



## Juvenile Solitary Video Project Discussion Guide

Juvenile facilities in Nebraska routinely subject kids in their care to solitary confinement. Solitary confinement can cause extreme psychological, physical, and developmental harm. For children, who are still developing and more vulnerable the risks of solitary are magnified. Isolation can be permanently damaging, especially for those who already have a mental health diagnosis. Best practices across the country demonstrate that less punitive alternatives exist that ensure better outcomes for system involved kids and public safety.

In the summer of 2019, the ACLU commissioned a series of videos produced by Jason Witmer to elevate these issues and continue our reform efforts centering the voices of Nebraskans impacted by solitary confinement. View the videos online or order a free DVD, use this discussion guide to help facilitate conversations, and learn more about how to take action to support long overdue reforms.

### Discussion Guide:

- What is your initial impression about solitary in Nebraska after watching these videos?
- Which individuals in the videos could you relate to the most? Why?
- Which individuals in the videos could you relate to the least? Why?
- In the video Tasha said: “They just put you away instead of trying to solve the problem. They just put you in a box and put a date on when you can come out. That doesn’t really help process anything.” How do you imagine a teenage Tasha could have been helped if she’d acted out instead of solitary?
- In the video, how did Justin try to manage the sensory deprivation of a solitary cell? What mental resources would the average child have to handle the experience? Children are often punished at home with “time out” in their rooms. How is it different when isolation happens in the institutional setting? In the video, Senator Lathrop, Senator Vargas, and Senator Pansing Brooks discuss policy reforms. What was your key takeaway from their message?
- In the video, former department of corrections employee Larry Wayne speaks broadly of solitary from his experiences on the front lines. What do you think about the concept of restorative justice he raises as an alternative?
- What are your key takeaways after watching these videos?

The ACLU and coalition partners across Nebraska are calling for an end to juvenile solitary confinement. According to official reports by all youth facilities across the state, children are placed in solitary for a variety of reasons, including administrative needs when staff are on break, cursing or verbal aggression, and threats or attempts of self-harm. Children of color are overrepresented in juvenile facilities and overrepresented in solitary confinement. The ACLU is working in the courts and in the legislature to put limits on the use of solitary to ensure children are returned to the least restrictive, healthiest setting possible anytime there is an intervention with solitary.

Take Action: <https://www.aclunebraska.org/en/campaigns/end-solitary-confinement-young-nebraskans>

Learn more: <https://www.stopsolitaryforkids.org/> and [www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org)