

UNDERSTANDING

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Building Self-Healing Communities





Cause I Ain't Got a Pencil

by Joshua T. Dickerson

I woke myself up
Because we ain't got an alarm clock
Dug in the dirty clothes basket,
Cause ain't nobody washed my uniform
Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark,
Cause the lights ain't on
Even got my baby sister ready,
Cause my mama wasn't home.
Got us both to school on time,
To eat us a good breakfast.
Then when I got to class the teacher fussed
Cause I ain't got a pencil.

Definitions

Trauma aware: Being aware that students experience trauma

Trauma-informed: Refers to the delivery of therapeutic practices and assumes a clinical understanding of trauma and its impact on individuals and settings

Trauma-sensitive: The term more typically used to refer to educational practices and approaches that are intended to cultivate a safe learning environment and mitigate the impact of trauma, and the impact it has on student learning

1. Adapted from the Missouri Model

2. The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom: Building Resilience with Compassionate Teaching, Patricia A. Jennings, 2019

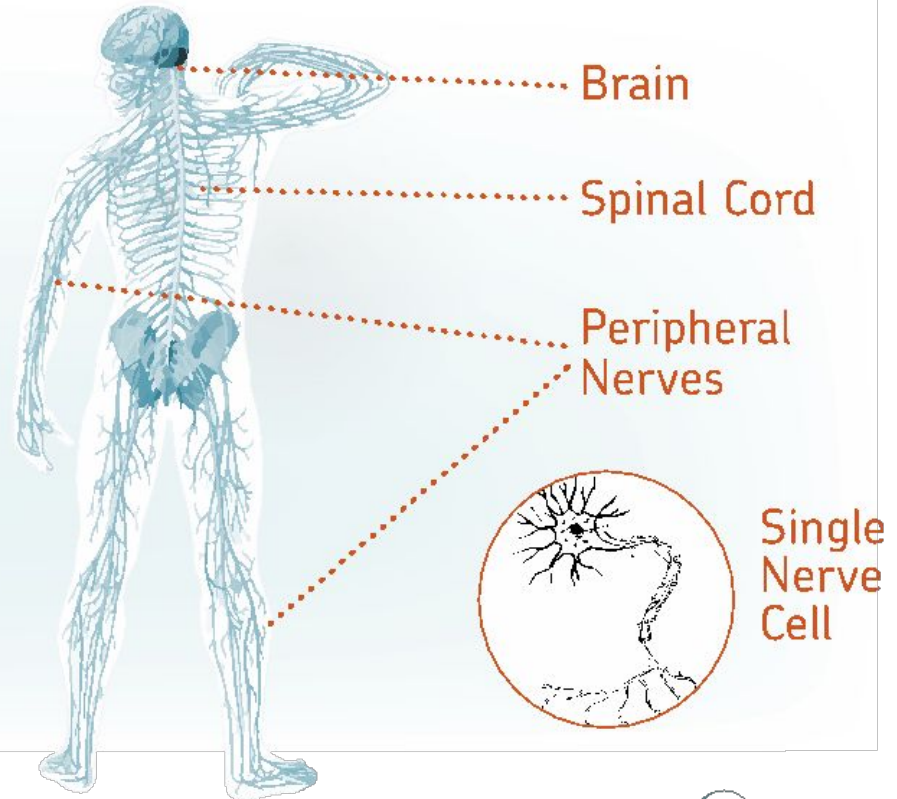
Memory of our experiences
IS STORED IN OUR BODY



HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM

Nervous system
ORCHESTRATES BODY
FUNCTIONS & PERCEPTIONS

Neuroscience
HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHY
A C E S
ARE SO POWERFUL



SYNAPTIC DENSITY



At Birth



Elementary Age



Puberty



Single
Neuron

CONCEPTION



Danger

Fight
Flight
Freeze

Survive
Worst
Conditions

Childhood Experience

Adaptation


Adult Functioning



Safety

People
Process
Possibility

Survive Best
Conditions -
*Vulnerable in
Worst*



What kind of situations might be a good match for a person who tends to be edgy, hypervigilant, emotionally detached, or quick to act?

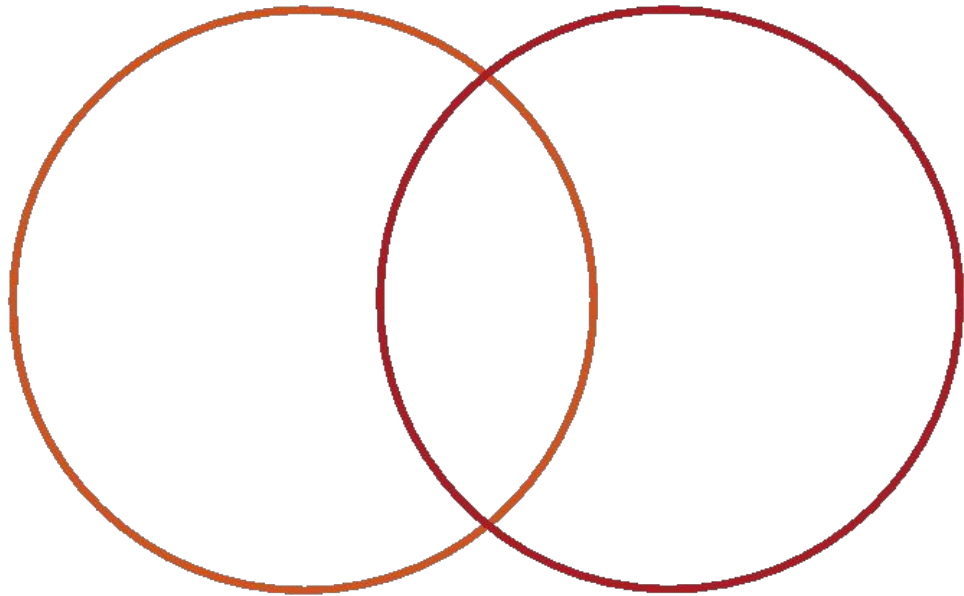
ADAPTATIONS VS EXPECTATIONS

WHEN BIOLOGY

collides

WITH SOCIAL
EXPECTATIONS
we run into

TROUBLE



STRESS

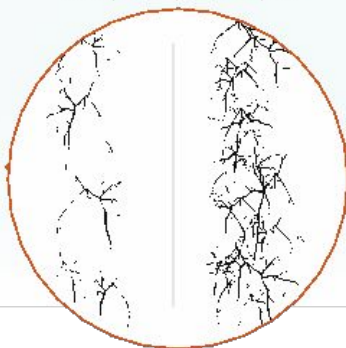
Interpretations Can Differ

set points in place by
EARLY ADULTHOOD



At Birth

SYNAPTIC DENSITY



Elementary Age





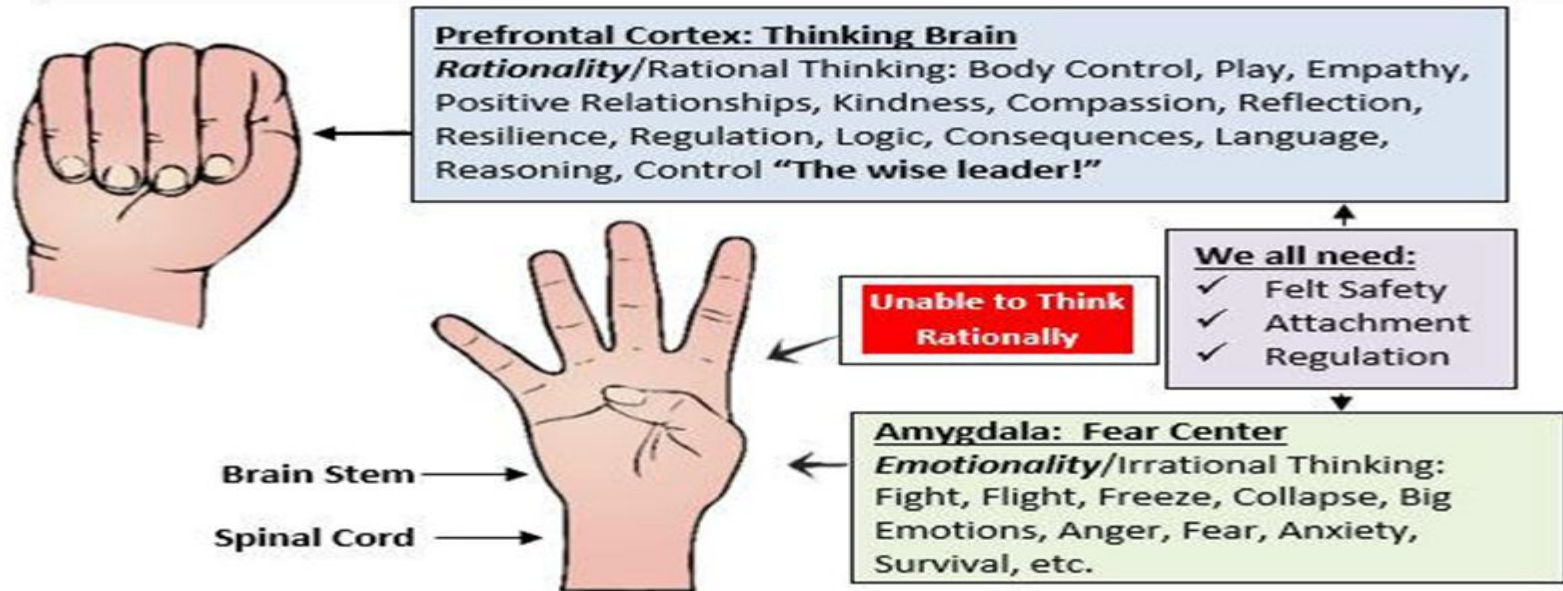
**Learning
Brain**



**Survival
Brain**

VS

Dan Siegel's Hand Brain Model

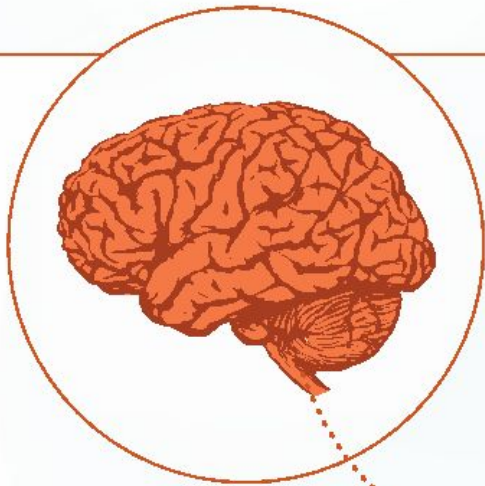


Credit: Daniel Siegel, M.D. is the creator of this metaphor and illustration "Hand and Brain" Copyright © 2014 www.intentionality.com

The Amygdala sends waves to the Hypothalamus (command center) which activates the Autonomic Nervous System:

- ✓ Sympathetic (fight, flight, freeze, collapse)
- ✓ Parasympathetic (rest & digest)

EXPERIENCE & ADAPTATION
sensitive periods
Cause-Effect





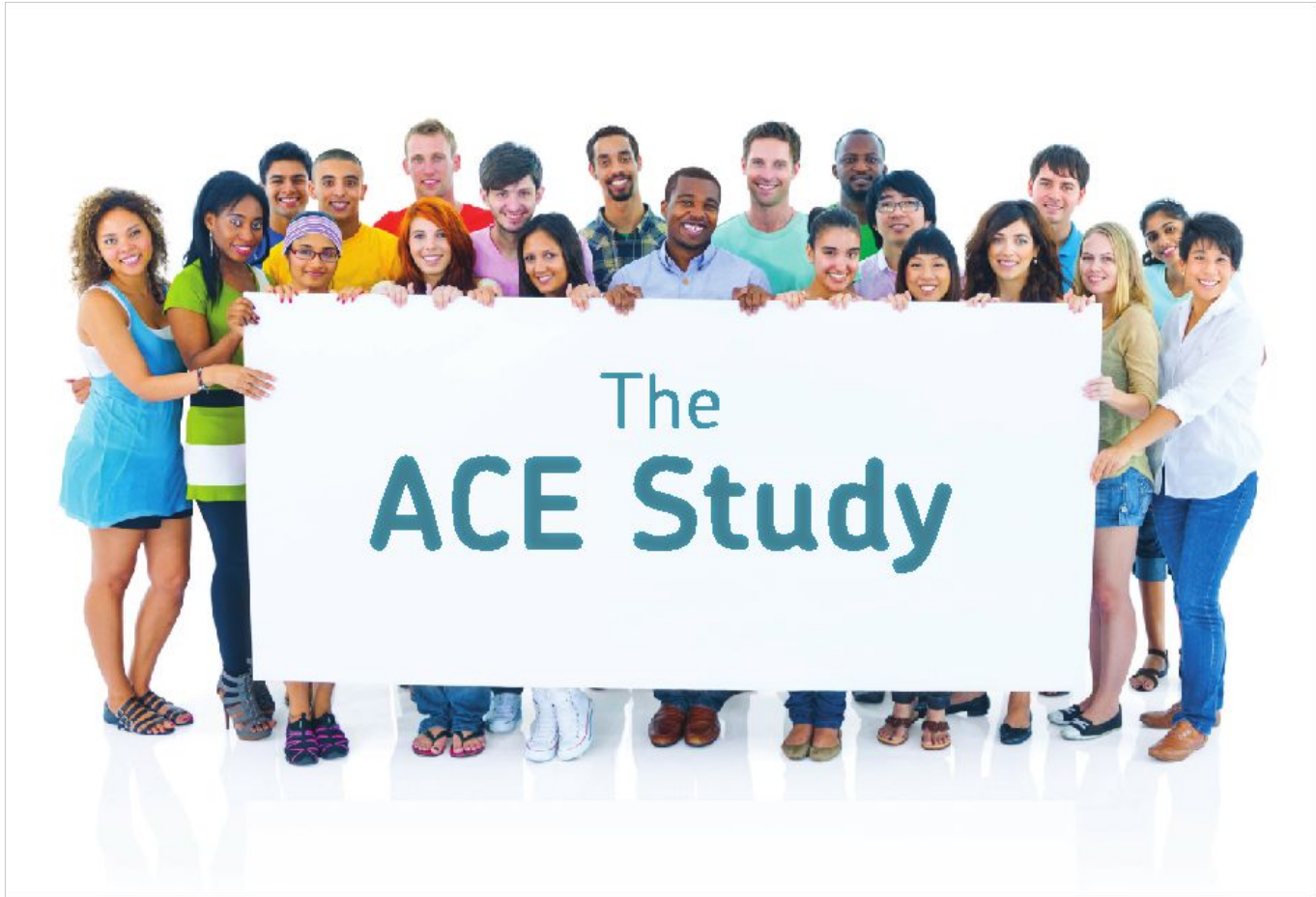
have a collective
CHOICE





Bullying





Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences(ACE)s are traumatic experiences that occur in a young person's life before the age of 18 that the individual remembers as an adult. They are stressful or traumatic events that may include household dysfunction. Adverse Childhood Experiences are strongly related to a wide range of health problems throughout a person's lifespan.

01/12/14

NEWS

Early Adversity Increases Physical, Mental, Behavioral Problems, Scientists Report



Dr. Robert Anda & Dr. Vincent Felitti
Investigators

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention,
Kaiser Permanente Study

Over 17,000 study participants

The ACE Study confirms, with scientific evidence, that adversity early in life increases physical, mental and behavioral problems later in life.



FINDING MORE CONNECTIONS

how multiple forms of **childhood adversity** can affect many important **PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS**

Adverse Childhood Experiences ARE COMMON

Household Dysfunction

Substance Abuse	27%
Parental Sep/Divorce	23%
Mental Illness	17%
Battered Mothers	13%
Criminal Behavior	6%

Neglect

Emotional	15%
Physical	10%

Abuse

Emotional	11%
Physical	28%
Sexual	21%

5

2

3

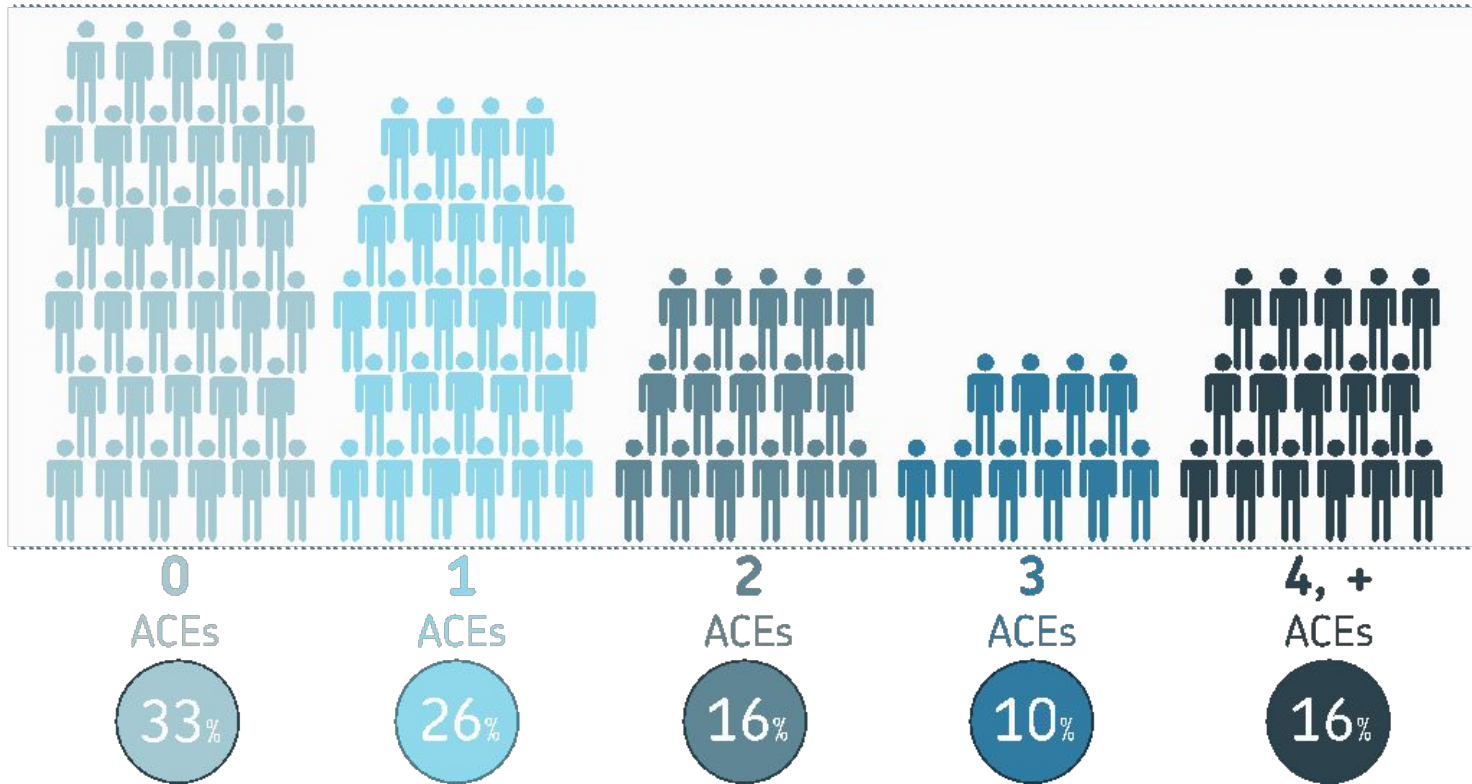
TOTAL 10 ACEs

ACEs are Highly Interrelated:

Where One ACE Occurs,
There are Usually Others

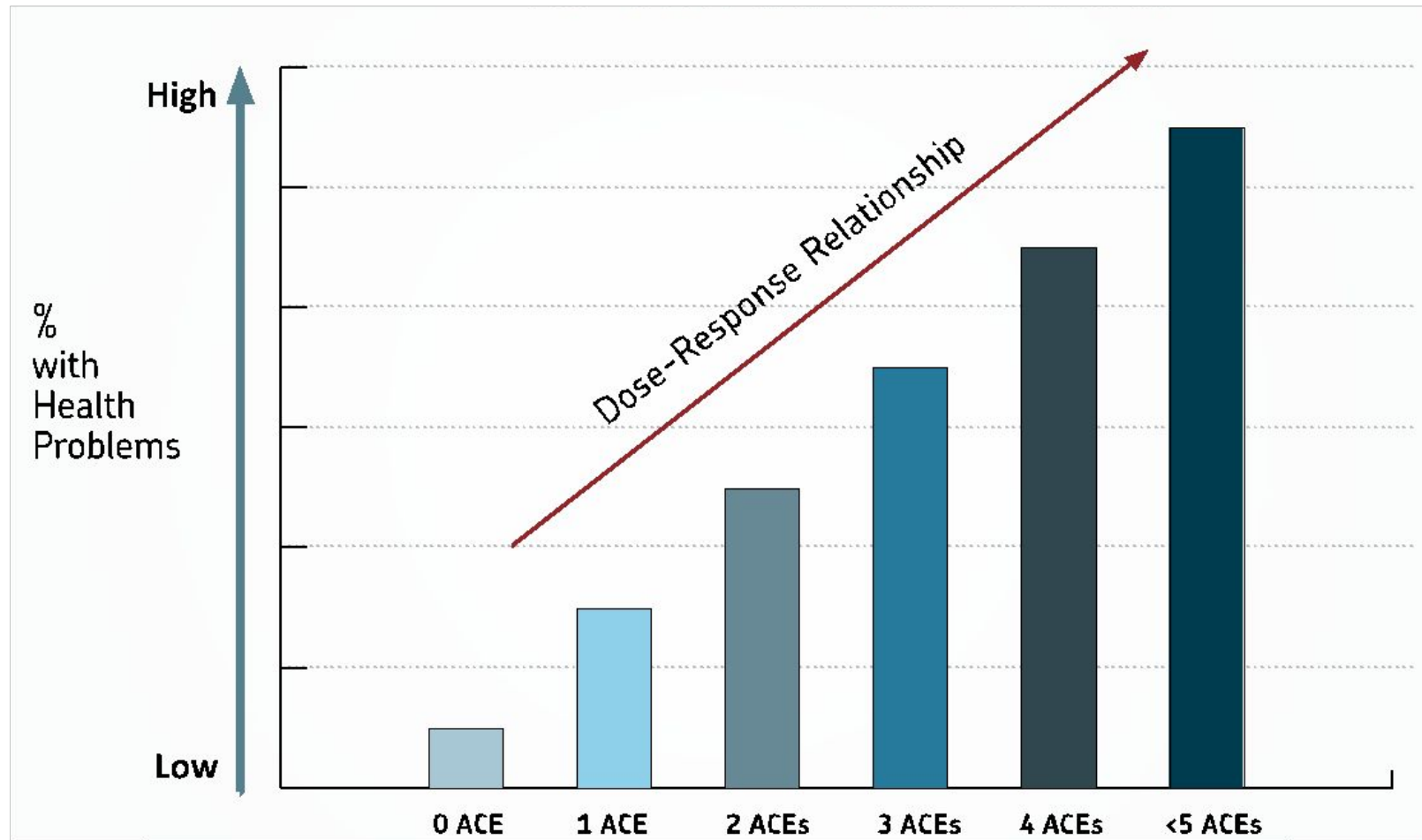


ACE Score = Number of ACE Categories

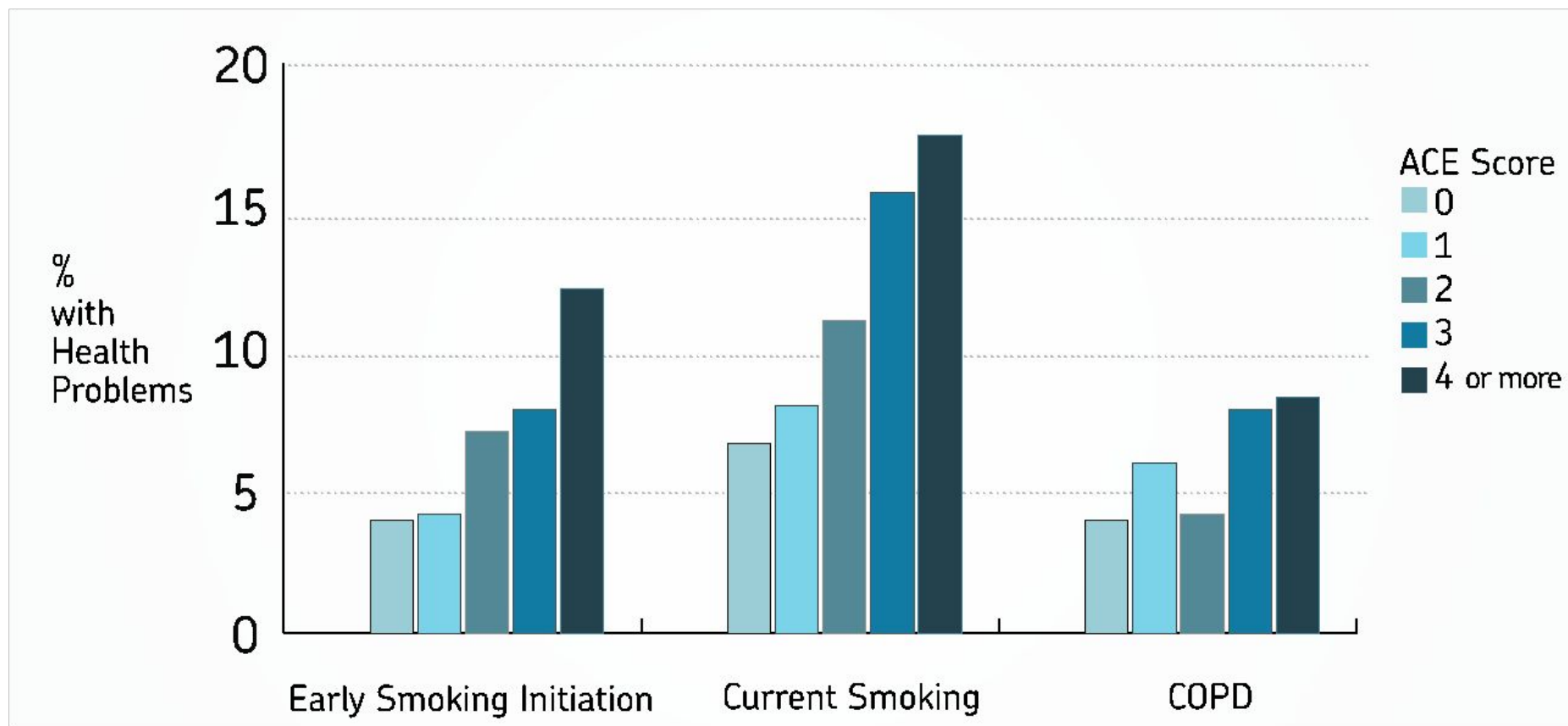


ACE Scores Reliably Predict Challenges During the Life Course

ACE Score and Health Problems



ACEs, Smoking and Lung Disease

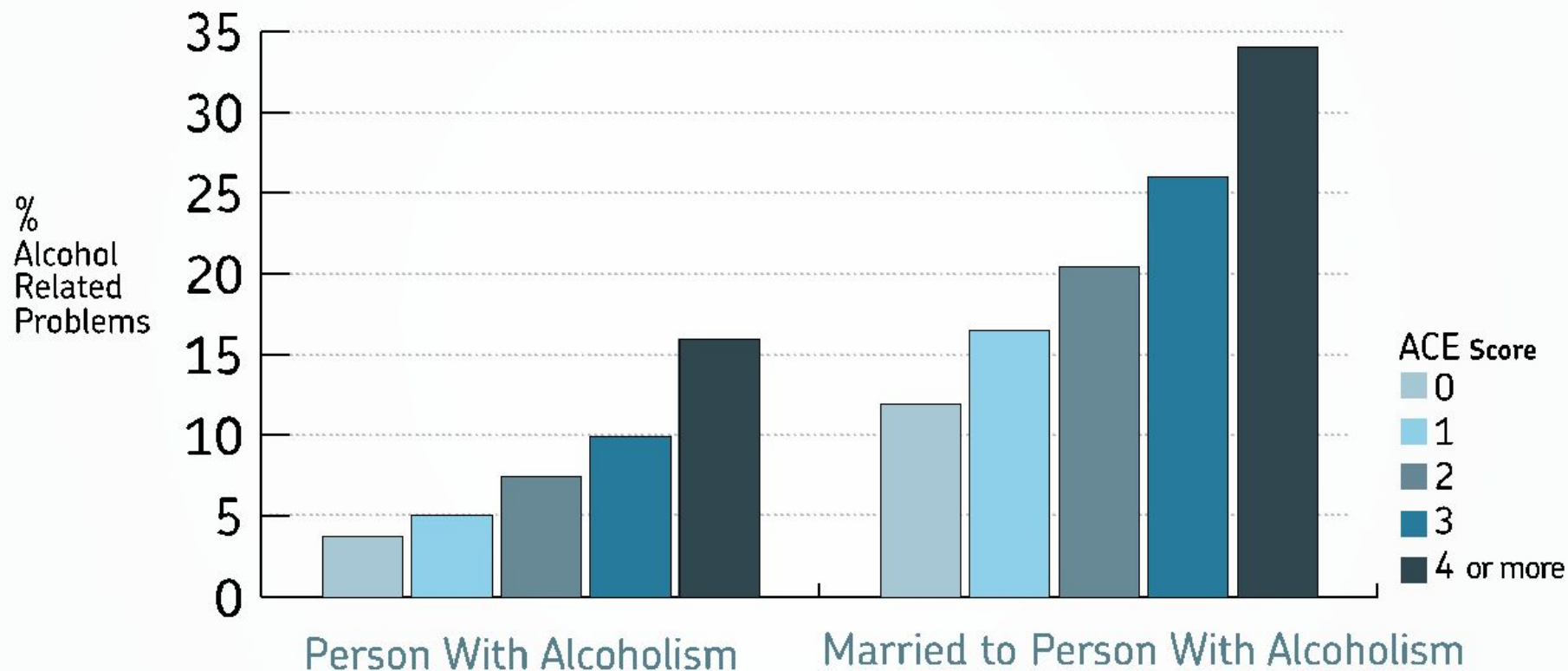




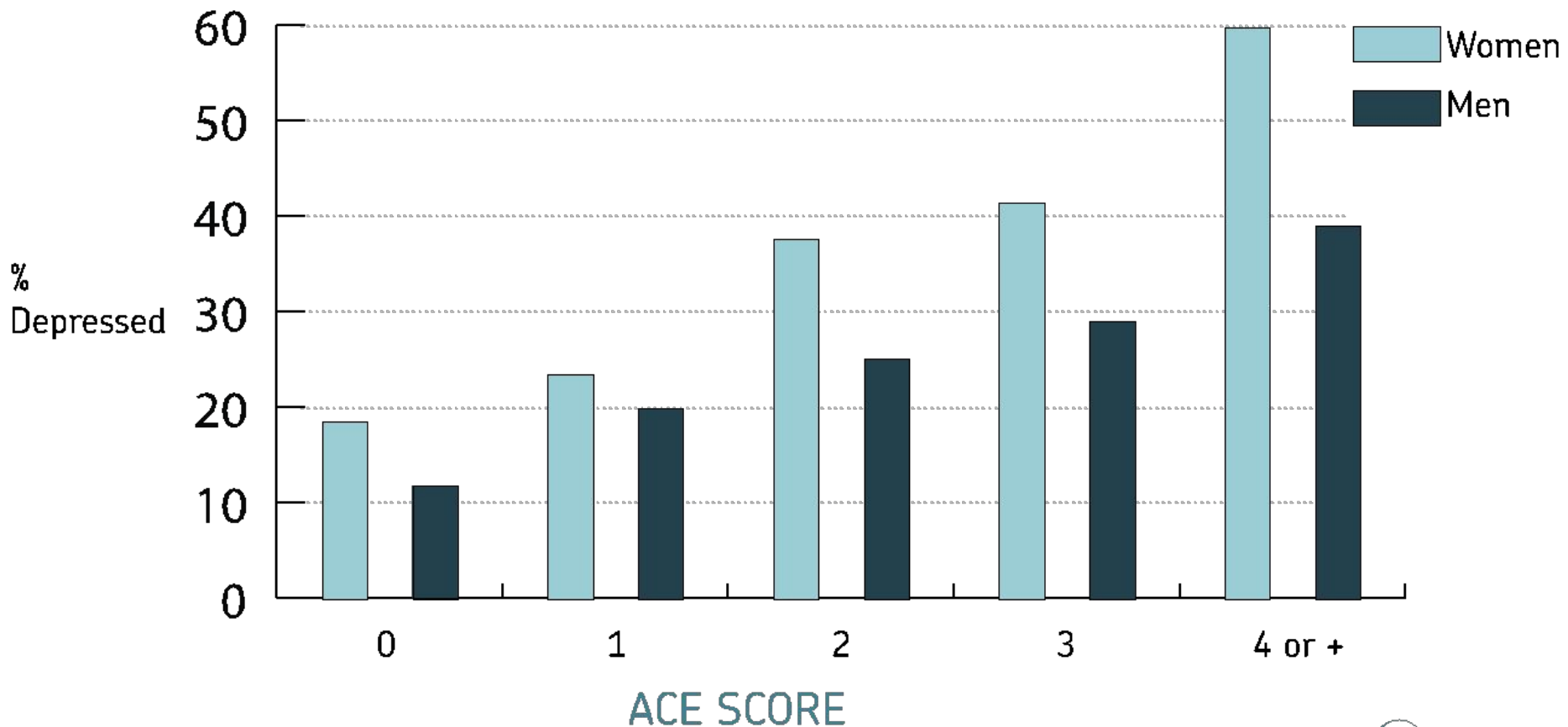
A n x i e t y
D e p r e s s i o n
D i f f i c u l t y C o n c e n t r a t i n g
A n x i e t y
D e p r e s s i o n
D i f f i c u l t y C o n c e n t r a t i n g
SMOKING

SMOKING

ACEs & Alcoholism & Marrying an Alcoholic

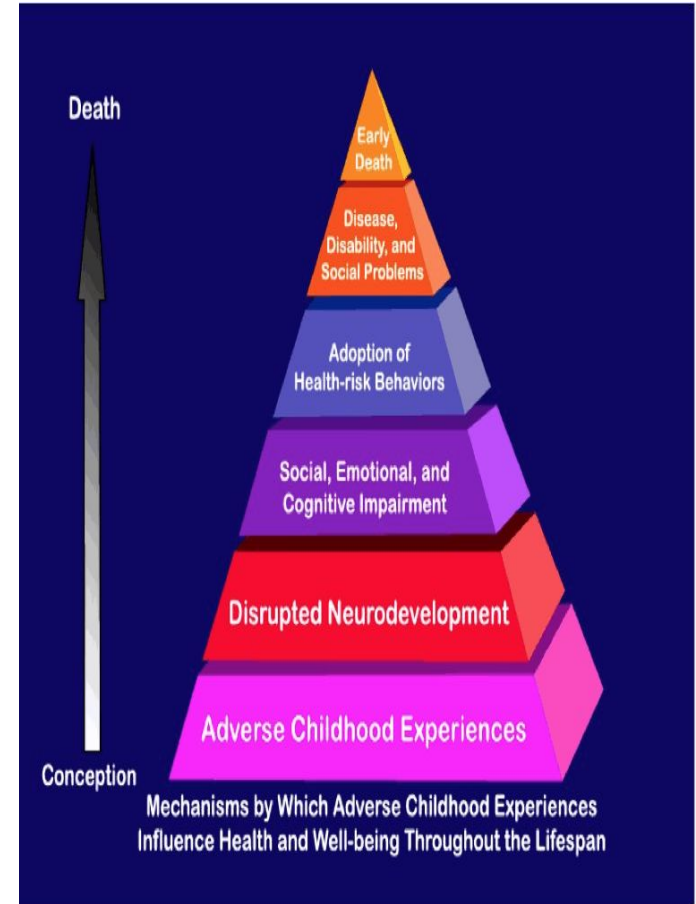


ACEs & Depression



Impact of ACEs

- Findings showed that people who experienced **four or more** adverse childhood events had:
 - increased risk for smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse
 - increased risk for depression and suicide attempts
 - 50 or more sexual partners
 - greater likelihood of sexually transmitted disease
 - challenges with physical inactivity, and severe obesity
- Additional findings show that ACE Score is associated with:
 - likelihood of attempted suicide across the lifespan
 - increased risk for broken bones
 - heart disease
 - lung disease
 - liver disease
 - multiple types of cancer



EXAMPLES OF ACE-ATTRIBUTABLE PROBLEMS

Alcoholism & Alcohol Abuse

Chronic Obstructive
Pulmonary Disease

Coronary Heart Disease

Depression

Drug Abuse & Illicit Drug Use

Fetal Death

Intimate Partner Violence

Liver Disease

Mental Health Problems

Obesity

Sexual Behavior Problems

Smoking

Unintended Pregnancy

Violence

Workplace Problems

ACEs are Common, Interrelated, Powerful



High ACE Scores
in Population

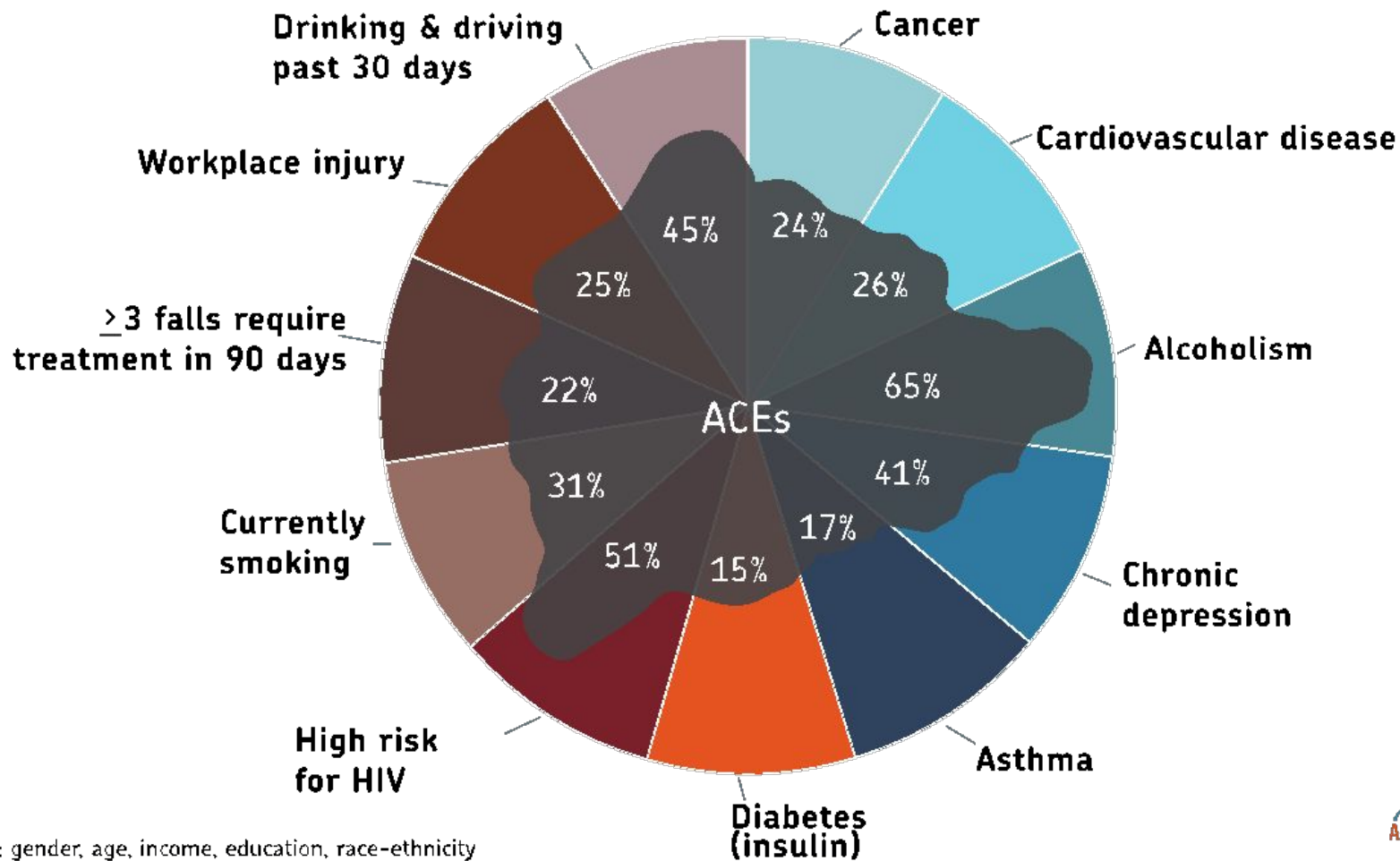


Increased Risk of Multiple
Health and Social Problems



Intergenerational
Transmission of ACEs

Population Attributable Risk



Controls: gender, age, income, education, race-ethnicity

Understanding trauma and its impact

- What is trauma
 - Understanding the different types of trauma
 - Acute Trauma
 - Complex Trauma
- What is an acute trauma response
 - Fight, flight or freeze

Traumatic Experiences are Prevalent in the Lives of Children

- One out of every four children attending school has been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning and behavior
- Trauma can impact school performance and impair learning
- Traumatized children may experience physical and emotional distress

Why Trauma Sensitive Schools

21st Century schools must learn to recognize the impact of trauma on students

To:

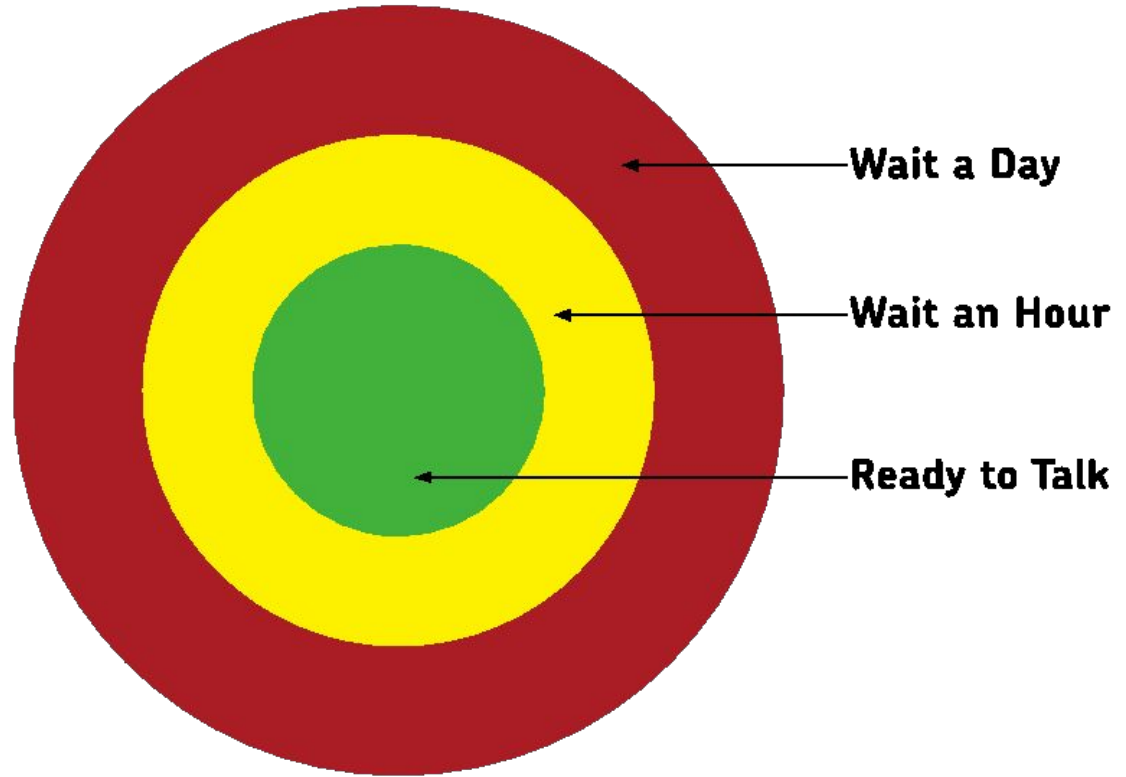
- Foster safe and supportive learning environments
- Build an environment where students can make positive connections
- Teach students how to safely regulate their emotions and heal from the impact of trauma

Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Assume that everyone has had experiences that could be traumatizing; such as a history of abuse or neglect, or mental health issues and exposure to violence. Therefore, we as educators want to be thoughtful about how we navigate interactions with students.



Trauma-Informed School Discipline



We

have the power to
shift the dynamics
that lead to
high ACE scores.



Core Protective Systems

Capabilities

Attachment
&
Belonging

Community
Culture
Spirituality

“Nurturing the healthy development of these protective systems affords the most important preparation or ‘inoculation’ for overcoming potential threats and adversities in human development. Similarly, damage or destruction of these systems has dire consequences for the positive adaptive capacity of individuals.”

Ann Masten, 2009

Attachment & Belonging

RELATIONSHIPS

with caring and competent

people are

—VITAL—

contributors to
resilience & recovery





Community, Faith &
Cultural Processes



f o s t e r
t h r i v i n g
c o m m u n i t i e s

Community Capacity Development

Leadership Expansion

Coming Together

Shared Learning

Results-Oriented Decisions

Leadership Expansion

Coming Together

Shared Learning

Results-Oriented Decisions

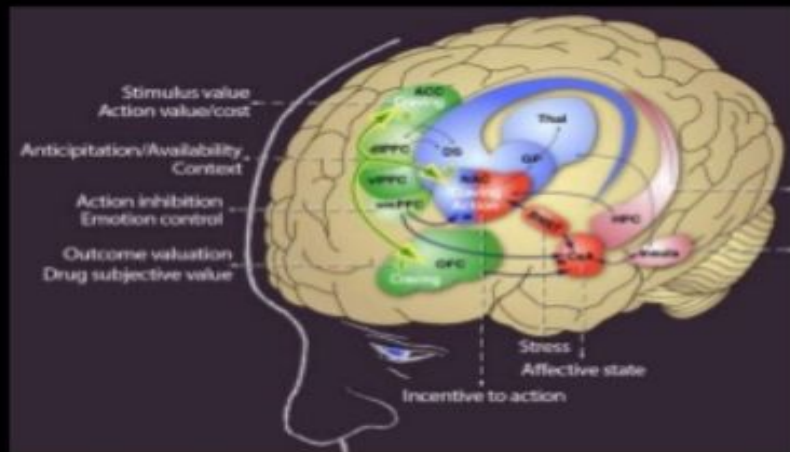


lifting all beings



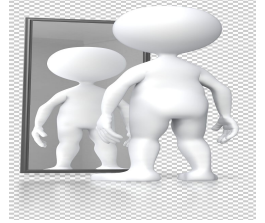
Executive Functions

- Planning
- Keeping track of time
- Skillful listening
- Evaluating ideas
- Self-reflecting
- Exercising mental flexibility
- Engaging positively with groups
- Asking for help
- Controlling emotions and impulses
- Growth mindset
- Big picture thinking/Expanded capacity for complexity



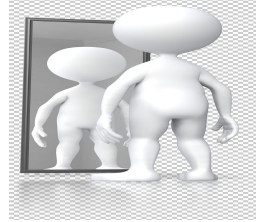
The vmPFC is also responsible for mediating conflicting thoughts, making choices, and governing social control. When pathways between the prefrontal cortex and the rest of the brain are damaged, or temporarily inhibited, adverse personality changes can result.

Reflection Questions



What is the role of schools in supporting students who are experiencing trauma?

Reflection Question



How is your school district supporting staff to meet the needs of students exposed to trauma?

UCSF HEARTS Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Intensive/Tertiary Intervention (5%)

Trauma-specific psychotherapy with students + consultation with teachers
IEP consultation / Trauma-informed crisis management

Early/Secondary Intervention (15%)

Participation in Care Team Meetings for at-risk students and school-wide issues
Trauma-informed school-wide positive behavioral support system
Trauma-informed, restorative discipline policies
Teacher wellness groups

Primary Prevention (80%)

Capacity building with school staff

Training on effects of complex trauma in schools and trauma-informed practices
Promote staff wellness and address stress, burnout, & vicarious trauma

Use of trauma-informed lens to augment universal supports

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
Health education on coping with stress
Safe and supportive school climate / Educational equity
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula
Restorative Practices / Restorative Justice

J. Dorado (2016),
UCSF Healthy
Environments
and Response to
Trauma in
Schools (HEARTS)

Trauma-Informed Multi-Tiered System of Support

Tier 3/Intensive (5%)

- Trauma-specific referrals to community mental health services
 - School-based individual counseling
- Consultation and Collaboration with Special Education staff (if appropriate)
- Trauma-informed Crisis Management (Threat Assessment/ Suicide Risk Assessment)

Tier 2/Intervention (15%)

- Participation in school-based intervention team meeting for students in need of targeted social, emotional, behavioral and academic supports
 - School-based group counseling
- Use of restorative approaches in discipline (Restorative Circles)
 - Teacher Wellness Groups

Tier 1/Prevention (80%)

- Capacity-building with School Staff
 - Training on the effects of trauma in schools and trauma-informed practices
 - Promote staff wellness and address stress burn out and vicarious trauma
- Use of trauma-informed lens to augment universal supports
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
 - Health education on coping with stress
 - Safe and supportive school climate/ Educational equity
 - Social Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL) curricula
 - Restorative Practices/ Restorative Justice

Addressing Trauma in Schools



Trauma Informed School Practices

Aim to:

- Understand, recognize, and respond to the effects of all types of trauma.
- Avoid re-victimization.
- Appreciate that many problem behaviors began as understandable attempts to cope.
- Maximize choices to improve student behavior and create a safe place for learning and healing.

Safe Supportive Learning

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>

Trauma Informed School Practices cont.

Aim to:

- Be culturally competent.
- Understand student behavior in the context of their life experiences and cultural background.
- Emphasize physical, psychological and emotional safety for students and staff.
- Understand that students who are exposed to trauma are sometimes mistaken as bad and as having learning disabilities.

Safe Supportive Learning

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>

Trauma informed teachers have a paradigm shift and change their conversation and language.

CHANGE is up to US



It is shaped by our thoughts, our conversations, the way we relate with one another in relationships, in families, and in communities.



Building Self-Healing Communities

Thank YOU!

www.aceinterface.com

Resources

“Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt: Strategies for Your Classroom”

by Susan E. Craig