actions.
- **Consider your intention.** If your intention is to understand, show compassion and introduce a place like Project Avary, CIP might be receptive and feel comfortable sharing. If your intention is only to change behaviors, CIP might shut down.
- **Be persistent** with caregivers about enrolling with Project Avary. Because of the stigma, caregivers may be reluctant to speak with you about a referral to Avary. "It took some of our caregivers 3 phone calls from our school counselors, but the referral to Avary was life changing for me and my family."

LIVED EXPERIENCE IS EXPERTISE



CURRICULUM & TRAINING

Our group mentorship **curriculum was developed by a licensed therapist who is also a CIP.** In collaboration with team members who contributed their own lived experience and professional expertise, they created a dynamic and **structured program** focused on **peer to peer healing centered engagement. Lived experience fosters connection and creates a sense of safety.** We maintain a highly capable team of trained Counselors with personal experience to **co-facilitate** weekly groups. After completing at least one year of training, Lead Counselors manage pacing, delegate leadership responsibilities, and **ensure safety of the group** with the assistance of Co-Counselors. Each group is overseen by a skilled Coach who offers additional ongoing training and support.

Weekly session participants gain:

- **Emotional support** - Reduced feelings of isolation and shame
- **Social Skills** - Empathetic listening, anger management, and cultivation of compassion
- **Professional Development** - Leadership training, job skills, increased confidence

GROUP MENTORING MODEL



PROJECT AVARY

GROUP MENTORING MODEL

TRADITIONAL MENTORING

- SUPPORTIVE
- NO TRAUMA TRAINING
- 1:1 RELATIONSHIP
- LIMITED MENTORS

OUR MODEL

- PEER LED
- TRAUMA-INFORMED
- LONG-TERM COMMUNITY
- AFFORDABLE & ACCESSIBLE

CLINICAL THERAPY

- PROFESSIONAL
- TRAUMA TRAINED
- SHORT TERM
- HIGH COST/HIGH BARRIER

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- Participants age 8-25 with caregiver's consent
- Has a current or formerly incarcerated parent or family member
- Access to a personal device
- Transportation to our pick up locations in the Bay Area (Overnight retreats and sleepaway summer camps for Northern CA youth)

*Youth are enrolled on a case by case basis. Youth are still encouraged to apply even if they do not meet all of the above criteria



SERVING BIPOC COMMUNITIES (Black, Indigenous, People Of Color)

- BIPOC are adversely affected due to deep rooted **systemic inequities** and community over policing
- BIPOC arrest rate is **5 times higher** than white Americans
- Families are historically torn apart causing negative ripple effects for generations
- **Childhood experiences affect overall well-being**
- Project Avary programming is tailored specifically to **support historically underserved populations**
- All sessions are led by **credible messengers**
- Youth identify with and see **BIPOC in leadership**
- Project Avary offers **culturally inclusive** programming



THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION ON IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

- Youth* are eligible to join when a parent is **detained or deported**.
- Families may experience fear and be on high alert regarding ICE raids and immigration status.
- Project Avary is a **safe space** of support and community.
- Information shared is **completely confidential**.
- We do not work with ICE or any government immigration agency.
- Project Avary has **Bilingual** (Spanish speaking) Staff

*In some cases, youth themselves are detained by ICE in “prison like” conditions that exacerbate trauma.



NATIVE AMERICAN OUTREACH



- Project Avary is actively expanding our outreach to share our program with more Native populations, **ensuring that more youth within these communities can access our resources and support.**
- Native people are incarcerated in state and federal prisons at a rate of **763 per 100,000 people**, which is **4 times** higher than the rate for white individuals.
- It's our priority at Project Avary to reach more Native youth to **ensure they have the support they deserve.**
- Visit our **Pathways for Native Youth** page on our website to learn more.



IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

- **No single organization can do it all!** In order to impact change, we must lean on community collaborative efforts.
- **Paid opportunities** help motivate youth and allow for continued participation.
- **Lived experience is expertise** & those closest to the problem are closest to the solution but aren't necessarily informed of available resources.
- **Help us get resources to those in need through:**
 - social media, community centers, schools, libraries, community partners, tabling events, jail and prison visiting centers, law enforcement agencies, court systems, foster care, social workers, online resource guides. . .
- How can **we partner to support** your program and mission?
 - Reciprocal partnerships uplift everyone involved



PARTNERSHIP PLANNING

- Direct [referrals](#)
- Add Project Avary to your Community **Resource Page**
- **Distribute flyers** to community members (flyers in appendix)
- **Share** directly with the youth or caregiver
- **Post flyer** in community spaces (ie: inside prison and jail waiting room)
- Schedule **Guest Speaker** for upcoming conferences and events
- Schedule **Podcast** Interviews
- Schedule **Staff Trainings** for your team
- **Community presentations** about parental incarceration, including information about Project Avary's Program resources
- **Post** information about Project Avary's Program on **websites** and **social media** initiatives
- **Email** about our program in your newsletter featuring our website
- Share **introductions** we can make for each other to further support missions goals

REFERRAL AND ENROLLMENT

Visit projectavary.org/nationalprogram to learn more and fill out the [enrollment application](#) ([Spanish version](#)). Once the application is received, an intake counselor will follow up with the caregiver to complete the youth enrollment.

HOW TO REFER:

- Share the informational flyer and/or online enrollment link with youth's caregiver
- Fill out online enrollment form with caregiver's permission

PROGRAM IMPACT



95%



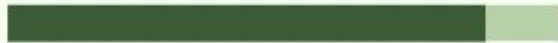
experience a sense of belonging with peers

100%



experience healthy attachment with caring and supportive adults

89%



show positive change in emotional regulation skills

94%



show positive change in conflict resolution

92%



show positive change in self esteem

90%



show positive change in perseverance

87%



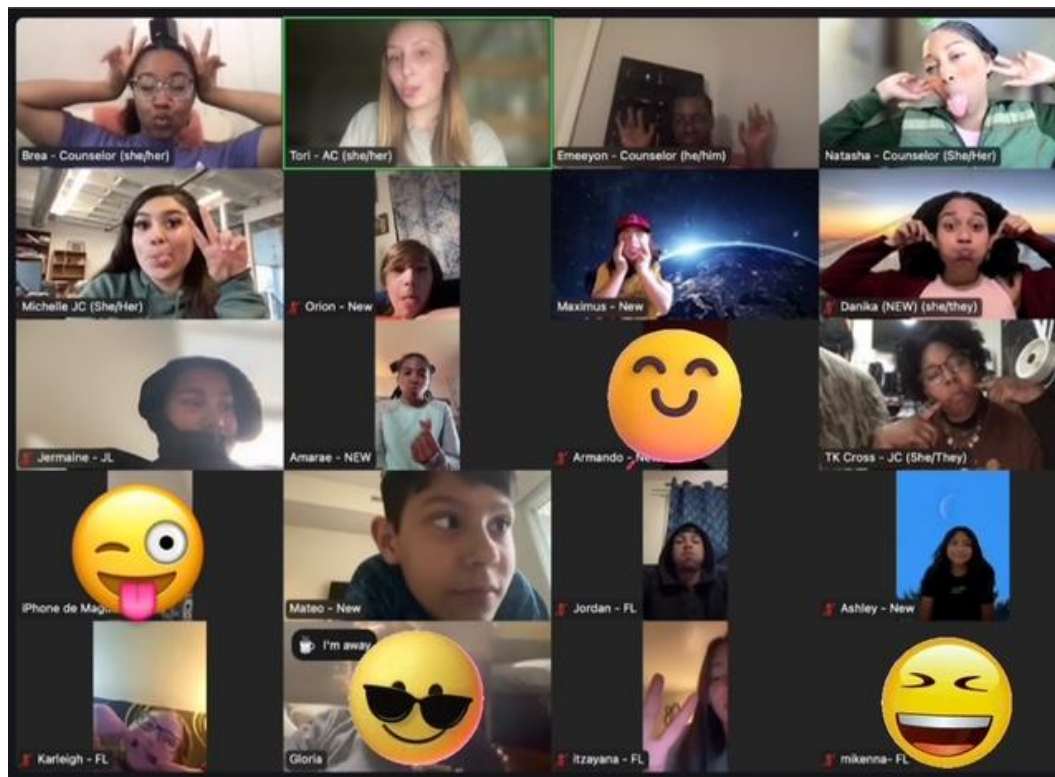
show positive change in leadership skills

Data from 2024 Project Avary participants

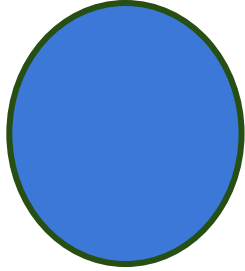
APPENDIX LINKS

- [National Support Circles Flyer](#) (English and Spanish)
- [Northern California Program Flyer](#) (English and Spanish)
- [Waiting room flyer](#)
- [National Support Circles VIDEO](#)
- [Northern California In Person Program VIDEO](#)
- Link resource page (coming soon!)

QUESTIONS?



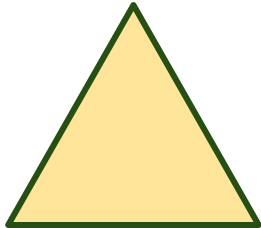
SHARE THE AVARY LOVE!



A questions that is still **circling** around in your mind



A learning that is **squared** away for you



A **point** that you're taking away from today's meeting