

Trauma/ACEs 101

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**IL Chapter, American Academy of
Pediatrics**

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Illinois Chapter

- **Providing pediatrician and interprofessional education, resources, and technical assistance**
- **Working on policy, advocacy, and systems improvement issues**
- **Connecting providers and families to community resources for education, treatment, and other services**

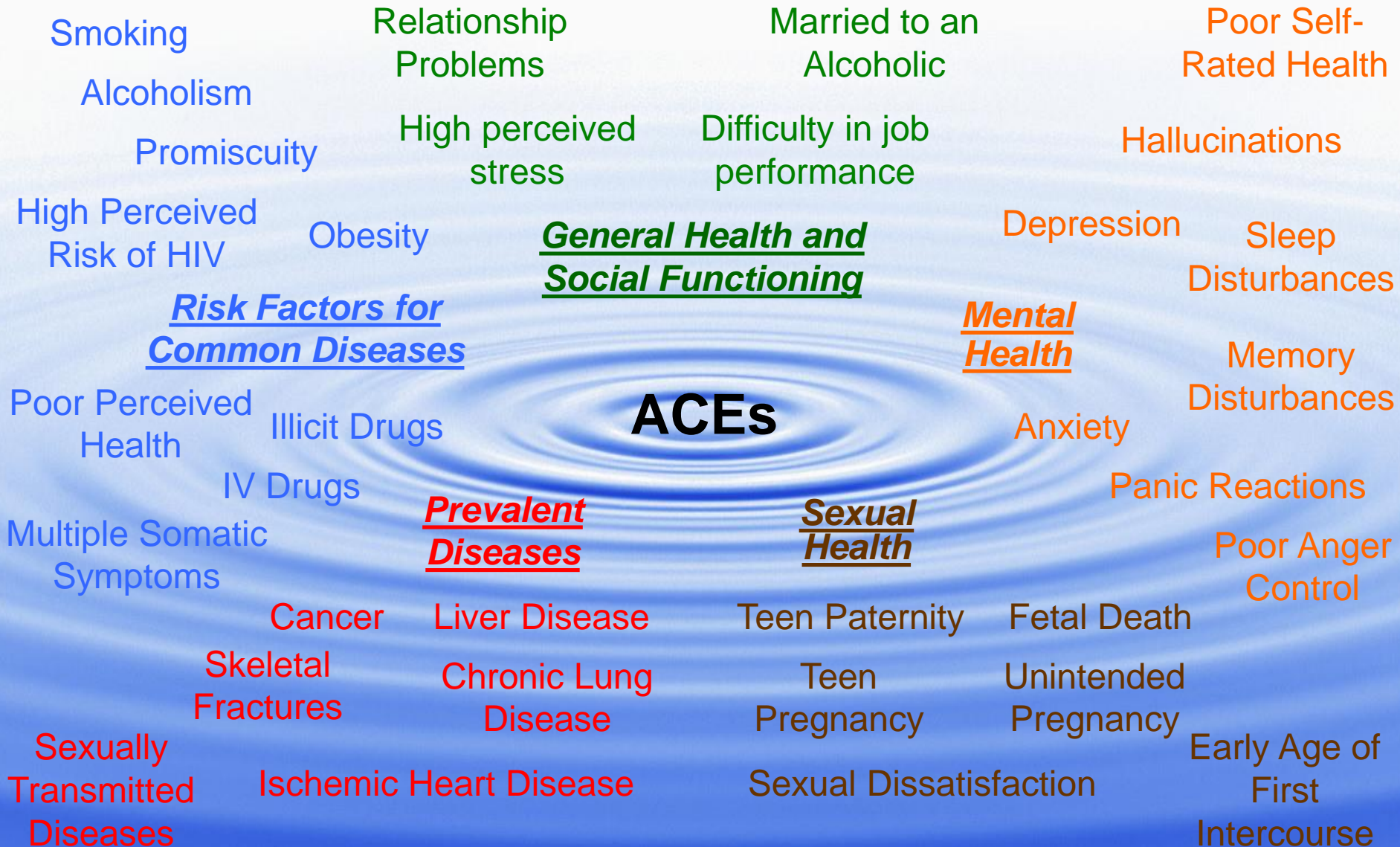
THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs) ON DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

ACE Study

The largest study of its kind that looks at the health and social effects of adverse childhood experiences over a lifespan



ACEs Impact Multiple Outcomes



ACEs Include

Abuse

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual

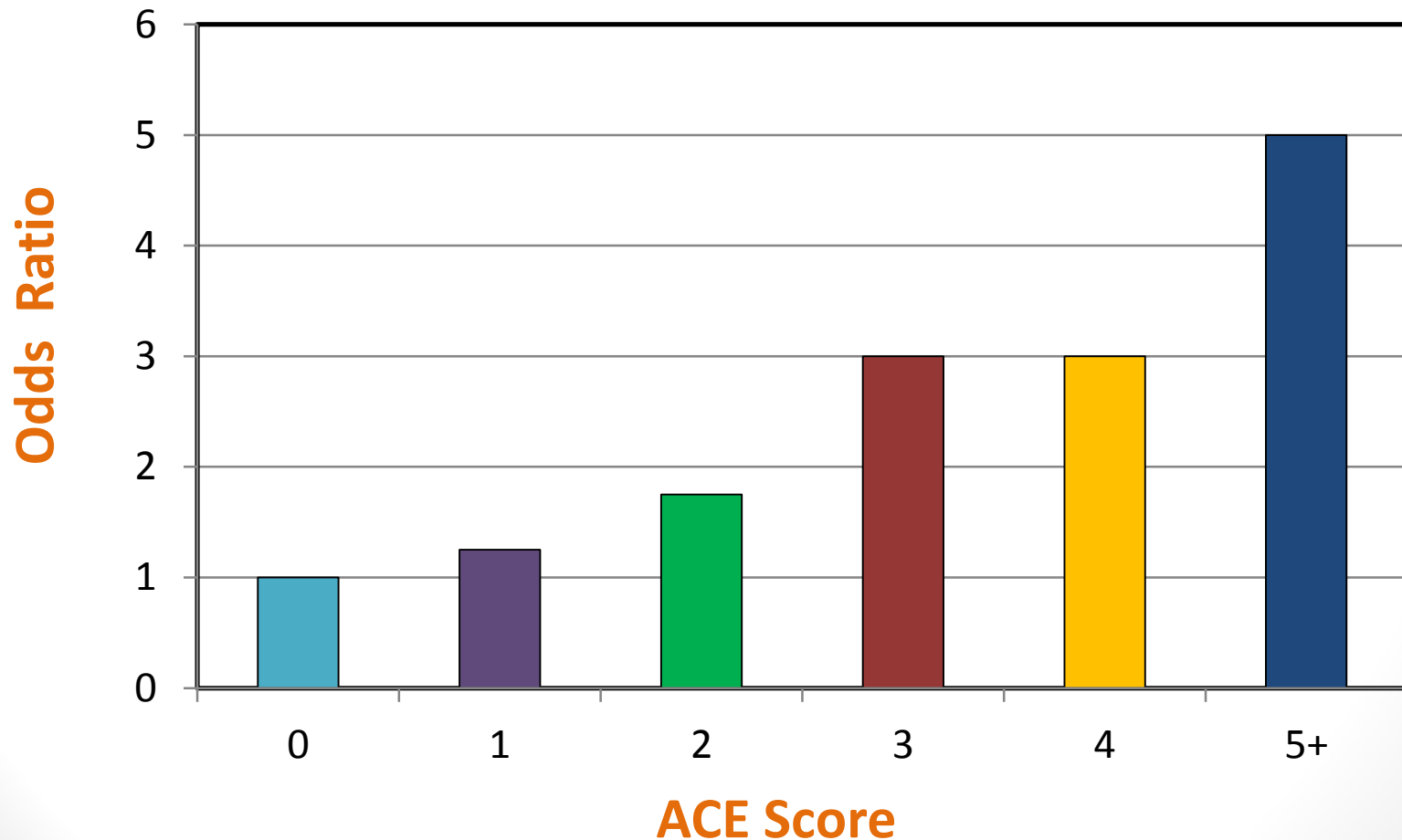
Neglect

- Emotional
- Physical

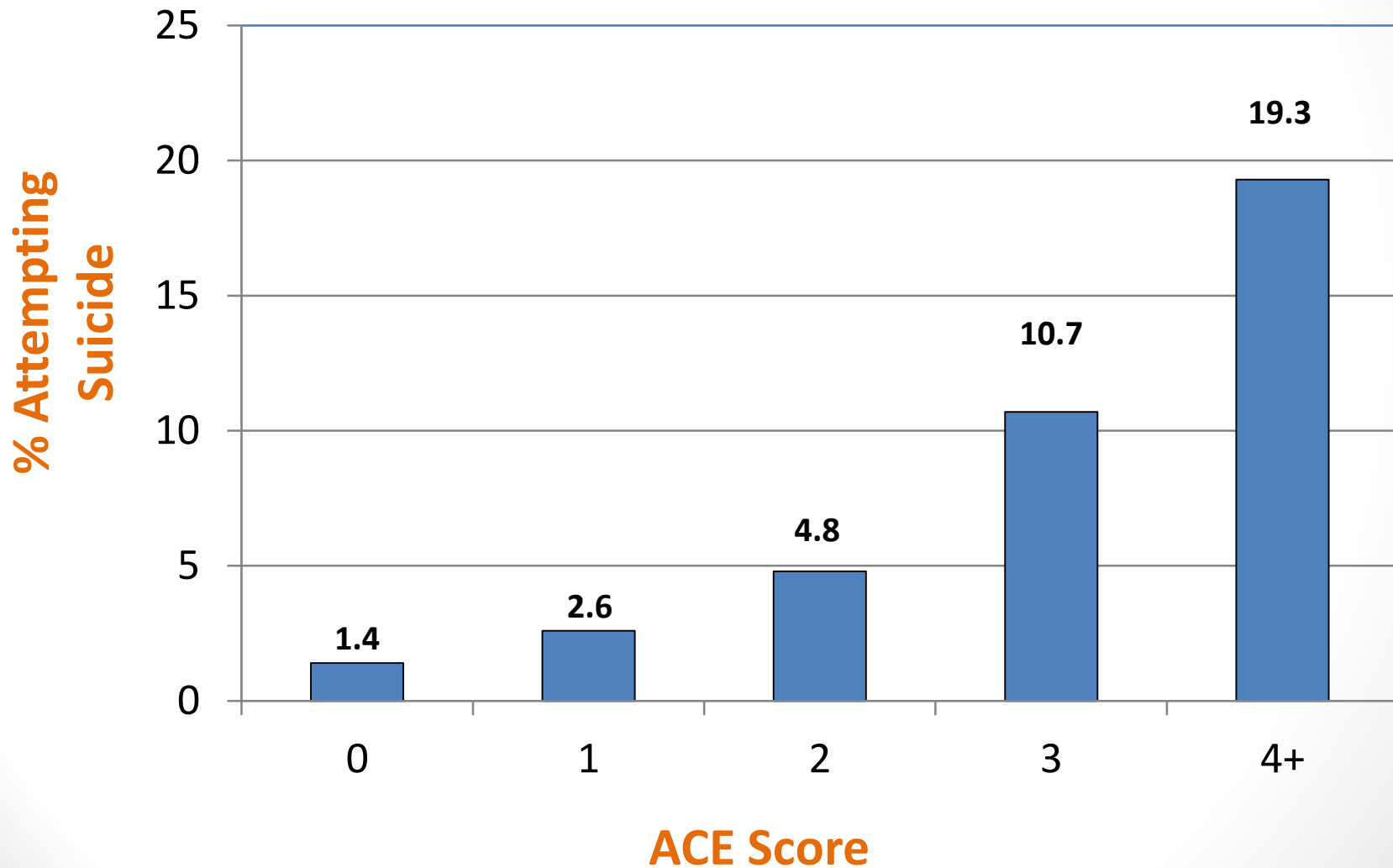
Home environment

- Mother treated violently
- Household substance abuse
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member

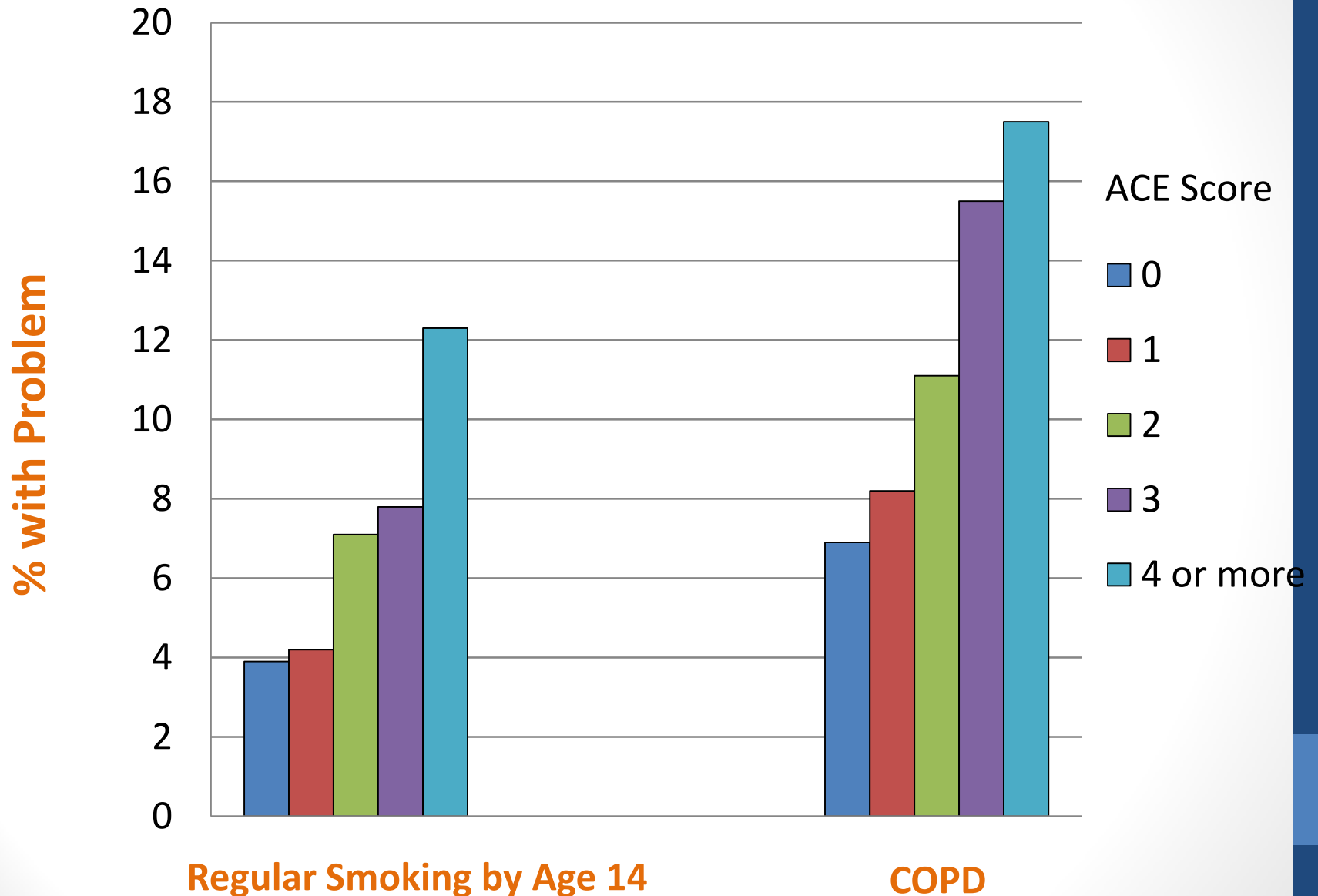
Risk Factors for Adult Depression are Embedded in ACE



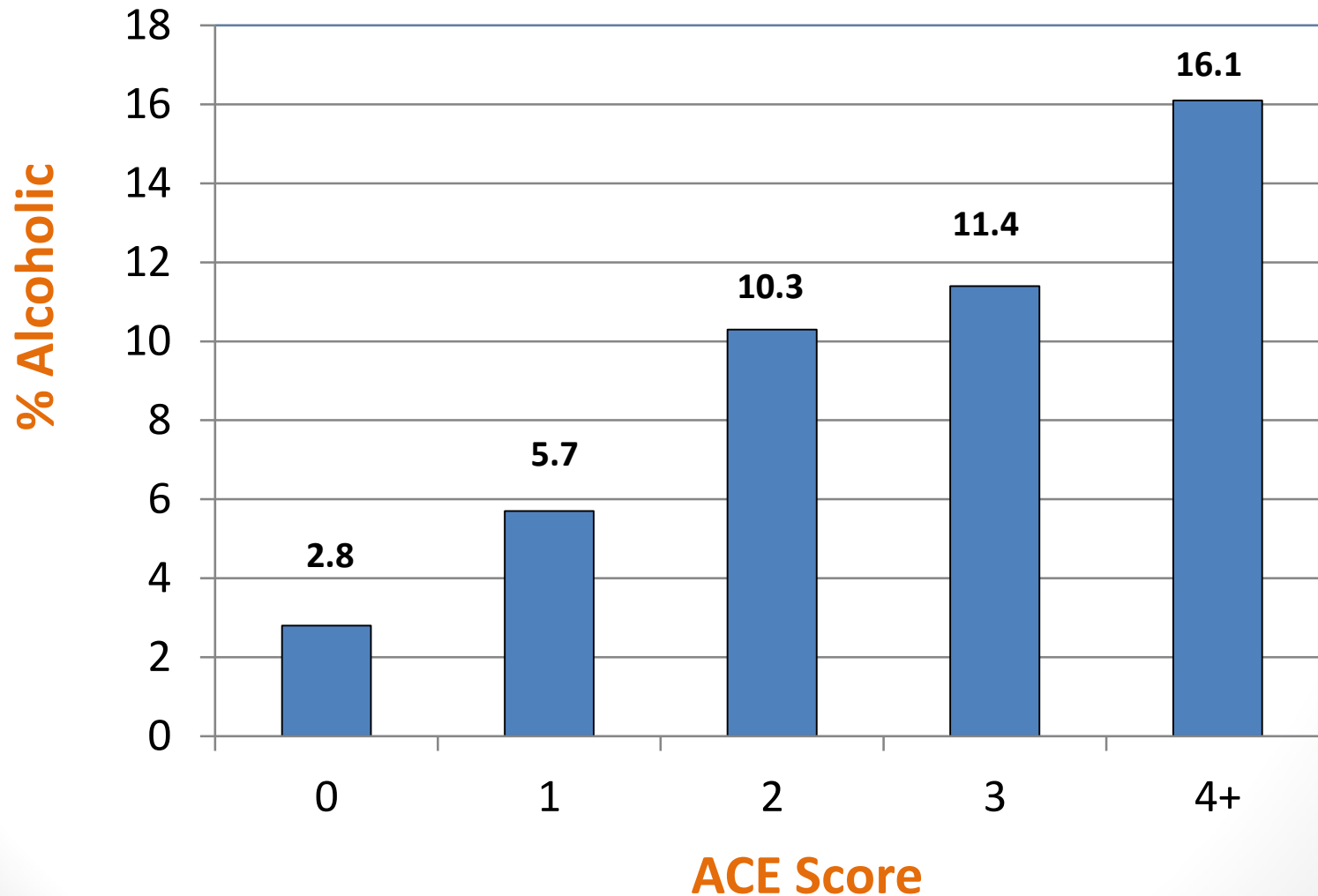
ACE vs. Suicide Attempts



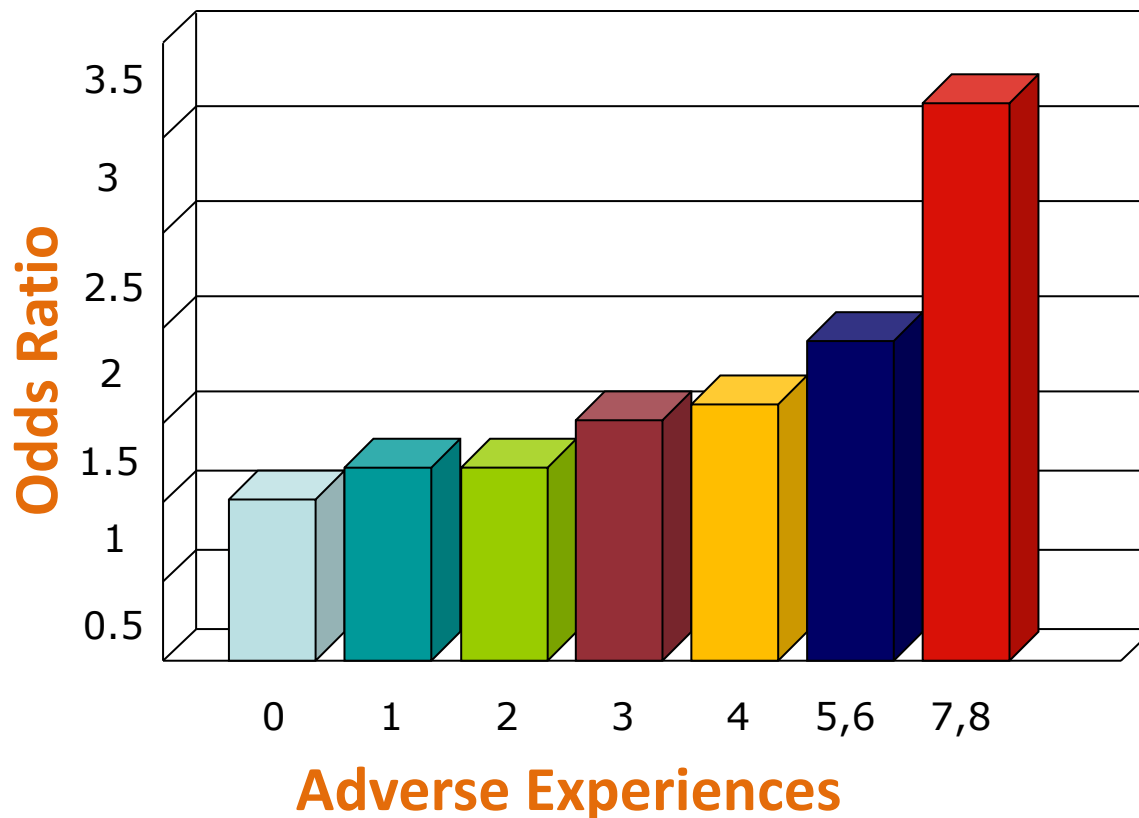
ACE vs. Smoking and COPD



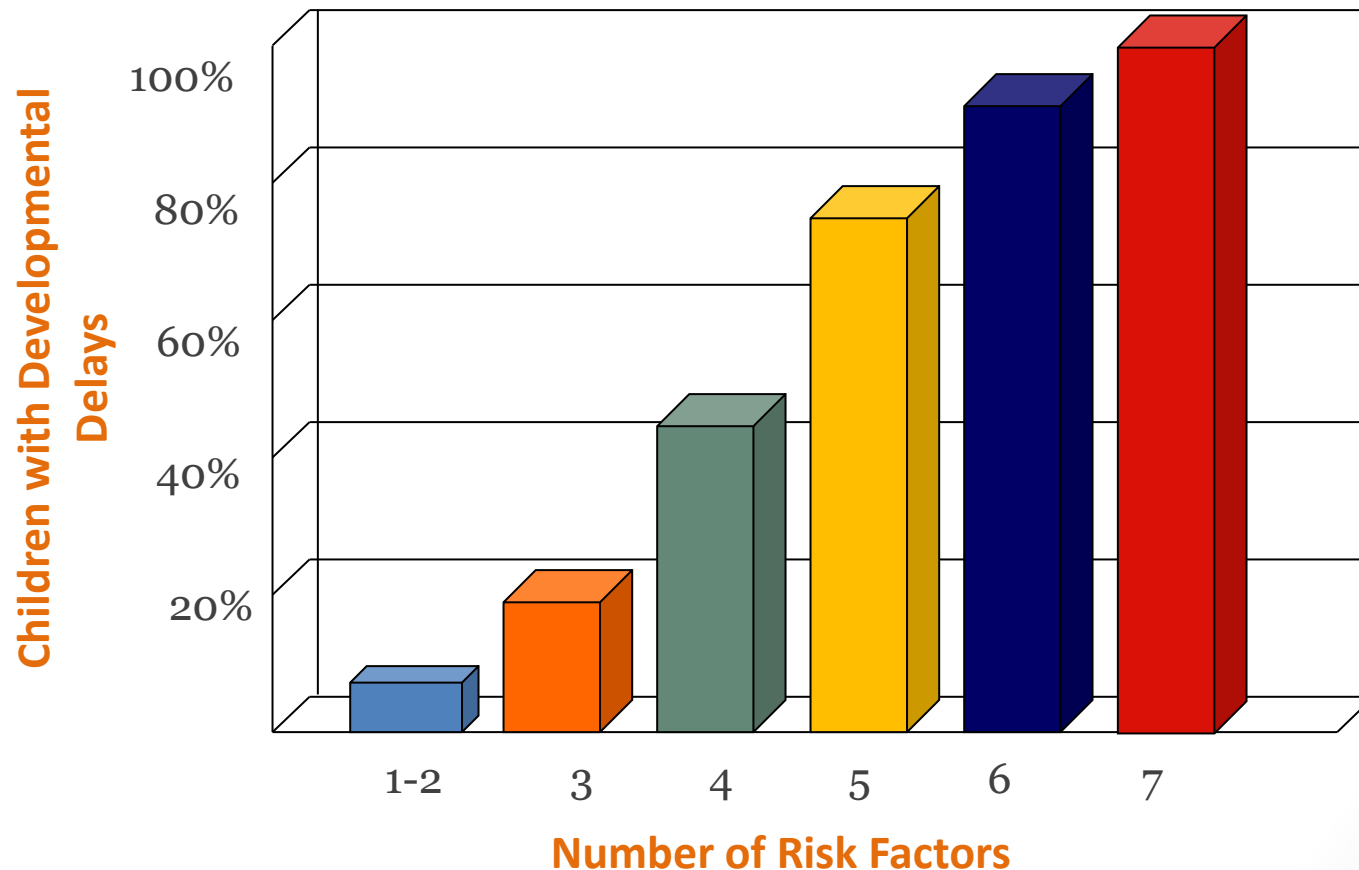
ACE vs. Adult Alcoholism



Risk Factors of Adult Heart Disease are Embedded in ACE



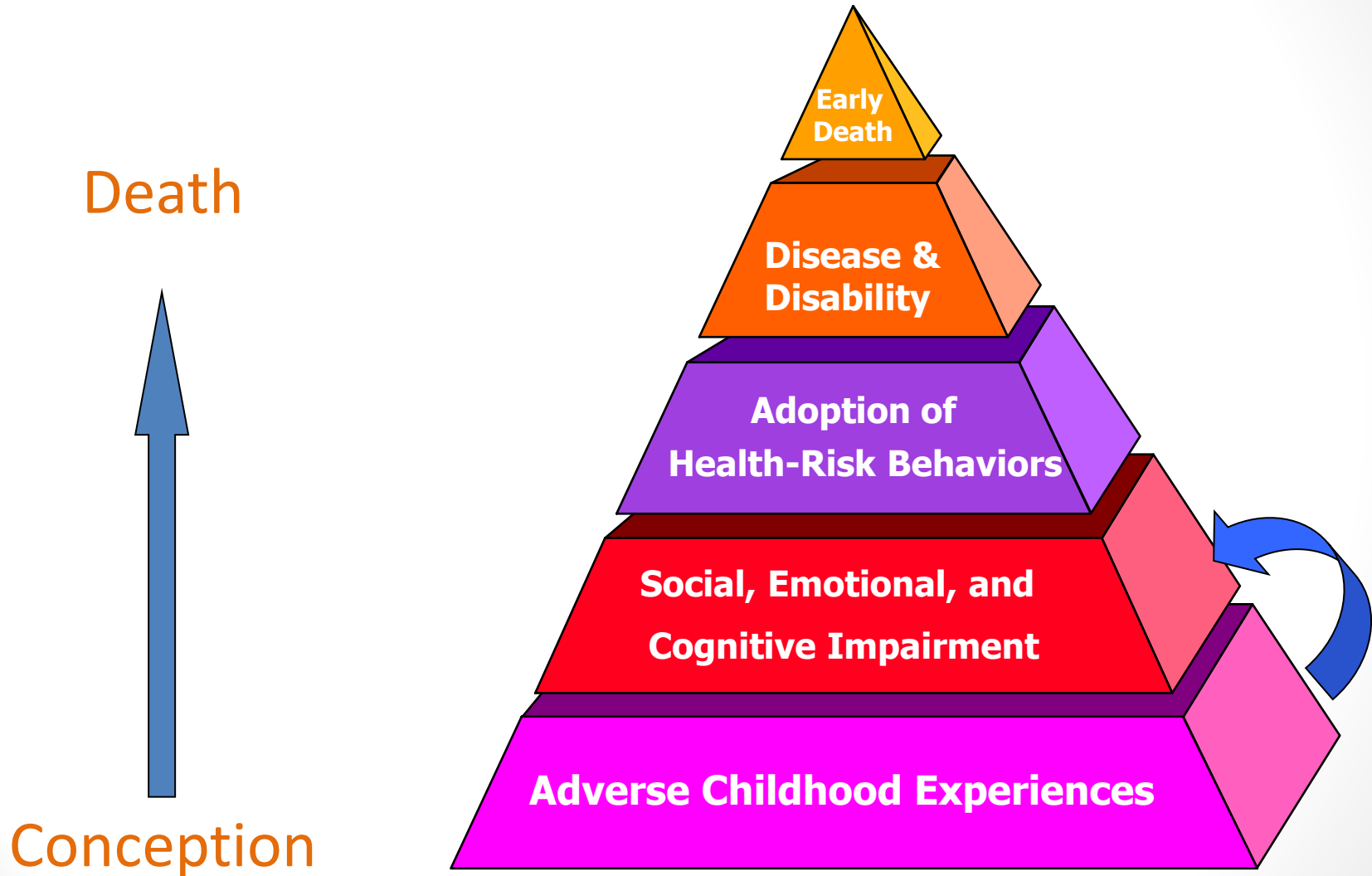
Risk Factors of Developmental Delay are Embedded in ACE



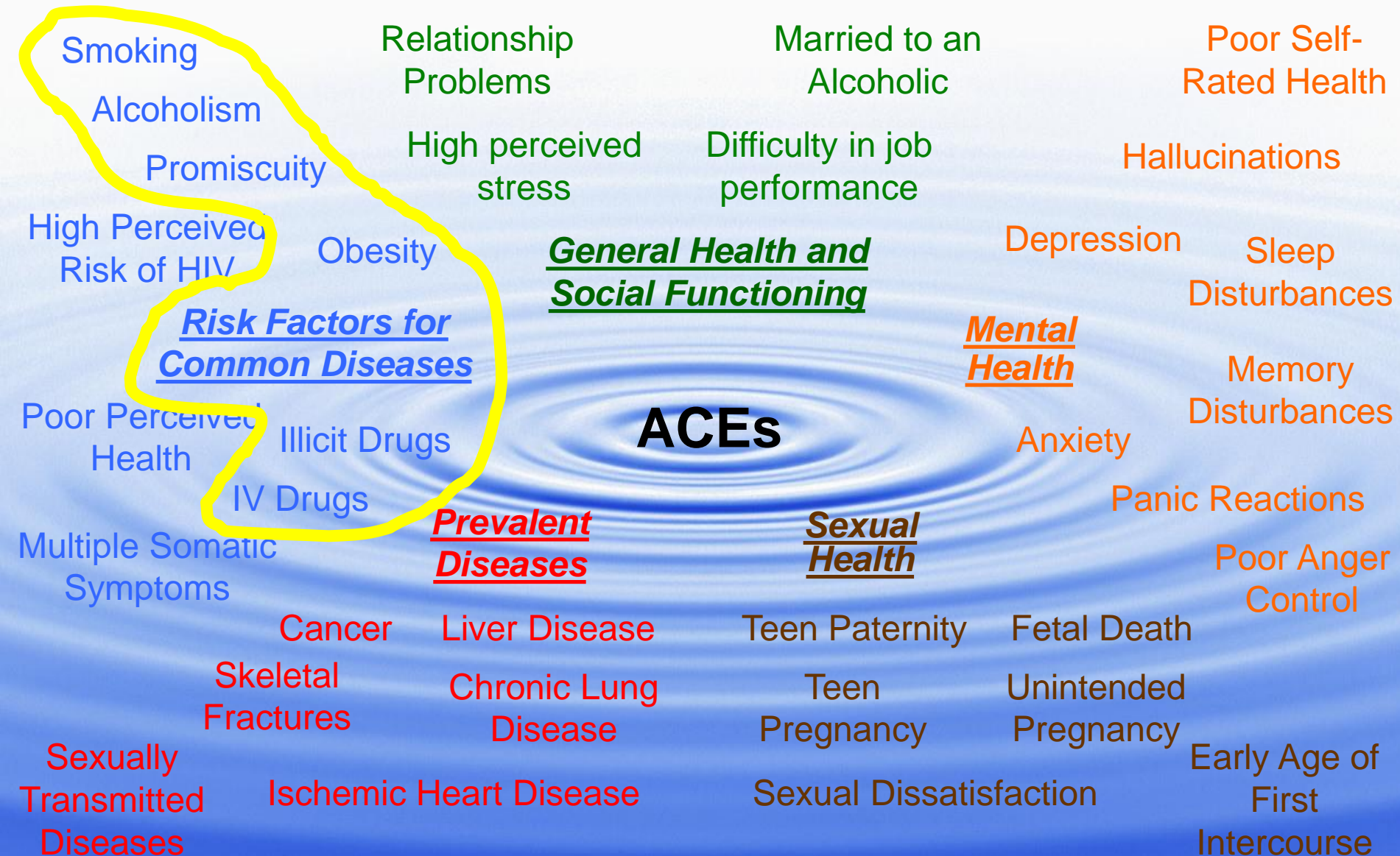
Data Source: Barth, et al. (2008)

Graphic adapted from 2011, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

Understanding the Impact of ACE



ACEs Impact Multiple Outcomes



ACE and the Brain

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF STRESS?

Three Levels of Stress Response

POSITIVE

Important to development in the context of stable and supportive relationships

Three Levels of Stress Response:

TOLERABLE

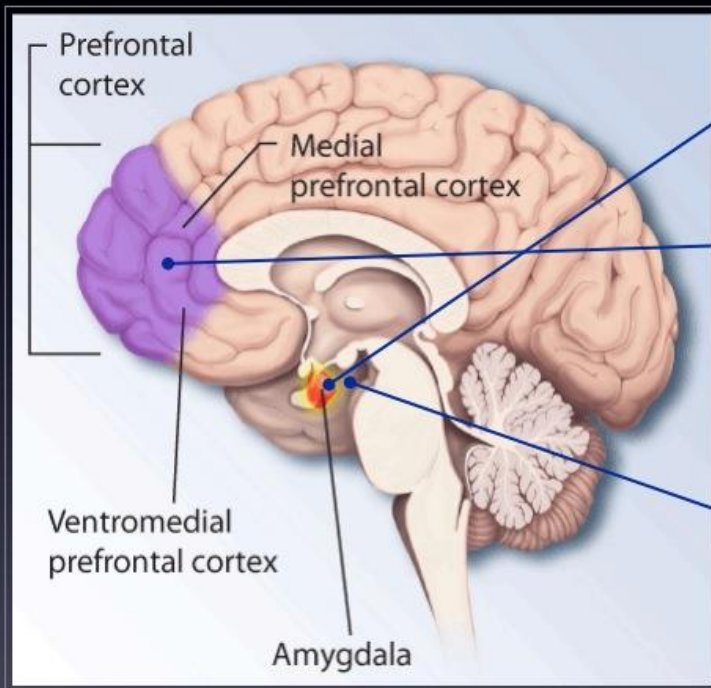
Serious and temporary, but impact buffered by supportive relationships and safe environments

Three Levels of Stress Response: Positive, Tolerable, Toxic

TOXIC

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

What happens?



Amygdala:

activates the stress response

Toxic stress: enlargement

Prefrontal cortex:

usually a check to the amygdala

Toxic stress: loss of neurons, less able to function

Hippocampus:

major role in memory and mood

Toxic stress: impairment in understanding and emotion

Toxic Stress and Brain Development

- effects on body systems
- can **damage brain architecture**
- can lead to lifelong problems

In the Classroom

Academic Performance

- Behavioral issues/concerns
- Ability to learn
- High absenteeism

Trauma can look like other things

- Developmental delay
- ADHD
- “Behavior issues”

What teachers might observe

- Separation anxiety
- Lack of developmental progress
- Re-creating traumatic event
- Physical complaints

From Child to Parent

How does stress affect parenting?

EFFECT OF TRAUMA ON PARENTING ABILITY

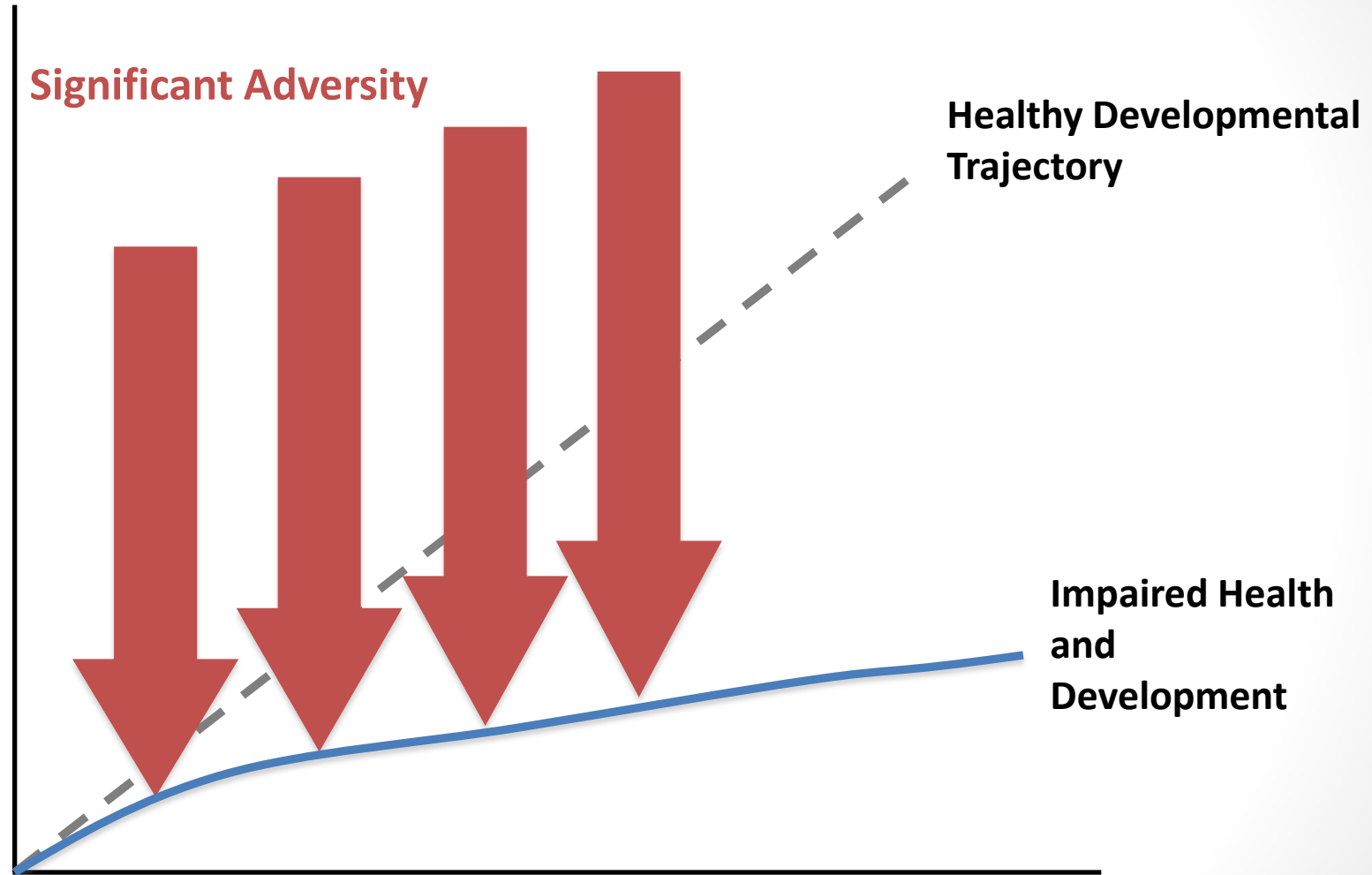
- Reduced parenting capacity/responses
- Unhealthy response to stress
- High ACE score and risky adult behaviors
- Intergenerational effect

How Brains are Built: A Review

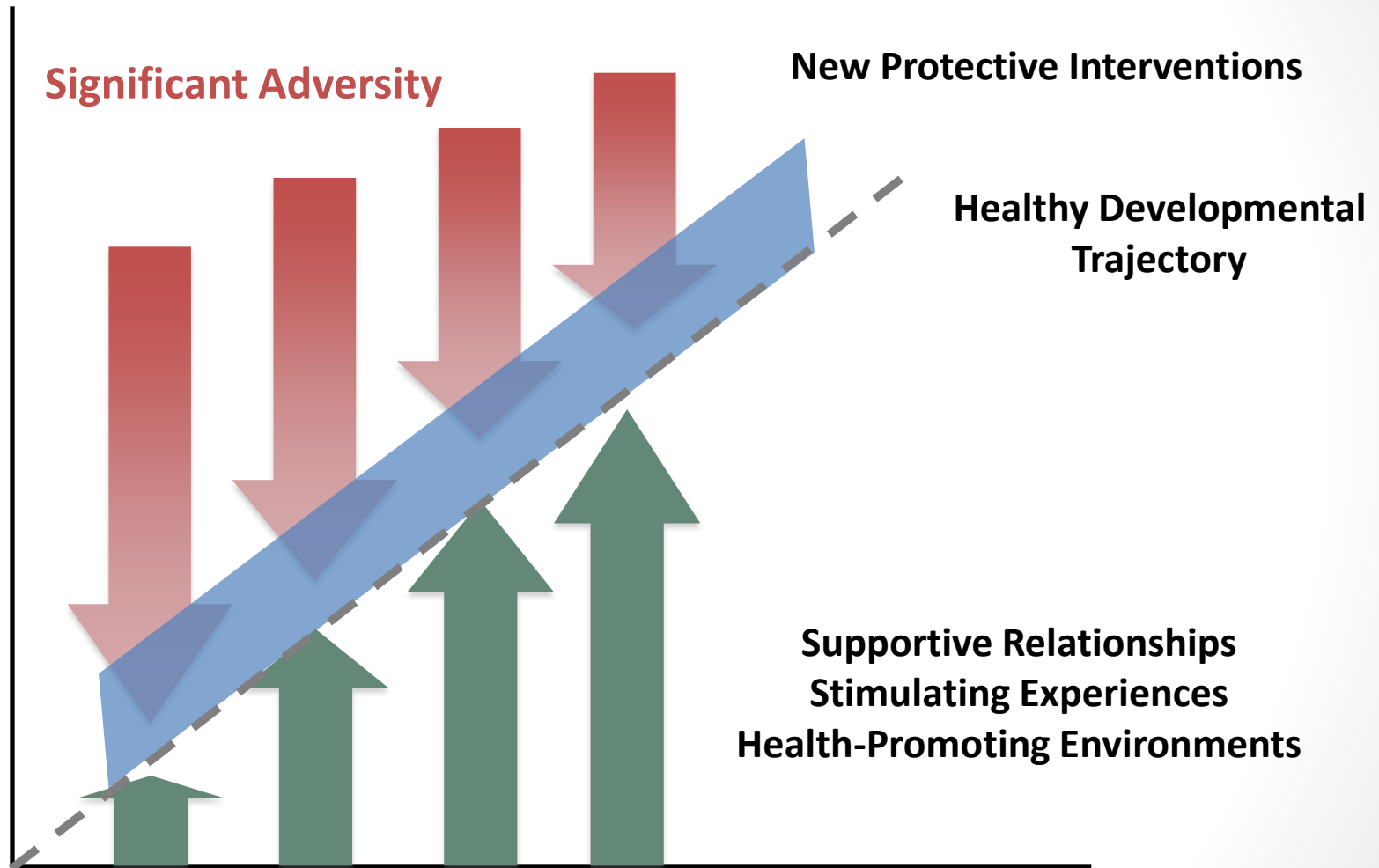
<http://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/video/how-brains-are-built-core-story-brain-development>

The Good News

Although Early Adversity CAN Impair Development...



...it doesn't have to



**WHAT COMES TO MIND
WHEN YOU HEAR THE
WORD “RESILIENCE”?**



RESILIENCE AND OTHER REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

Several factors for resiliency, including:

- Cognitive capacity
- Healthy attachment relationships
- Confidence in personal strengths and abilities
- The ability to regulate emotions and behavior
- Supportive environmental systems

**What can YOU do to build
resiliency in children and families?**

What can you do to support a child with complex trauma?

- **Respond through compassion, not discipline**
- **Be trauma-informed when assessing children's behaviors or your expectations of the family**
- **Provide consistency and stability in your interactions with children, families, colleagues**

**“You do not have to be a therapist
to be therapeutic”**

**What's wrong with
this person?**

**What has happened to
this person?**

Just as important...

Take Care of Yourself!

- Increased irritability or impatience with students, families, or colleagues
- Decreased concentration
- Denying that traumatic events impact those we serve or feeling numb or detached
- Intense feelings and intrusive thoughts, that don't lessen over time, about someone else's trauma

Self Care Assessment

STRESS!





Things we recommend to manage stress

- Don't go it alone.
- Recognize compassion fatigue as an occupational hazard.
- Guard against your work becoming the only activity that defines who you are.
- Address your physical, psychic, and spiritual needs.



Past

Present

Future

Your charge today

- Think about all the children you serve
- Think about their families
- Think about the community in which you work
- Think about your colleagues
- Think about the ways you can build resilience with and for all of them

Thank You

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