

How Can Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

Lessen Negative Health Outcomes

For Individuals Experiencing or Who Have Experienced

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

A Presentation By Ian Mearns

# Our Stories - Are Important!

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- Unique
- Mental & Physical
- Positive & Negative
- Influence Identity, Behavior, Personality
- Help Us Grow
- Instill Our Values
- Impact Overall Wellbeing
- Generational Influences

# Throughout Our life

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Infancy – Ages 0 to 2

Early Childhood – Ages 3 to 8

Adolescence – Ages 9 to 18

Early Adulthood – Ages 19 to 45

Middle Adulthood – Ages 46 to 65

Late Adulthood – Ages 65+

# What Causes Our Life Experiences?

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**Chance** – Life Events Occur Randomly

**Free Will** – Make Choices Independently of Prior Events

**Indeterminism** – Not Causally Determined

**Predeterminism** - Theological – Devine Entity

Physical – Physical Events - Laws of Physics/Nature

Environmental – Shaped by Physical Environment

Psychological – Phenomena - Events or Conditions

Biological – Factors – Genes, Neurological Structure

**Trauma** - Acts as a Cause to Specific Events

# Positive Life Experiences

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Developmental - Physical and Mental

Emotional – Love, Heartbreak Accomplishments

Social – Parties, Events

Personal – Accomplishing Goals

Relational – Making Friends, Meeting Partners

Professional – Promotions, Completing Projects

Educational – Awards, Degrees

# Negative Life Experiences

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Major Life Events - Death of a Loved One

Emotional – Heartbreak, Depression

Social – Bullying, Isolation

Personal – Substance Use, Homeless

Relational – Breakups, Divorce

Professional – Job Loss

**Traumatic – Abuse, Neglect, Environmental**

# Focus on Childhood Trauma

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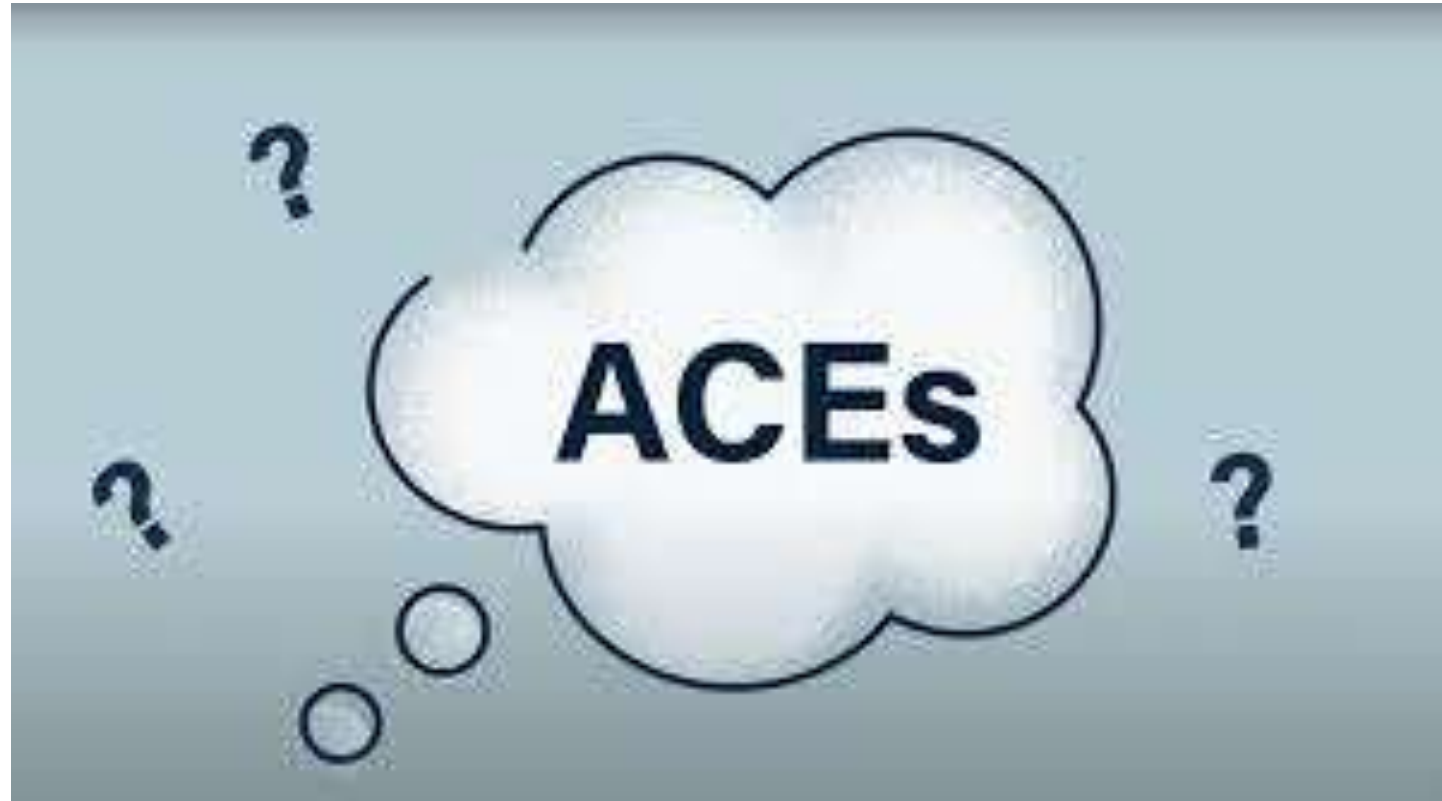
Ages 0 to 17 – Includes Life Stages

Infancy – Ages 0 to 2

Early Childhood – Ages 3 to 8

Adolescence – Ages 9 to 18

**Traumatic Events – Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**





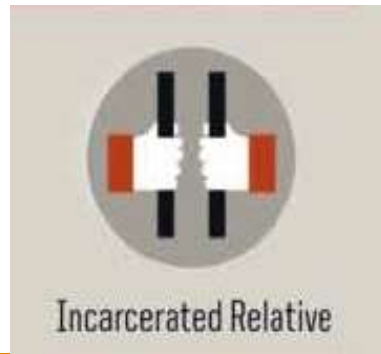
# ACE Categories and Types

Home

Abuse



Neglect



# Household Challenges



Mental Illness



Divorce



Substance Abuse



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently

# Abuse

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Physical



Emotional



Sexual

# Neglect



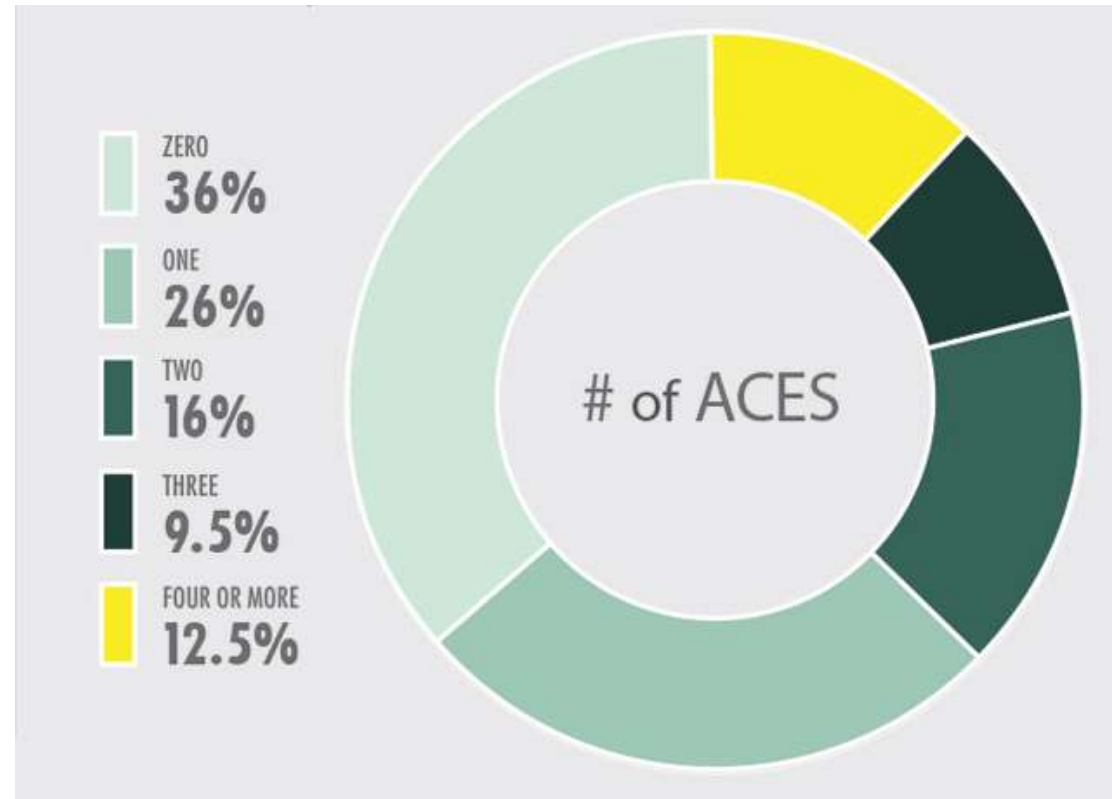
Physical



Emotional

# Normative Population ACE Survey

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# Presenters Score - 8

Household



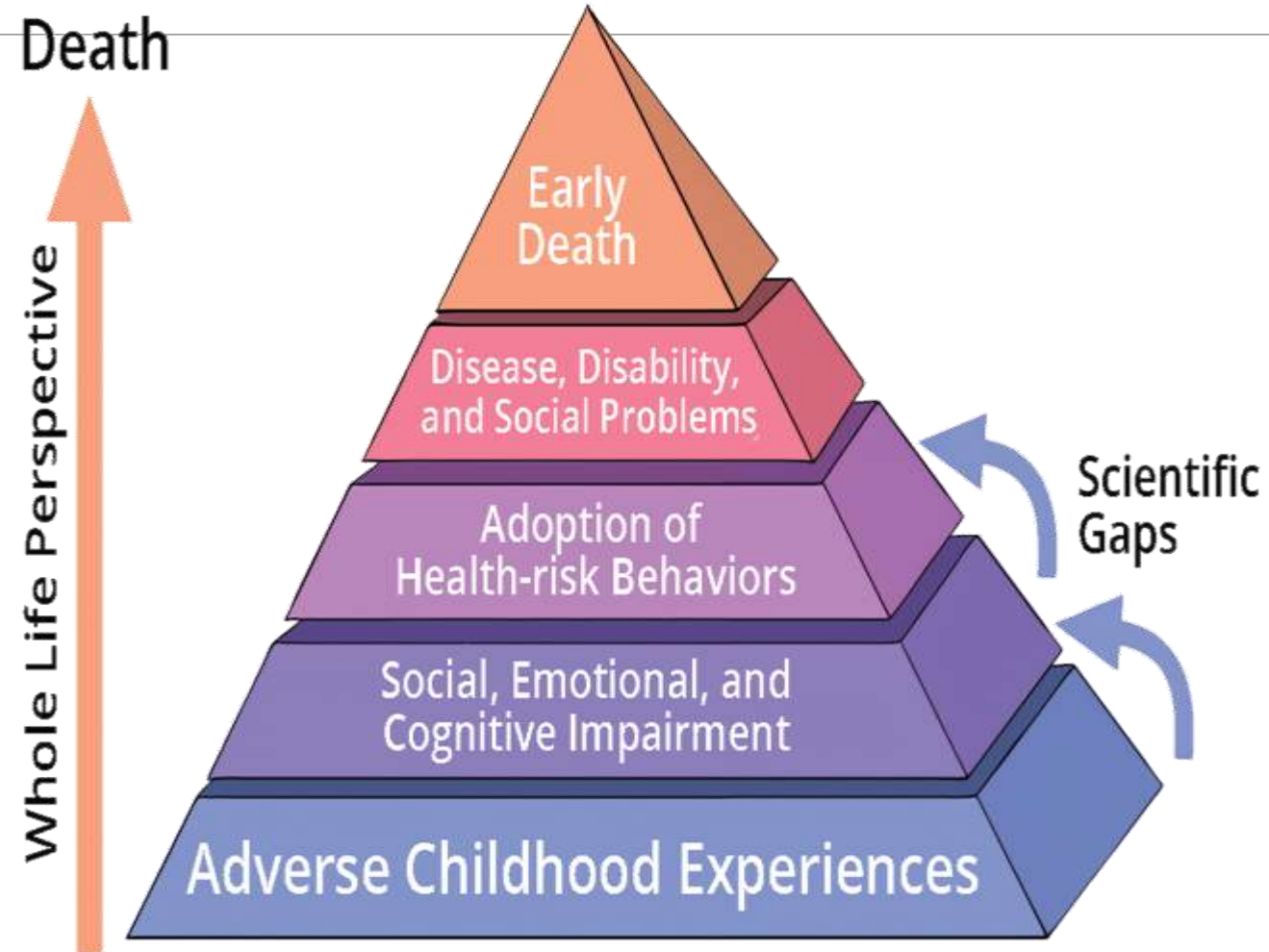
Abuse



Neglect



# How Do ACEs Affect Us?



# Childhood Chronic Health Conditions

ACE Score of 1 = 19.6%

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ACE Score of 2 = 36.1%





# Childhood

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## **Age 0**

- Born w/ Physical Issues - Twins— Adoption

## **Age 2**

- First Hospitalization - Physical Abuse – Dislocated Shoulder (1 of 4)

## **Age 3 to 5**

- Father Lost Job/Became Disabled – Started Using Substances
- Family Became Extremely Poor
- Mom – Started Working - Spent More Time w/ Father, Abuse Increased

## **Age 6 to 10:**

- Second Hospitalization – Neglect
- School Started –
- Parents Called By Teacher– Physical Abuse (Bruising)
- CPS/Police Called – Physical Abuse (Burns)

# Childhood Obesity

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ACE score of 1 = 26.9%

ACE Score of 2 + = 26.7%



# Childhood

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## **Age 11 to 12**

- First Time Using Alcohol
- First Arrest/Detainment – Shoplifting

## **Age 13 to 14**

- Second Arrest/Detainment – Minor in Possession
- Third Arrest/Detainment– Trespassing
- First School Suspension
- Put in Guardianship

## **Age 15 to 16**

- Truancy
- Failing Grades
- Multiple School Suspensions
- Started Running Away

# Bullied or Excluded

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ACE Score of 1 = 28.3%

ACE Score of 2+ = 45.9%




# Adolescence

## **Age 17**

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- Continued to Run Away
- Confronted Parents – Physical Abuse Stopped.
- Enlisted in Marines
- Attended Summer School
- Completed Internship
- Death of Friend

## **Age 18**

- Graduated High School
  - Left to Marines
  - Completed Bootcamp
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# ACEs Still Effect Adults

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As We Continue to Grow.....



....So Does The Amount of Toxic Stress In Our Bodies

# Negative Adult Health Outcomes

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# Alcohol Related Deaths

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**ACE Score of 2+**

400% Alcoholic

**ACE Score of 5+**

800% Alcoholic

- 1986 Paternal Grandfather – Liver Failure
- 1997 Maternal Cousin – Cirrhosis
- 2002 Maternal Uncle – Cirrhosis and Heart Failure
- 2005 Friend - DUI – Car Crash
- 2007 Friend - DUI – Car Crash
- 2011 Paternal Grandmother – Cirrhosis
- 2016 Paternal Uncle – Liver Failure
- 2017 Friend - DUI – Car Crash
- 2019. Friend - DUI - Car Crash
- 2020 Friend - Alcoholic Ketoacidosis
- 2021 Paternal Uncle – Liver Failure



# Depression & Suicide

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## ACE Score of Four or More

- 460% - Struggle w/ Depression
- 1,220% - Attempt/Complete Suicide

- 1997 Highschool- Firearm
- 2001 Highschool - Firearm
- 2011 Marines - Sleeping Pills
- 2013 Family – Alcohol
- 2015 Marines - Firearm
- 2016. Family- Hanging
- 2019 Marines - Pills
- 2021 Marines - Hanging

# Substance Use

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## ACE Score of 4+

700% - Using Illegal Drugs

1003% - Inject Drugs

- 1995 Grandmother – Prescription Drugs
- 2003 Friend - Heroin Overdose
- 2007 Friend - Methadone Overdose (Brother)
- 2019 Friend - Overdose – Pills (Brother)
- 2023. Friend - Fentanyl Overdose (Brother)
- Friend - Fentanyl/Meth Overdose – (Brother)
- Friend - Fentanyl Overdose (Brother)
- Friend – Fentanyl Overdose
- 2024 Overdose – Alcohol (Brother)

# Physical Illnesses

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## **ACE Score of 4+**

- 390% - Lung Disease
  - 200% - Develop Cancer
  - 240% - Hepatitis
- 1979 – Maternal Grandfather – Heart Attack
  - 2006 Mom – Colon Cancer
  - 2010 Aunt – Lung Cancer
  - 2018 Dad – Bowel Cancer

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# Shortened Mortality

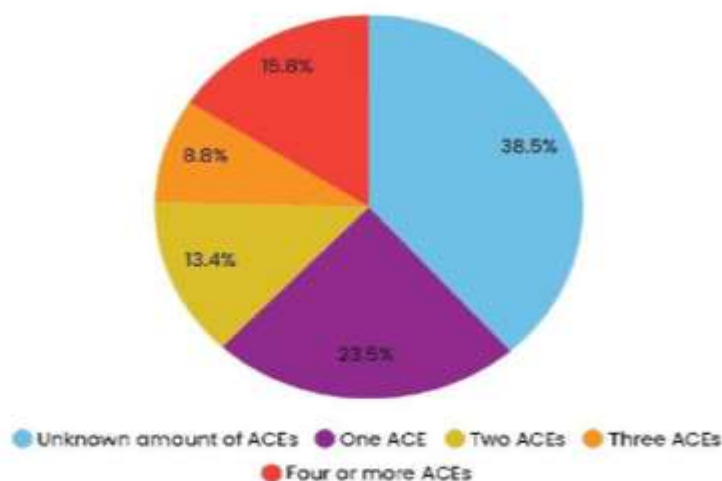
## **ACE Score of 6+**

Mortality Rate 20 Years Less

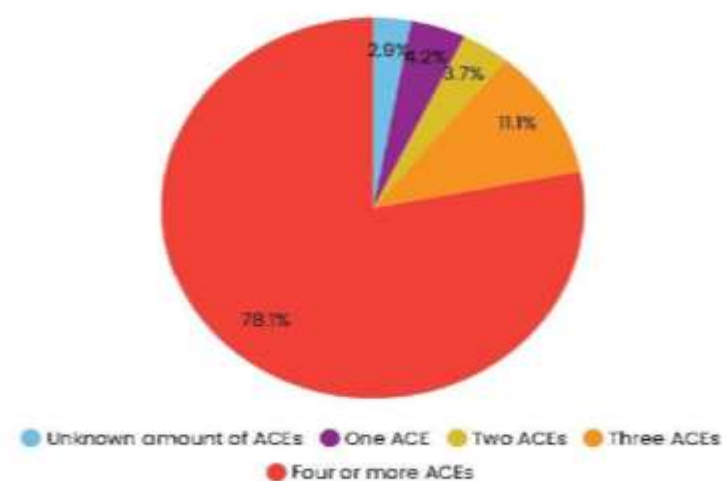
- 2015 – Friend - Shot
- 2019 – Friend - Stabbed
- 2020 – Friends Parents - Stabbed

## ***ACEs Are Extremely Prevalent in Prison***

**64% of the U.S. population has at least one ACE.**



**98% of the prison population has at least one ACE.**



# Experiences Shared by I/Is

## • Individual

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- Arrest/Incarcerated – Young Age
- Substance Use.
- Mental Illness.

## • Home

- Abuse & Neglect
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Mental Illness
- Unemployment

## • Family

- Family members were incarcerated.
- Mental Illness
- Substance Abuse

## Neighborhood

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- Gun Violence
- Crime
- Poverty

## Community

- Lack of Employment Opportunities
- Food Inequity
- Poverty

## Environmental

- Air Pollution
- Vehicle Traffic & Noise
- Lack of Green Space

# Experiences Presenter Shares With TRU Clients

## • Individual

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- Struggle with Mental Illness
- Arrested at a Young Age

## • Home

- Abused & Neglected
- Drugs and Alcohol in Home
- Mental Illness
- Unemployment

## • Family

- Mental Illness
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence

## Neighborhood

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- Crime
- Poverty

## Community

- Lack of Employment Opportunities
- Food Inequity (Food Desert)
- Poverty

## Environmental

- Air Pollution
- Vehicle Traffic & Noise

# So Why Am I Not in Prison?

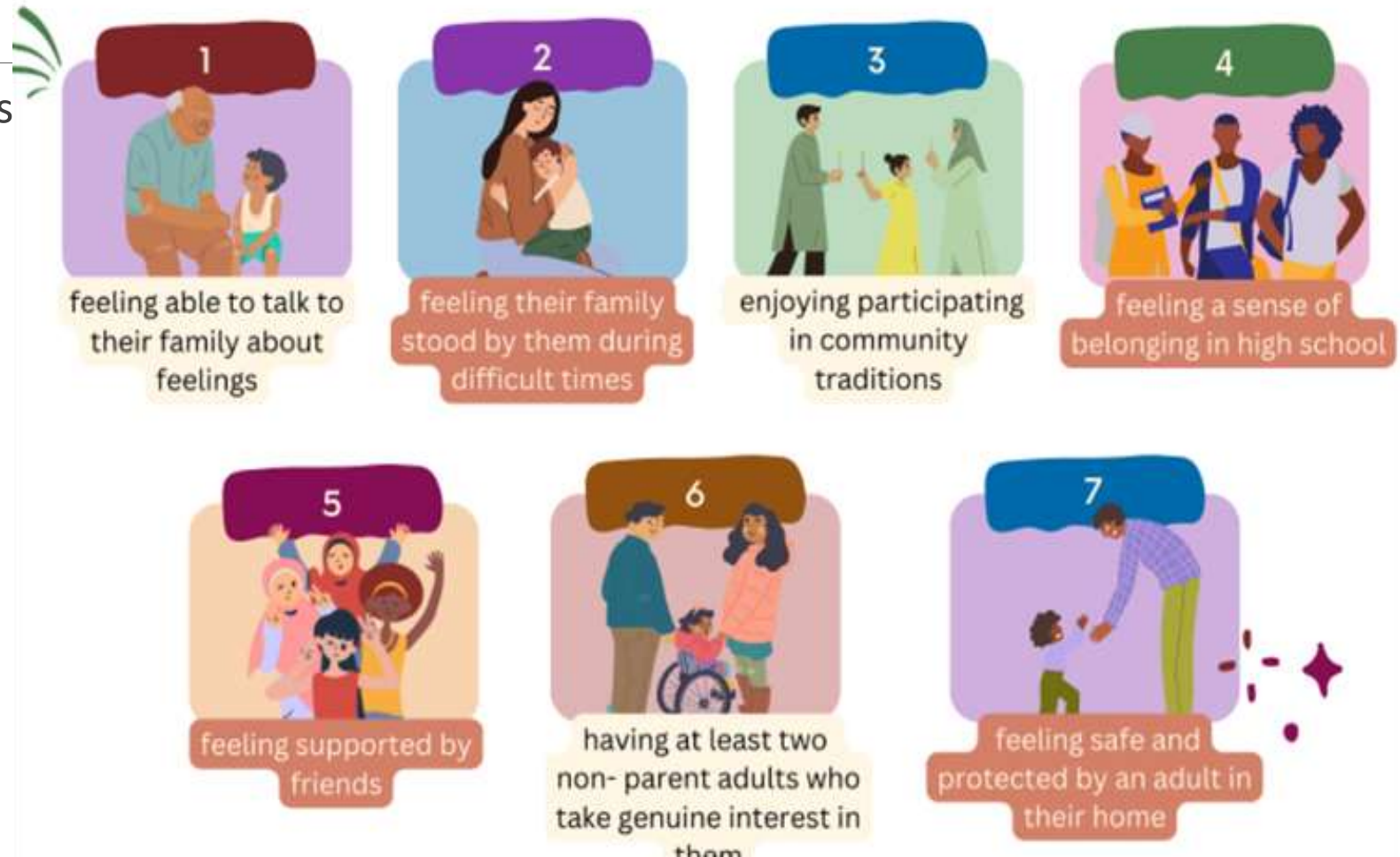




# Positive Childhood Experiences

Events, Relationships, and Environments

- Nurture Sense of Belonging
- Improves Child's Well Being
- Provides Support



# How do PCEs Help?

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- Counterbalance Negative Effects of ACEs
- Help Children Develop a Support Network,
- Increase Resilience and Positive Outcomes

# My Positive Childhood Experiences

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- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. The ability to talk with family about feelings             | • No  |
| 2. The sense that family is supportive during difficult times | • No  |
| 3. The enjoyment of participation in community traditions     | • No  |
| 4. Feeling a sense of belonging in high school                | • No  |
| 5. Feeling supported by friends                               | • Yes |
| 6. Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely cared  | • Yes |
| 7. Feeling safe and protected by an adult in the home         | • No  |

# Personal PCE's

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Feeling Supported and Spending Time w/ Friends

- Playing Music
- Concerts
- Skateboarding
- Gym

Having 2 Non-Parental Adults Who Actually Cared

- Parents of Friends
- Marine Recruiters

# Negative Aspects of My PCEs

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Feeling Supported and Spending Time w/ Friends

- Substance Use
  - Tobacco - Age 6
  - Alcohol Use - Age 11

Having at least 2 Non-Parent Adults Who Genuinely Cared

- Parents of Friends: Health Issues – Alcoholism and Drug Use  
No Supervision – Increase in Criminality/Truancy

# Even if PCEs Were Not Present....

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what are other  
words for  
not present?



absent, away, elsewhere,  
missing, off, gone, lost,  
lacking, abroad, mislaid





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Building Resilience Can Still Help!

A solid orange horizontal bar at the bottom of the slide.



# Build Healthy Relationships





Make Everyday  
Have Meaning



# Learn From the Past

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Stay Hopeful



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## Take Care of Yourself

- i. Exercise
- ii. Eat Well
- iii. Engage in MH Services
- iv. Embrace Sobriety



# Take Action

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# Things Are Different in Prison

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- ❑ Security
- ❑ Lack of Choice
- ❑ Limited Resources
- ❑ Approved MH Groups
  - Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
  - Promoting Emotional Resilience
  - Beyond Trauma – A Healing Journey for Women ( Find Similar – Male I/Is

# End Goal – Where the Rubber Meets the Road

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## Mixed Method Research Process

- ❑ Qualitative – How do you feel classes have helped your trauma?
- ❑ Quantitative – Scale of 1 – 10 have your ADLs improved?
- ❑ Areas to Improve Upon – What worked? What didn't work?
- ❑ Potential New Group – Specifically Focused on ACE Trauma

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