



# An Equity Approach to Addressing Childhood Trauma

Lisa Cushatt, LMSW

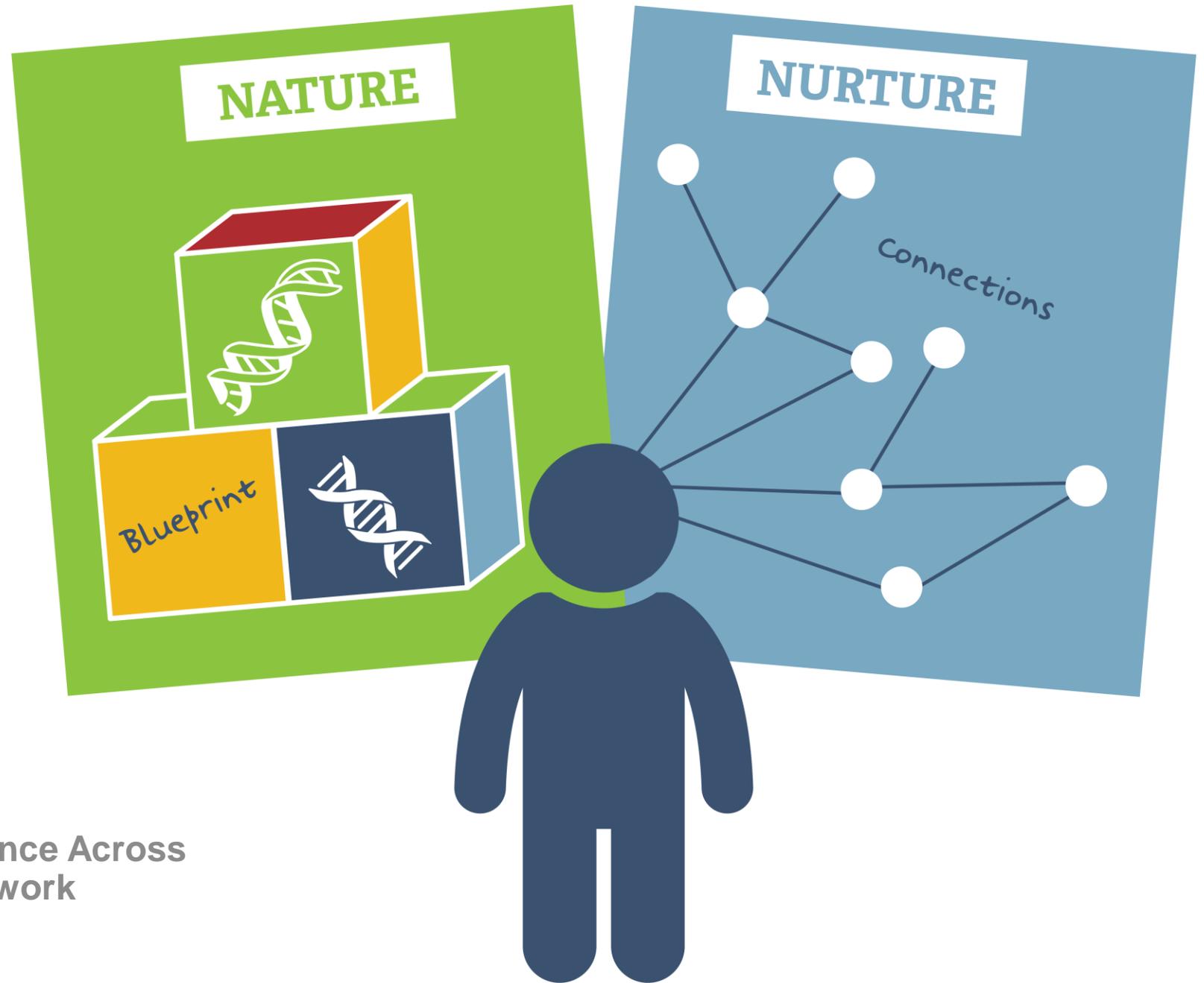
Iowa ACEs 360





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

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

# 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



# Long-term Health Impacts of Trauma

## Health

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

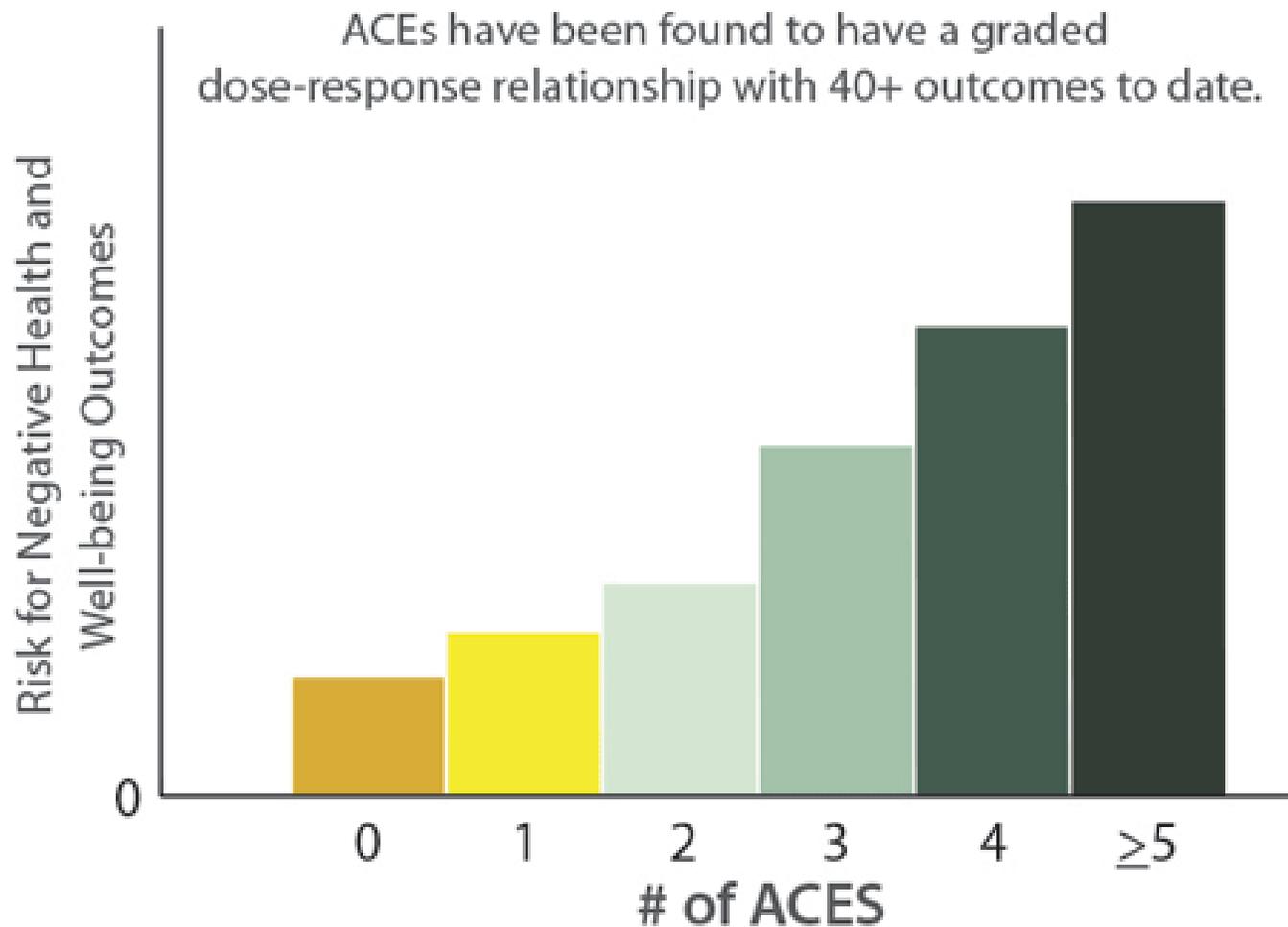
## Behaviors

Smoking, risky sexual behavior, alcoholism, drug use

## Life Potential

Graduation rates, academic achievement, time lost from work

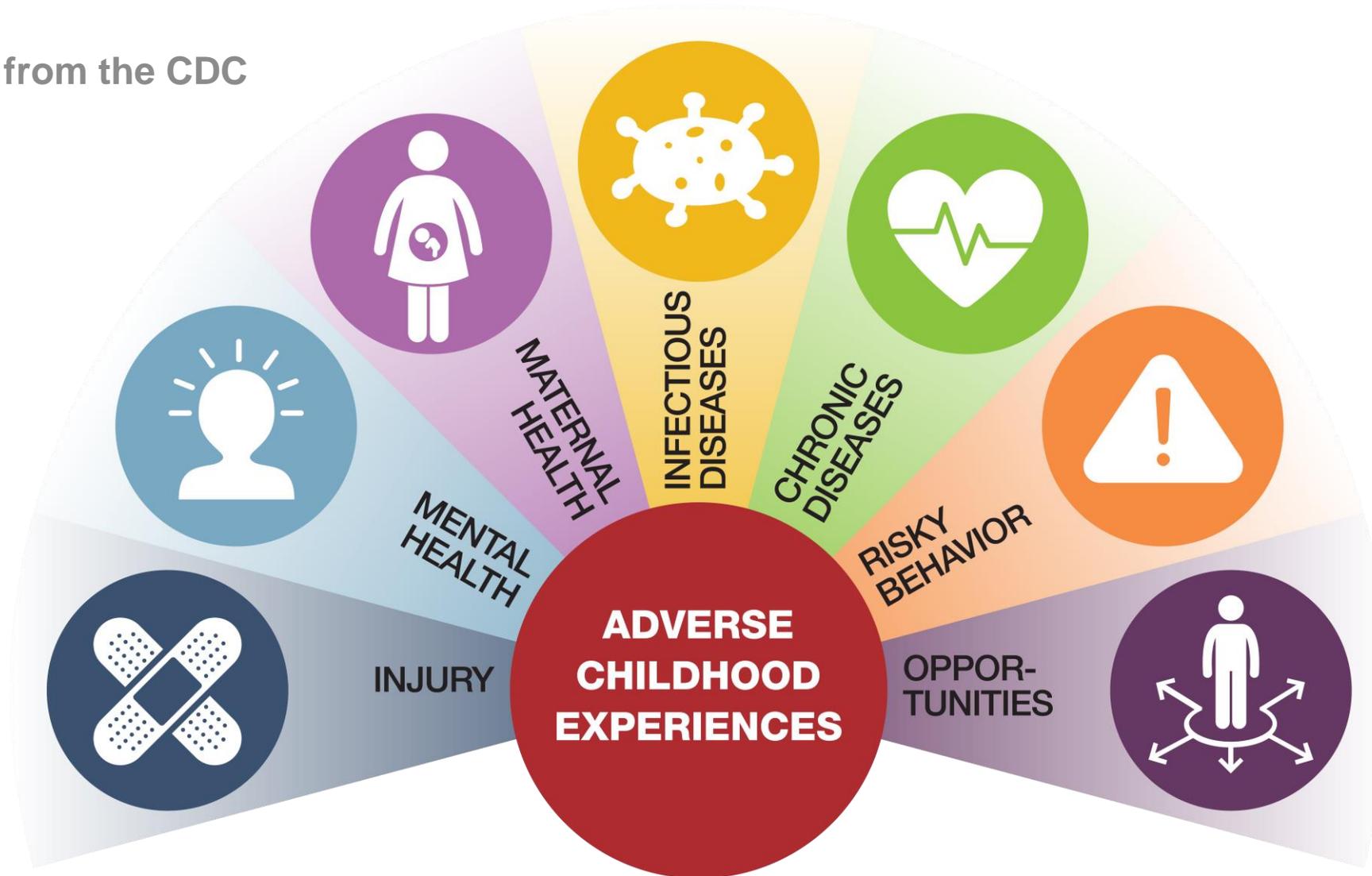
Source: Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., . . . Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults - The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of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



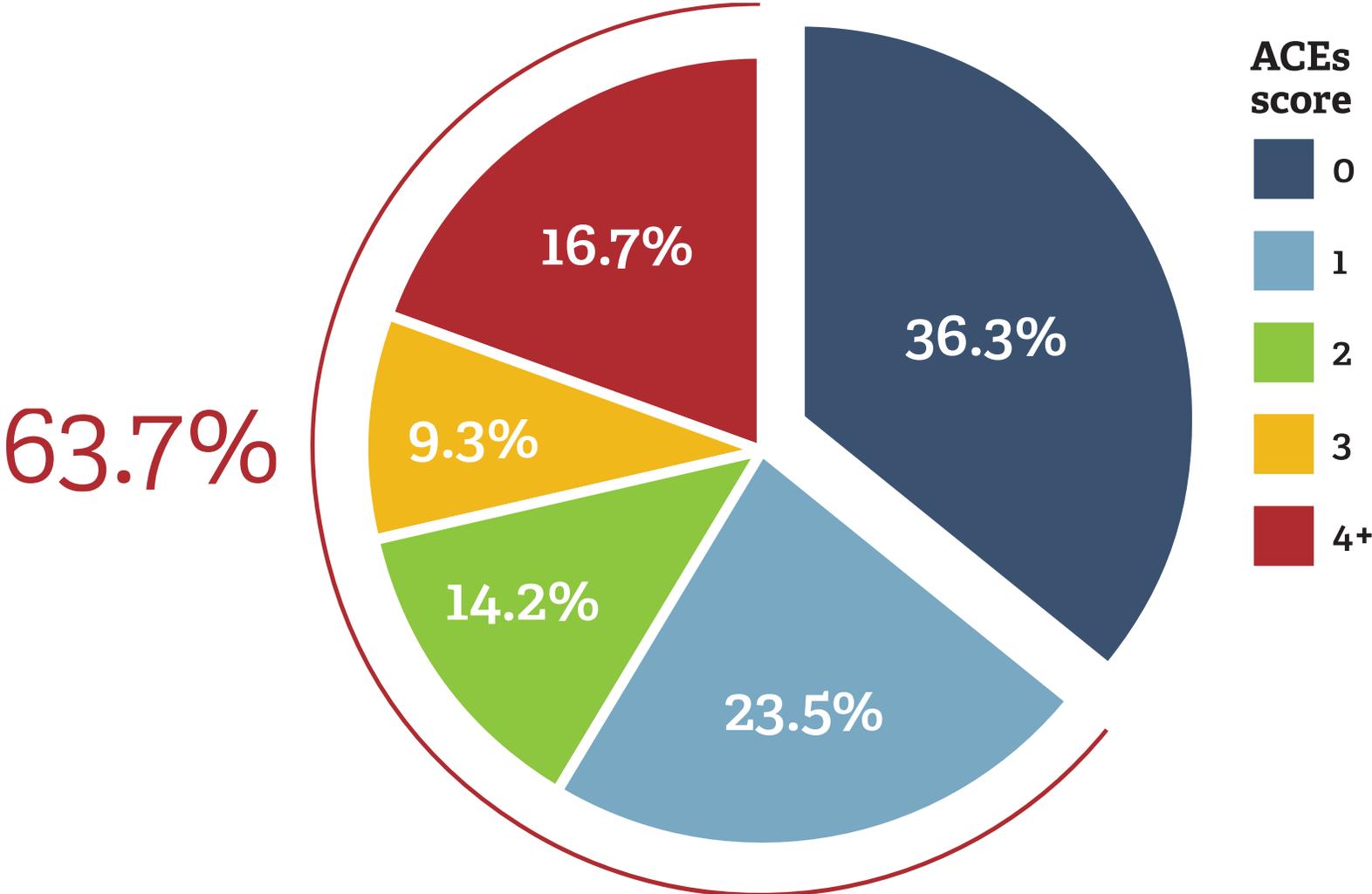
\*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.

# EARLY ADVERSITY HAS LASTING IMPACTS

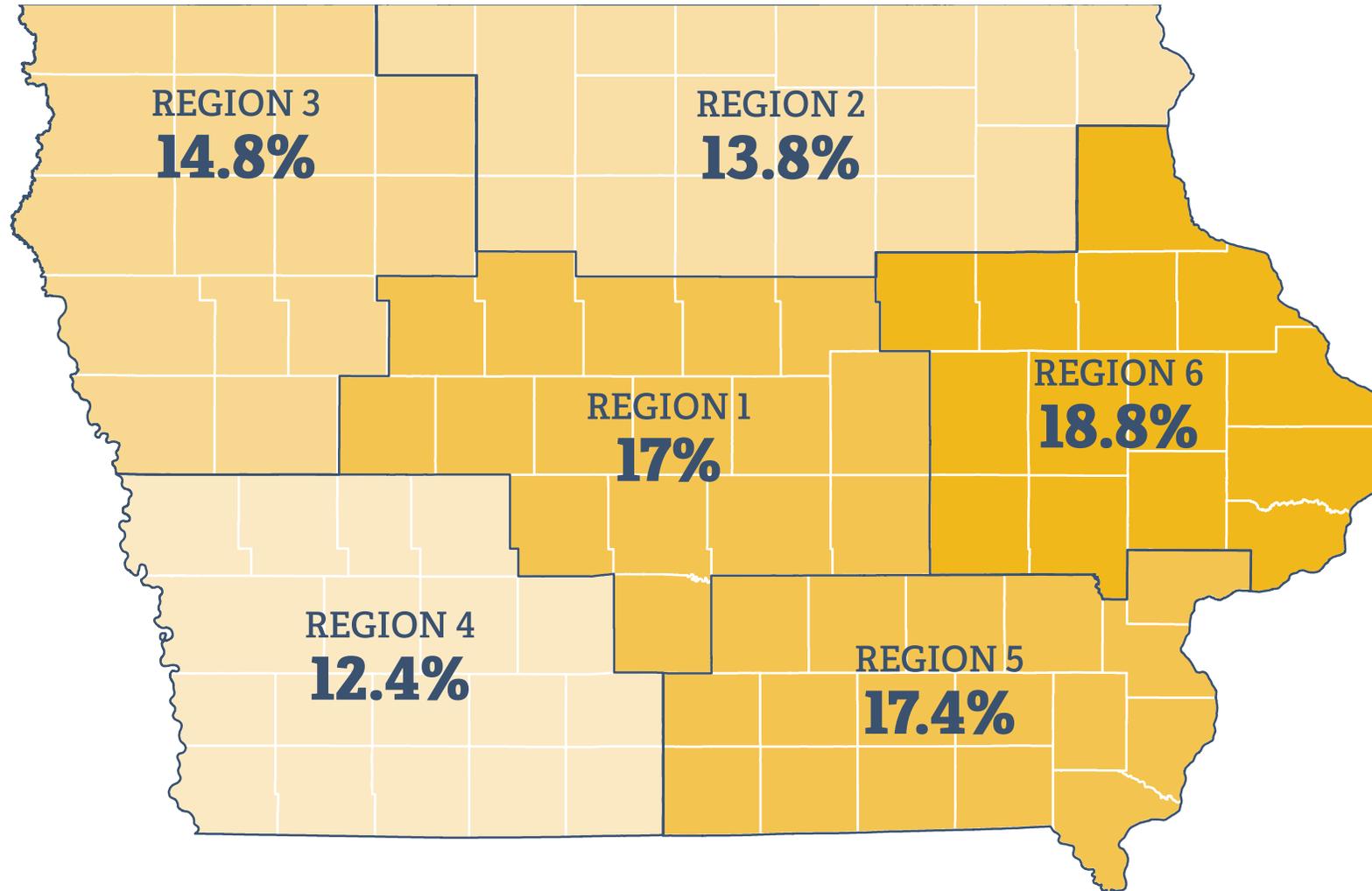
Adapted from the CDC



# PREVALENCE OF ACES AMONG IOWANS



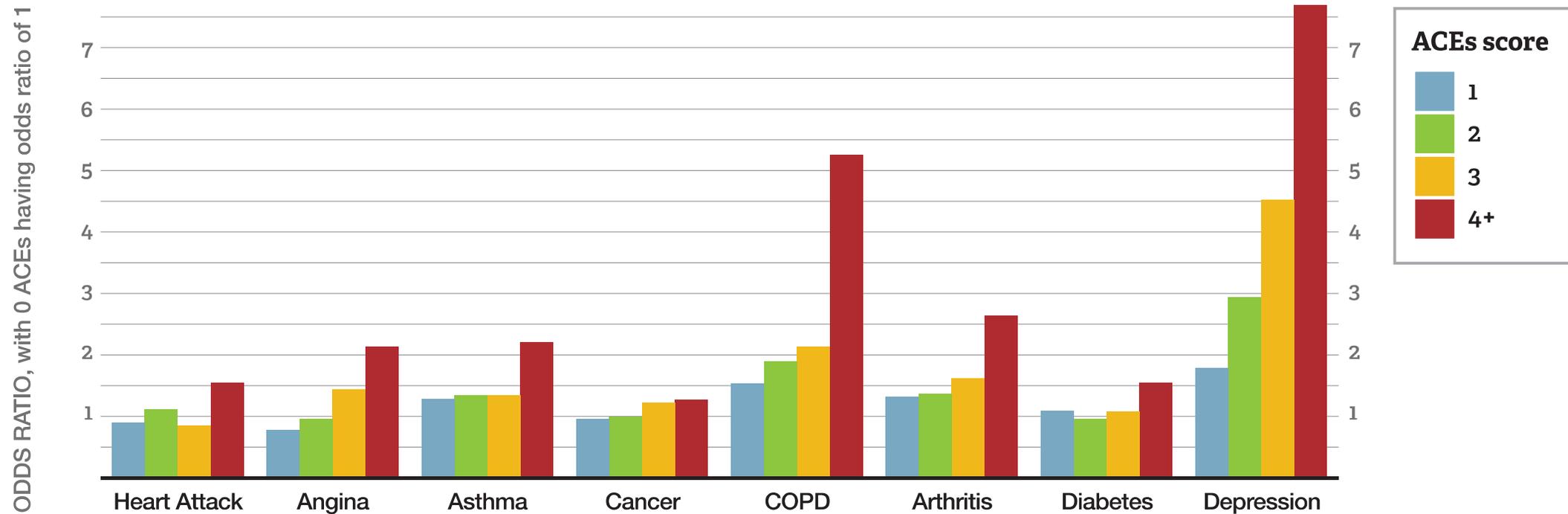
# PREVALENCE OF ACES AMONG IOWANS





# ACES AND HEALTH

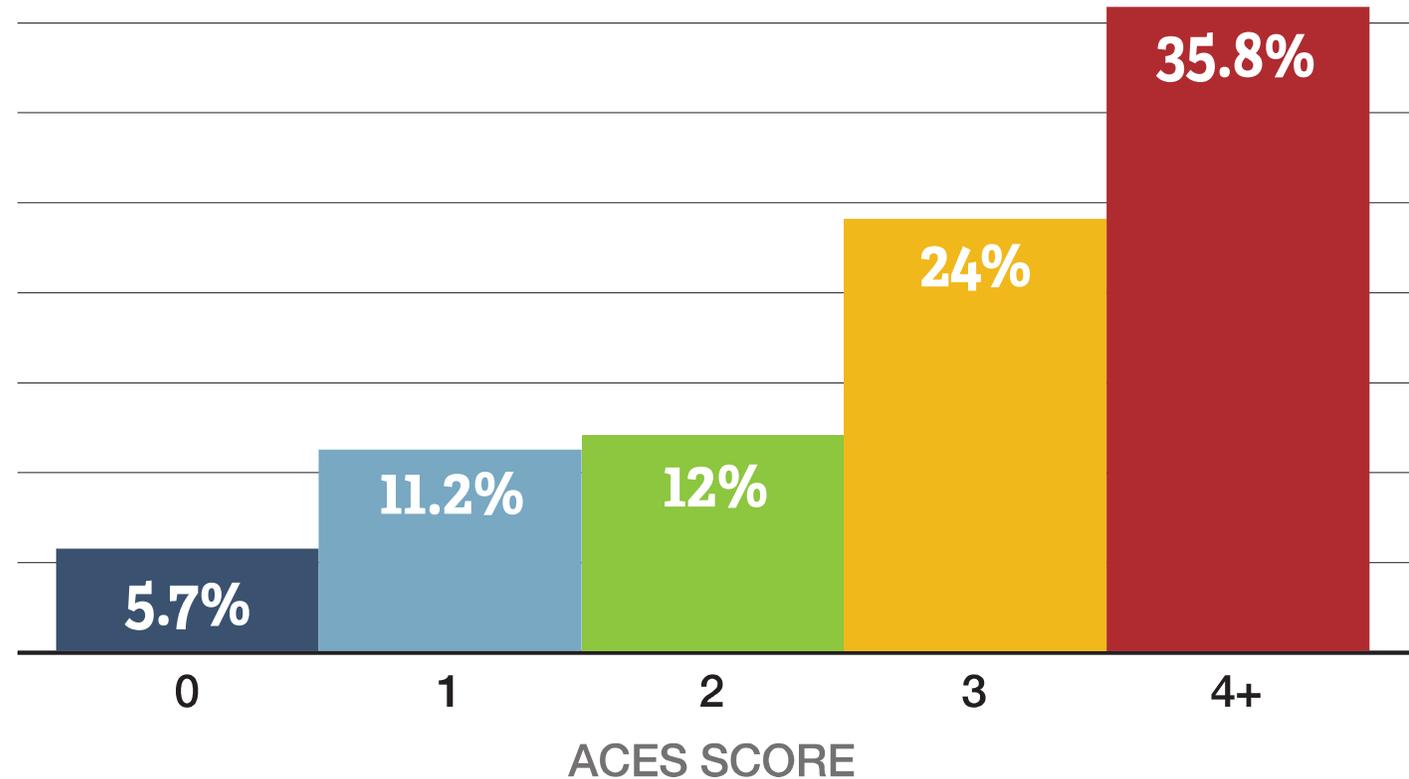
## ODDS OF DEVELOPING HEALTH CONDITIONS BASED ON ACES/NEGLECT





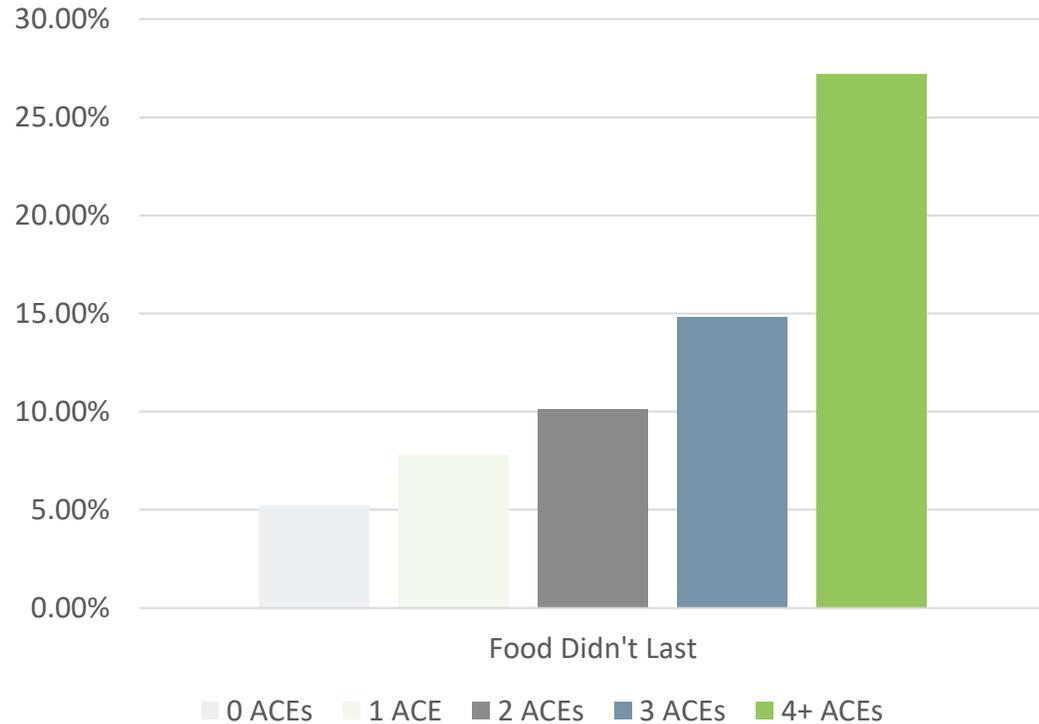
# ACES AND MENTAL HEALTH

PERCENTAGE OF  
IOWA ADULTS  
REPORTING AT  
LEAST ONE MENTAL  
HEALTH CONCERN  
BY REPORTED  
EXPERIENCE OF  
ACES/NEGLECT

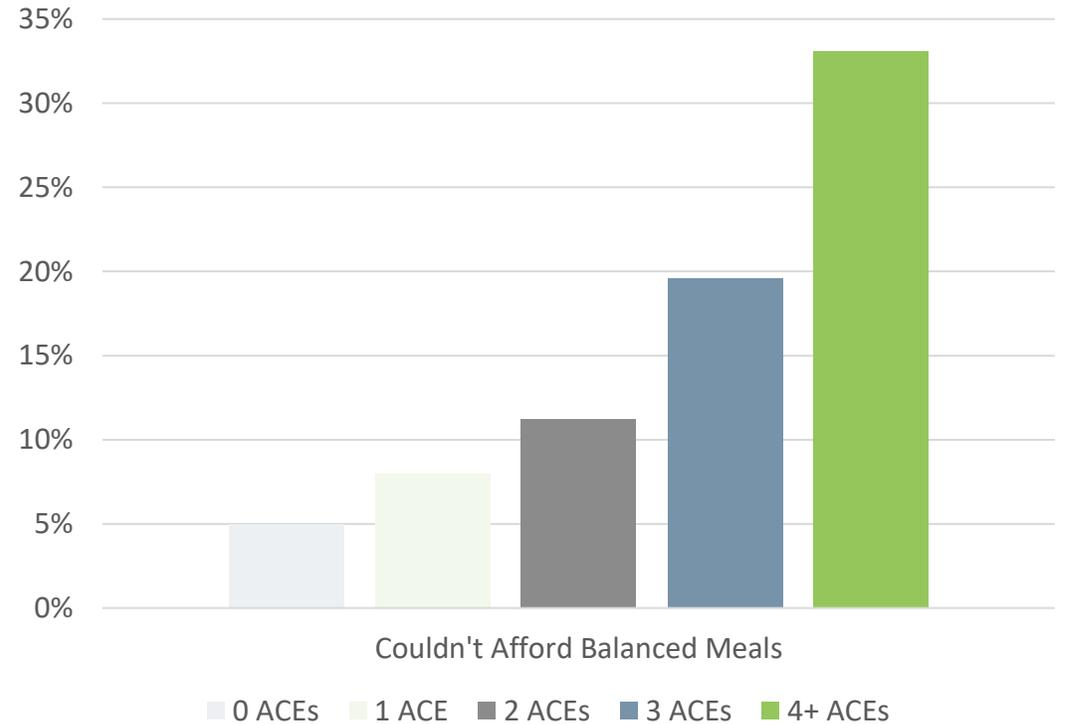


# ACEs and Hunger

Adults reporting their food didn't last and they couldn't afford more in the last 12 months by reported number of ACEs/neglect



Adults reporting they could not afford balanced meals in last 12 months by reported number of ACEs/neglect



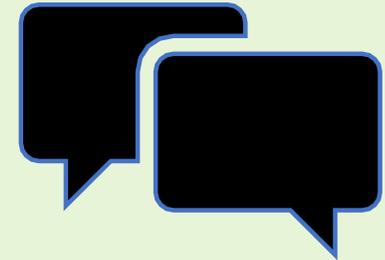
# Household Trauma

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What are the challenges with the original 10 ACEs?



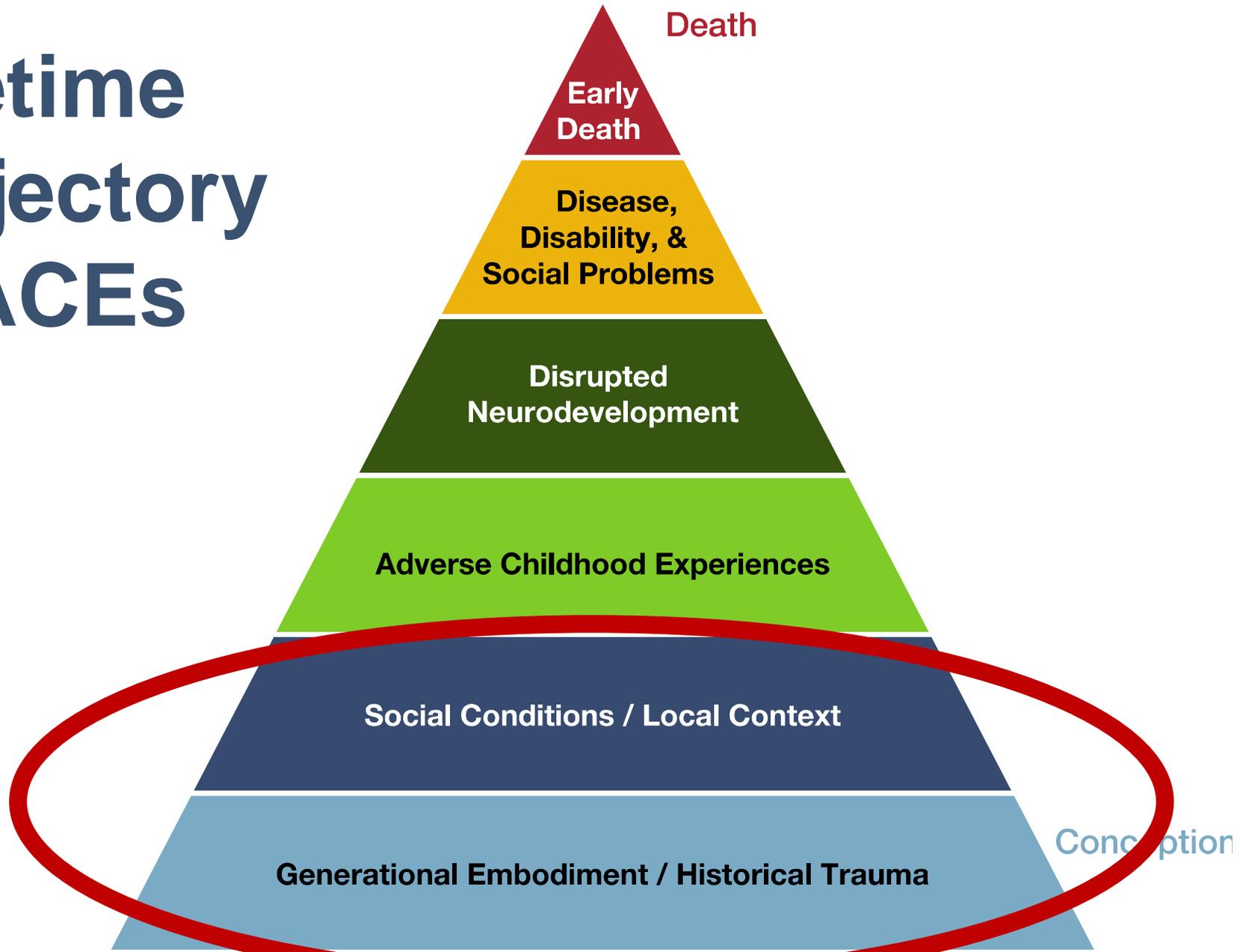
**Let's Discuss**

# The Framework

Beyond Conventional ACEs



# Lifetime Trajectory of ACEs

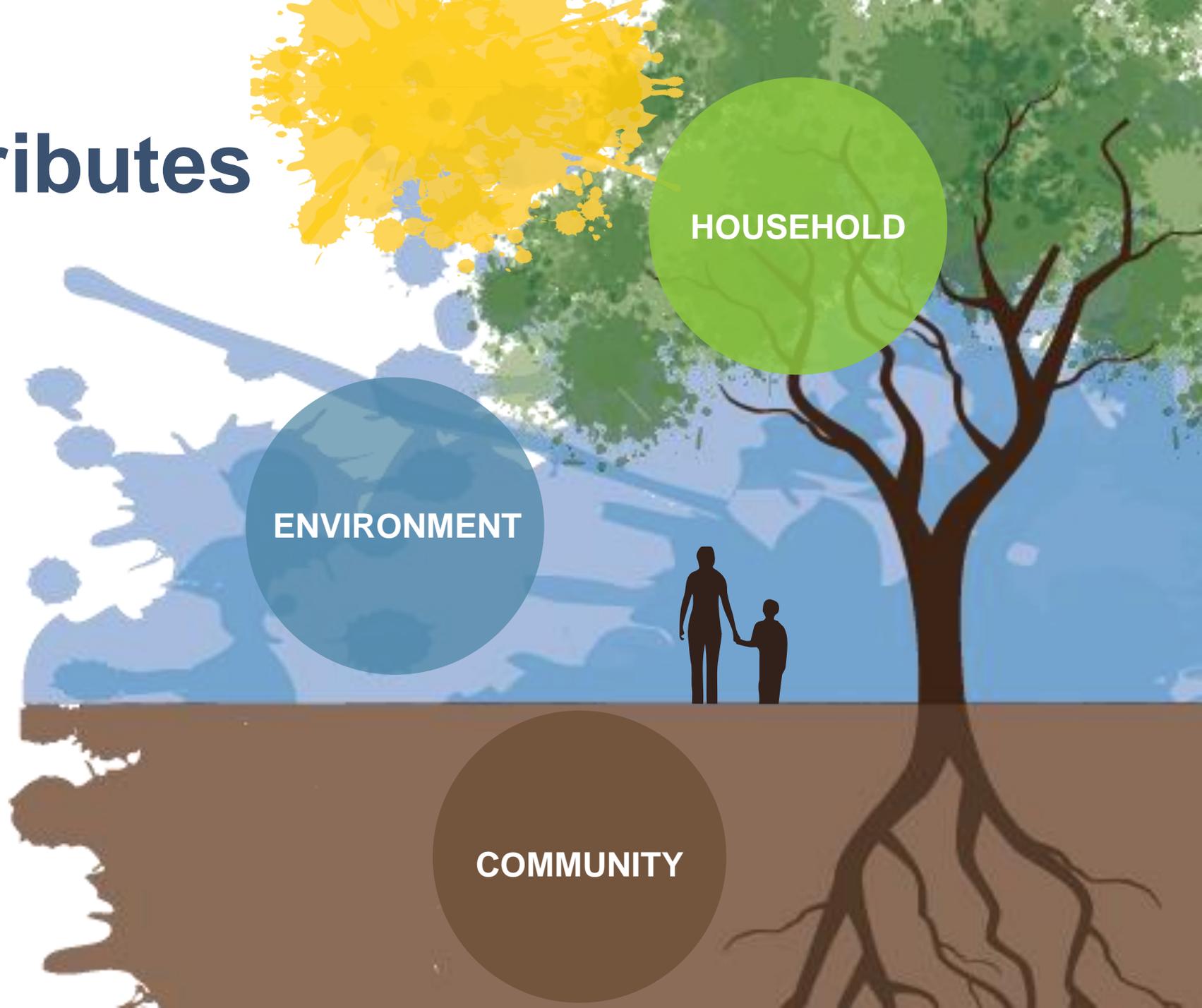


# What Contributes to ACEs?

abuse, neglect, parental mental illness, divorce, homelessness, maternal depression, incarcerated family member, domestic violence

natural disaster, climate crisis

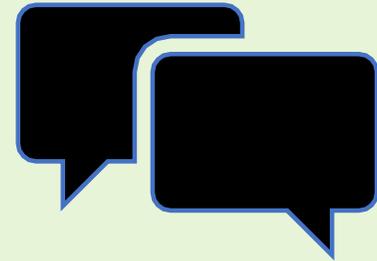
historical trauma, structural racism, violence, poverty, lack of jobs, poor housing quality, poor water and air quality, substandard schools



# Environment and Community Trauma

## Emerging Awareness

- Experiencing discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, place of birth, disability or religion
- Feeling unsafe in your neighborhood or not trusting your neighbors
- Exposure to community violence
- Bullying
- Involvement in foster care
- Loss of parent or guardian due to death
- Deportation or migration
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters



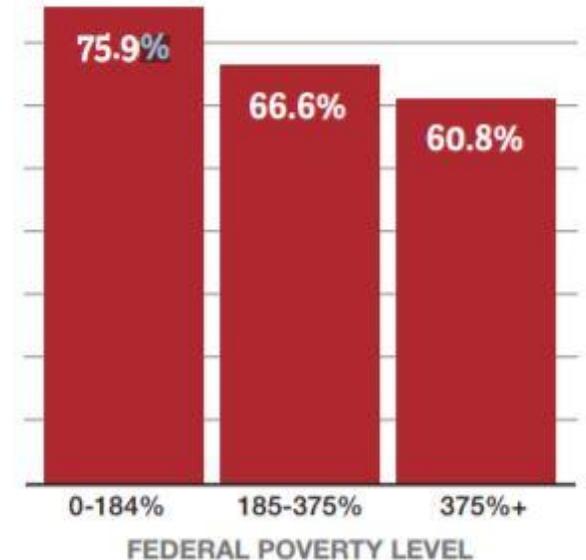
**Let's Discuss**

# Environment and Community Trauma

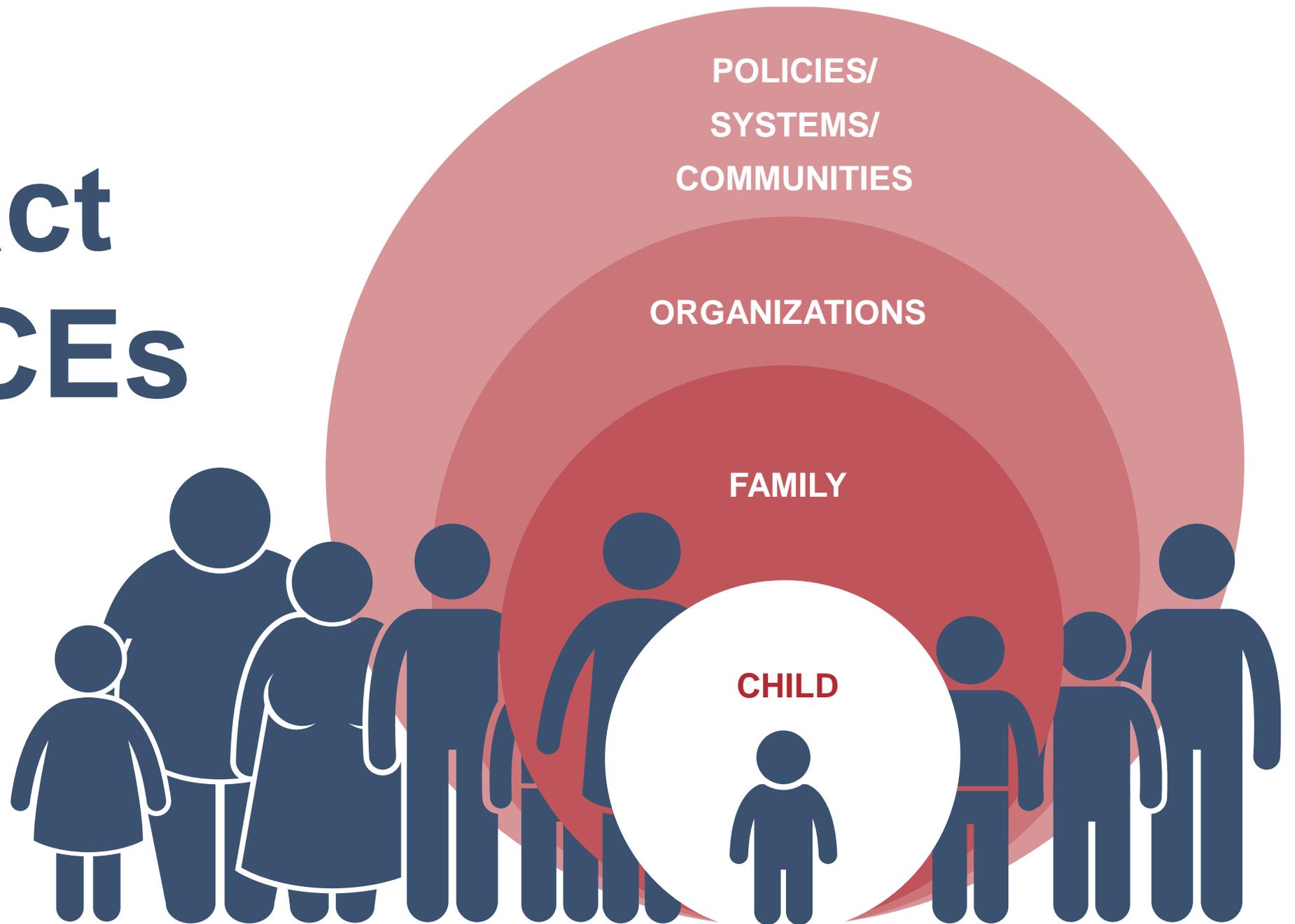
Groups that report experiencing 4+ ACEs at higher rates include:

- Adults of color
- Women
- Adults with less than a high school education
- Below 184% of the federal poverty level

**THE PERCENTAGE OF IOWA ADULTS REPORTING AT LEAST ONE CATEGORY OF ACEs OR NEGLECT BY FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL:**



# Impact of ACEs



# Strengthening Our Communities



Addressing childhood trauma cannot occur without disrupting the systems that cause inequities. Trauma-informed care does not occur in the absence of equity and anti-racism efforts.

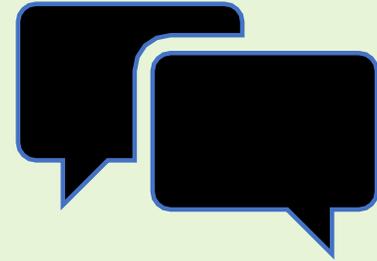
# Strengthening Our Communities



# Infusing Critical Concepts

Expanding Focus of ACEs Movement

Collective Trauma  
Historical Trauma  
Epigenetics  
Equity  
Health Equity  
Equitable Recovery



**Let's Discuss**

# Infusing Critical Concepts into the ACEs Movement

## Expand this:

Child abuse prevention

Trauma informed mental health interventions

Maternal health access

Disaster recovery/ pandemic response

Focus groups/community conversations

## Infuse This

Understanding of impact of historical trauma, systemic discrimination in child welfare, implicit bias

Assess effectiveness for diverse clients, diversify workforce

Address discrimination in health care, increase supports for families before birth

Designate more intense supports/resources to families disproportionately impacted

Power in decision-making, youth voice, follow the data and leadership of those most impacted by trauma



# Your Opportunity to Respond

- Read** more about the research and best practices at [www.iowaaces360.org](http://www.iowaaces360.org).
- Sign up** to receive updates on ACEs work and networking opportunities.
- Review** learning series and access learning guide at <https://www.iowaaces360.org/pandemic-response>
- Join** a regional advocacy event to identify systems change opportunities.
- Advocate for changes** within your organization or community.

THANK YOU!

