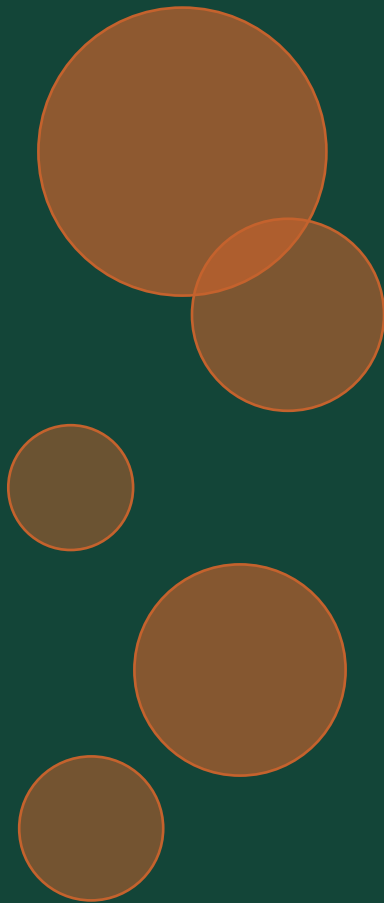




KIM B. HOLMES CONSULTING

CROSSROADS FOR FLORIDA KIDS

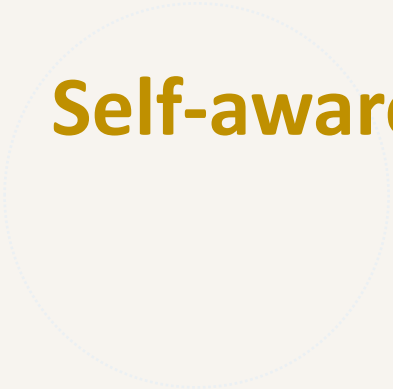
Barriers to Building Trust Across Differences



Agenda

- ❑ **Introduction and Level Setting**
- ❑ **The Trust Burden**
- ❑ **The Six Pillars of Trust**
- ❑ **Trust Barriers by Dimension of Difference**
- ❑ **Cross-Cutting Barriers**
- ❑ **Practical Reference Tools**

Ingredients



Self-awareness

Curiosity

Vulnerability

Intention

Hillsborough County Context — Know Your Community

Each data point below connects directly to the potential trust gap between Crossroads volunteers and the youth you serve.

1.58M residents · 55% people of color

One of the most diverse counties in the US. Your client's community context may differ dramatically from yours.

45% White · 32% Hispanic · 18.3% Black

The county is majority-minority. Your volunteer corps is likely majority-White. That gap can be the starting point of your trust work.

63% of juvenile arrests: Black youth

Black youth are arrested at nearly 4x their population share. Your client walks in knowing this, even if they cannot name it.

19.6% of residents are foreign-born

Nearly 1 in 5 residents was born outside the U.S. Immigration fear shapes engagement with engagement with legal institutions even when unrelated to the charge.

12.7% below poverty · 15.1% of children

Poverty is not character. Logistics barriers such as transit, shared phones, fines, fees are structural. Always ask before interpreting absence.

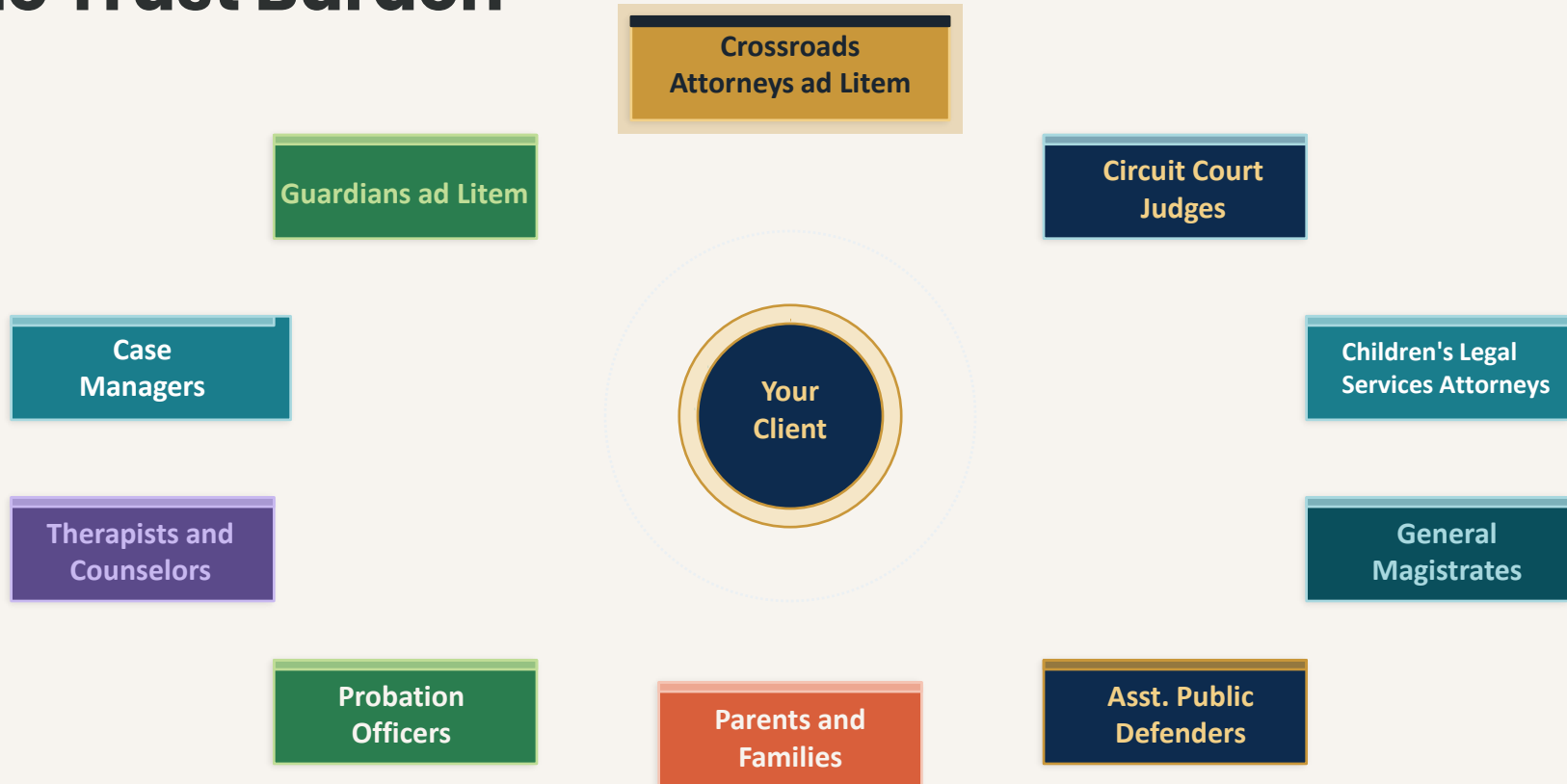
Spanish is primary non-English language

Arrange certified interpretation — not family members, not ad hoc. A clinical and legal obligation.

Hillsborough is a leading county in Florida for juvenile arrests

Your clients come from one of the highest juvenile detention counties in the state. The system has already shaped their relationship to authority.

The Trust Burden



The Six Pillars of Trust

Competence

Knowing enough to actually help

Learn dependency/delinquency basics before you before you meet your client. Know their neighborhood context. 'I don't know — but I will but I will find out' is a competent answer.

Reliability

Doing what you say you will do

Follow through on every commitment, on time. When logistics make showing up hard for hard for your client, problem-solve together. together. Check in between hearings.

Goodwill

Showing genuine care

Ask about their life, not just the case. Put your your phone away. Stay present. Care across the the difference. You do not need to share their their background to genuinely show up for them. them.

Honesty

Being transparent and truthful

Tell the truth about the case, your role and your your limits. Name the demographic gap directly. directly. Explain confidentiality every time. Never Never promise outcomes you cannot deliver. deliver.

Openness

Adapting to what each child needs

Change your approach based on what this child needs today — not what worked for your last client. When they correct a cultural assumption, listen. Then adjust.

Fairness

Giving what they need, not just what what others get

Give each client what they specifically need. Advocate for fee waivers, interpreter access, and mental health services. When the system treats them unfairly, name it — in court.

Trust Barriers by Dimension of Difference

What creates it · What it looks like · What to do

Barriers — Race & Ethnicity

Barrier	What Creates It / What It Looks Like	What to Do
Systemic distrust	Black and Brown youth have been failed by police, schools, and courts before you arrived. You inherit that deficit even before you speak.	Name the gap honestly. Stay consistent. Every promise kept is a deposit into that account.
Racial disparity awareness	In Hillsborough County: Black youth are 18% of the population but 59% of the arrests. Your client knows this, even if they cannot articulate it.	Know the data. Do not pretend that the system is neutral. Advocate against disparate treatment in hearings.
Adultification bias	Black children are perceived as older and less innocent. This shapes attorney advocacy and judicial response, often without awareness.	Hold onto this: your client is a child. Advocate with that lens, always, in every proceeding.
Colorblind approach	Claiming not to 'see' race signals that you will miss what most shapes your client's daily experience in Hillsborough County, in life.	Say: 'I want to understand your experience — including how your identity shapes what you face in this system.'
Cultural assumption	Assuming all Hispanic clients share the same context — such as conflating Cuban-American Tampa culture with that of recent Central American immigrants.	Ask. Do not assume. Cultural humility means your client is the expert on their own experience.

Barriers — Age & Development

Barrier	What Creates It / What It Looks Like	What to Do
Adolescent brain science	The teen brain cannot weigh long-term consequences the way adults can, affecting risk assessment, decision-making and communication.	Adjust how you explain outcomes. Do not read poor future-orientation as indifference. It is biology.
Legal jargon	Complex legal language excludes youth who have not grown up around it, regardless of their intelligence or capability.	Plain language, always. Ask: 'Can you tell me back what I what I said so I know I explained it well?'
Power imbalance	You are an adult authority figure. They have been spoken about – not with – by adults in power their whole lives. Your credentials can feel like a threat.	Let them lead the pace. Ask permission. Honor: 'I don't want to answer that right now.'
Short-termism	Youth in survival mode think in days and weeks, not months and years. Long legal timelines feel abstract and irrelevant to their immediate reality.	Break timelines into small, concrete next steps. Check in frequently. Make the near future feel manageable.
Case-focused myopia	Treating the legal facts as the whole picture misses who this young person is and signals they are a case number, not a human being you are fighting for.	Ask about school, friends, what they want after all of this is over. The child is the point. The case is the context.

Barriers — Mental Health & Trauma

Barrier	What Creates It / What It Looks Like	What to Do
Trauma misread as defiance	Silence, shutdown, hostility, or avoidance are trauma responses, not attitude. The body responds to perceived threat, not the attorney's good intentions.	Stay calm and regulated. Your steadiness is itself therapeutic. Do not take it personally or withdraw warmth.
Hypervigilance	Chronic threat exposure means the body is always scanning for danger. Your office, questions, and tone may trigger the alarm system.	Use calm, predictable transitions. Explain what will happen before it does. Ask: 'Is there anything I can do to can do to make this space more comfortable for you? you?
Disclosure management	A client may share something deeply disturbing. Your visible reaction in that moment determines whether they ever trust you with something hard again.	Receive it without visible shock. 'Thank you for trusting me with that.' Then breathe, take notes, and get support afterward .
Attachment responses	Youth who have lacked stable adults may idealize you ('you're the only one') or test you with hostility — both are attachment signals.	Receive both with warmth and honesty. You can care deeply without becoming their only relationship — and should help them build others.
JMHC context gap	Crossroads volunteers in Juvenile Mental Health Court need familiarity with the court's structure and treatment approach — not just the legal file.	Take advantage of training provided by Crossroads to understand available resources.

Barriers — Socioeconomic Status & Class

Barrier	What Creates It / What It Looks Like	What to Do
Logistics as barriers	Missed appointments, missed calls, missed court dates in Hillsborough are almost always about transit, shared phones, or work schedules, not attitude.	Ask: 'What would make it easier to show up?' Then solve. Then solve that problem together, not for them.
Fines and fees	Florida's juvenile system imposes court costs that trap low-income families deeper in the system. The Juvenile Law Center calls it 'debtor's prison for kids.'	Advocate for fee waivers. Know the Hillsborough relief options. This is legal advocacy, not social work.
Condescension risk	Poverty does not equal ignorance. Treating clients as less capable because of their economic circumstance is a trust-breaker that rarely announces itself.	Match your register to the individual, not their income bracket. They may not have resources, but they do have dignity.
Material instability	Housing instability, food insecurity, and unstable communication affect every interaction, including your client's capacity to engage on any given day.	Check in about basic stability. Connect clients to community resources. This context belongs in your advocacy.
Office dynamic	A formal law-office setting or courthouse meeting location can trigger class-based intimidation or trauma associations for families in poverty.	Consider meeting at a library, community center, or other accessible, neutral location when possible.

Barriers — Immigration Status

Barrier	What Creates It / What It Looks Like	What to Do
Fear of legal contact	Mixed-status families may fear that any contact with legal institutions put the family at risk, even when the case is completely unrelated to immigration.	Be explicit early: explain your role, what you report, and to whom. Repeat this. Put it in writing if helpful.
Confidentiality confusion	Clients and families may not understand attorney-client confidentiality, especially across language or cultural gaps where legal institutions feel hostile.	Explain confidentiality in plain language and in the client's the client's or family's language. Arrange certified interpretation.
Interpreter access gap	Ad hoc translation – by family members, siblings, or bystanders violates confidentiality and distorts communication in ways you may never know about.	Always use certified interpretation for Spanish, Creole Creole and other languages as needed. This is both a both a clinical and a legal obligation.
Chilling effect	Florida's immigration enforcement climate makes families reluctant to engage with courts and attorneys, even when their child's case demands full participation.	Meet families where they are. Be patient with silence and silence and refusal. Name your role as advocate, not not authority.
Documentation barriers	Youth who serve as family interpreters carry a disproportionate burden — managing their own legal situation while navigating the system on behalf of parents.	Name this dynamic openly. Advocate for the child's need, child's need, for their own support, separate from the from the family role.

Cross-Cutting Barriers

These appear in every relationship, regardless of dimension

Cross-Cutting Barriers — These Can Appear in Every Relationship

Trust Debt

Your client has likely been let down by adults, institutions, and attorneys before you met them. You do not start at zero; you start in a deficit.

Response: Every pillar of trust you embody is a deposit into that account.

Power Imbalance

You hold professional authority, legal knowledge, adult status, and often race and class privilege. Your client holds none of these in this setting.

Response: Rebalance actively: ask permission, let them lead the pace, name your power honestly, honor their right to say no.

Respectability Pressure

Coaching clients to 'present well' in ways that erase their identity for judicial comfort centers the attorney's ease — not the client's dignity.

Response: Ask: whose comfort am I centered on and at whose expense? Advocate for the child, not the image.

Implicit Bias

Confirmation bias: reading silence, lateness, or avoidance as attitude rather than context. Attribution error: explaining client challenges as character rather than circumstance.

Response: Before each meeting, ask: what assumptions am I carrying into this room today?

Institutional Churn

Multiple attorneys, caseworkers, and placements mean your client has learned that adults leave. Their disengagement may be self-protection, not indifference.

Response: Name your commitment explicitly and early. Then prove it. Meeting after meeting, hearing after hearing.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

Discipline disparities can push Black and Brown youth into the legal system before an attorney is ever assigned.

Response: Know this history. Do not re-institutionalize them in your relationship. Create safety where the system created threat.

Trauma Response Quick Guide — What You Might See & How to Respond

What You Might See	Why It May Be Happening	A Caring Response
Silence or shutdown	Dissociation, shame, or learned self-protection from being punished for speaking.	Normalize: 'Take your time — there is no no rush here.' Don't fill the silence with more more questions.
'I don't care' about the case	Emotional numbing or testing whether you will stay stay engaged even if they withdraw.	Stay engaged: 'I hear you. I am still going to going to keep working for you.' Mean it. it. Show up next time.
Hostility or rudeness	Hypervigilance — the body's response to chronic threat. threat. This is not a personal attack.	Stay calm. Your steadiness is therapeutic. Do not withdraw warmth. Do not escalate.
Hard disclosure	First-time disclosure or testing whether you can handle the weight of their reality.	No visible shock. 'Thank you for trusting me with that.' Breathe. Take notes. Get support afterward.
Idealization ('you're the only one')	Attachment response — common with youth who have lacked consistent, caring adults.	Warmth and honesty: 'I care about you. Let's Let's also make sure you have other people people in your corner.'
Missed appointments	Transit barriers, shared phones, work obligations, fear - almost never attitude.	Ask: 'What would make it easier to show up?' Solve that problem — don't interpret it as indifference.

SECTIONS 8-9

Practical Reference Tools

How to Use This Reference

This reference card distills the core of your Crossroads trust training into a practical tool you can return to before, during, and after every client meeting.

Before a Meeting

Run the Pre-Meeting Self-Check. Ask yourself one question per pillar. If the answer is 'no' or 'I don't or 'I don't know', that is where to focus.

When a Client Seems Disengaged

Check the Trauma Response Guide. Almost every behavior that reads as 'attitude' has a different different explanation and a different response.

When Something Feels Off

Review the Cross-Cutting Barriers and Trust Debt slides. Power imbalance and institutional churn are invisible forces that shape every relationship.

When You Are Unsure How to Respond

Find the client's primary dimension of difference. Each table gives you what creates the barrier, what it looks like, and a concrete action you can try.

With Your Co-Counsel

Use this as a debrief tool after difficult meetings. The six pillars give you shared language and a sense of what not may be working.

Remember: Trust is not a feeling — it is a judgment your client makes based on evidence. This reference tells you what evidence they are collecting.

Pre-Meeting Self-Check — Run This Before Every Client Meeting

Ask yourself each question. If the answer is 'no' or 'I don't know' — that is where to focus today.

✓ / Notes

Competence

Do I understand enough about this client's legal, cultural, and community context to actually help today?

Reliability

Have I followed through on everything I said I would do since our last meeting? If not, am I prepared to address it directly?

Goodwill

Am I walking in focused on this child as a person — or primarily on the legal task in front of me?

Honesty

Is there anything I am avoiding telling this client because it is uncomfortable? What do they need to know today? Am I being nice or am I being kind?

Openness

What assumption am I carrying into this meeting? Am I genuinely willing to be wrong about it?

Fairness

Is there something this client specifically needs that I have not yet advocated for — in or out of court?

Use the notes column to jot a word or two — or simply pause on each question before you walk in.

All Six Pillars — Applied Across Every Dimension of Difference

	Race & Ethnicity	Age & Development
Competence	Know the disparity data; don't pretend the system is neutral.	Understand teen brain limits; adjust how you explain outcomes.
Reliability	Consistency matters more for youth who distrust institutions.	Youth track follow-through intensely; the teen brain registers broken promises acutely.
Goodwill	Care that does not see race misses what their daily experience.	Ask about their life, not just their case. They are a person, person, not a delinquency file.
Honesty	Name the gap: 'We come from different backgrounds. I want to understand yours'.	Explain the system in plain terms — no jargon, no sugarcoating.
Openness	Listen when the client corrects a cultural assumption, then change.	Adapt meeting length, location, and format to their attention and needs today.
Fairness	Advocate against racially disparate treatment in hearings. Name it.	Youth deserve to understand their proceedings. Plain Plain explanations.

All Six Pillars — Applied Across Every Dimension of Difference

	Mental Health	Poverty & Class	Immigration Status
Competence	Learn trauma response vs. defiance before your first meeting	Know the logistical barriers your client faces in Hillsborough County	Understand mixed-status family dynamics and their stakes
Reliability	Predictability is a clinical need for youth with trauma or anxiety	Be flexible on logistics; transit, shared shared phones work as real barriers barriers	Regular contact builds safety for families who fear government contact contact
Goodwill	Check in on client's wellbeing, not just their legal status	Do not condescend. Client may lack resources, but has dignity	I may fear you. Show me, repeatedly, that you are safe.
Honesty	Be transparent about what you can and cannot do for your client's mental health needs	Be honest about timelines and outcomes, even when the news is hard	Be explicit: what you report, to whom, and when
Openness	Adjust if today is a bad day. Reschedule without judgment.	Meet at a library or community center; the office dynamic intimidates	Offer documents and explanations in the client's or family's language
Fairness	Advocate for mental health services as part of case resolution	Advocate for fee waivers, transit support, resource connections	Protect against immigration consequences in every recommendation

“It is within our differences that we are both most powerful and most vulnerable, and some of the most difficult tasks of our lives are the claiming of differences and learning to use those differences for bridges rather than as barriers between us.”

— Audre Lorde



COMPETENCE



RELIABILITY



GOODWILL



HONESTY



OPENNESS



FAIRNESS

Thank you!



KIM B. HOLMES
CONSULTING

Bold leadership. Brave conversations. Belonging for all.