

YOUTH IN SOLITARY

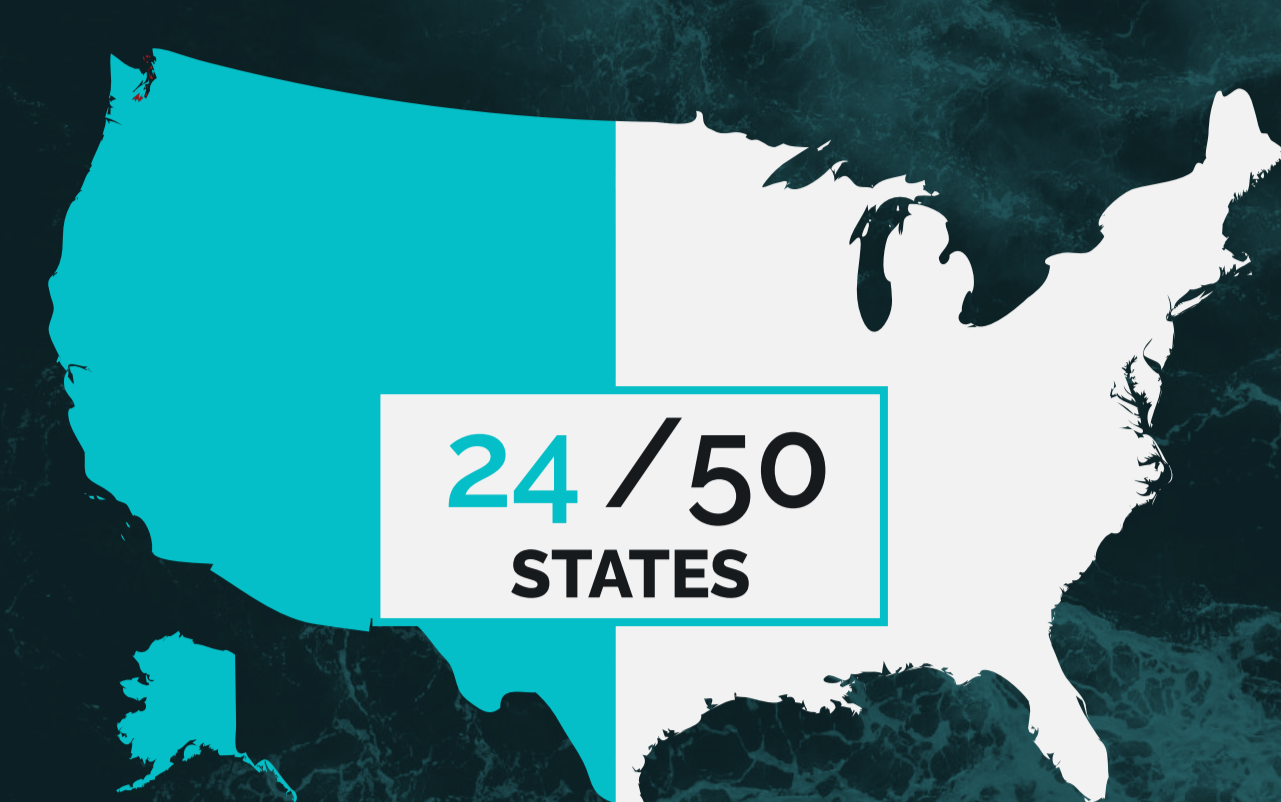
What Is Solitary Confinement?



Youth in solitary confinement spend up to **24 hours a day** alone in a cell without meaningful human contact.



The UN classifies solitary confinement as **torture**, and calls for a ban on placing children in solitary.



24 states place **no limits** on the use of solitary on kids.

Hard Numbers about Kids in Solitary

About **60,000 children** are held in juvenile facilities on any given day. **35%** reported experiencing solitary confinement. Hundreds more kids are likely held in solitary in adult prisons and jails, and schools also frequently hold kids in seclusion.



Psychological and Developmental Effects



Kids in solitary frequently exhibit depression, anxiety, and issues with impulse control.



Half of all suicides in juvenile facilities happen while kids are in solitary. Additionally, rates of self-harm are much higher in solitary confinement than in the general prison facility population.



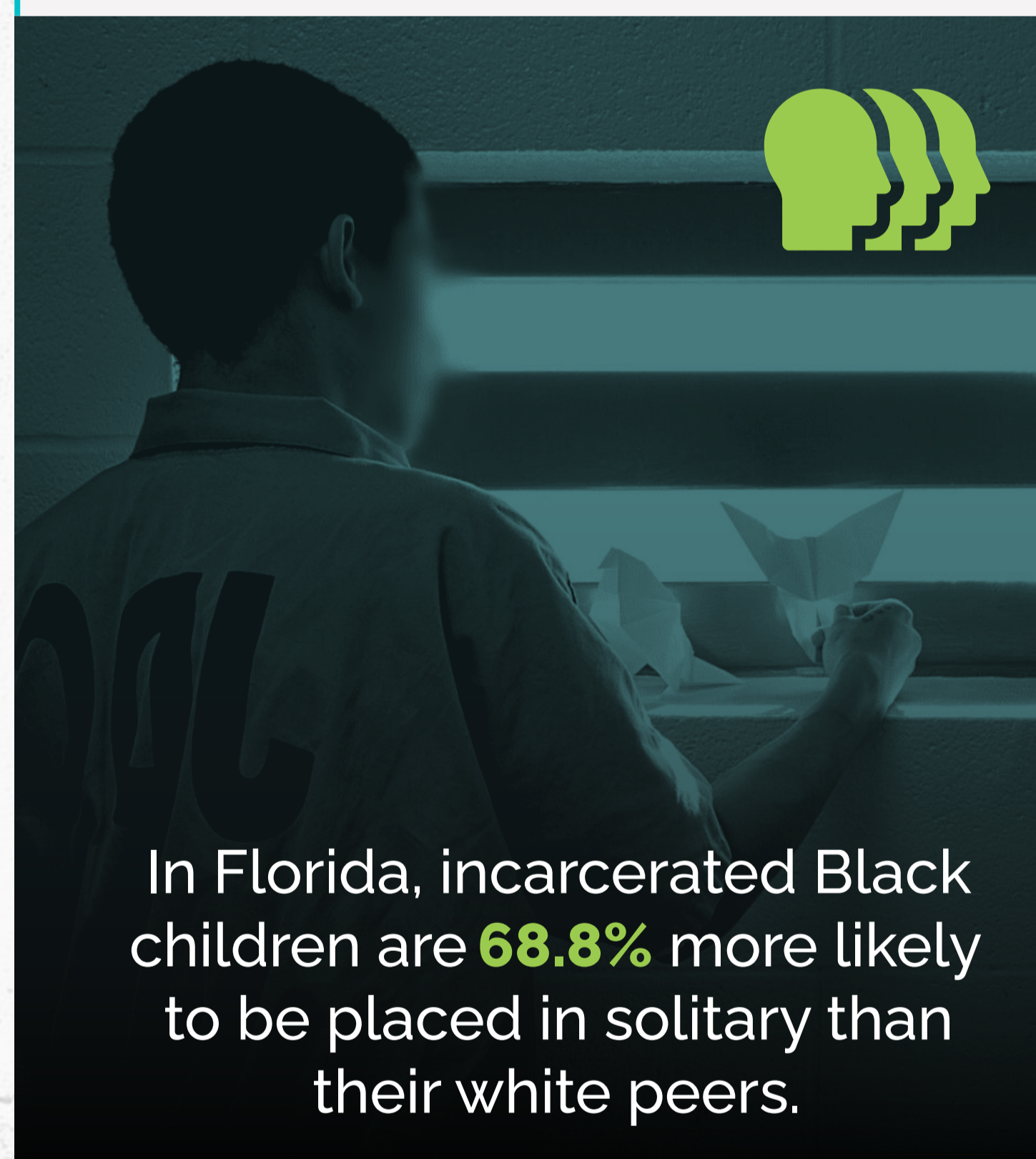
Children held in solitary usually receive no educational materials, and miss class time.



Due to their vulnerability, youth are at jeopardy for adverse reactions to seclusion, including stunted development. The National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence held that solitary confinement can harm youth who are already severely traumatized from childhoods of abuse and neglect. Youth subjected to seclusion have suffered visual and auditory hallucinations, insomnia and paranoia, uncontrollable feelings of rage and fear, and posttraumatic stress disorder. The U.S. Department of Justice found that youth may experience these symptoms even after short periods of isolation.

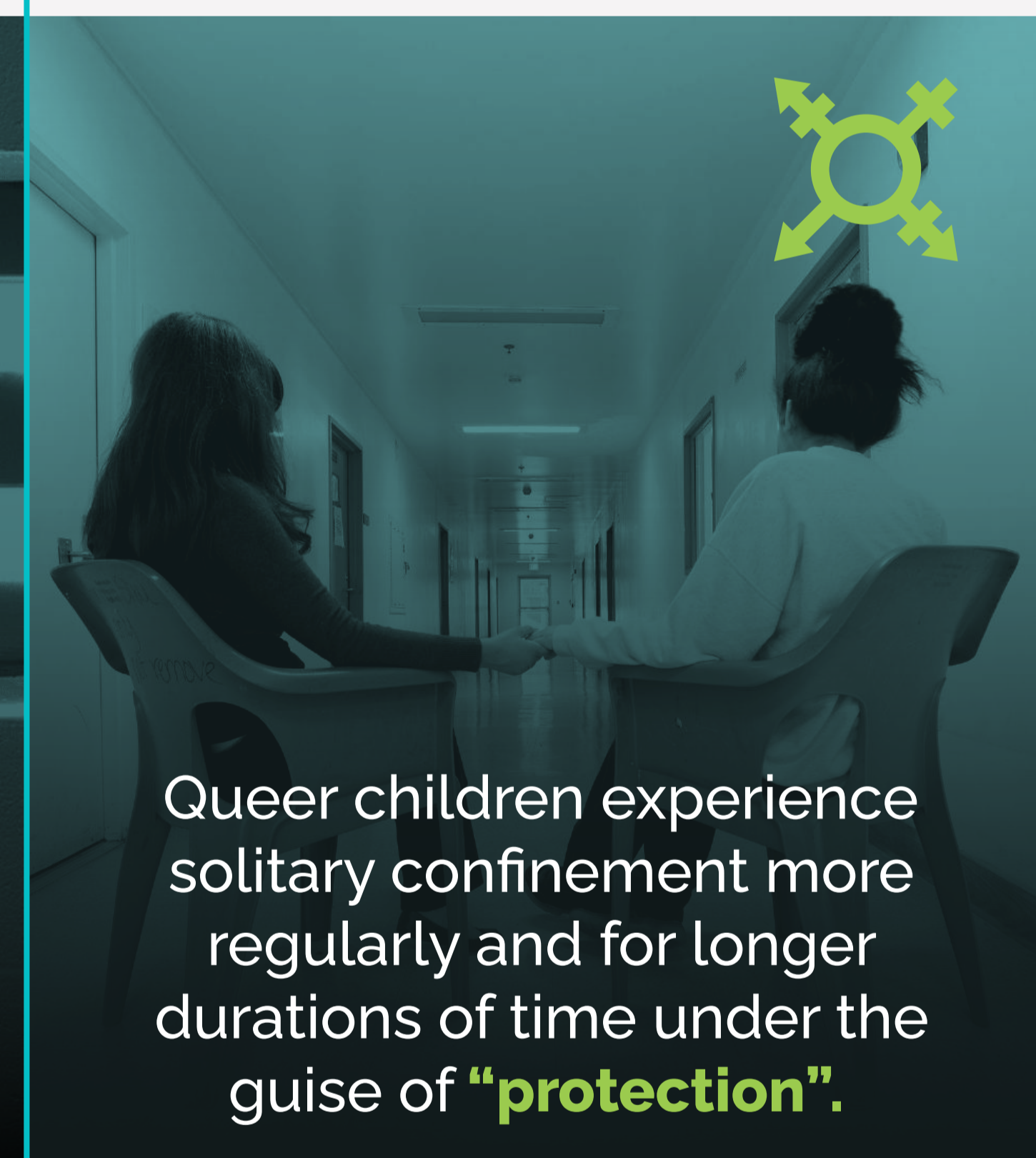
Discrimination among Children in Solitary

ACCORDING TO RACE



In Florida, incarcerated Black children are **68.8%** more likely to be placed in solitary than their white peers.

ACCORDING TO GENDER AND SEXUALITY



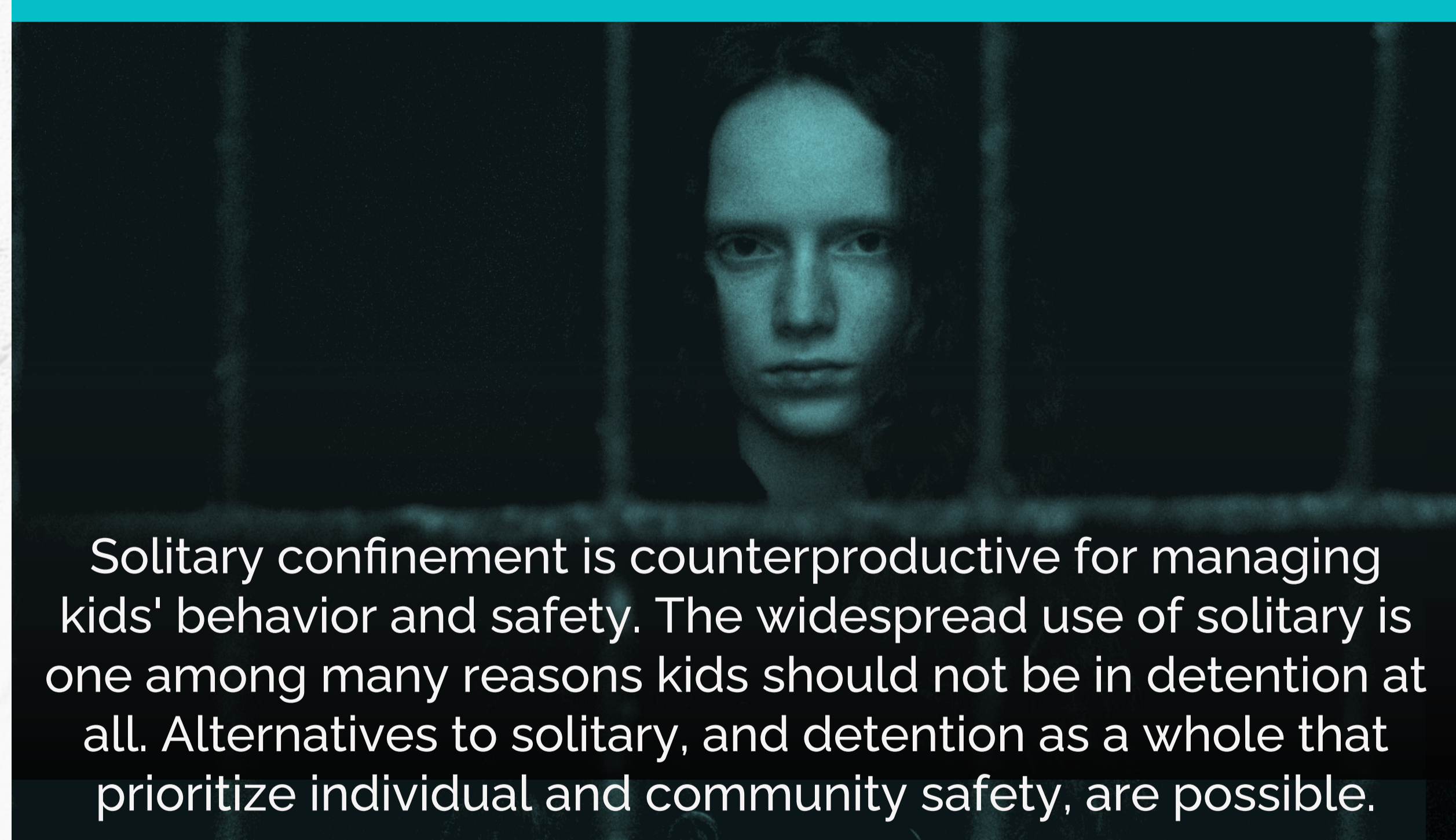
Queer children experience solitary confinement more regularly and for longer durations of time under the guise of **"protection"**.

ACCORDING TO ABILITY



In three years, over 500 incidents of restraint and a seclusion occurred within Maine schools. **95%** of incidents involved disabled students.

Alternatives to Solitary for Kids



Solitary confinement is counterproductive for managing kids' behavior and safety. The widespread use of solitary is one among many reasons kids should not be in detention at all. Alternatives to solitary, and detention as a whole that prioritize individual and community safety, are possible.



Research shows that children grow best when supported and surrounded by their families and communities.

Movement for Change



Jurisdictions across the country are ending or dramatically restricting the use of solitary for young people.



Best policy changes include ending solitary confinement in all forms and by all names beyond three or four hours. Best practices include limiting solitary to minutes and hours.



Four states—California, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Oregon—have banned the solitary confinement of young people beyond four hours in recent years. The federal government banned solitary confinement of young people beyond three hours.



The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act's core requirements—such as jail removal and sight-and-sound separation from adults—were designed to protect youth from the harsh environments of the adult criminal justice system. Similarly, banning solitary confinement aligns with these protective measures, ensuring youth are not exposed to traumatic experiences that undermine their rehabilitation.

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