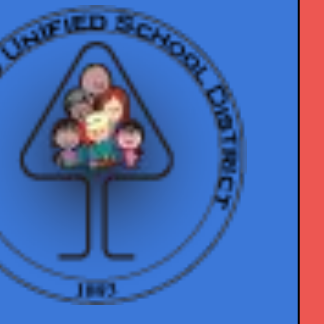




Mental Health in the Juvenile Justice System

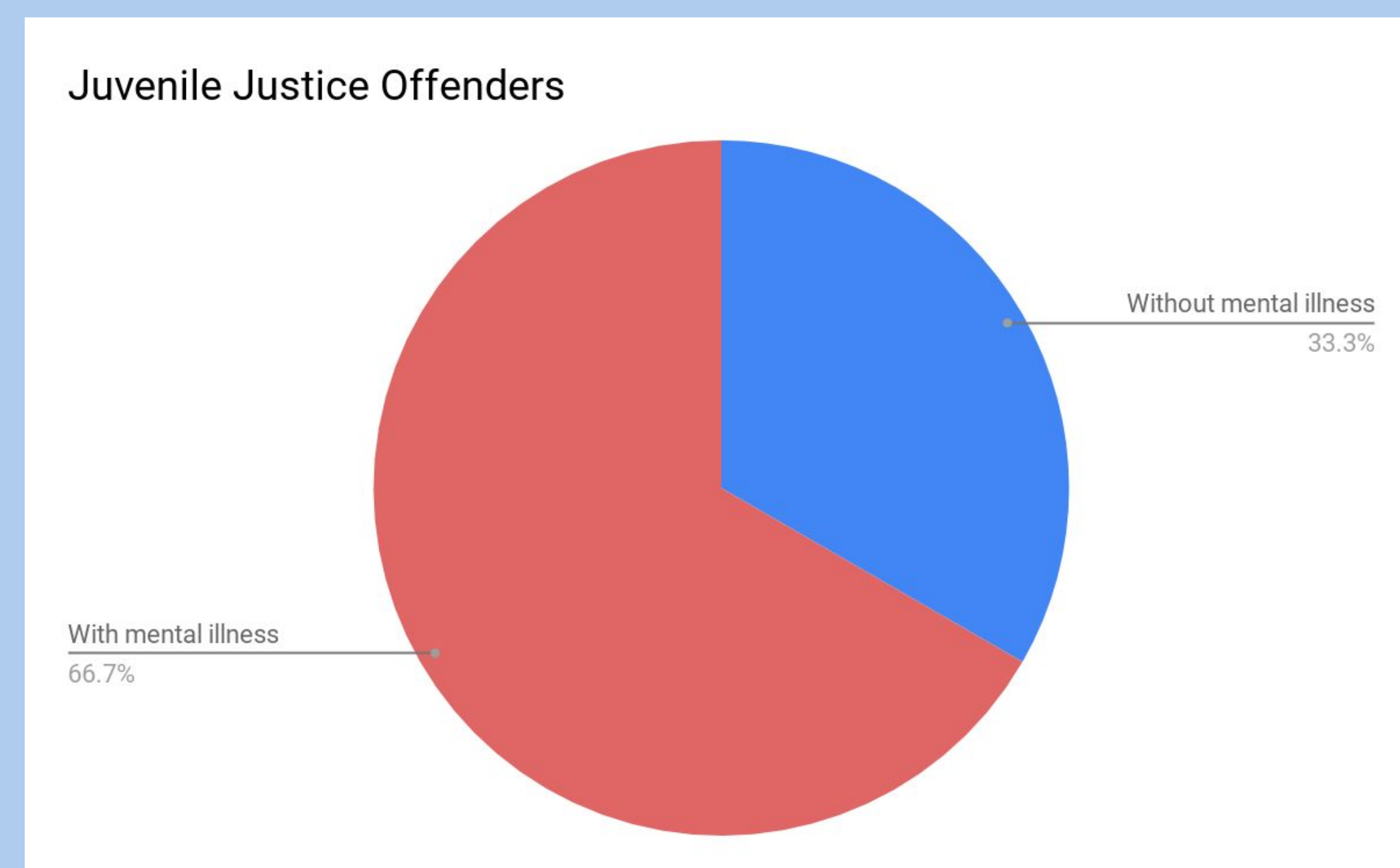
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INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you suffer from the mental disorder obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). You have compulsive habits to soothe your anxiety. It could be a need for order, such as counting your money over and over again to make sure none of it gets lost. Abnormality can only heighten your symptoms. Now imagine you're a 16-year-old kid suffering from this disorder going through incarceration in the juvenile justice system. No one is treating your disorder, causing it to get worse and worse. Over time, you begin to develop depression and panic disorder, causing your mental condition to get worse and worse. When you finally get out of the system, you can no longer focus in school and you're afraid to leave the house. When you graduate with plummeting grades, you can't get into college and you can't get a job, so you end up in trouble again. This vicious cycle happens to many youths in the juvenile justice system today, and that is a problem

Figure 1: Percentage of juvenile justice offenders who suffer from mental illness.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The inquiry approaches that I used are

- Action research
- Case study

By showing how real people see this issue, its importance is raised in the eyes of the school. Therefore, by using a case study, we show how the majority feels. By including expert opinions, we created the most effective solution.

We stayed out of juvenile detention centers, and when we mention professionals, we interviewed our Vice Principal. The data collection tools that we used are a series of interviews and survey, because they allowed me to collect qualitative data about the population I am assessing.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

Coding

Common Themes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action taken from a younger age ● Mental health services are a necessity, not a luxury
Motifs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expensive ● The kids need it ● Starts at home
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Harsher punishments to discourage behavior ● Implementing mental health services at a younger age ● "Scouting" for kids who need the help more



We asked a school administrator the following questions and received the responses shown.

Given the Information presented, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents strongly disagree and 10 represents strongly agree, what is your opinion on the statement:

"The Juvenile Justice System negatively impacts the mental health of the incarcerated"

7

"Adequate resources are provided to prevent mental health disorders"

2 "highly doubt it"

"Those with mental health disorders are treated in a way that does not worsen their disorder"

Does not know

"Juvenile offenders do not deserve mental health services"
5 "Deserve is a strong word, they NEED mental health services"

"It is easy for juvenile offenders to return to regular life"

2

"Juvenile offenders are not judged after they serve their punishment"

3

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Proposal

First time offense:

Choice of:

Stricter standard punishment to discourage repeated behavior

or

Light punishment upon the condition that the student accepts school provided mental health services

"A lot of it is nurture versus nature... attacking these issues is the way to go. Kids can improve; we see it here all the time."

-School Administrator

As recommended by the school administrator we interviewed and in alignment with our research, this proposal offers both an option to help the youth and enforcement of the rules for those who do not choose to take this opportunity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

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