ACEs: Linking Childhood Trauma to Long-Term Health and Social Consequences

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Department of Public Health Summit
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The Children's Clinic
"Serving Children & Their Families"

Goal & Objectives

Goal: To be more trauma informed in our interaction with peers, children and families.

Objectives:

- Increase knowledge and understanding about trauma, toxic stress and childhood adversity
- Learn how to build protective factors and resiliency
- Learn skills to provide trauma-informed care

Why this? Why Now?

Recent Headlines:

When toxic stress in young children lasts forever

Tender Young Brains
What kind of childhood stress should parents actually be stressing about?

Dangers of "Crying It Out"
Damaging children and their relationships for the long-term.

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY HAS LIFELONG CONSEQUENCES

Significant adversity in childhood is strongly associated with unhealthy lifestyles and poor health decades later.

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LINKING CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND ADULT OUTCOMES

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY
Advocacy to minimize childhood adversity (e.g. - efforts to address poverty, food scarcity, domestic violence, parental substance abuse)

POOR ADULT OUTCOMES
Health and social services to deal with adverse outcomes (e.g. - efforts to address the behavioral, social, health and economic consequences)

Three Levels of Stress

Positive

- Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels

Tolerable

- Serious temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships

Toxic

- Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships

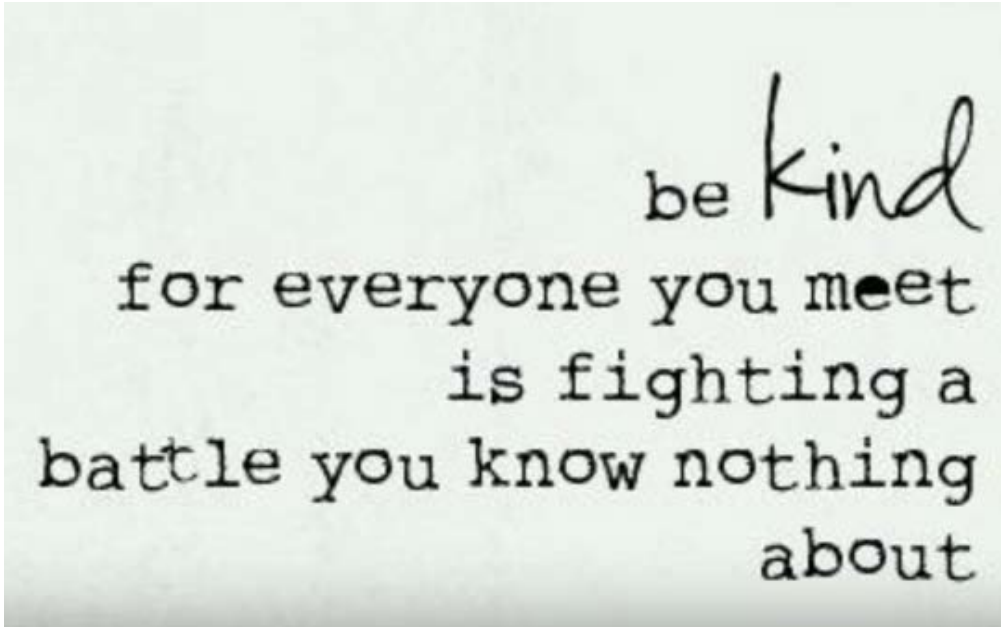
Understanding Trauma is Imperative

- Trauma is pervasive
- Trauma's impact is broad and diverse
- Trauma's impact is deep and life-shaping
- Trauma; especially interpersonal violence, is often self-perpetuating
- Trauma is insidious and differentially affects the more vulnerable
- Trauma affects how people approach services
- The service system has often been re-traumatizing
- *Healing is possible*

What is Trauma?

- **Trauma is any experience that leaves a person intensely threatened. It often triggers physical, psychological, and emotional symptoms.**

- If left untreated, these effects will linger long after the event(s) has occurred.



Trauma-Informed Care

Video available at: https://youtu.be/TStXKJKtgkI

LINKING CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND ADULT OUTCOMES

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY

TOXIC STRESS

- Epigenetic modifications
- Disruptions in brain architecture
- Behavioral allostasis

POOR ADULT OUTCOMES

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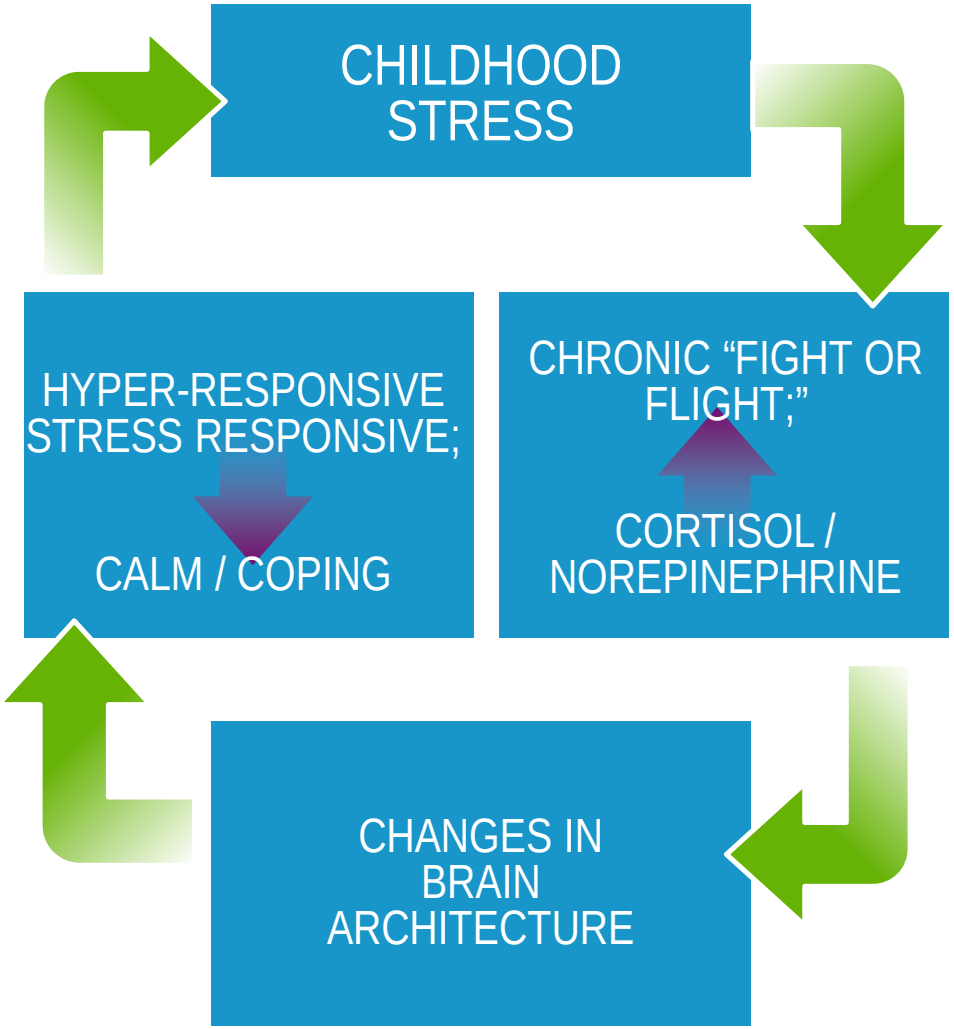
IMPACTS OF EARLY STRESS



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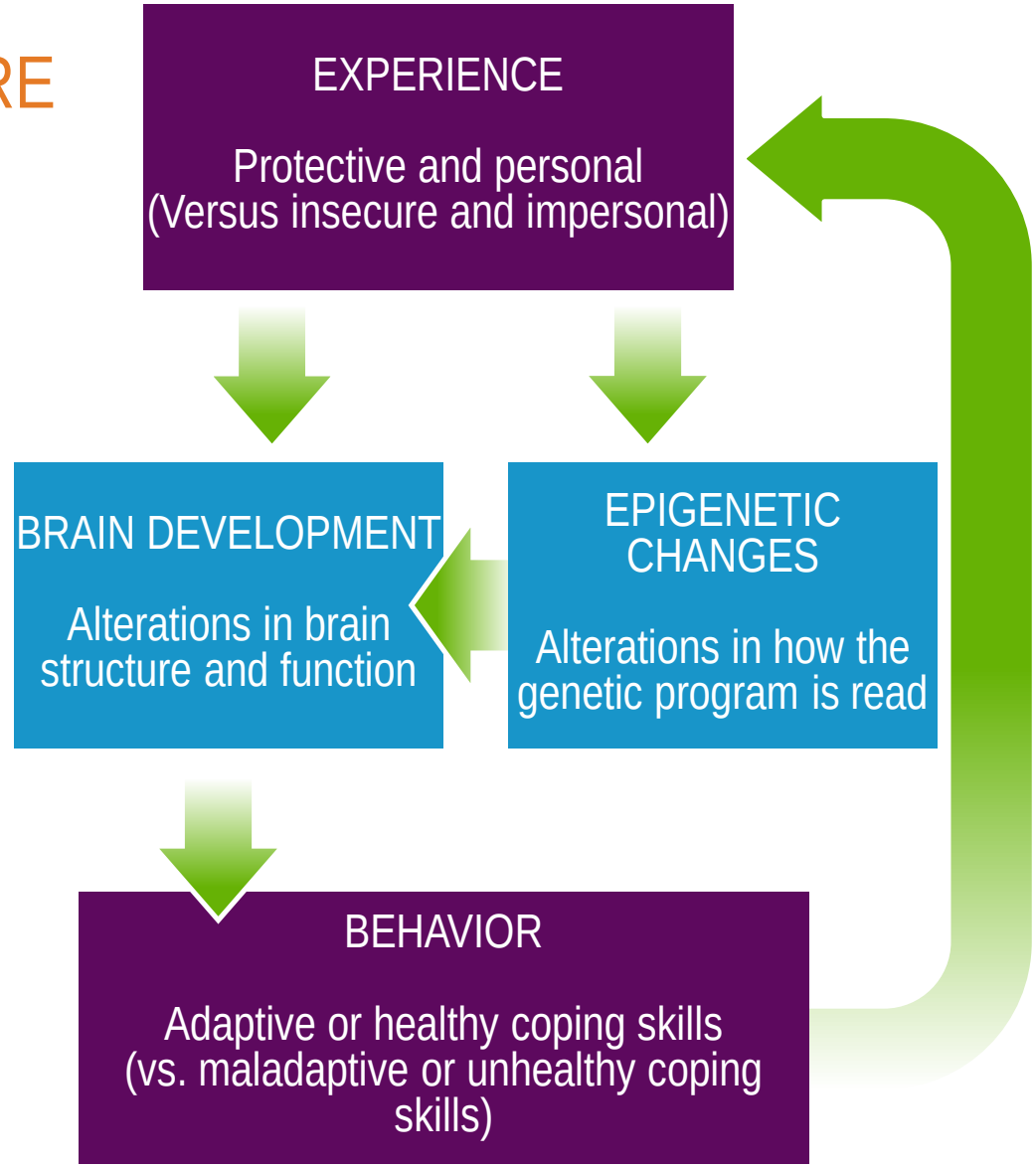
THE DANCE BETWEEN NURTURE AND NATURE

Development Results From an Ongoing, Re-iterative, and Cumulative Dance Between Nurture and Nature



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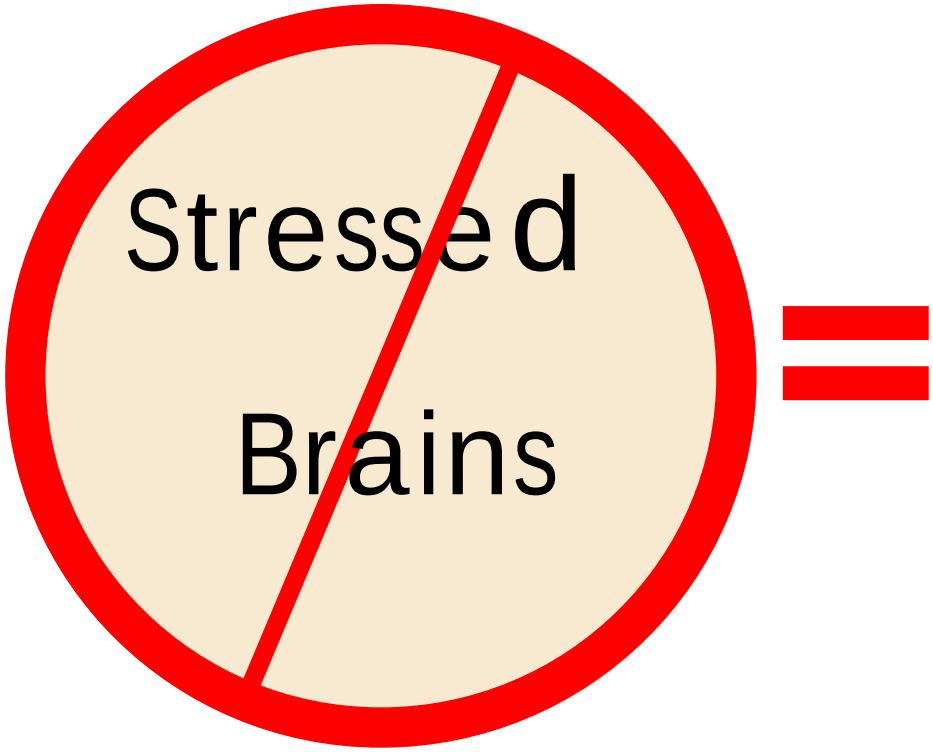
Survival Mode Response



<u>Brain cannot effectively</u>:

- Respond
- Learn
- Process
- Allow time to calm & return to higher brain functioning

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Stress Hormones

- Cortisol - stress management response hormone
- Norepinephrine - stress hormone/neurotransmitter
- Oxytocin - anti stress hormone

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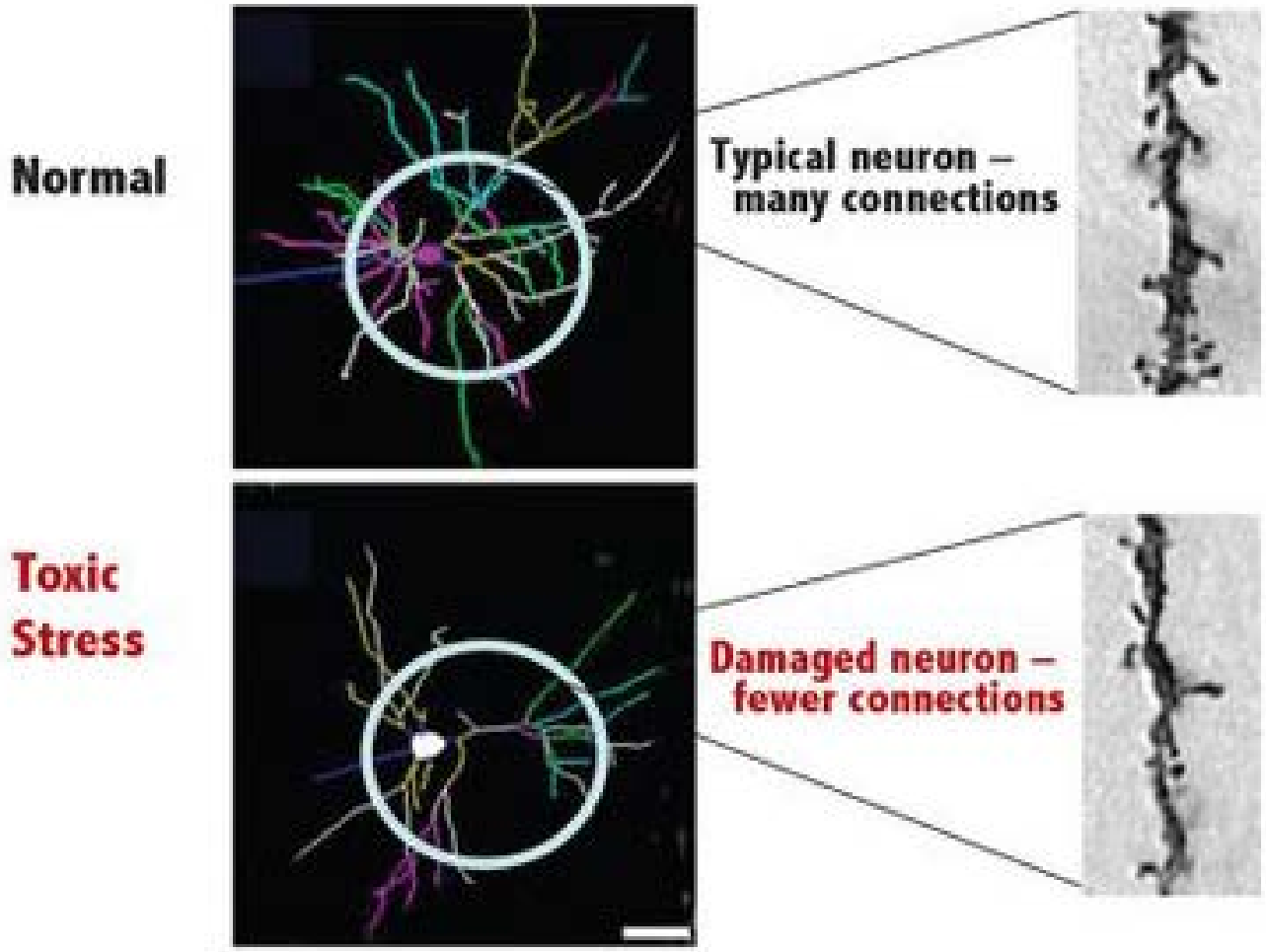
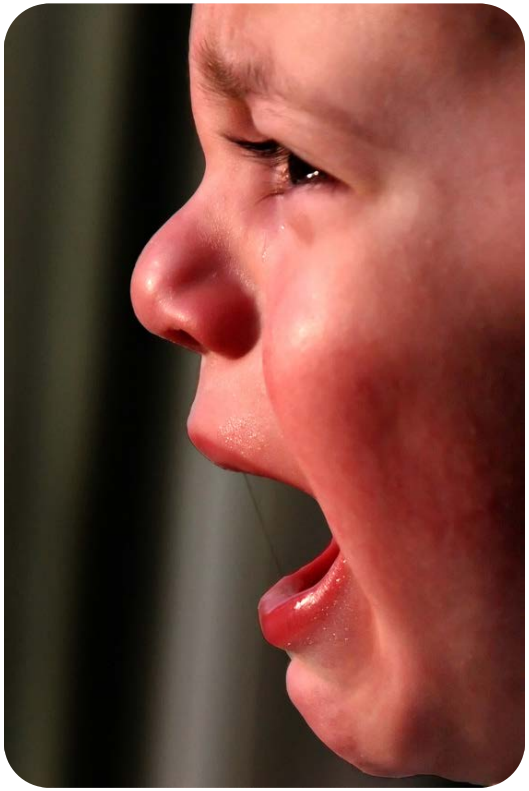
Toxic Stress Changes Architecture of Brain

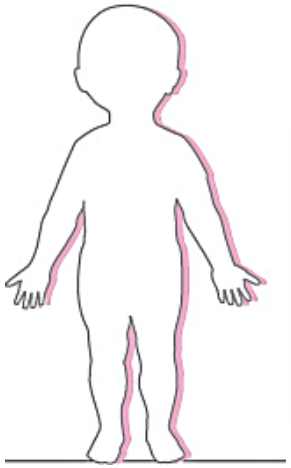


What Are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

- **Abuse**
  - Emotional
  - Physical
  - Sexual
- **Neglect**
  - Emotional
  - Physical
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Substance Abuse**
- **Mental Illness**
- **Divorce**
- **Incarcerated Family Member**

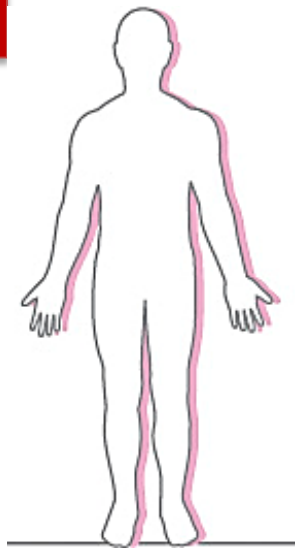


Exposure to Toxic Stress and Adverse Childhood Events



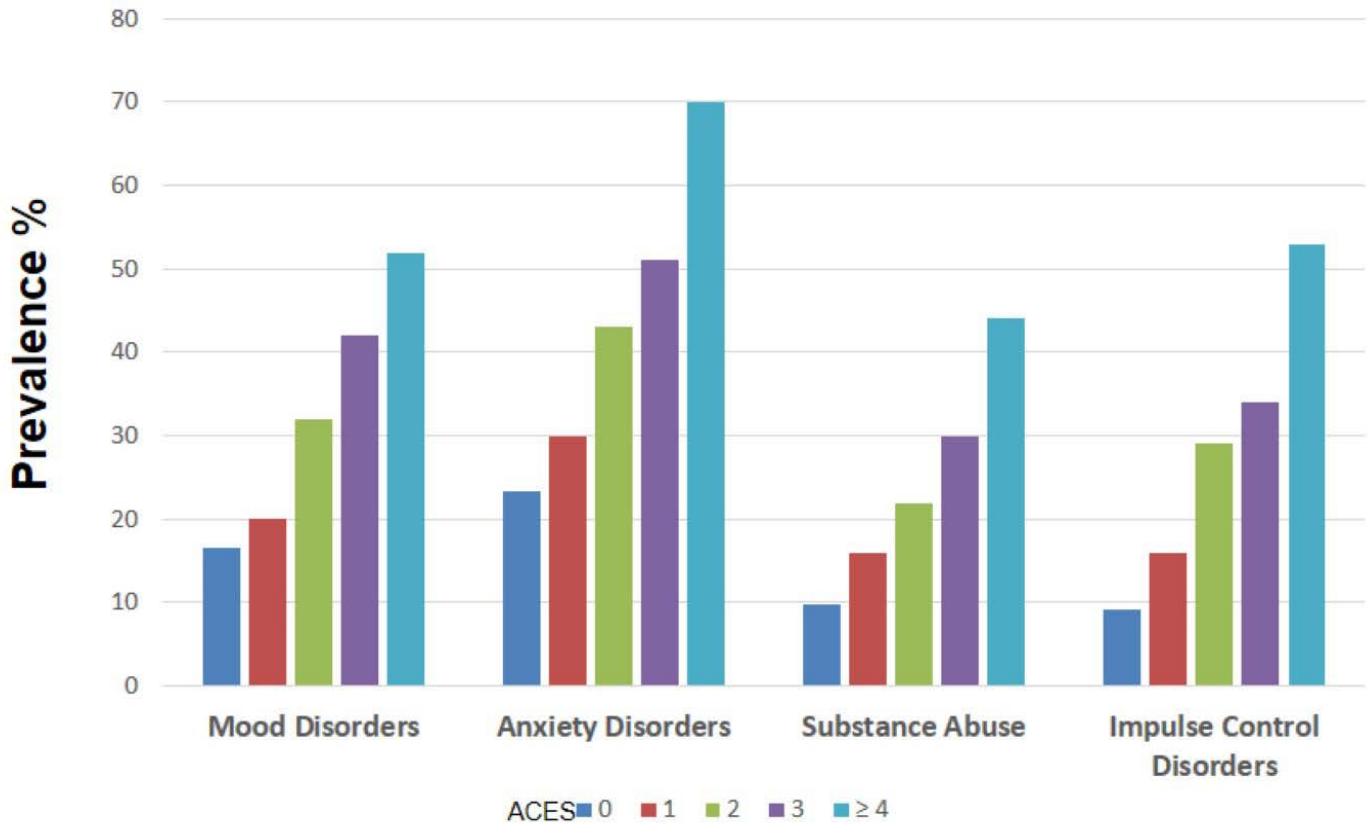
Increased
- School failure
- Behavioral problems
- Substance abuse

Decreased
- Executive functions
- Judgment



Increased
- Heart disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Divorce
- Poverty

Cumulative ACES & Mental Health

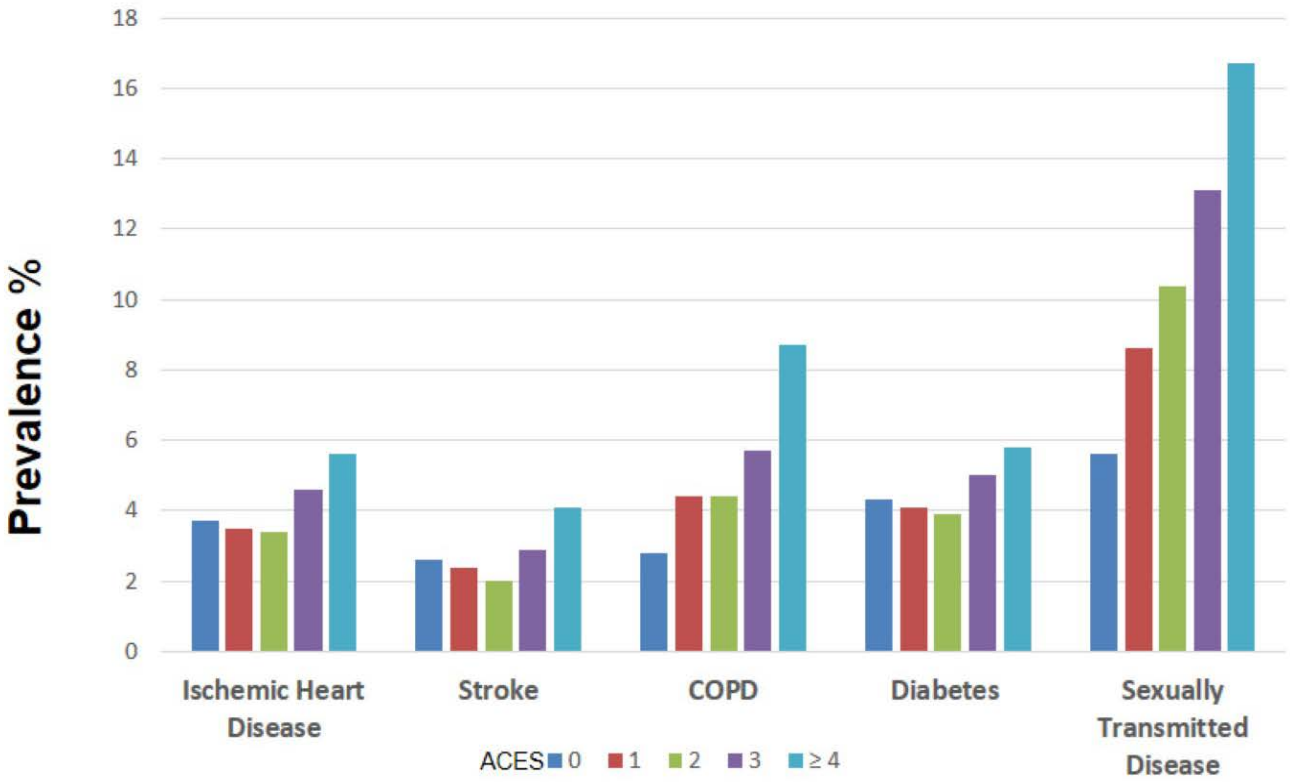


[1]Data from the National Comorbidity Survey-Replication Sample (NCS-R).
[2]Putnam, Harris, Putnam, J Traumatic Stress, 26:435-442, 2013.

CANarratives.org

Content source: Child Adversity Narratives, CANarratives.Org

Cumulative ACES & Chronic Disease



[1]Felitti et al., (1998) American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 14:245-258.

CANarratives.org

Content source: Child Adversity Narratives, CANarratives.Org

Signs of Distress

- Emotional reactions – anxiety, fear, powerlessness, helplessness, worry, anger
- Physical or somatic reactions – nausea, light headedness, increase in BP, headaches, stomach aches, increase in heart rate and respiration or holding breath
- Behavioral reactions – crying, uncooperative, argumentative, unresponsive, restlessness
- Cognitive reactions – memory impairment or forgetfulness, inability to give adequate history

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Behavioral Symptoms of Trauma in Young Children

Child's Response to Trauma: Misunderstood Causes in Young Children		
Response	More Common in	Misunderstood Cause
• Detachment • Numbing • Compliance • Fantasy	• Females • Children with ongoing trauma/pain • Children unable to defend themselves	• Depression • ADHD inattentive type • Developmental Delay

Content source: The American Academy of Pediatrics Trauma Toolkit: The Medical Home Approach to Identifying and Responding to Exposure to Trauma

Where do we begin and how do we move forward?

The Six Protective Factors

- Enhance Parental Resilience
- Develop Social Connections
- Build Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Offer Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Foster Social and Emotional Competence
- Promote Healthy Parent-Child Relationships

[InBrief: The Science of Resilience]

Video available at: https://youtu.be/1r8hj72bfGo

Therefore……

We need to presume the clients we serve have a history of traumatic stress and exercise "universal precautions" by creating systems of care that are *trauma-informed.*

(Hodas, 2005)

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Trauma-Informed Approach

A framework emerging nationally describing the context in which trauma is addressed or treatments deployed contribute to the outcomes for the trauma survivors, the people receiving services, and the individuals staffing the systems.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA

A Trauma-Informed Organization

A program, organization or system that

- realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery
- recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in those involved with the system
- resists re-traumatization
- responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings

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Seven Domains of Trauma-Informed Care

- *Domain 1:*

  Early Screening & Comprehensive Assessment of Trauma
- *Domain 2:*

  Consumer Driven Care & Services
- *Domain 3:*

  Trauma-Informed, Educated & Responsive Workforce
- *Domain 4:*

  Provision of Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based and Emerging Best Practices
- *Domain 5:*

  Create a Safe and Secure Environment
- *Domain 6:*

  Engage in Community Outreach and Partnership Building
- *Domain 7:*

  Ongoing Performance Improvement

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The Importance of *Relationships*

WHAT HELPS?

- Interactions that express kindness, patience, reassurance, calm and acceptance and listening
- Frequent use of words like PLEASE and THANK YOU

WHAT HURTS?

- Interactions that are humiliating, harsh, impersonal, disrespectful critical, demanding, judgmental

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The importance of the *Physical Environment*

WHAT HELPS?

- Comfortable, calming, and private treatment and waiting. Furniture is clean and comfortable
- No wrong door philosophy
- Integrated restrooms
- Messages conveyed throughout that are positive and hopeful

WHAT HURTS?

- Congested areas that are noisy
- Poor signage that is confusing
- Uncomfortable furniture
- Separate bathrooms
- Cold non-inviting colors and paintings/posters on the wall

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Principles of Sensitive/Empathetic Practice

- **Changing the lens**
- Be respectful
- Take time
- Build rapport
- Share information
- Share control
- Respect boundaries
- Foster mutual learning
- Understand non-linear healing
- Demonstrate awareness and knowledge of trauma

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Content source: Handbook on Sensitive Practice for Health Care Practitioners: Lessons from Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Empathy vs. Sympathy

Video available at: https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369Jw

What Can We Do to Provide Sensitive Care and Practices?

- Train “all” staff about trauma, sensitive practice and sharing critical information
- Screen and assess for trauma
- Communicate a sensitivity to trauma issues
- Create a safe and comfortable environment
- Provide services in a trauma informed manner

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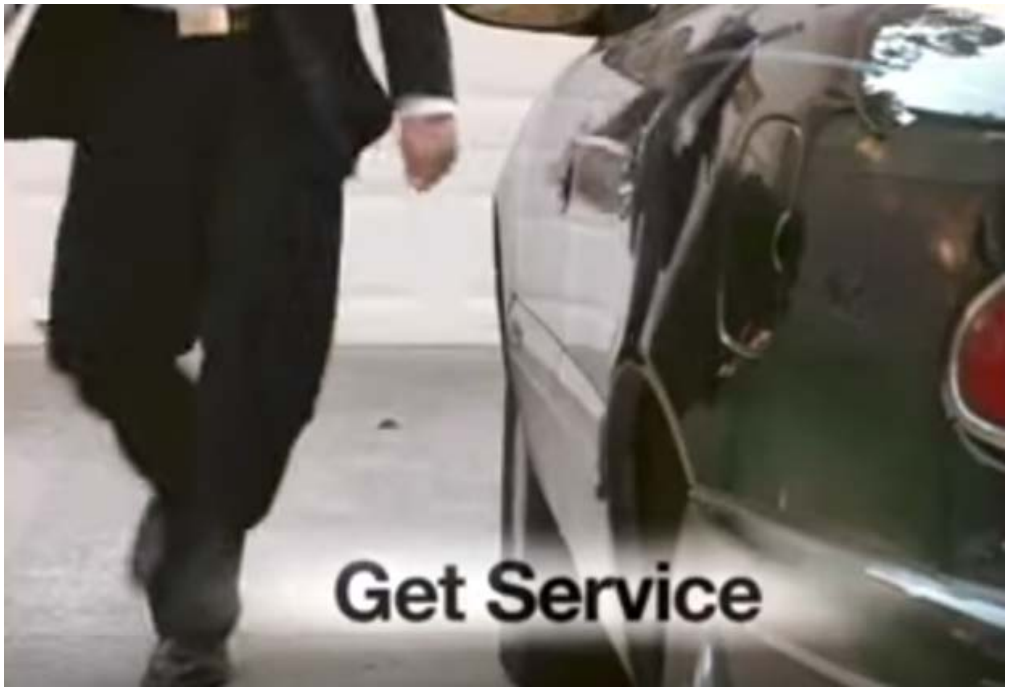

The Secret to Happiness is Service

Video available at: https://youtu.be/JxZR4HhlDu4

Resilience & Peace

- It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of these things and still be calm in your heart. - Anonymous

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Building Resiliency

- The key is to not try to avoid stress altogether, but to manage the stress in our lives in such a way that we avoid the negative consequences of stress!

- Accept the fact that there will be certain levels of stress in your life, and work to manage it in a way that you avoid or minimize the negative consequences of the stress (Daniel, 2007)

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5 Strategies to Build Resiliency

- Cultivate optimism
- Shift your focus
- Process difficult emotions
- Connect
- Be present

Qualities of Resilient People

- Optimism, Faith
- Integrity
- Social support: Foster group identity and cohesion
- Perseverance
- Responsibility

(Everly, 2009, from Desiderius Erasmus, A guide to the Righteous Protector, 1501; Sun Tzu, The Art of War)

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Personal

- Exercise
- Maintaining medical appointments
- Reading
- Adequate rest
- Creative projects
- Socializing
- Exposure to the arts/performance
- Spa/wellness treatment
- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Hobbies
- ?

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Step 1

Capacity Building & Training in Trauma Informed Care

- Advisory Council
- EBBI Program Staff
- Clinical Leadership
- All Clinic Staff
- All Staff with Parent Contact

Step 2

Identify Target Population

- Prenatal Parents
- Children ages 0 to 4
- Parents of Children ages 0 to 4

Step 3

Screening

For the Child

- PEDS
- MCHAT
- Sensitive and Probing Questions

For Parents/Prenatal

- Edinburg Postnatal Depression Scale
- Family/Pregnancy Wellbeing Survey
- Sensitive and Probing Questions

Step 4

Assessment & Stratification

High Risk

- Intake Interview & Assessment which includes the Patent Health Questionnaire (PHQ9) for depression, and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD7)
- Referrals & Linkage

Medium Risk

- Intake Interview & Assessment
- Referrals & Linkage

Low Risk

- Resources
- Referrals & Linkage

Step 5

Patient Care Plan Interventions

Based on Intervention Level

- Multidisciplinary Case Consultation
- Case Management, including Intensive Case Management
- Mental health Services & Referrals
- Medical Legal Partnership Services
- Home Visits
- Mediation
- Resources
- Parenting Classes *Group Counseling, Parent Institute, Project Fatherhood, Love, Listen & Play*
- Recreational Classes *Infant Massage, Cooking & Nutrition, Walking Clubs*

Everychild Foundation
Bright Beginnings Initiative

Because every child deserves a bright and healthy beginning

The Children's Clinic
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Vision

A world in which all children have an opportunity for optimal brain development—the foundation for lifelong health and stronger nations.

It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men and women.

Adapted quote from Frederick Douglas

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