



# ACEs and Youth Mental Health

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JAMHECHO  
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# Disclosures

- Nil relevant disclosures

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

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- The original CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study
  - one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and household challenges and later-life health and well-being
  - 1995 to 1997 with two waves of data collection. Over 17,000 participants from Southern California
  - confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences (0-18yrs) and current health status and behaviours
- Ongoing ACE surveys across the USA – Behaviour Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) by CDC

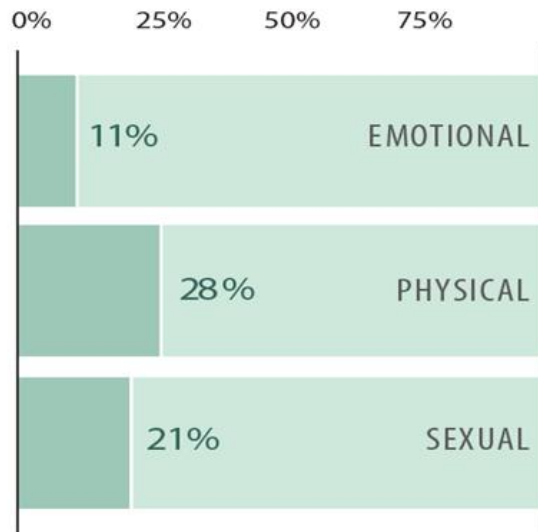
[CDC – Centre for Disease control and prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html)

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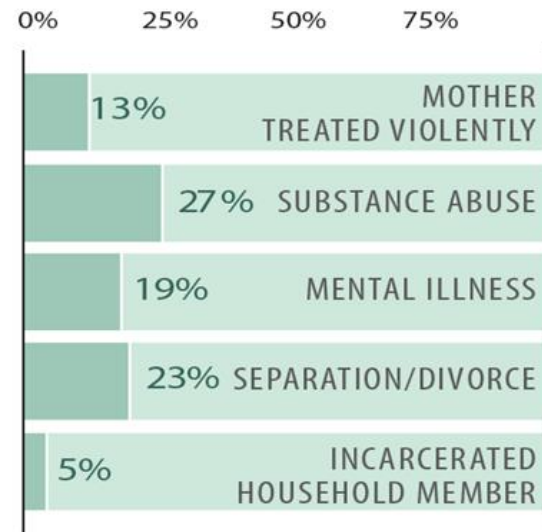
## TYPES *of* ACES

The ACE study looked at three categories of adverse experience: **childhood abuse**, which included emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; **neglect**, including both physical and emotional neglect; and **household challenges** which included growing up in a household where there was substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment of a mother or stepmother, parental separation/divorce or had a member of the household go to prison. Respondents were given an **ACE score** between 0 and 10 based on how many of these 10 types of adverse experience to which they reported being exposed.

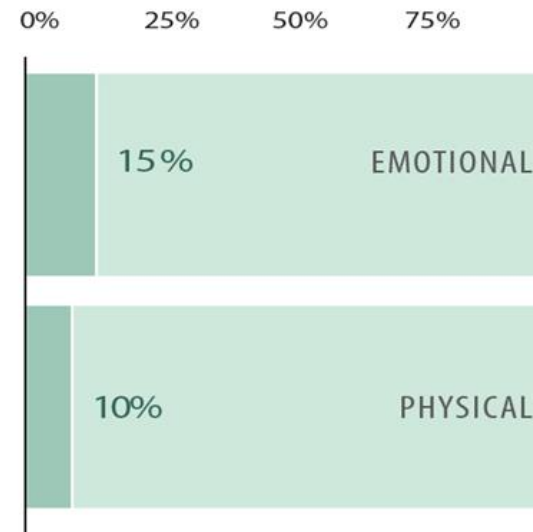
### ABUSE



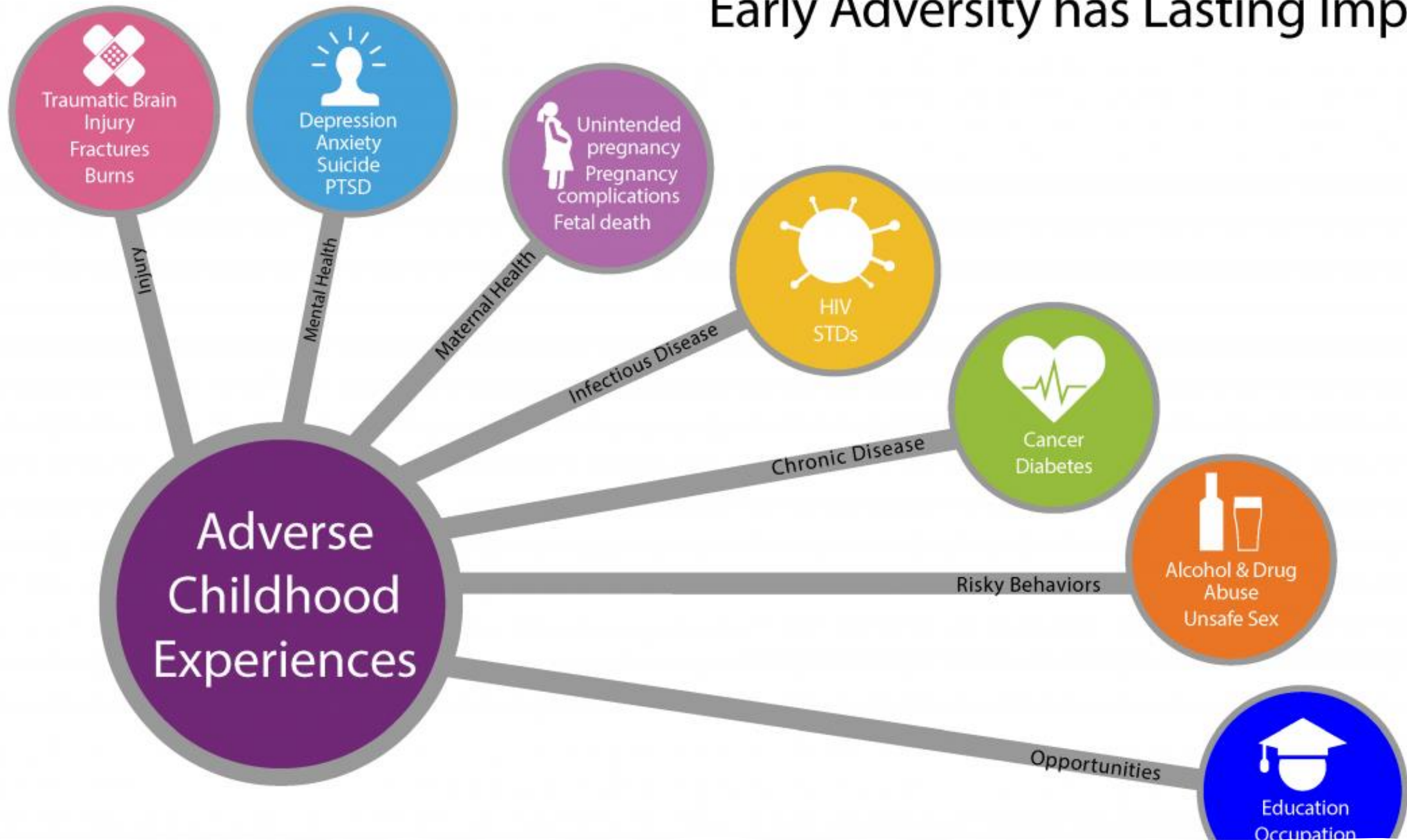
### HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES



### NEGLECT

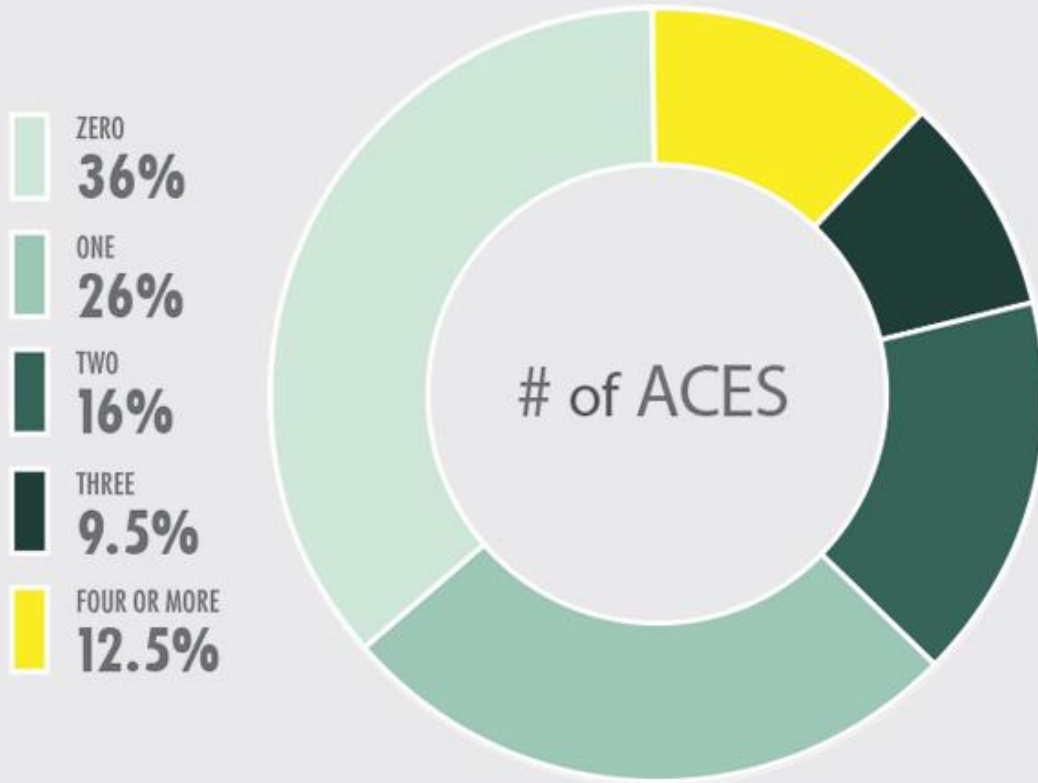


# Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



## How Common are ACEs?

ACE Study



## The World Mental Health Surveys across 21 countries

- little variation in ACE prevalence between country income groups,
- 38–39% of participants reporting at least one ACE
- at least four ACEs in 2–3%.

Kessler RC, McLaughlin KA, Green JG et al. *Childhood adversities and adult psychopathology in the WHO World Mental Health Surveys. Br J Psychiatry.* 2010; **97**: 378-385

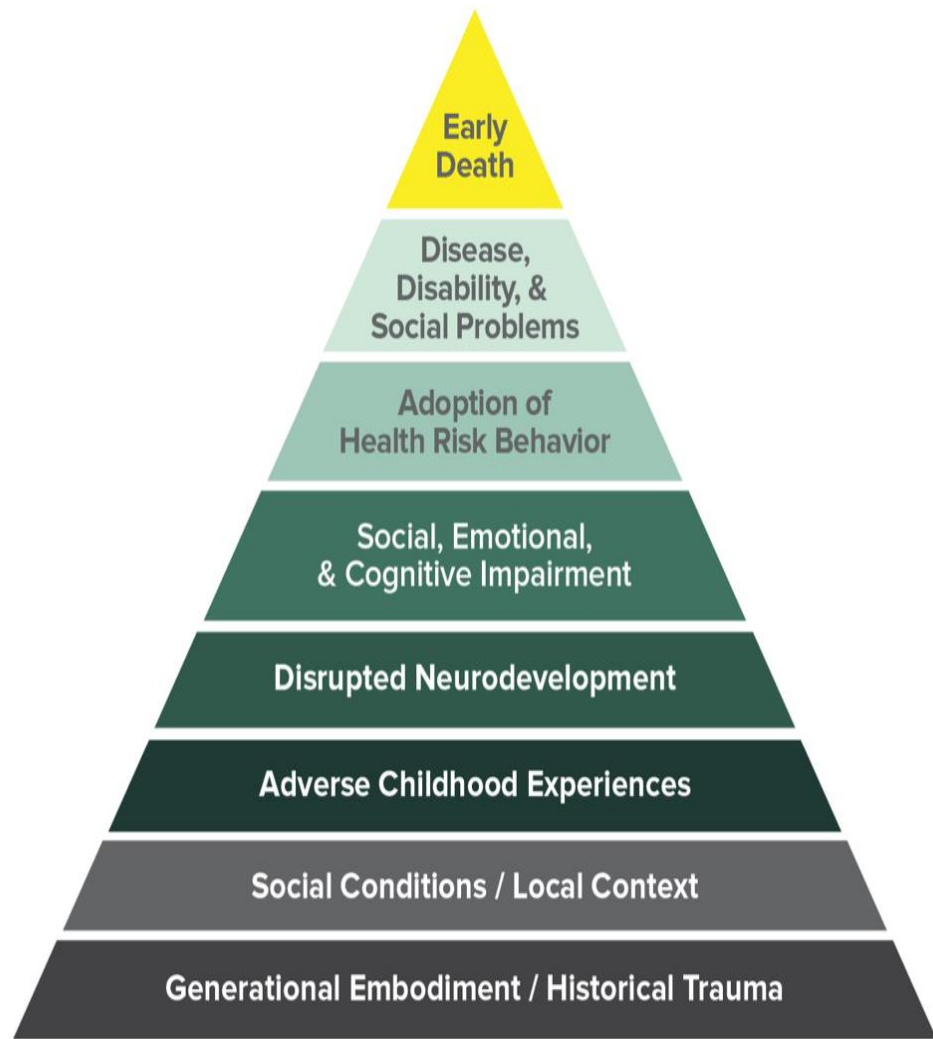
# Systematic review and Meta-analysis of 37 international studies on ACEs

- outcomes in youth and adults comparing 4 or more ACEs vs. no ACEs

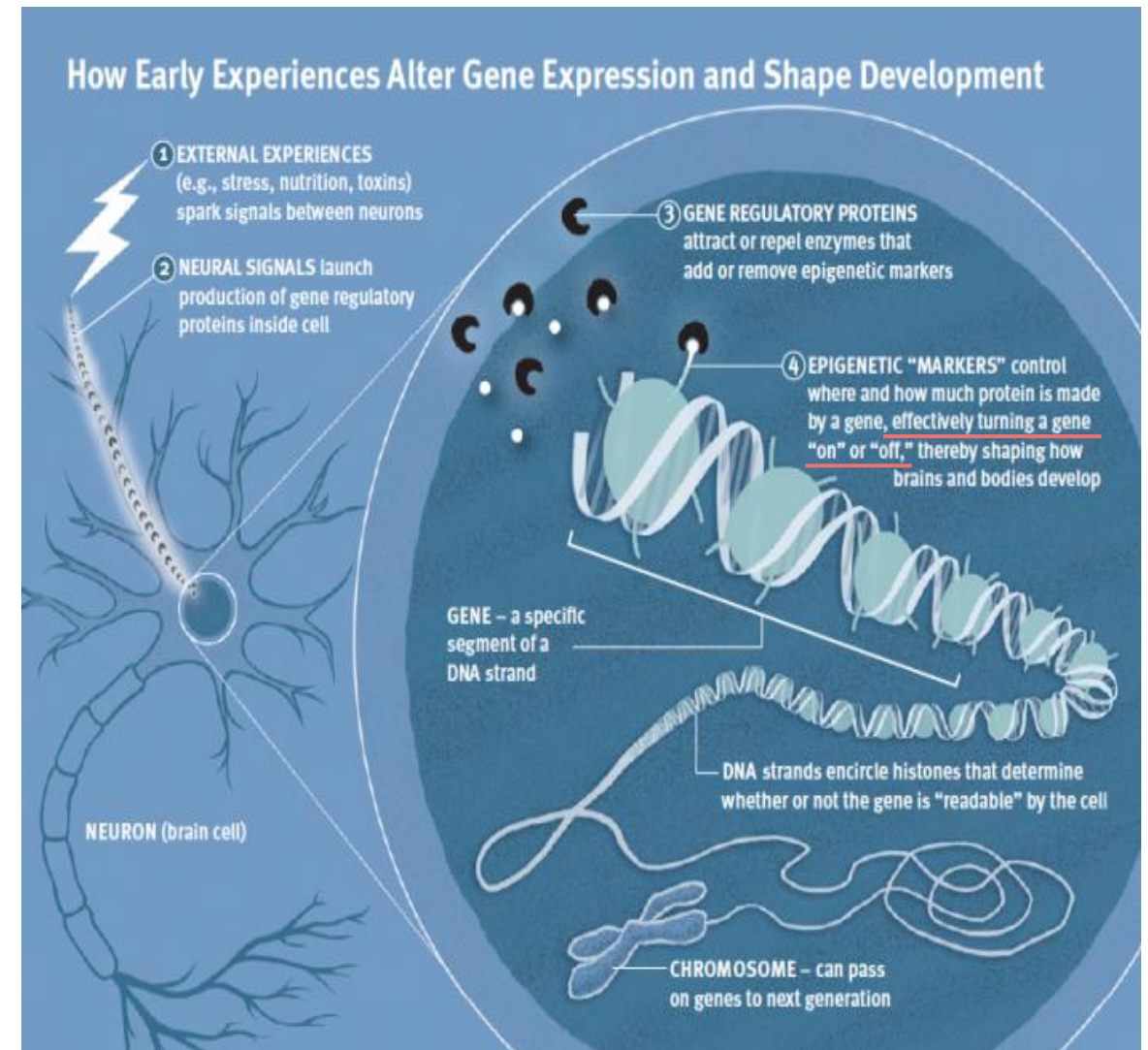
*Karen Hughes, Mark A Bellis, Katherine A Hardcastle, Dinesh Sethi, Alexander Butchart, Christopher Mikton, Lisa Jones, Michael P Dunne. The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The Lancet Public Health. Volume 2 Issue 8 Pages e356-e366 (August 2017)*

Health outcome or Risk Behaviour	Association (Odd's Ratio - OR)
<b>Physical inactivity, overweight or obesity, and diabetes</b>	Weak or modest (OR less than 2)
<b>Smoking, heavy alcohol use, poor self-rated health, cancer, heart disease, and respiratory disease</b>	Moderate (OR 2-3)

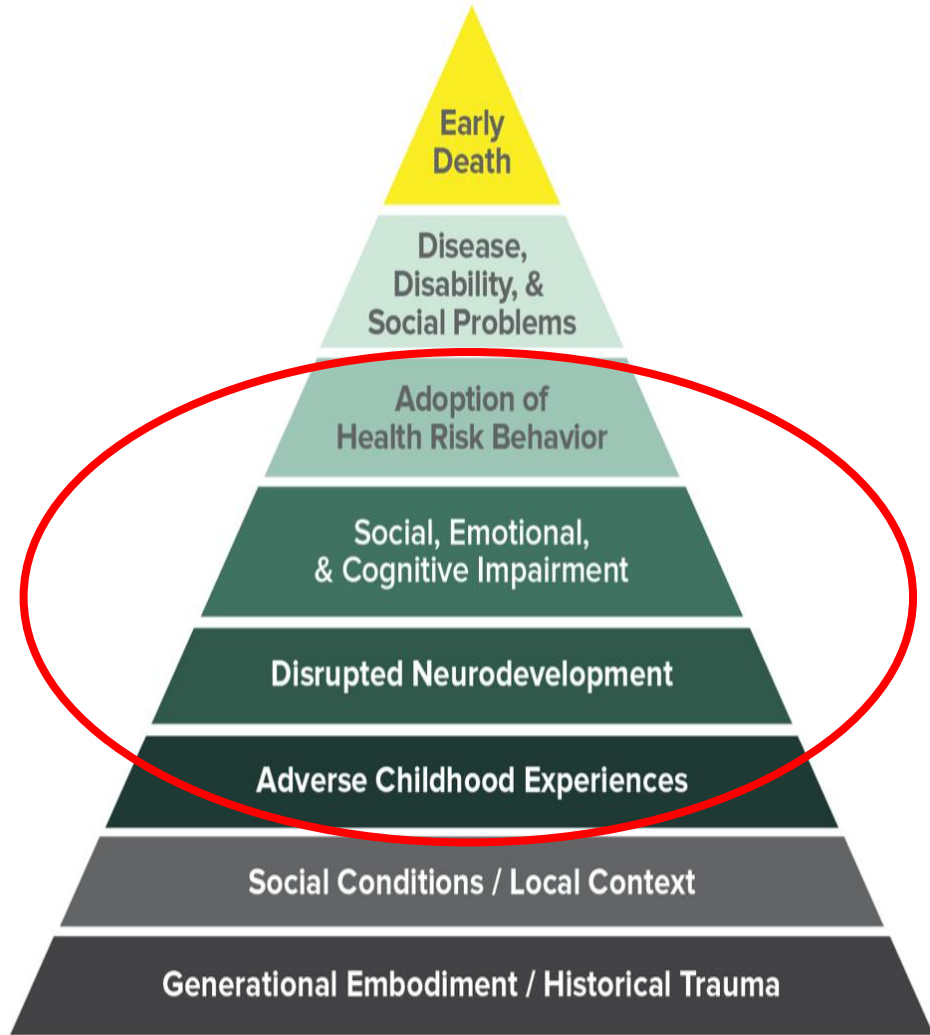




Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan







Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

## YOUNG MIND PREPARING TO BE AN ADULT (developmental challenges)

- Emotional regulation
- Impulse control – risky behaviours
- Socially acceptable
- Abstract thinking
- Sense of self
- Secure relationship needed from parents BUT also individuating

# ACEs affecting youth mental health

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- Jan 2020 data from a longitudinal study (Negriff S. **2020**) of ACEs on adolescent development (n = 352; Mean age = 18) - **symptoms of depression, anxiety, trauma, externalizing behaviour**

Witnessing Intimate Partner Violence

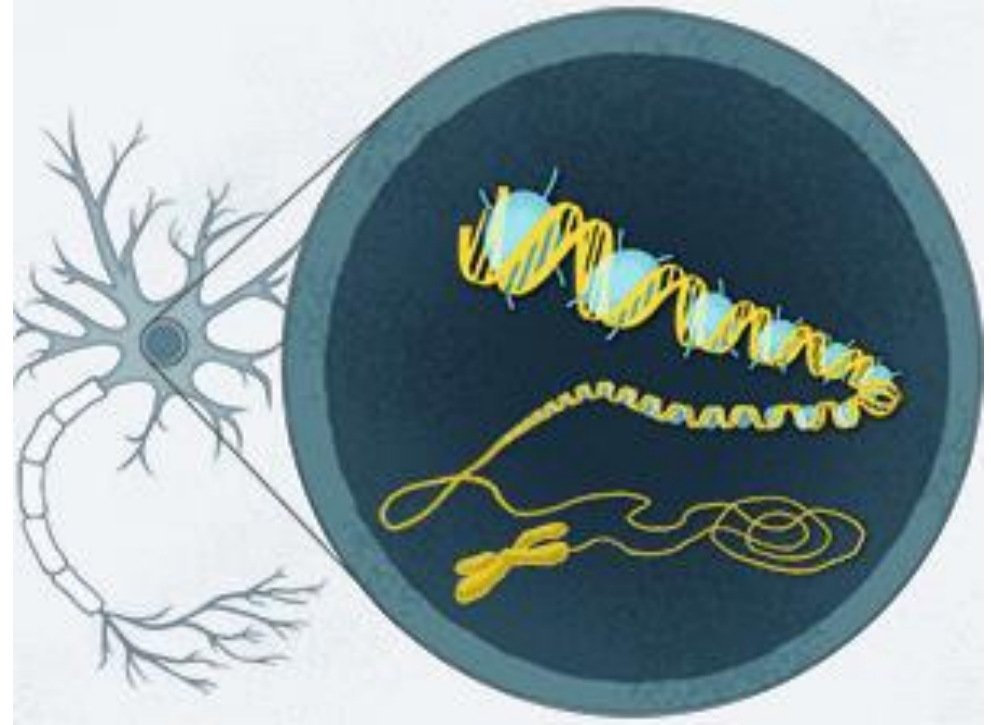
Neglect

Sexual abuse and physical abuse were

Emotional abuse and emotional neglect

- Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) in UK, a prospective cohort of children born in southwest England in 1991-1992 (Houtepen LC, et al. **2020**)
  - 4,917 participants (50.1% female),
  - those who had **4 or more ACEs** as compared to those with no ACEs were
    - more likely to struggle with **depression, drug use and smoking at age 17yrs** (Odd's Ratios 2-3) and
    - had **lower educational attainment at age 16yrs** (Odd's Ratio – 2).
- Students in Metropolitan region in Brazil involved in bullying (Reisen A et al. **2019**) —
  - both, **victims** (OR 9.8) and **aggressors** (OR 5.8) – were more likely to have been exposed to adversity during childhood

ACEs  
have  
occurred in  
the past –  
is there  
hope now?



# Also... ACEs can be prevented

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/prevention.html>

## **Strengthen economic supports to families**

- Strengthening household financial security
- Family-friendly work policies



## **Change social norms to support parents and positive parenting**

- Public engagement and enhancement campaigns
- Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment



## **Provide quality care and education early in life**

- Preschool enrichment with family engagement
- Improved quality of child care through licensing and accreditation



## **Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development**

- Early childhood home visitation
- Parenting skill and family relationship approaches



## **Intervene to lessen harms and prevent future risk**

- Enhanced primary care
- Behavioral parent training programs
- Treatment to lessen harms of abuse and neglect exposure
- Treatment to prevent problem behavior and later involvement in violence

# Reference S

- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/resources.html>
- Centre on Developing Child, Harvard University  
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/deep-dives/mental-health/>
- Houtepen LC, Heron J, Suderman MJ, Fraser A, Chittleborough CR, Howe LD. Associations of adverse childhood experiences with educational attainment and adolescent health and the role of family and socioeconomic factors: A prospective cohort study in the UK. *PLoS Med*. 2020;17(3):e1003031
- Andressa Reisen, Maria Carment Viana, Edson Thodoro Dos Santos Neto. [Adverse childhood experiences and bullying in late adolescence in a metropolitan region of Brazil](#). *Child Abuse Negl*. 2019 Jun;92:146-156.
- [Sonya Negriff](#). ACEs are not equal: Examining the relative impact of household dysfunction versus childhood maltreatment on mental health in adolescence. [Social Science & Medicine](#). [Volume 245](#), January 2020. (Kaiser Permanente Southern California, 100 S. Los Robles Ave, Pasadena, CA 91101, United States)
- Clinical experience