Resources on Prison-Industrial Complex Abolition & Anti-Carceral Social Work

The purpose of this guide is to provide social work practitioners, researchers, and students with a robust list of resources to grow our field's understanding of prison-industrial complex (PIC) abolition, and help move us closer to anti-carceral social change work. You'll notice that many of the pieces listed are not academic in nature, and this was a deliberate choice. Researchers are trained to view non-academic sources as less worthy of attention and citation. This list rebukes that position, and brings the work of system-involved/impacted people, organizers, journalists, and others outside of the academy to the forefront, while also including the work of abolitionist scholars.

The intention behind curating these resources is to encourage their incorporation into existing social work syllabi, to promote the creation of entirely new course offerings, and to support organized reading groups focused on learning more about PIC abolition, and its alignment with social work values and ethics.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. This resource will be a living document that I hope abolitionist social workers will continue to build on together. If you have feedback related to this guide, such as offerings you'd like to see included or items you think should be removed, please email Sophia P. Sarantakos at Sophia.Sarantakos@du.edu.

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Works By System-Involved/Impacted People

Books

Blood In My Eye by George L. Jackson

Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson by George L. Jackson

Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur

Angela Davis: An Autobiography by Angela Davis

Hauling Up the Morning (Izando la Manana): Writings and Art by Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in the U.S. edited by Tim Blunk and Raymond Luc Levasseur

If They Come in the Morning: Voices of Resistance edited by Angela Y. Davis

Inside This Place, Not Of It: Narratives From Women's Prisons edited by Robin Levi and Ayelet Waldman

The New Abolitionists: (Neo)Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings edited by Joy James

The Long Term: Resisting Life Sentences, Working Toward Freedom edited by Alice Kim, Erica Meiners, Jill Petty, Audrey Petty, Beth E. Richie, and Sarah Ross

Audio

"Two Sides of Justice":
https://soundcloud.com/2sidesofjustice
****Curriculum:** https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kzL6Vz7q_Ggs3smPuXVFNsm40eHc0Se7/view

Zines

Zine library curated by Stephen Wilson, who is currently caged:
https://abolitionistst udy.wordpress.com/leap-zine-lib/

In the Belly:
https://abolitionistst udy.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/itb_vol1_final_online_read.pdf
***Link to support this zine by and for people held captive by the PIC:*
https://www.patreon.com/inthebelly

Unpacking The Size, Scope, and Power of the Prison-Industrial Complex

Websites

Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie:
https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2022.html

Incarcerated Women and Girls:
https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/incarcerated-women-and-girls/

U.S. Prison Population Trends:
https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/u-s-prison-population-trends-massive-buildup-and-modest-decline/

Following the Money of Mass Incarceration:
https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/money.html

Collateral Consequences:
https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/collateral-consequences/

Reports

"The Prison Industry: How it Started. How it Works. How it Harms." by Worth Rises:
bit.ly/howitharms

"Police Brutality Bonds: How Wall Street Profits From Police Violence" by ACRE Action Center on Race & the Economy:
http://nathancummings.org/wp-content/uploads/PoliceBrutalityBonds-Jun2018-1.pdf

Book

Carceral Capitalism by Jackie Wang

Zine

Racial Capitalism and Prison Abolition:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BZeL1qcOxnHW8PO3uq41eh7T82tEjuqO/view

Hyper-Criminalization/Incarceration Origin Stories

Books

The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America by Naomi Murakawa

From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America by Elizabeth Hinton

Getting Tough: Welfare and Imprisonment in 1970's America by Julilly Kohler-Hausmann

Are Prisons Obsolete? by Angela Y. Davis

The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America by Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California by Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America by James Forman

Governing Through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear by Jonathan Simon

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

**Paired with this crucial critique:
https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4599&context=fss_papers

Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex edited by Eric A. Stanley, Nat Smith, and CeCe McDonald

Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBTQ People in the United States by Joey L. Mogul, Andrea J. Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock

Understanding Mass Incarceration: A People's Guide to the Key Civil Rights Struggle of Our Time by James Kilgore

Videos

The Intercept. (2019, December 5). *Mariame Kaba Offers a People's History of Prisons in the U.S.*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCvXRJFjZAA

Policing

Books

Policing The Planet: Why The Policing Crisis Led To Black Lives Matter edited by Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton

The End Of Policing by Alex S. Vitale

Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing by Stuart Schrader

Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color by Andrea J. Ritchie

Who Do You Serve, Who Do You Protect? Police Violence and Resistance in the United States edited by Joe Macaré, Maya Schenwar, and Alana Yu-lan Price (can access for free here)

America On Fire: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion Since the 1960s by Elizabeth Hinton

Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution, and Imprisonment edited by Angela Y. Davis

Articles

"Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police" by Mariame Kaba:
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html

"How I Became a Police Abolitionist" by Derecka Purnell:
https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/how-i-became-police-abolitionist/613540/

"The Struggle to Abolish the Police is Not New" by Garrett Felber:
http://bostonreview.net/race/garrett-felber-struggle-abolish-police-not-new

"Standing Up For Our Communities: Why We Need a Police-Free Future" by Rachel Herzing:
https://truthout.org/articles/standing-up-for-our-communities-why-we-need-a-police-free-future/

"Why 'Crime' Isn't The Question, and Police Aren't The Answer" by Alec Karakatsanis:
https://www.currentaffairs.org/2020/08/why-crime-isnt-the-question-and-police-arent-the-answer

"We Have Already Stopped Calling the Cops" by Aviva Stahl:
https://www.bustle.com/rule-breakers/police-abolition-domestic-violence

"The Answer to Police Violence Is Not 'Reform.' It's Defunding. Here's Why." by Alex S. Vitale:
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/31/the-answer-to-police-violence-is-not-reform-its-defunding-heres-why

Videos

Project NIA. (2020, October 13). *Defund Police*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT0YpOmk8NA&feature=youtu.be

Critical Resistance. (2017, September 13). *Dylan Rodriguez, 'It's Not Police Brutality'*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ylEUT2BvvtM&fbclid=IwAR3lqHrUQxWLdjXpTfNyy9CKST5mP4CFewt3l0Un1S0m7D4SV_-fdk1jv1Y

Podcasts

Andrea Ritchie discussing the #DefundThePolice movement on Beyond Prisons podcast: https://www.beyond-prisons.com/home/interrupting-criminalization-feat-andrea-ritchie

Zine

Police Abolition 101: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yb92kZfrUadGTB8tqBZ27f6RqhYpeDpv/view

Interactive Timeline

Policing Timeline by Critical Resistance: http://criticalresistance.org/policing-timeline/

Social Work & Policing

Articles

"The 'Benevolent' Policing of Social Work and Mental Health" by Khadijah Kanji: https://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/views-expressed/2020/07/benevolent-policing-social-work-and-mental-health

"Don't Co-opt Social Workers on the Path to Police 'Reform'" by Eddie Uehara: https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/dont-co-opt-social-workers-on-the-path-to-police-reform/?fbclid=IwAR0vAreIjxvasvaRFch8HO71TFWpx4-IhlLv1jSSo6qk8ilpFaN0pfmt-gQ

"The Ethical Conflict of Social Work Within a Carceral System" by Mary Buser: https://filtermag.org/social-work-carceral-system/

"Do Not Call Me a Social Worker" by James Bell III:
https://equitymatterspodcast.medium.com/do-not-call-me-a-social-worker-84a76dd4b184

"Social Workers are Rejecting Calls for Them to Replace Police" by Mia Sato:
https://theappeal.org/social-workers-are-rejecting-calls-for-them-to-replace-police/

"Affirming the Call for Social Work to Fully Support Defunding the Police" by Laura Abrams, Alan Dettlaff, Carcey Merritt, Jennifer Mosley, Lenna Nepomnyaschy, Sophia Sarantakos, & Shannon Sliva:
https://medium.com/@alandettlaff/affirming-the-call-for-social-work-to-fully-support-defunding-the-police-8a2e3b370e5

"The NASW is Failing Us. Either it Changes, or We Will Change it Ourselves." by Social Service Workers United-Chicago:
https://medium.com/@socialserviceworkersunited/the-nasw-is-failing-us-either-it-changes-or-we-will-change-it-ourselves-b1da4c8a0096

"We Don't Need Cops to Become Social Workers: We Need Peer Support + Community Response Networks" by Stefanie Lyn Kaufman-Mthimkhulu:
https://blog.usejournal.com/we-dont-need-cops-to-become-social-workers-we-need-peer-support-b8e6c4ffe87a

"We Can't Just Replace Cops With Social Workers" by Jonathan Foiles:
https://slate.com/technology/2020/07/social-workers-cant-replace-cops.html?fbclid=IwAR0V2Cp1DoM18lUmzelPpx5bWJsn-vEFI5SMaZsBKxL4MEljdQjYXrKSlCI

"It's About Power: Interview On Social Work & Policing" interview with J. Rogue:
https://blackrosefed.org/its-about-power-interview-social-work-policing/

"Why Social Workers Cannot Work With Police" by Lori James-Townes:
https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/08/social-workers-police-collaborate.html

"Trading Cops for Social Workers Isn't the Solution to Police Violence" by Cameron Rasmussen & Kirk "Jae" James:
https://truthout.org/articles/trading-cops-for-social-workers-isnt-the-solution-to-police-violence/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=39e6ebc0-aca4-4c45-8119-4afe4d9598a4&eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=56b7aab1-56f1-4664-86cc-575532c7f842

"'Social Workers Belong in Police Departments' is an Offensive Statement" by Sheila P. Vakharia: https://filtermag.org/social-workers-police-departments/

Social Work & PIC Abolition

Academic Articles

"From Carceral Feminism to Transformative Justice: Women-of-Color Feminism and Alternatives to Incarceration" by Mimi E. Kim: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15313204.2018.1474827?casa_token=zsxeWtvyneUAAAAA:RyPIg176M1lOiLv48q58tBvYIe0Y_WJtuLddYTtsCHIBMQMQ6h9ZN7IDmJS82m4bSxNb3lUi1FXo

"Resisting Carcerality, Embracing Abolition: Implications for Feminist Social Work Practice" by Beth E. Richie and Kayla M. Martensen: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886109919897576?casa_token=Ig2AE_DlovMAAAAA:-9PY7b-iWDoc3pcna4I8WfMWdVt4FC0blEtVLKLUdCngcjxdUUKmVWejHLO9Pw0i8WTQpkCx5WuW

"Queering Smart Decarceration: Centering the Experiences of LGBTQ+ Young People to Imagine a World Without Prisons" by Jane Hereth and Alida Bouris: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0886109919871268?casa_token=WTxJbhwRqlgAAAAA:A--deYz0alD5gZpn-zFfhWQxpzprpFGrytHgAkISfQhyYcvmI9N9KYAYXYLd7UpGvA1ll_Ty8YQf

"Defund the Police: Moving Towards an Anti-Carceral Social Work" by Leah A. Jacobs et al: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10428232.2020.1852865?casa_token=y0jXCewzEg8AAAAA:8Gs02JNXQM2nZCmhLKaH_DulgmZNrPuxPjfZtPlTh6DYVlJ3_P1QyoVeWS4uCGkFwMBr4lsQVf4K

Restorative & Transformative Justice, & Anti-Carceral Feminism

Books

The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities edited by Chin-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement edited by Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds by adrienne maree brown

Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good by adrienne maree brown

Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Meditation by adrienne maree brown

All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence by Emily L. Thuma

Feminist Accountability: Disrupting Violence and Transforming Power by Ann Russo

The Feminist and the Sex Offender: Confronting Sexual Harm, Ending State Violence by Judith Levine and Erica R. Meiners

The Feminist War On Crime: The Unexpected Role of Women's Liberation in Mass Incarceration by Aya Gruber

Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration, and a Road to Repair by Danielle Sered
Restorative Justice: Theories and Practices of Moral Imagination by Amy Levad

Abolition. Feminism. Now. by Angela Y. Davis, Gina Dent, Erica R. Meiners, and Beth E. Richie

Articles

"The Transformative Justice of Judge Aquilina" by Sophie Gilbert:
https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2018/01/judge-rosemarie-aquilina-larry-nassar/551462/

"The Sentencing of Larry Nasser Was Not 'Transformative Justice.' Here's Why." by Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba:
https://theappeal.org/the-sentencing-of-larry-nassar-was-not-transformative-justice-here-s-why-a2ea323a6645/

***These two pieces together are a great way to discuss the true meaning of transformative justice.*

Videos

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, July 16). *Introduction to Restorative Justice*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8E1LDeiGBU

TEDx Talks. (2019, July 18). *How Restorative Justice Could End Mass Incarceration*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPA-p6UUDl4

NYC TJ Hub. (2020, September 29). *Restorative Justice at Home with Jennifer Viets*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQ0pfRGILsE

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, October 13).*The Modern Roots of Transformative Justice*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqMxNiKQLHc

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, October 13). *What is Accountability?*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZuJ55iGI14

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, October 21). *Transformative Justice in the Era of #DefundPolice*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTpHcV-8dFA

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, October 13). *Everyday Practices of Transformative Justice*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-UE8wwXEtc

Resource Hub

Site created by Mariama Kaba with resources related to restorative and transformative justice: https://transformharm.org/

Mutual Aid

Books

Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution by Peter Kropotkin

Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the next) by Dean Spade
**Free teaching guide for this book provided by Dean Spade:
http://www.deanspade.net/2020/08/12/free-teaching-guide-for-new-mutual-aid-book/

The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs by The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation

Body and Soul: The Black Panther Fight Against Medical Discrimination by Alondra Nelson

The Black Power Movement and American Social Work by Joyce M. Bell

Righteous Self Determination: The Black Social Work Movement in America by Patricia Reid-Merritt

Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945 by Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn

The Young Lords: A Reader edited by Darrell Enck-Wanzer

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex edited by INCITE!

Anarchy Works: Examples of Anarchist Ideas in Practice by Peter Gelderloos

Undoing Border Imperialism by Harsha Walia

Revolutionary Hillbilly: Notes from the Struggle on the Edge of the Rainbow by Hy Thurman

Articles

"Mutual Aid Is Essential to Our Survival Regardless of Who Is in the White House" by Dean Spade: https://truthout.org/articles/mutual-aid-is-essential-to-our-survival-regardless-of-who-is-in-the-white-house/

"Mutual Aid Always Pops Up Where Disasters Are" by Dean Spade: https://progressive.org/dispatches/dean-spade-mutual-aid-upton-clark-201214/#.X9gPT1MonD0.twitter

"Now Is the Time for 'Nobodies'" by Dean Spade: https://www.alternet.org/2017/01/now-time-nobodies-dean-spade-mutual-aid-and-resistance-trump-era/

Videos

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, July 24). *Introduction to Mutual Aid*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJaeblrlW_Q

Dean Spade. (2019, July 9). *Shit's Totally FUCKED! What Can We Do? A Mutual Aid Explainer*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PopmGAvsggg

The Laura Flanders Show. (2020, April 6). *Mutual Aid Justice: Beyond Survival*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mJCVWKaTtc

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, November 12). *We Keep Each Other Safe: Mutual Aid for Survival and Solidarity*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C32KGX6qP5s

Building Capacity for Mutual Aid Workshop Series by Dean Spade: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLlbjNglS2TDKGhXpwMu7gNm4DDU-nPIQ

Disability Justice

Books

Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis Of Movement Is Our People by Sins Invalid

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories From The Twenty-First Century edited by Alice Wong

Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Disability by Liat Ben-Moshe

Disability Incarcerated: Imprisonment and Disability in the United States and Canada edited by Liat Ben-Moshe, Chris Chapman, and Allison C. Carey

Videos

Bernard Center for Research on Women. (2020, April 10). *Moving at the Speed of Trust: Disability Justice and Transformative Justice*: http://bcrw.barnard.edu/event/moving-at-the-speed-of-trust-disability-and-transformative-justice/?utm_source=BCRW+Email+List&utm_campaign=b674134f1a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_09_08_58&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_440ce3d248-b674134f1a-125532153

Resource Hub

Abolition and Disability Justice: https://abolitionanddisabilityjustice.com/

Syllabi & Study Guides

Introduction to the Prison-Industrial Complex Workshop Curriculum from the Chicago PIC Teaching Collective: https://chicagopiccollective.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/introduction_to_the_prison_industrial_complex-curriculum-final.pdf

Abolition for the People:
https://level.medium.com/abolition-for-the-people-397ef29e3ca5

Worth Rises curriculum for course on "The Prison Industry":
https://worthrises.org/courseintroduction

Study and Struggle Curriculum:
https://www.studyandstruggle.com/fall2020

Black Perspective, Prison Abolition Syllabus 2.0:
https://www.aaihs.org/prison-abolition-syllabus-2-0/

Yellowhead Institute, Indigenous Abolitionist Study Group Guide:
https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2020/08/10/an-indigenous-abolitionist-study-group-guide/

Abolish Everything (group at VCU) Study Guide:
https://www.abolisheverything.org/political-education

For a World Without Police Study Guide:
http://aworldwithoutpolice.org/study-guide/

Abolition Journal study group guide:
https://abolitionjournal.org/studyguide/?fbclid=IwAR3Og7WvW4v3bPJe-ddO2Odok5gFgmwD0sCZnrBgyJ0BLwF0XYfuTQsx8Ks

The Digital Abolitionist Library:
https://www.thedigitalabolitionist.com/study-page

Mutual Aid Syllabus by Dean Spade:
http://bigdoorbrigade.com/2019/08/29/first-draft-of-mutual-aid-syllabus/
*******Reading questions for this syllabus:*
http://www.deanspade.net/2019/09/30/reading-questions-for-mutual-aid-class/

Abolition Q&A by K Agbegiyi:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/182cay4IFu4S3wJuTChWA63NAKXqmJIDgkSxuNDZZTZo/edit

Prison Abolition Resource Guide by Micah Herskind:
https://micahherskind.com/abolition-resource-guide/

One-pagers & Graphics

Reformist Reforms vs. Abolitionist Steps in Policing (newly revised):
http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_REV2020.pdf

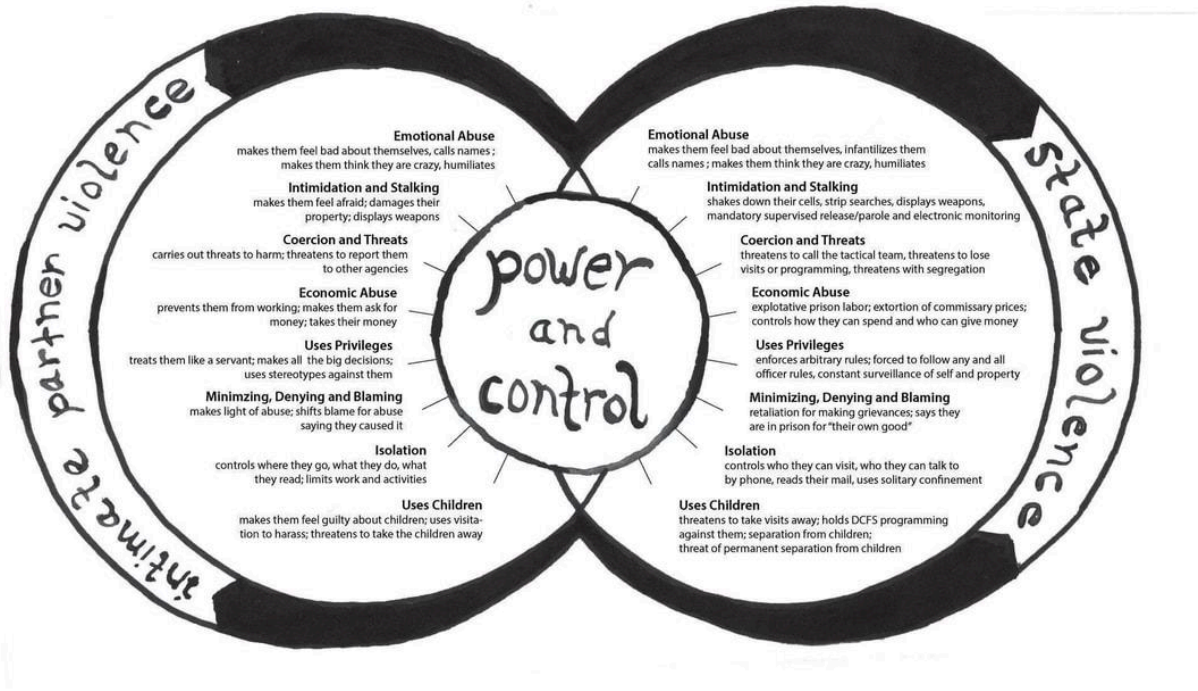
Reformist Reforms vs. Abolitionist Steps to End Imprisonment:
http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CR_abolitioniststeps_antiexpansion_2021_eng.pdf

Mandatory Reporting is Not Neutral:
https://www.mandatoryreportingisnotneutral.com/

Visual Explainer of the PIC by Critical Resistance:



Power and Control Wheel reconceptualized by Monica Cosby and created by Sarah Ross:



This graphic reconceptualizes the traditional power and control wheel to show the connection between interpersonal and state violence.

For more information and larger versions of this graphic, go here:
https://www.defendsurvivorsnow.org/make-connections.html

And here:
https://survivedandpunished.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SP-2020-Annual-Review.pdf

Get Involved!

Find, donate to, and/or volunteer with abolitionist organizations in your area:
https://maphub.net/thedigitalabolitionist/TDAmap

Find, donate to, and/or volunteer with your local bail fund:
https://www.communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory

Explore your local mutual aid network:
https://www.mutualaidhub.org/

For additional ways to fight against the PIC, and support people inside, please refer to Mariame Kaba's "9 Solidarity Commitments to/with Incarcerated People for 2021":
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ByMHRNbsntdyziubfPJq7vDzxiBFEqroxzCUgKsxp9E/edit