



Leading with Hope:

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

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Iowa ACEs 360 empowers communities, organizations, and people to take informed actions to prevent and, mitigate the lifelong effects of childhood adversity.



Compassionate Communities

Where Everyone Can Thrive

Objectives

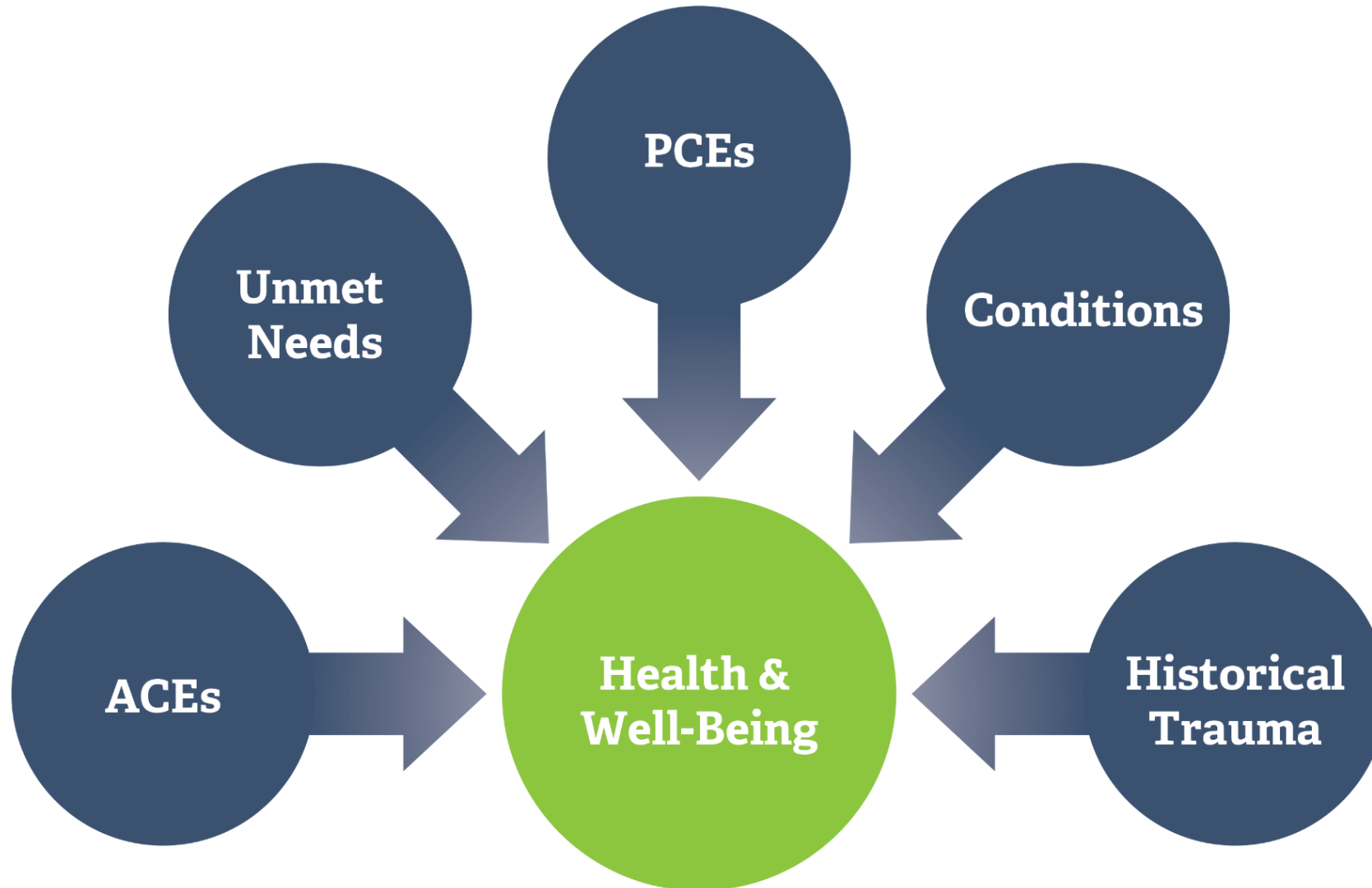
- Understand Iowa research about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and how trauma impacts health and well-being
- Reflect on factors that contribute to childhood trauma and how those factors must inform how we respond.
- Explore ways that Iowans are responding to trauma and identify actions you can take

Adverse Childhood Experiences

and their impact on health and well-being



Impacts on Health and Well-being



Stress

Where do you feel stress in the body?

We have a physiologic response to situations.

TOXIC STRESS:

- AAP: In contrast to positive or tolerable stress, toxic stress is defined as the excessive or prolonged activation of the physiologic stress response systems in the absence of the buffering protection afforded by stable, responsive relationships.

Toxic stress can affect brain growth and development



Household Trauma

Original 10 ACEs

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Physical Neglect

Emotional Neglect

Mental Illness of Adult/Caregiver

Substance Abuse of Adult/Caregiver

Incarceration of Adult/Caregiver

Domestic Violence

Divorce/Separation



What are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are incidents that dramatically upset the safe, nurturing environments children need to thrive.

Long-term Health Impacts of Trauma

Health

Obesity, diabetes, depression, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones, suicide attempts

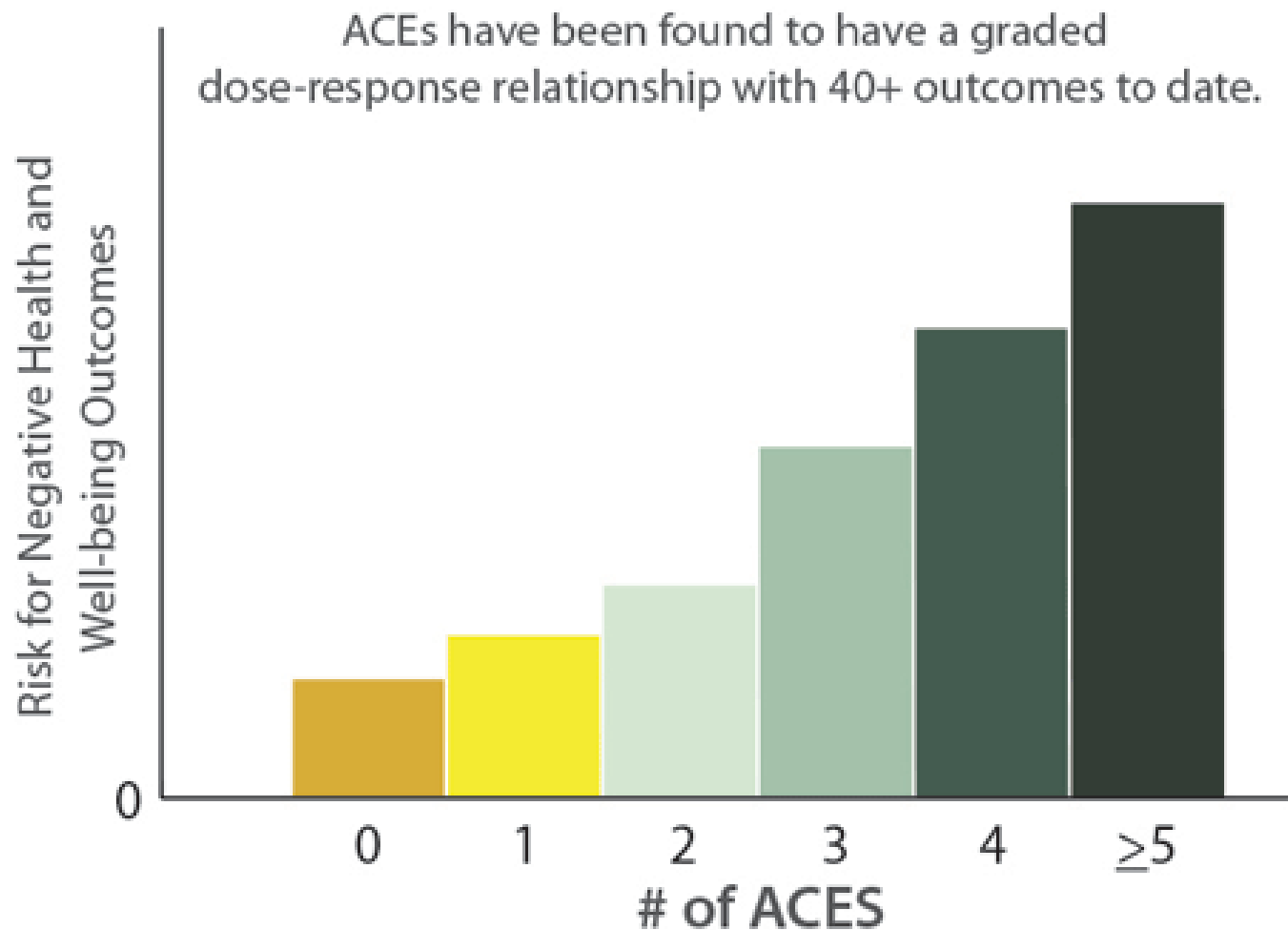
Behaviors

Smoking, risky sexual behavior, alcoholism, drug use

Life Potential

Graduation rates, academic achievement, time lost from work

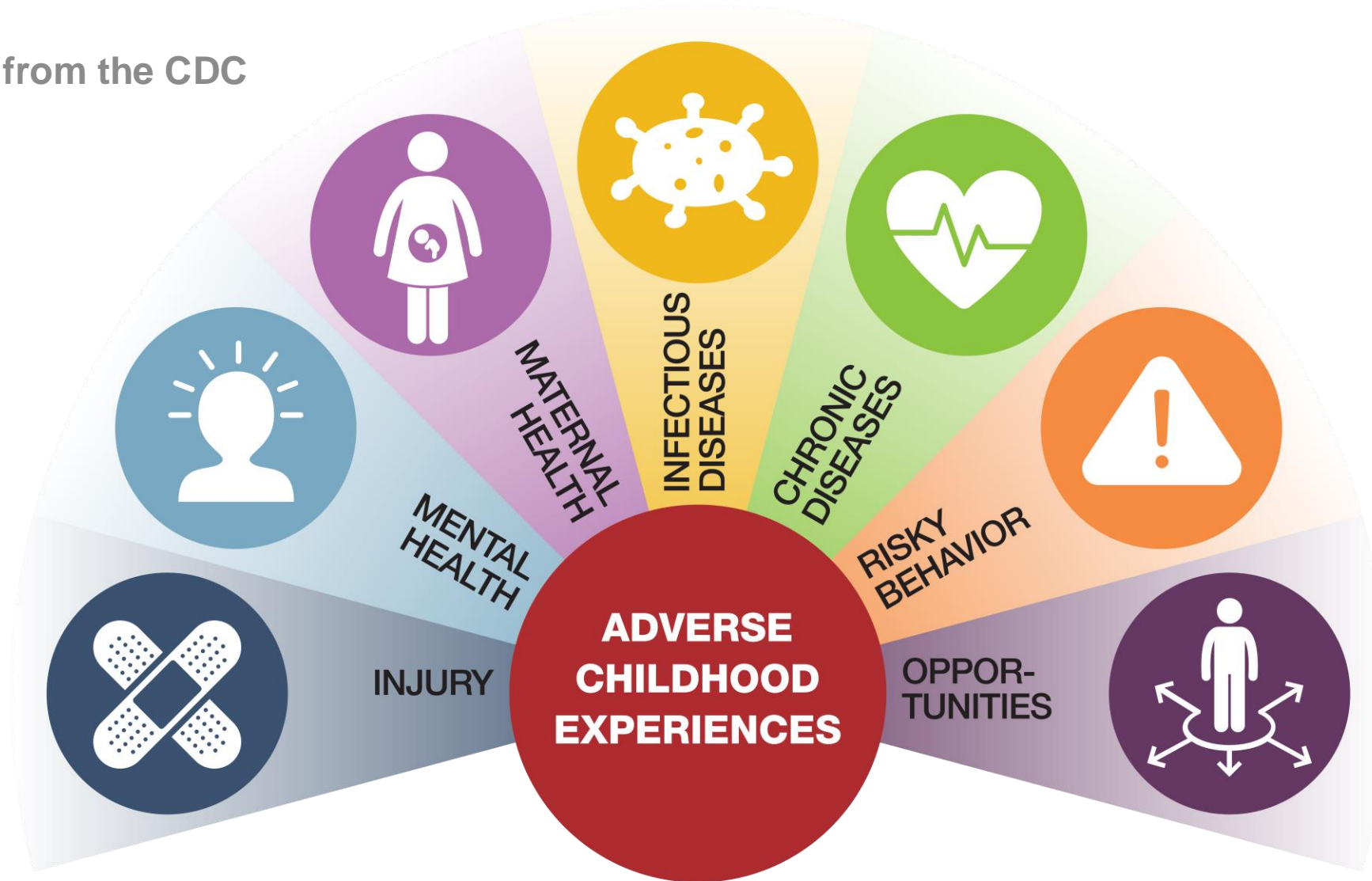
Source: Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., . . . Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults - The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245-258.



*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.

EARLY ADVERSITY HAS LASTING IMPACTS

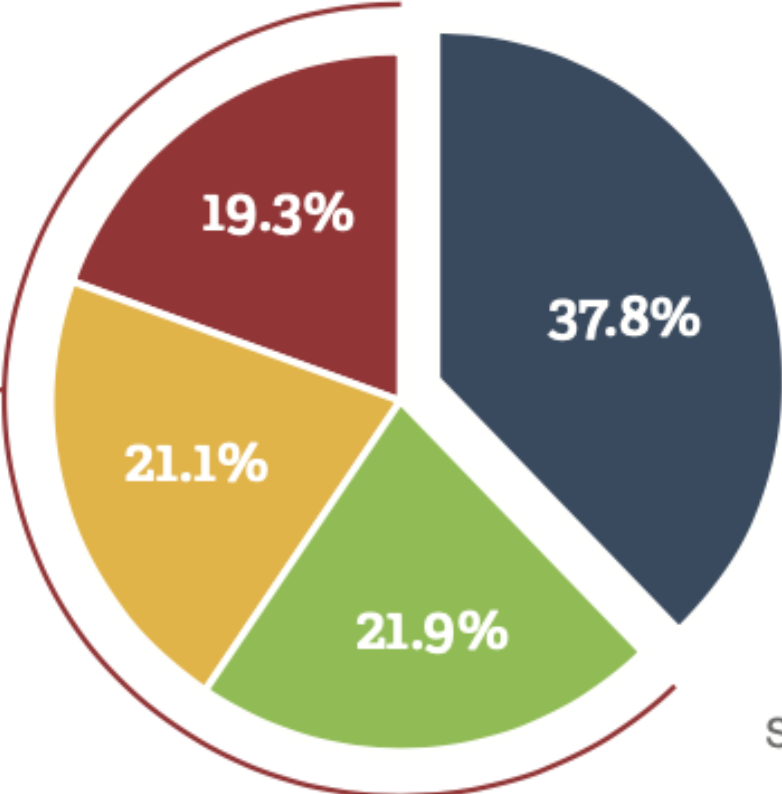
Adapted from the CDC



PREVALENCE OF ACES AMONG IOWANS

PERCENT OF IOWA ADULT POPULATION REPORTING ACES

62.2%
of Iowa adults reported experiencing **at least one type of child abuse or household stress** before the age of 18*

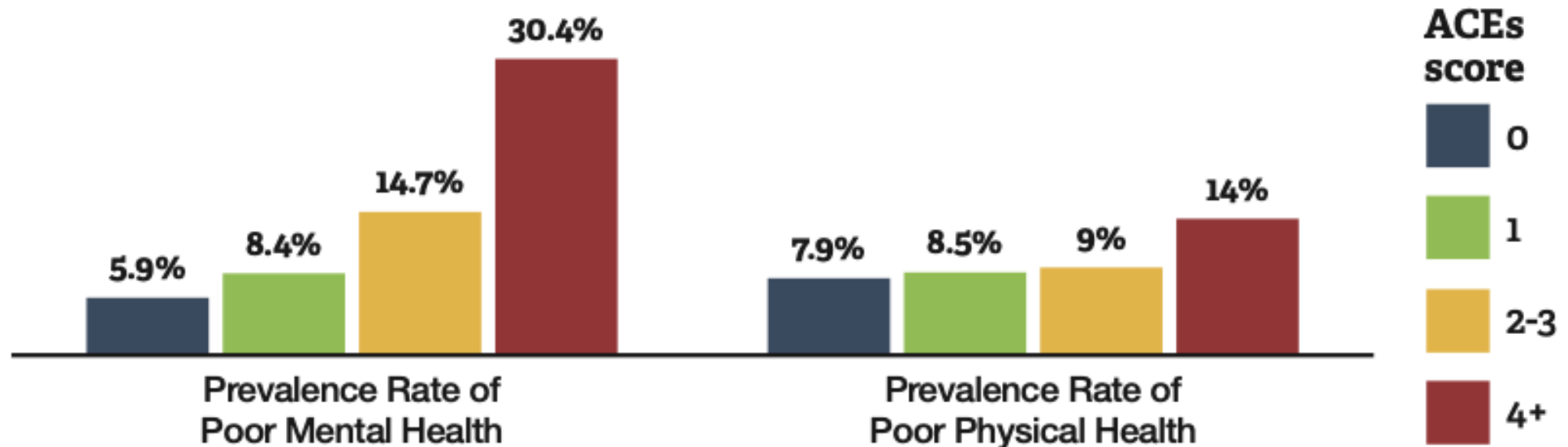


Source: Iowa BRFSS, 2021-2022



ACES AND HEALTH

PREVALENCE RATE OF IOWA ADULTS REPORTING POOR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH BY TOTAL NUMBER OF ACES



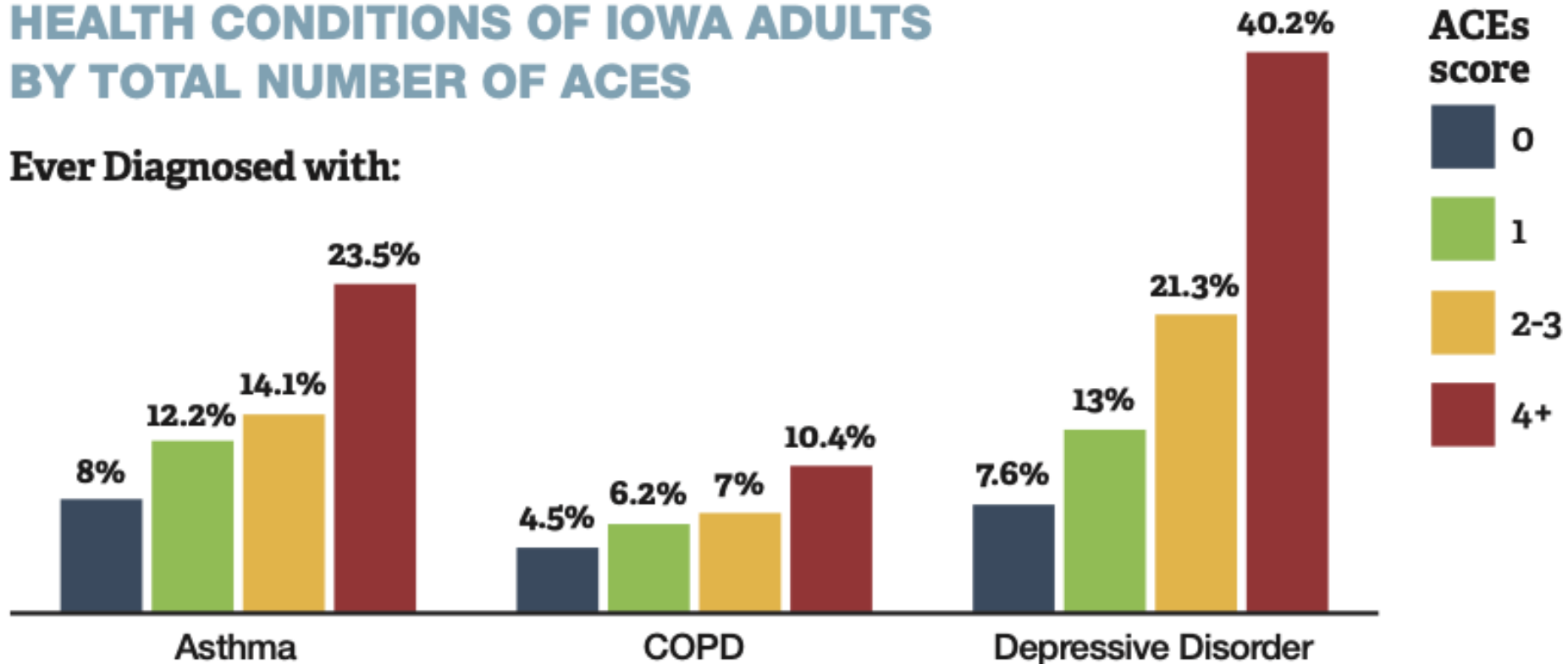
Source: Iowa BRFSS, 2021-2022



ACES AND HEALTH

HEALTH CONDITIONS OF IOWA ADULTS BY TOTAL NUMBER OF ACES

Ever Diagnosed with:

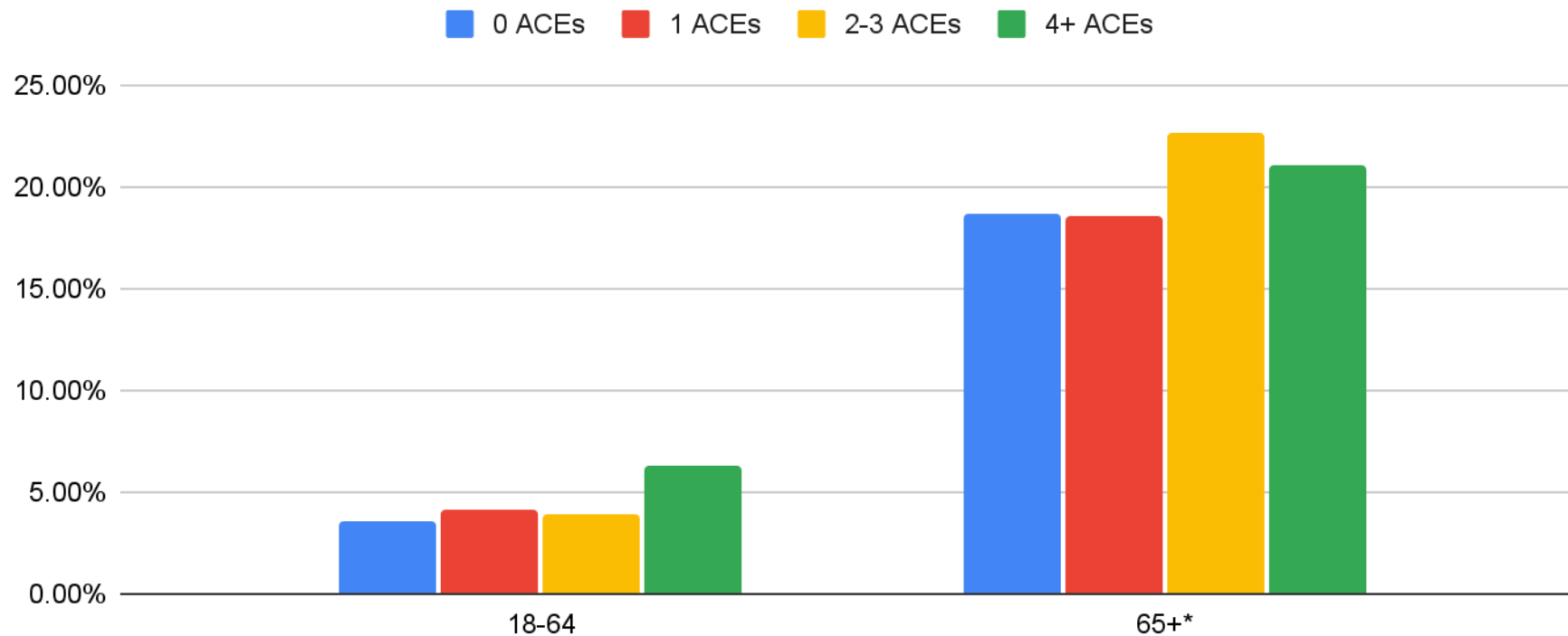


Source: Iowa BRFSS, 2021-2022



ACES AND HEALTH

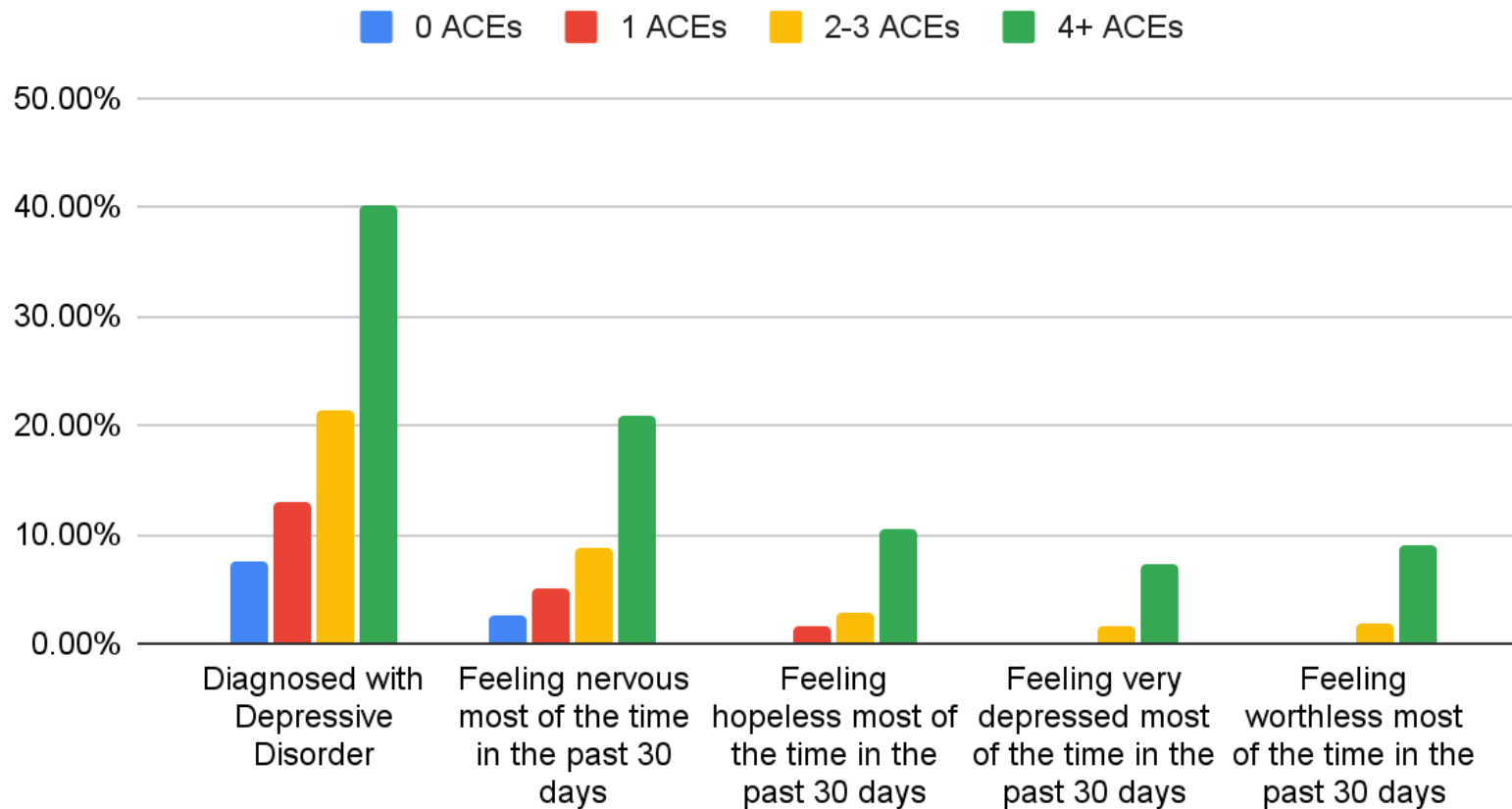
Percentage of Iowa Adults who have reported cardiovascular disease by age of onset and reported ACEs Score





ACES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Indicators by Reported ACEs Score



Source:
Iowa BRFSS
2021-2022

IOWA DATA AND NEGLECT

Adult data related to unmet needs

•9.9% of Iowa adults reported they had no one who helped them feel important or special

•9.2% of adults reported not feeling like their family was a source of strength and support

•6.6% of Iowa adults reported they did not feel loved



Iowa Youth Reporting ACEs

IOWA YOUTH REPORTING ACES

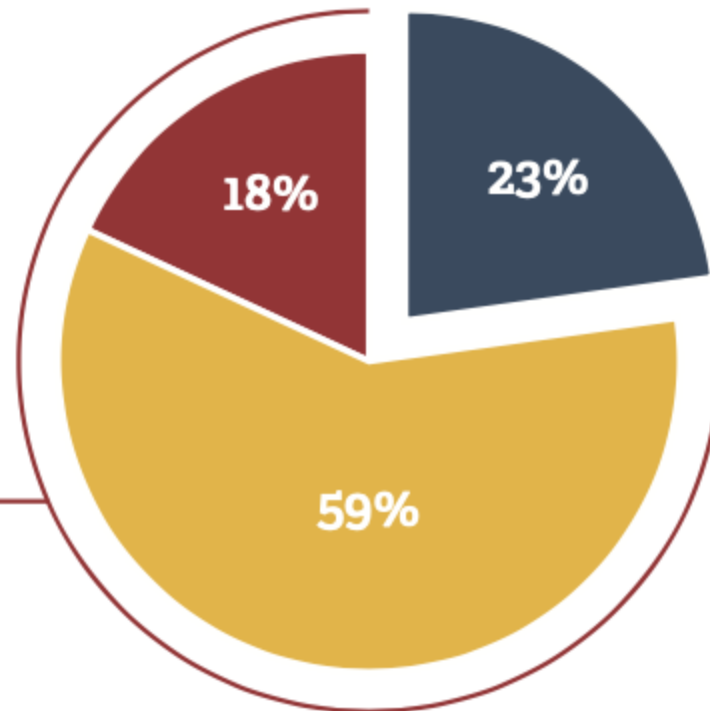
**ACEs
score**

0

1-3

4-7

77.6%
of Iowa youth reported
at least one ACE



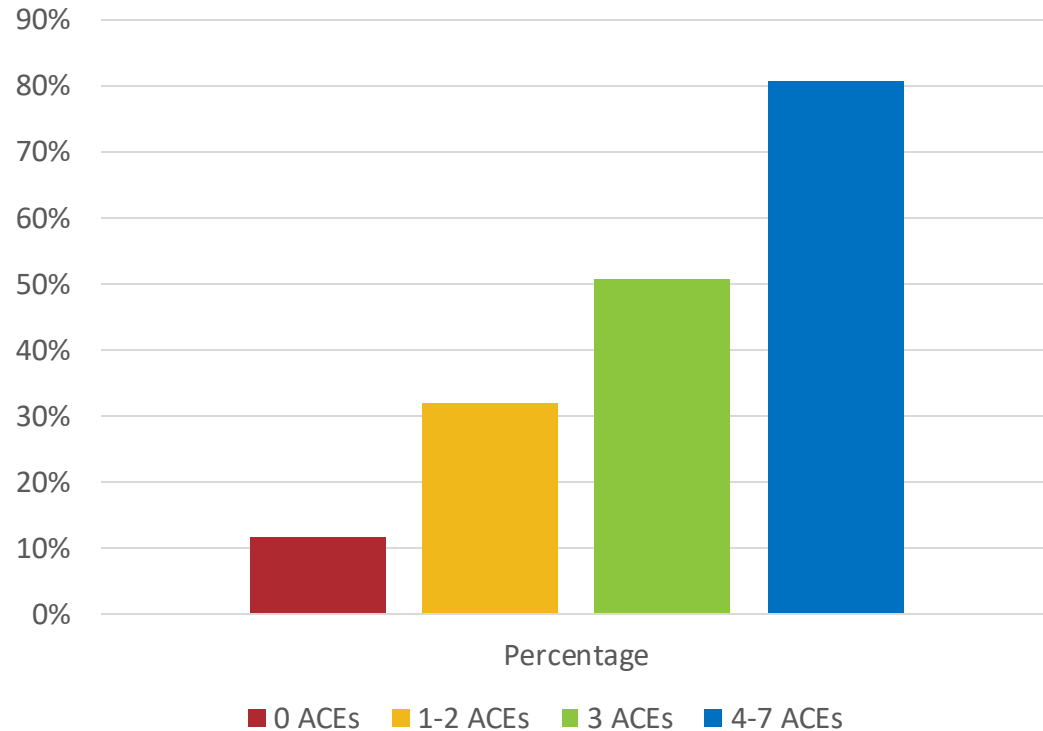
LGBTQ+ youth, multiracial youth, and those with disability, all had higher rates of experiencing 4-7 ACEs than the total average.

Source: Iowa Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2021)

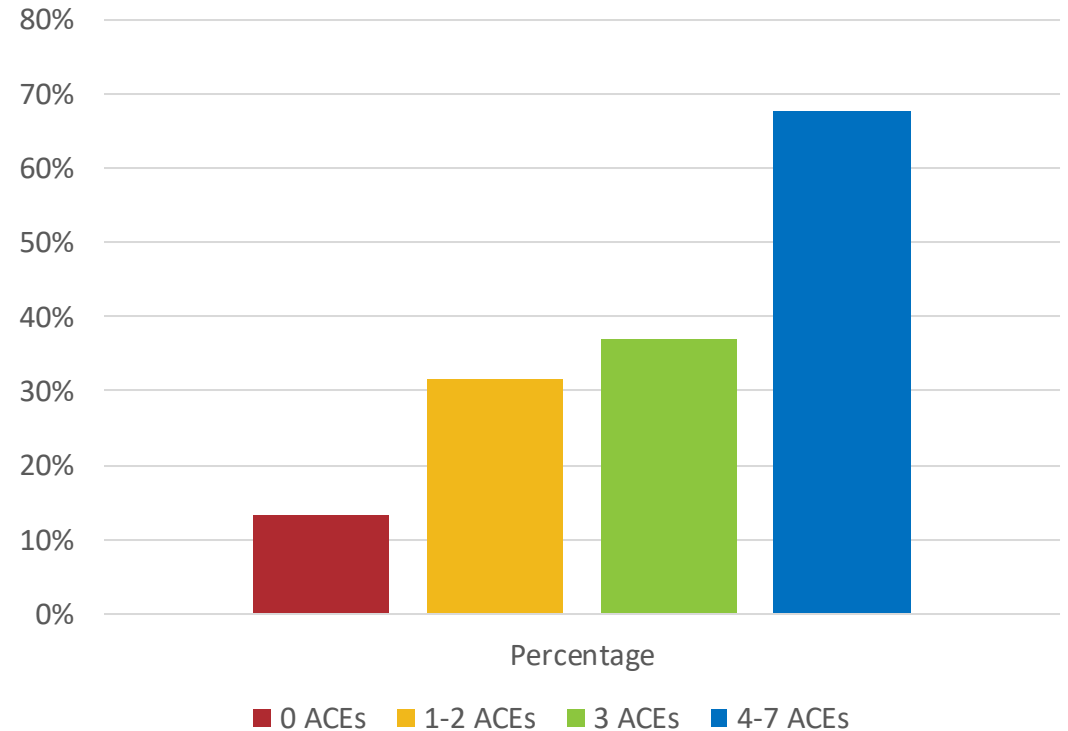
*Neglect/unmet needs calculated separately

Iowa Youth Reporting ACEs & Mental Health

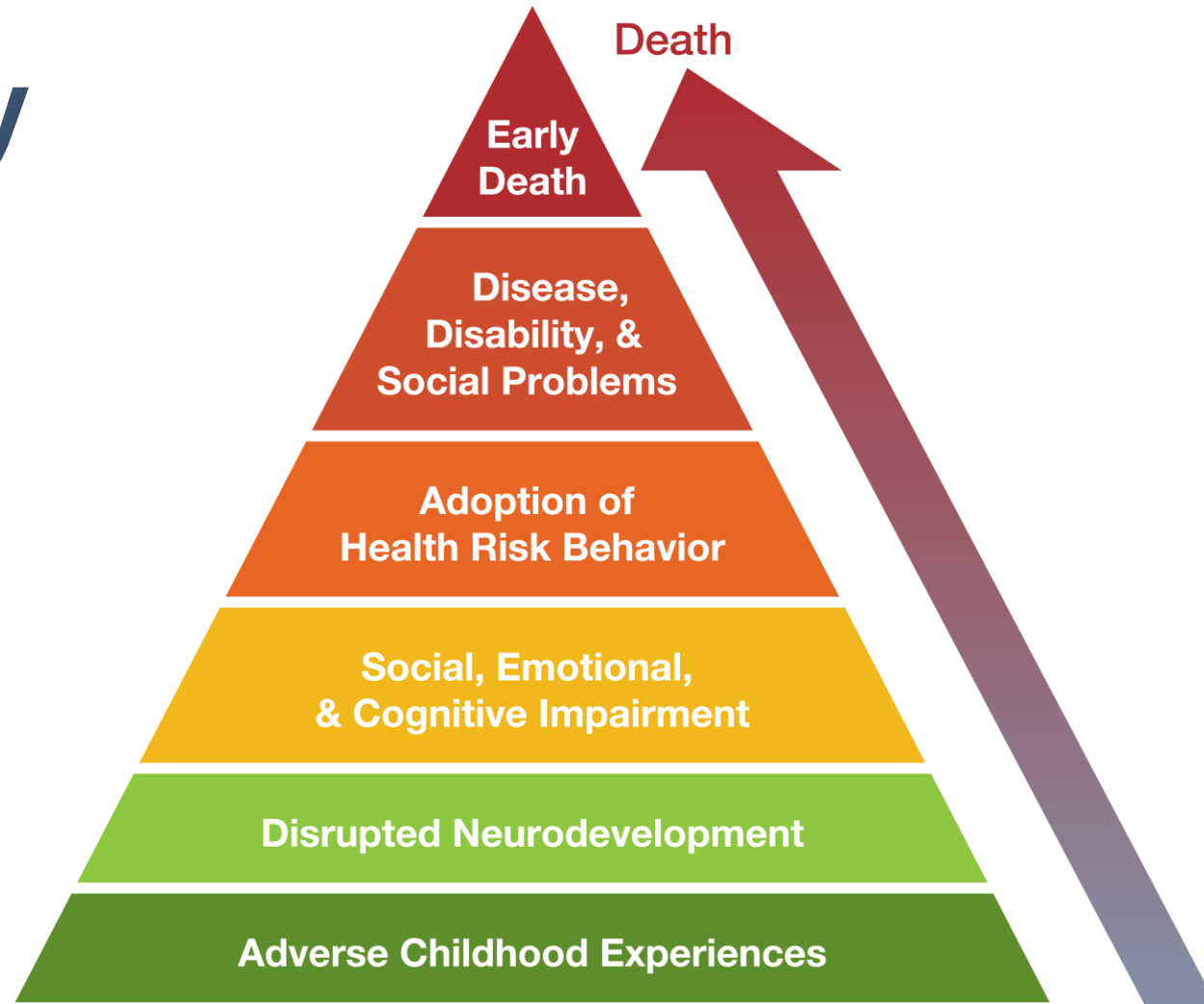
Percentage of youth reporting prolonged sadness or hopelessness by reported ACEs



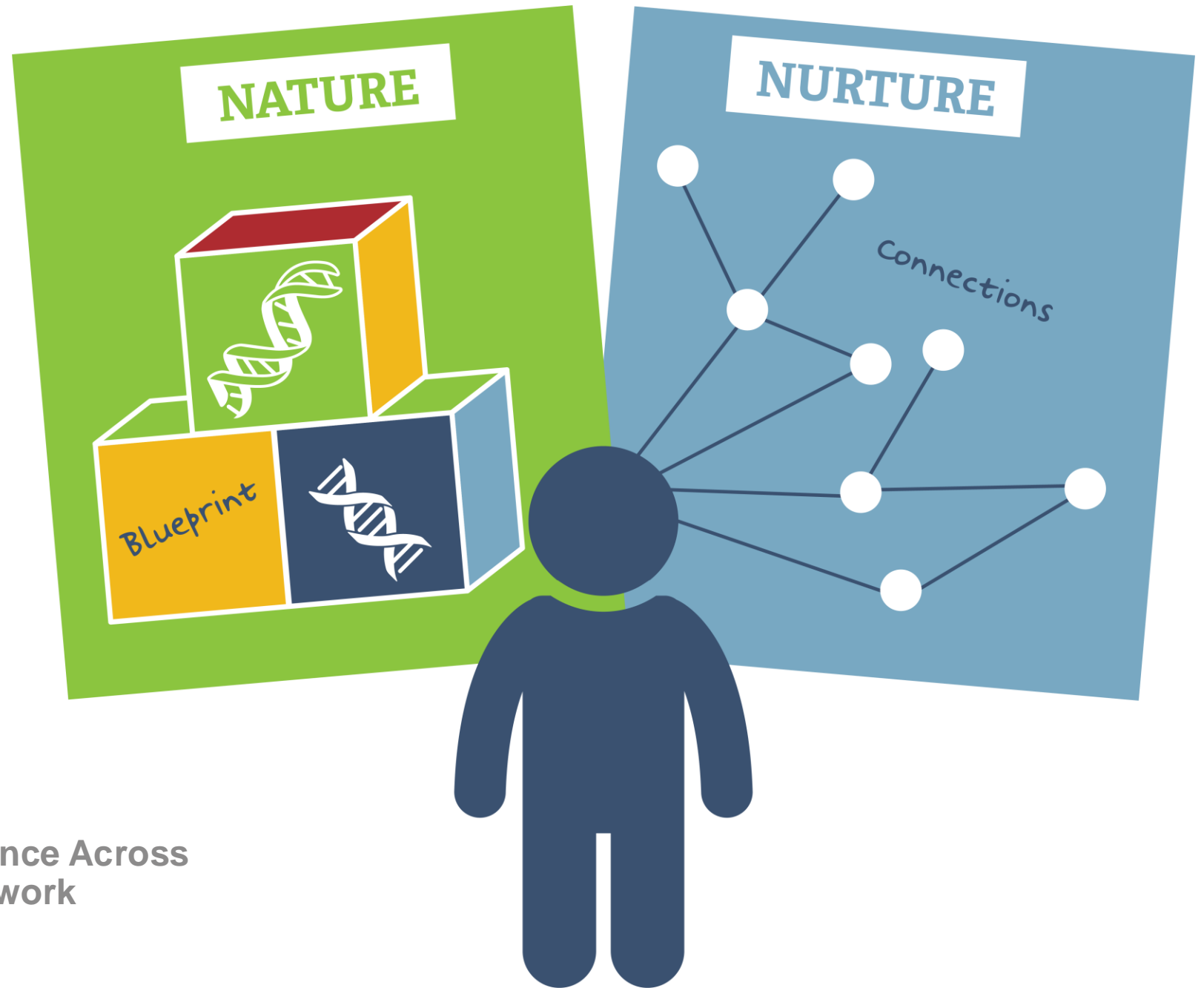
Percentage of youth reporting poor mental health by reported ACEs



Lifetime Trajectory of ACEs



A child's experiences early in life are important building blocks for the developing brain. Genes provide the basic blueprint, but environmental influences fine-tune how the brain works by shaping which connections get used.



SOURCE: Preventing Violence Across the Lifespan Research Network

BRAIN BUILDERS



ACEs impact...

Affect Regulation

Panic reactions, depression, anxiety, hallucinations

Somatic Issues

Sleep disturbances, severe obesity, pain

Substance Use

Smoking, alcoholism, illicit drug use, IV drug use

Sexuality

Early intercourse, promiscuity, sexual dissatisfaction

Memory

Amnesia (childhood)

Arousal

High stress, problems with anger, perpetrating domestic violence



Children who suffer 7 or more types of adversity
in the first three years of life have a

100% chance
of developmental delays.

SOURCE: HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CENTER ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD

Factors Contributing to Trauma

and their impact on health and well-being



Household Trauma

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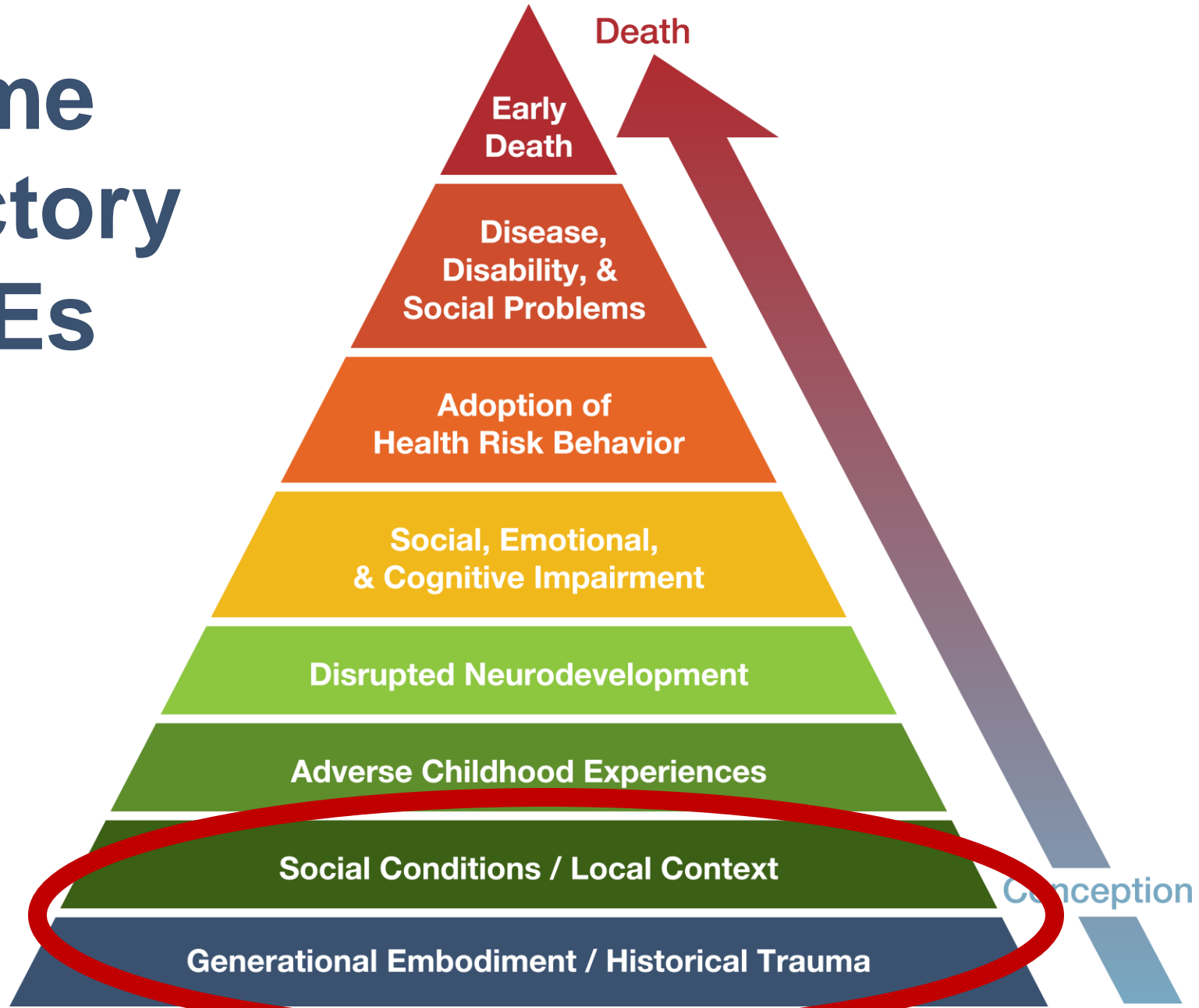
Divorce/Separation



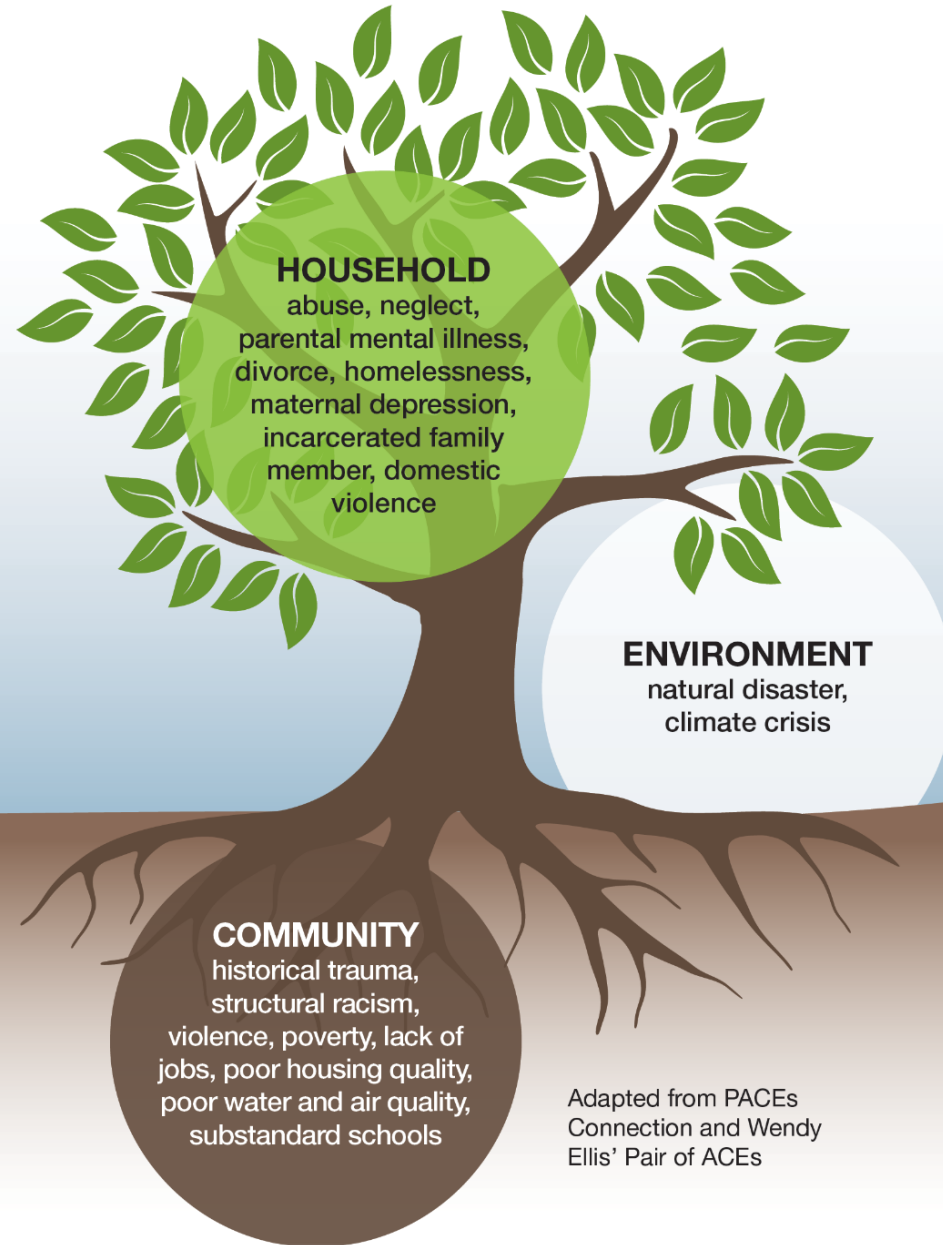
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Lifetime Trajectory of ACEs



What Contributes to ACEs?



Community and Environmental Trauma

- **11%** of Iowa students report not having basic physical needs met
- **15.8%** of adults reported they did not have enough money to buy food when needed
- **7.7%** of Iowa adults reported being unable to pay mortgage, rent, or utility bills
- **10.7%** of adults reported never enjoying participating in community traditions when in high school
- **5.9%** of adults reported not having at least two adults other than their parents who took interest in them in high school

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



Source: cdc.gov



What adversity is impacting children and families locally?

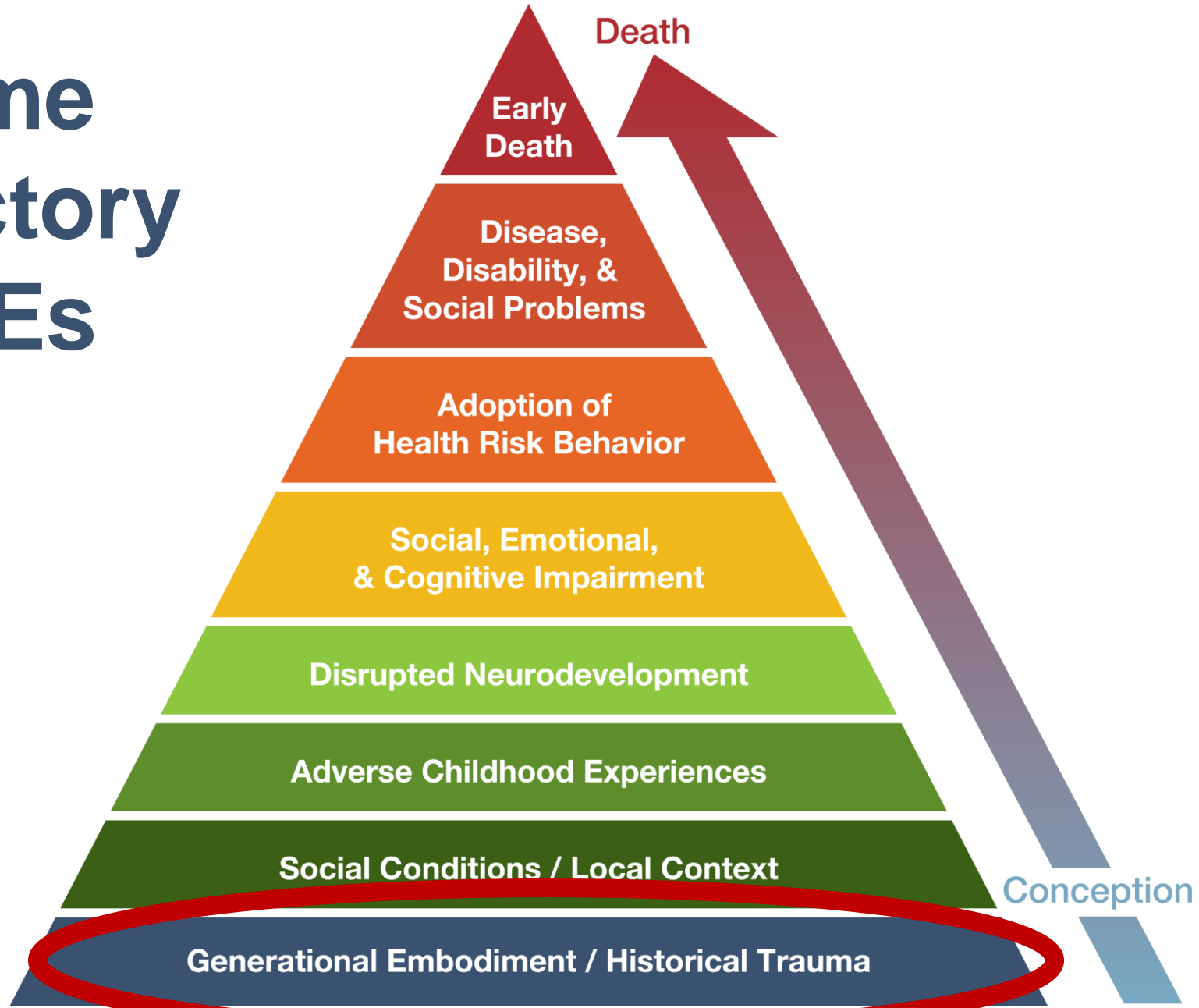
What conditions are traumatic to children and families your work with?

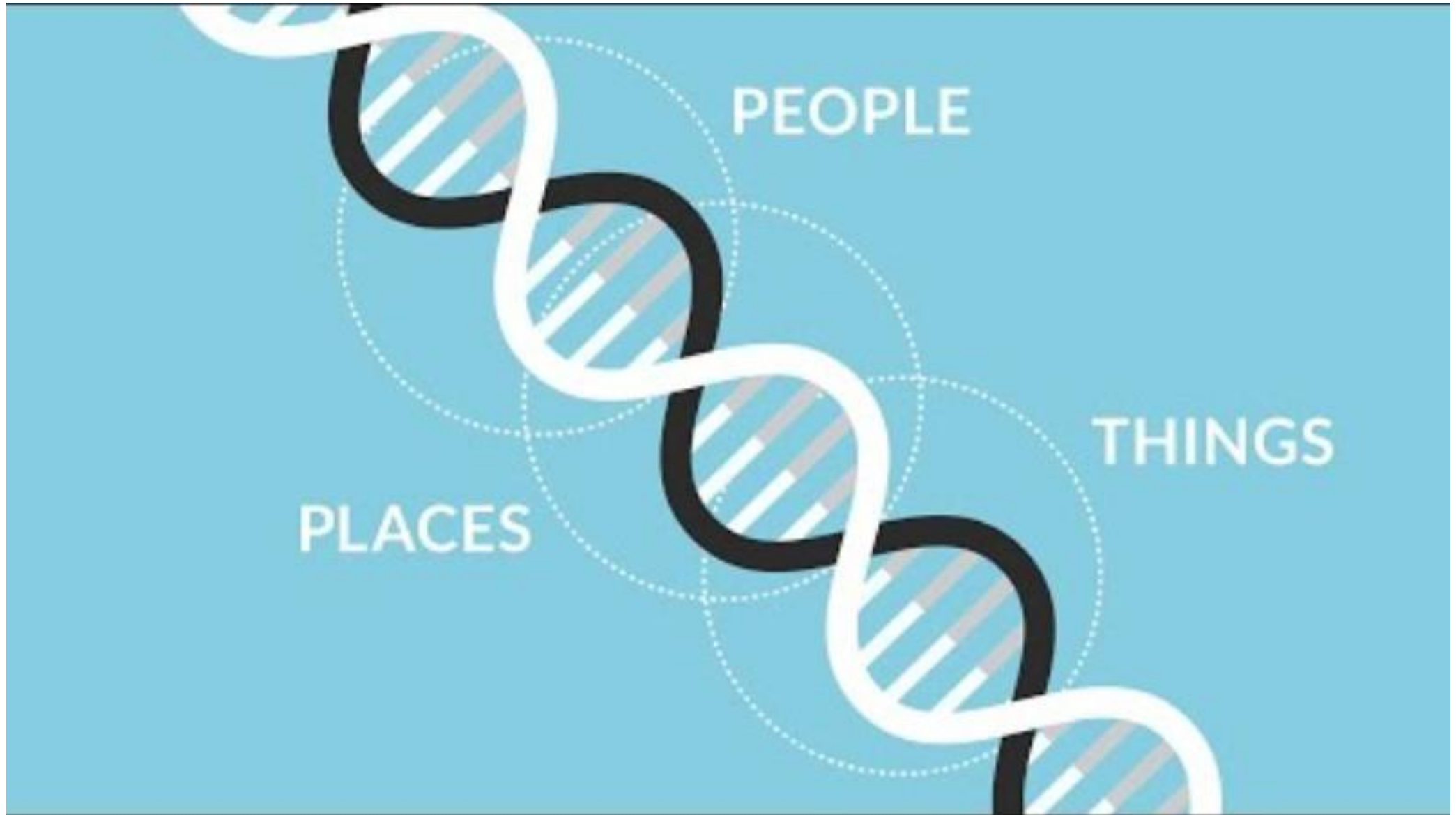
HOUSEHOLD

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY

Lifetime Trajectory of ACEs





Strengthening Our Communities



What Can We Do?

Strategies for Action



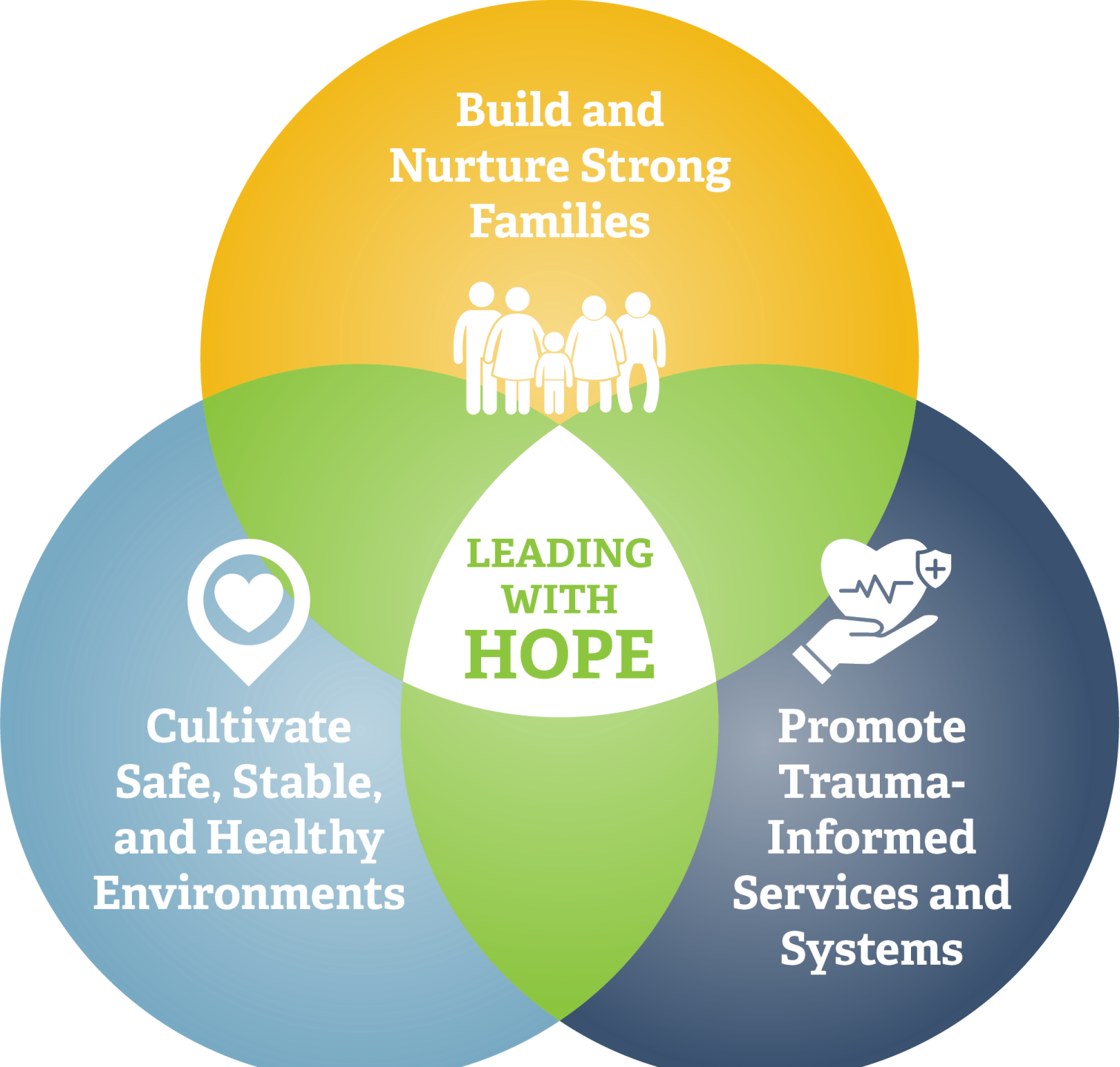


POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



What does your community or organization do well?

What can be improved?



Strategies for Action



TAKING ACTION

BUILD AND NURTURE STRONG FAMILIES

What works?

- ✓ Strengthened economic supports for families, such as food assistance and child tax credits
- ✓ Access to prenatal and maternal health and mental health supports
- ✓ Opportunities for paid leave and supportive workplace policies
- ✓ Prenatal and early childhood home visitation and care coordination services
- ✓ Quality childcare and early education with family engagement



TAKING ACTION

CULTIVATE SAFE, STABLE, AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

What works?

- ✓ Healing-focused and inclusive communities
- ✓ Community-led solution development
- ✓ Trauma-informed educational environments that promotes social-emotional well-being, collaborate with families and communities, and restorative discipline practices



TAKING ACTION

PROMOTE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES AND SYSTEMS

What works?

- ✓ Trauma-informed and culturally appropriate services and supports
- ✓ Continuum of mental health services, especially for infant, children, and adolescents
- ✓ Family-centered and intergenerational treatment for substance use disorders
- ✓ Trauma-informed organizations that prioritize workforce health and well-being

TAKE ACTION

What is one thing that stood out to you about what I presented today?

What is one way strategy that connects to your efforts at work or in the commitment?

What is ONE commitment you can make today?



Your Opportunity to Respond

- Read** more about the research and best practices at www.iowaaces360.org.
- Sign up** to receive updates on ACEs work and networking opportunities.
- Review** online learning modules and upcoming learning opportunities at www.iowaaces360.org.
- Join** a regional ACEs coalition to identify systems change opportunities.
- Advocate for changes** within your organization or community.

THANK YOU!



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