



Healing Iowa:

Reshaping our systems and communities for Iowa's children to thrive in response to ACEs

Iowa ACEs 360





We want to hear from you!



Compassionate Communities

Where Everyone Can Thrive



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

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

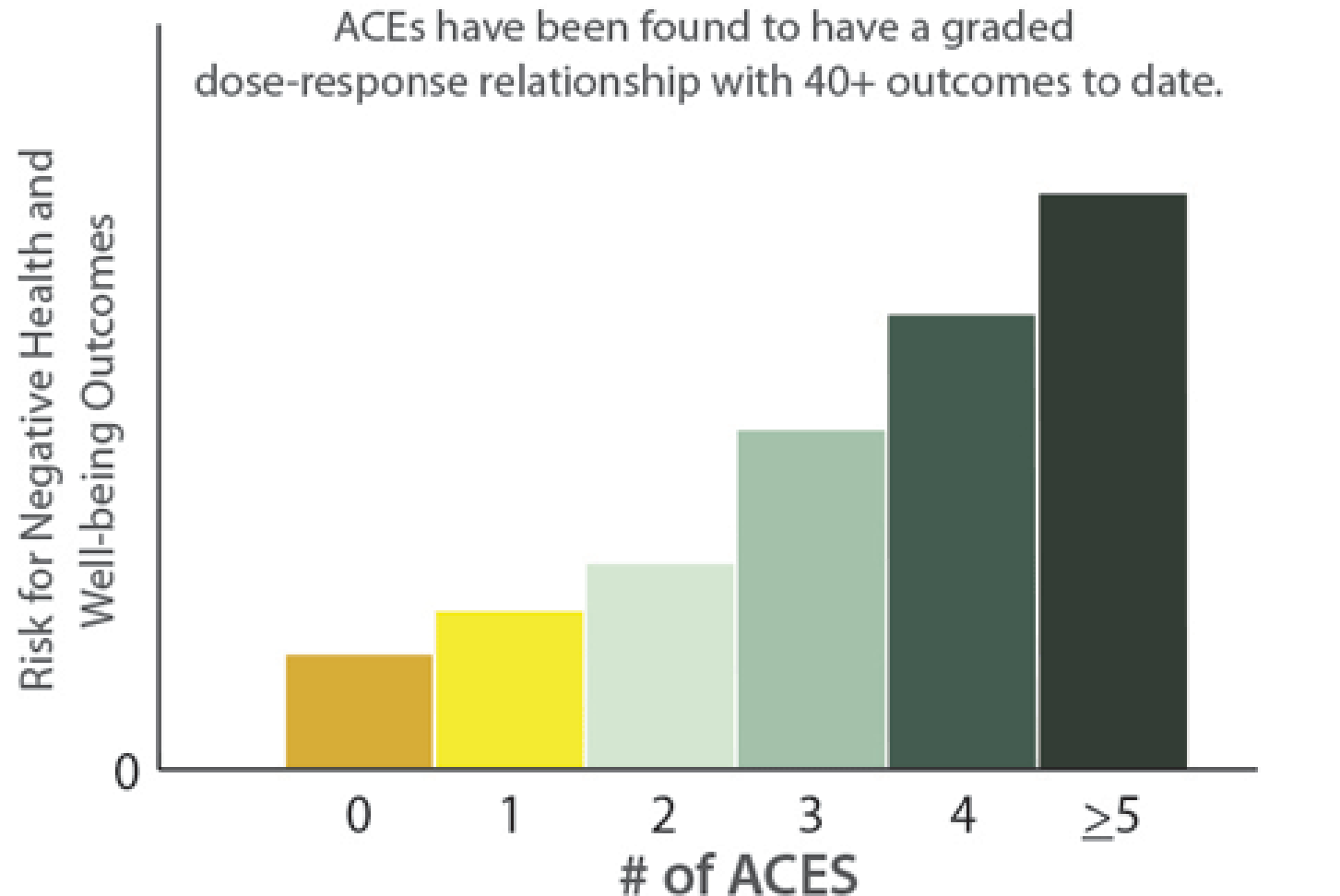
Behaviors

Smoking, risky sexual behavior, alcoholism, drug use

Life Potential

Graduation rates, academic achievement, time lost from work

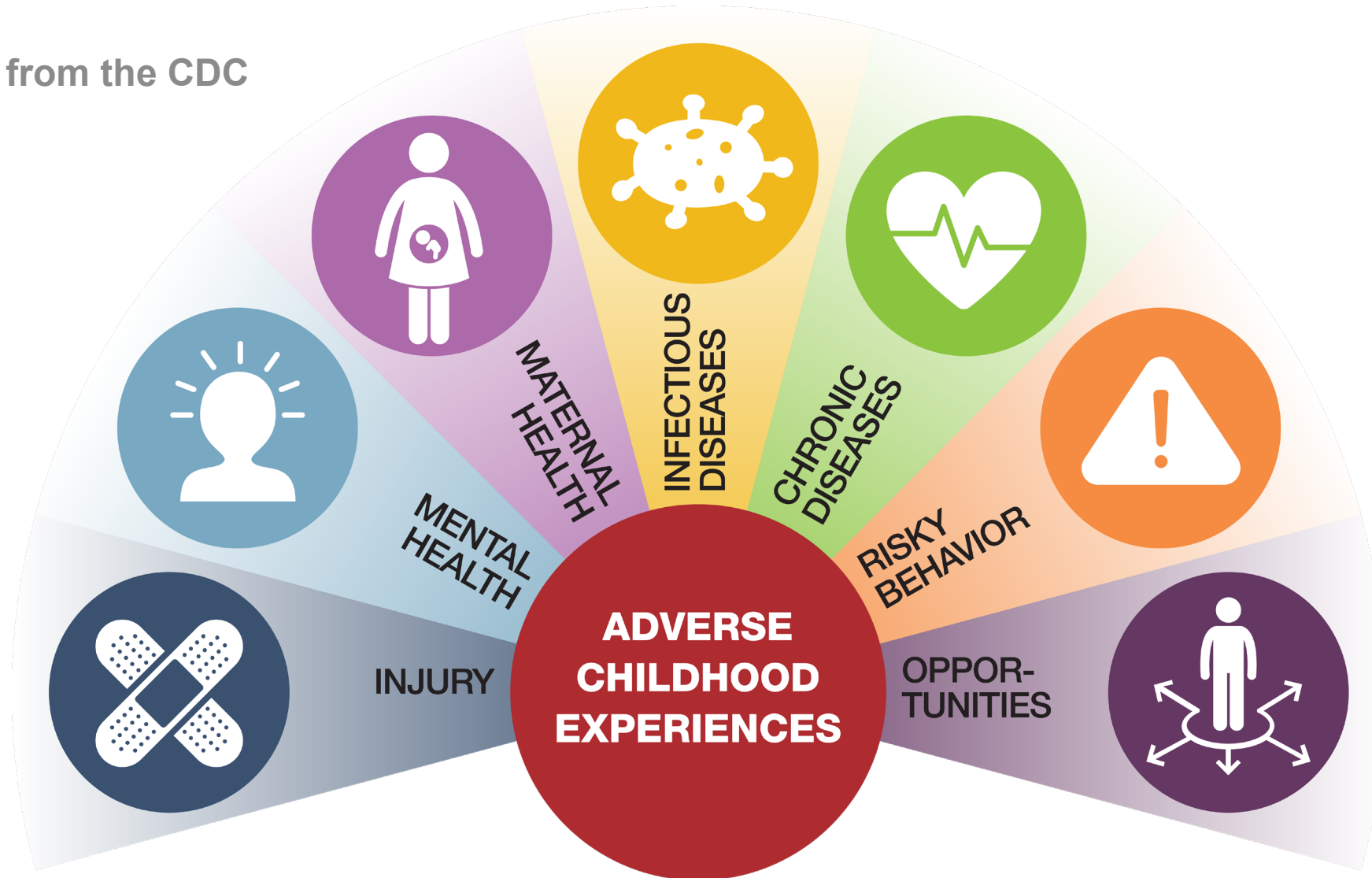
Source: Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., . . . Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults - The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of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



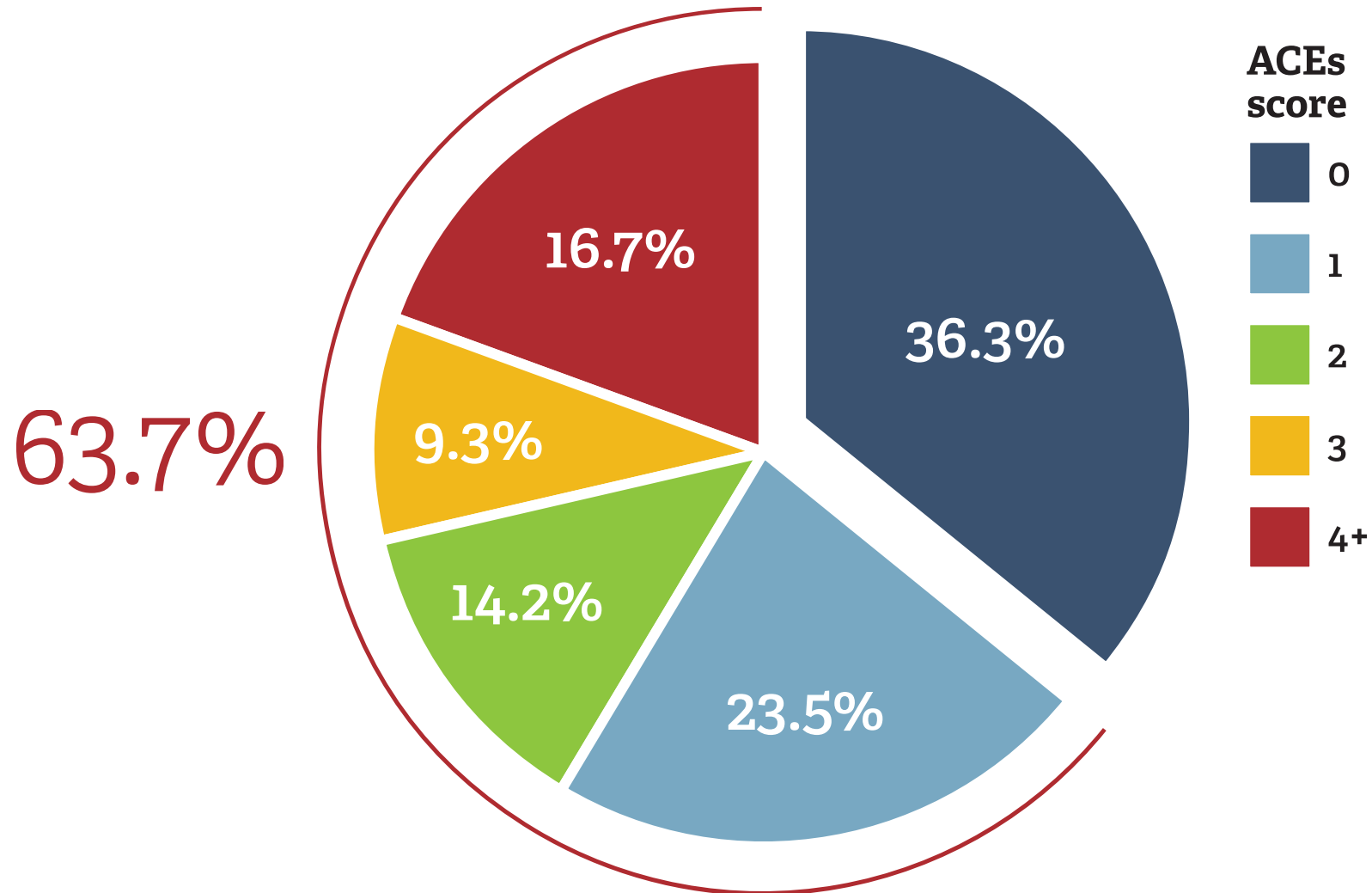
*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.

EARLY ADVERSITY HAS LASTING IMPACTS

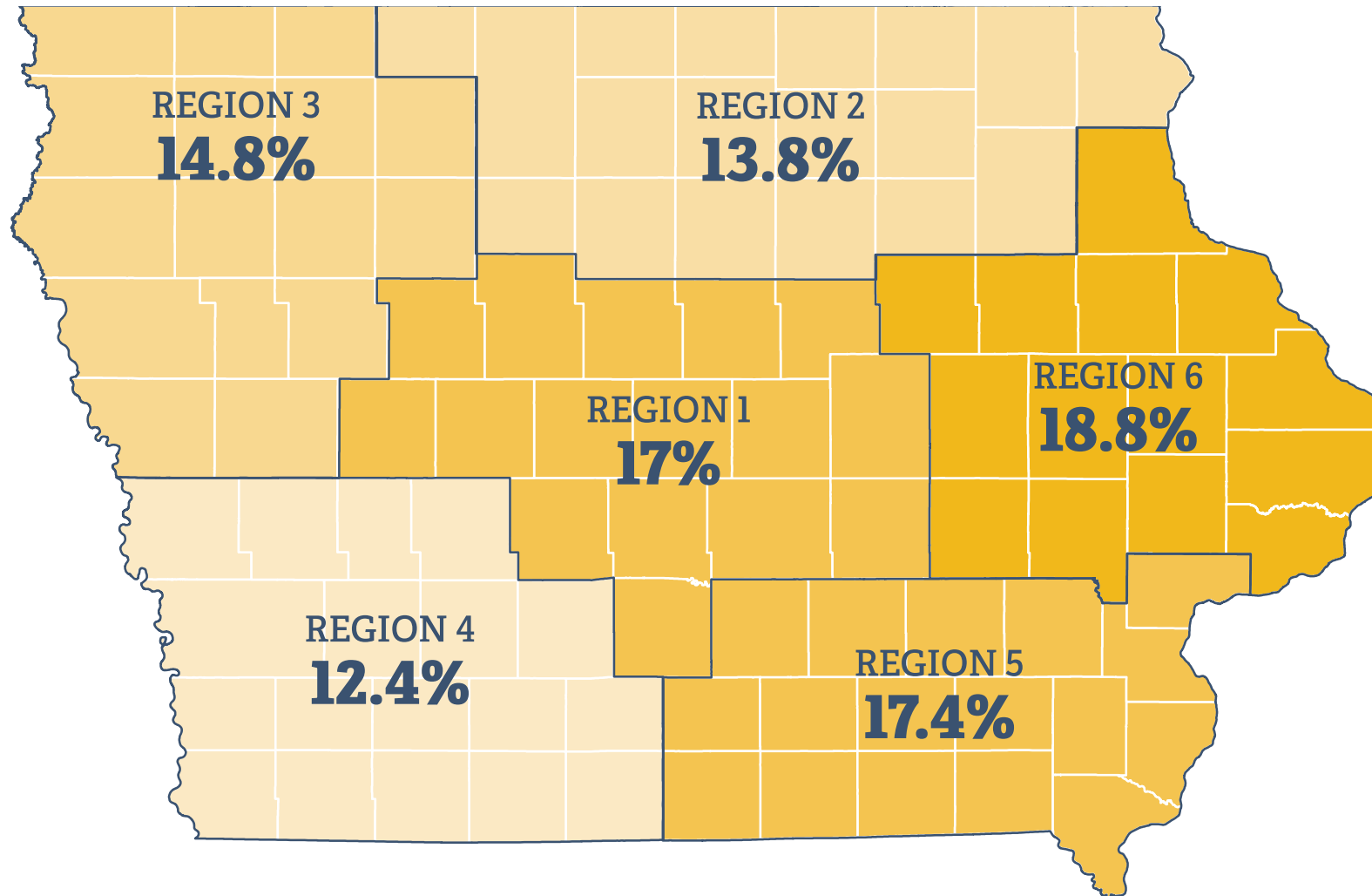
Adapted from the CDC



PREVALENCE OF ACES AMONG IOWANS



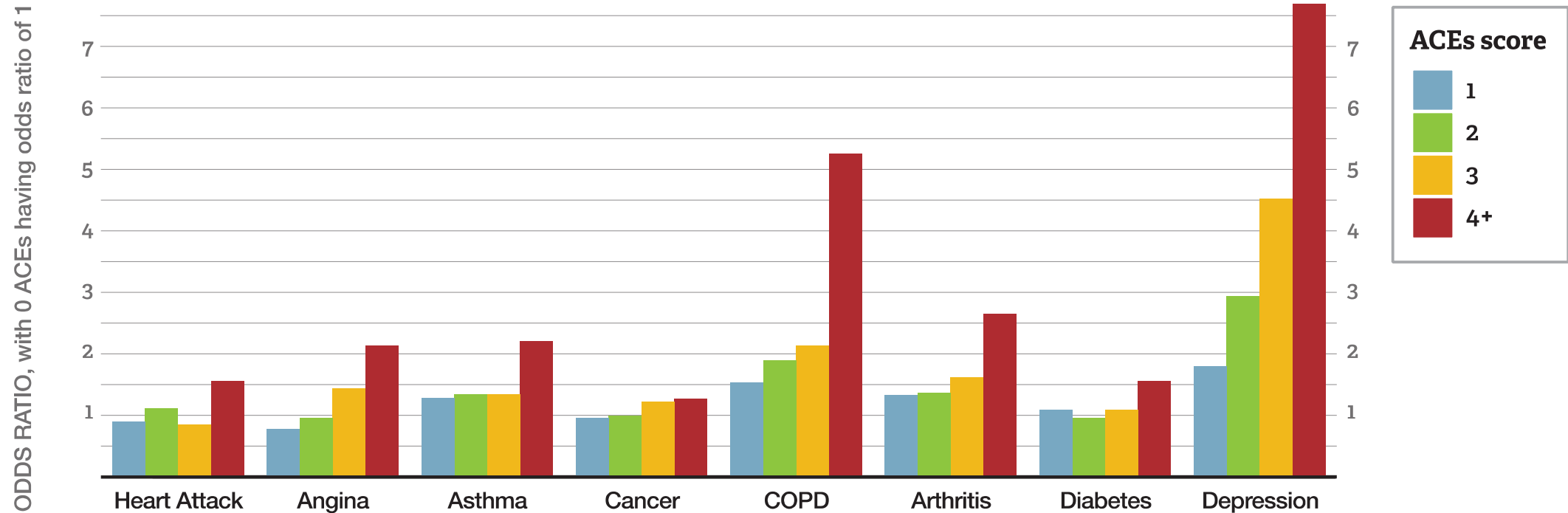
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ACES AND HEALTH

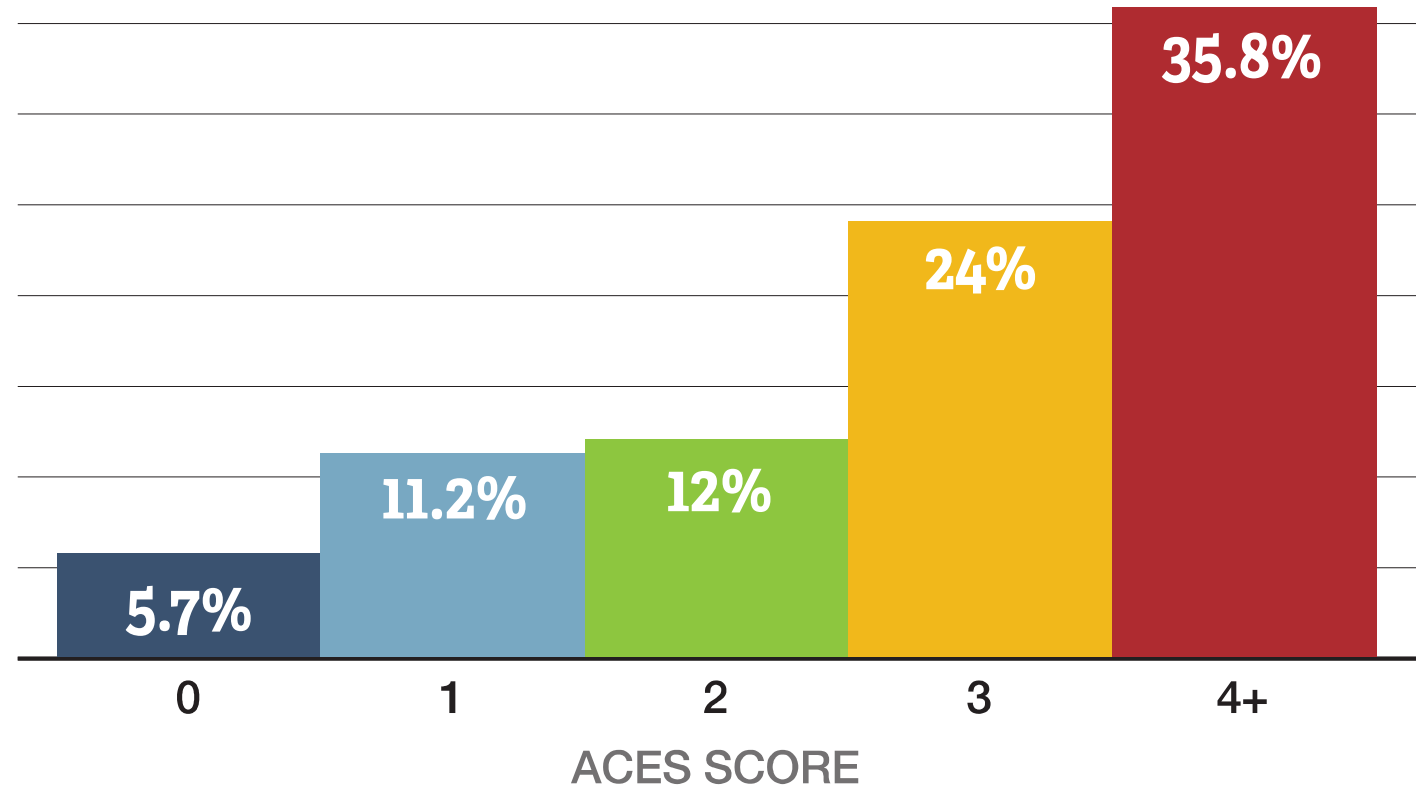
ODDS OF DEVELOPING HEALTH CONDITIONS BASED ON ACES/NEGLECT



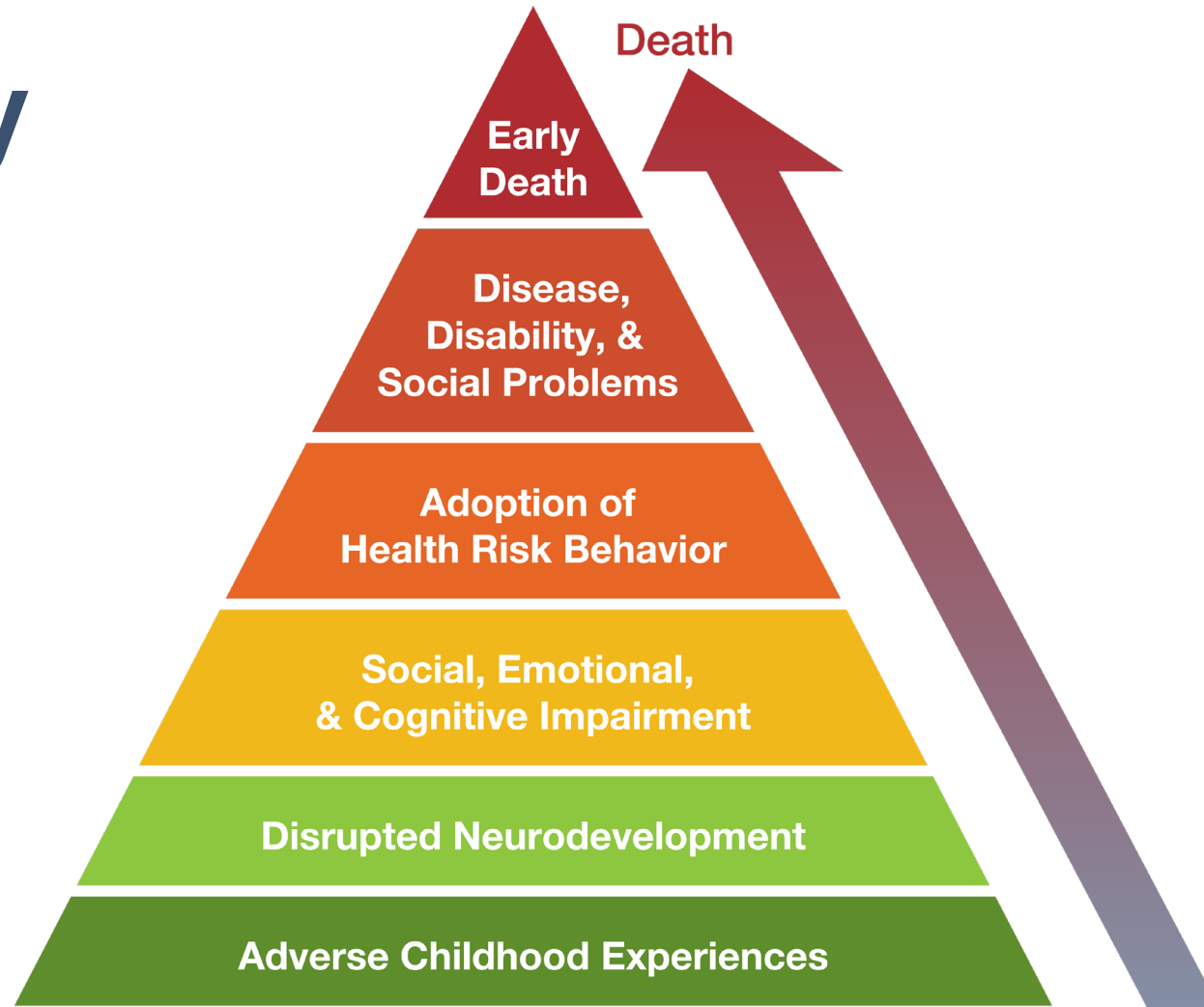


ACES AND MENTAL HEALTH

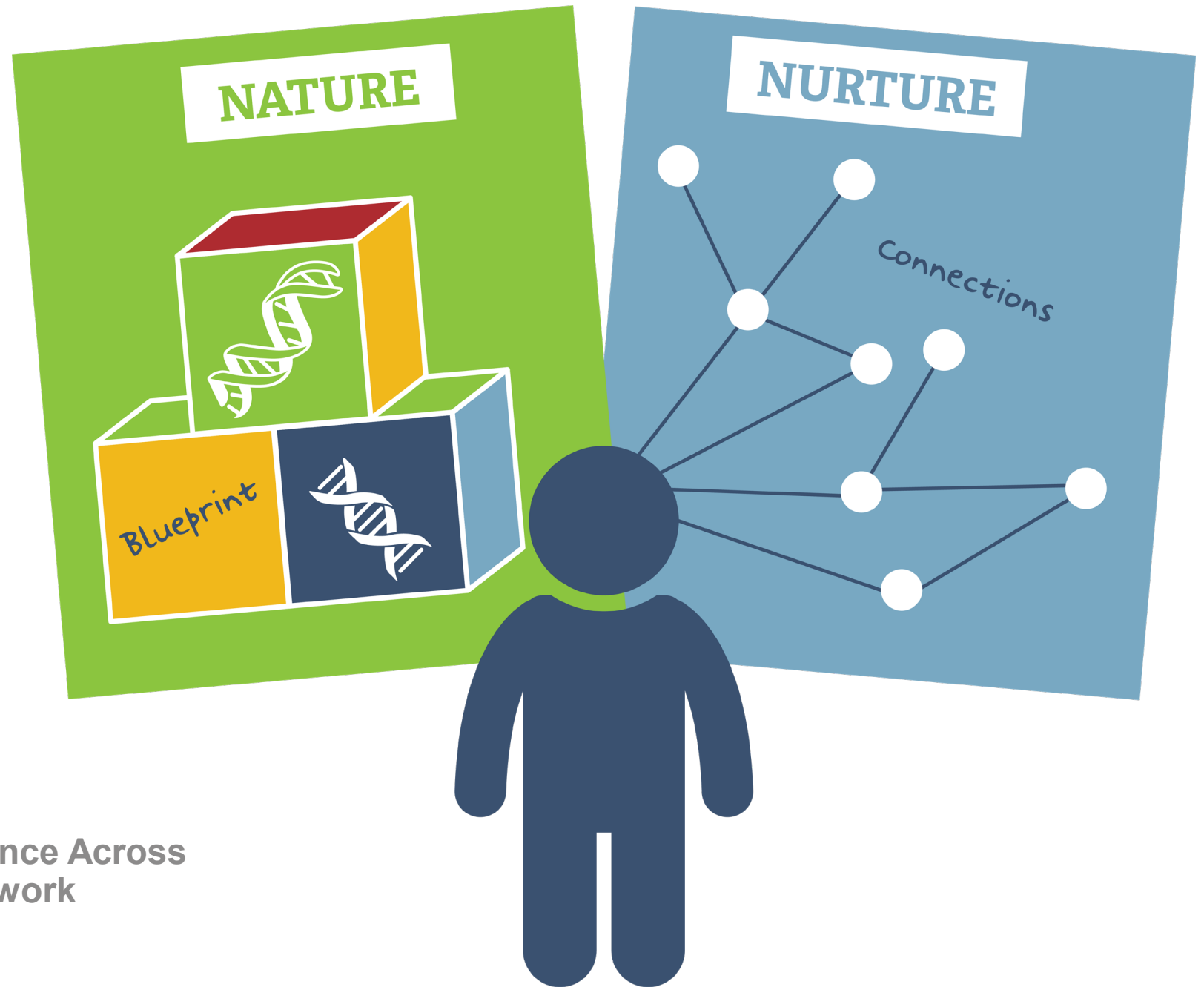
PERCENTAGE OF
IOWA ADULTS
REPORTING AT
LEAST ONE MENTAL
HEALTH CONCERN
BY REPORTED
EXPERIENCE OF
ACES/NEGLECT



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

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

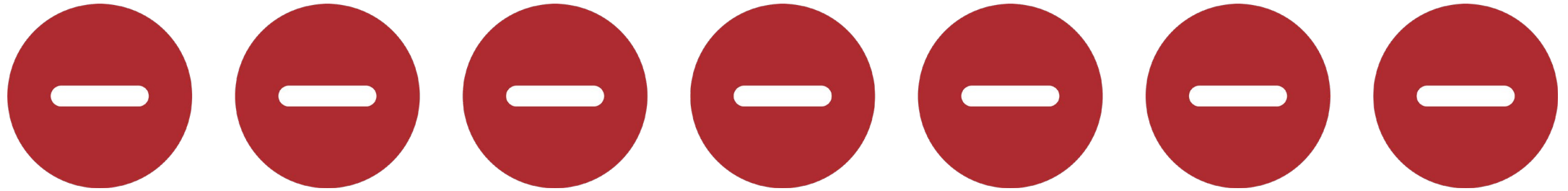
Early intercourse, promiscuity, sexual dissatisfaction

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



ODDS RATIO OF STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED FOUR OR MORE ACES COMPARED TO THOSE WITH ZERO ACES:

3.4x  more likely to experience academic failure

4.9x  more likely to have severe attendance problems

6.9x  more likely to have behavior problems

SOURCE: BLODGETT AND LANIGAN, 2018. NOTE: THIS IS NOT IOWA-SPECIFIC DATA

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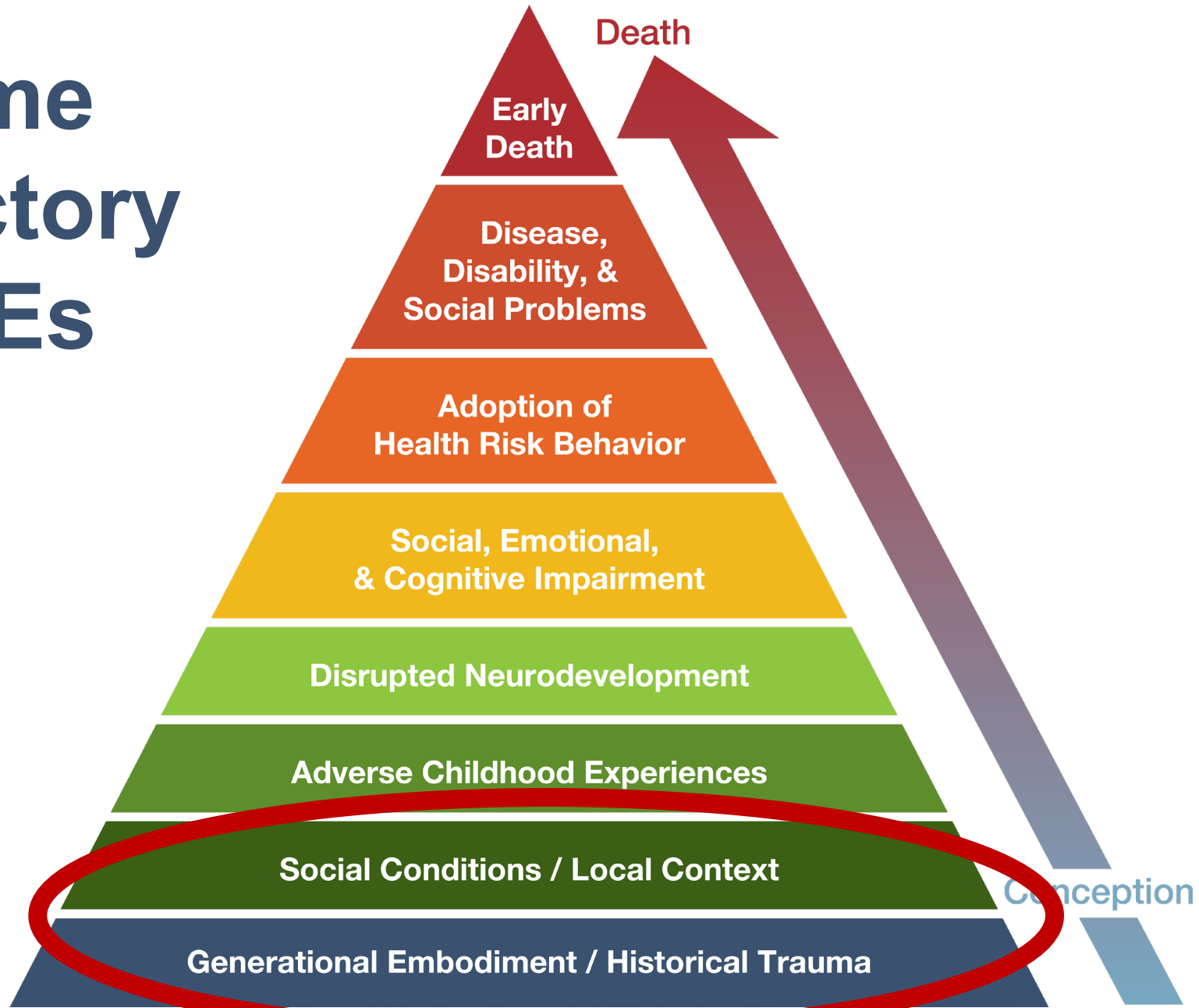
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are incidents that dramatically upset the safe, nurturing environments children need to thrive.

The Framework

Beyond Conventional ACEs



Lifetime Trajectory of ACEs

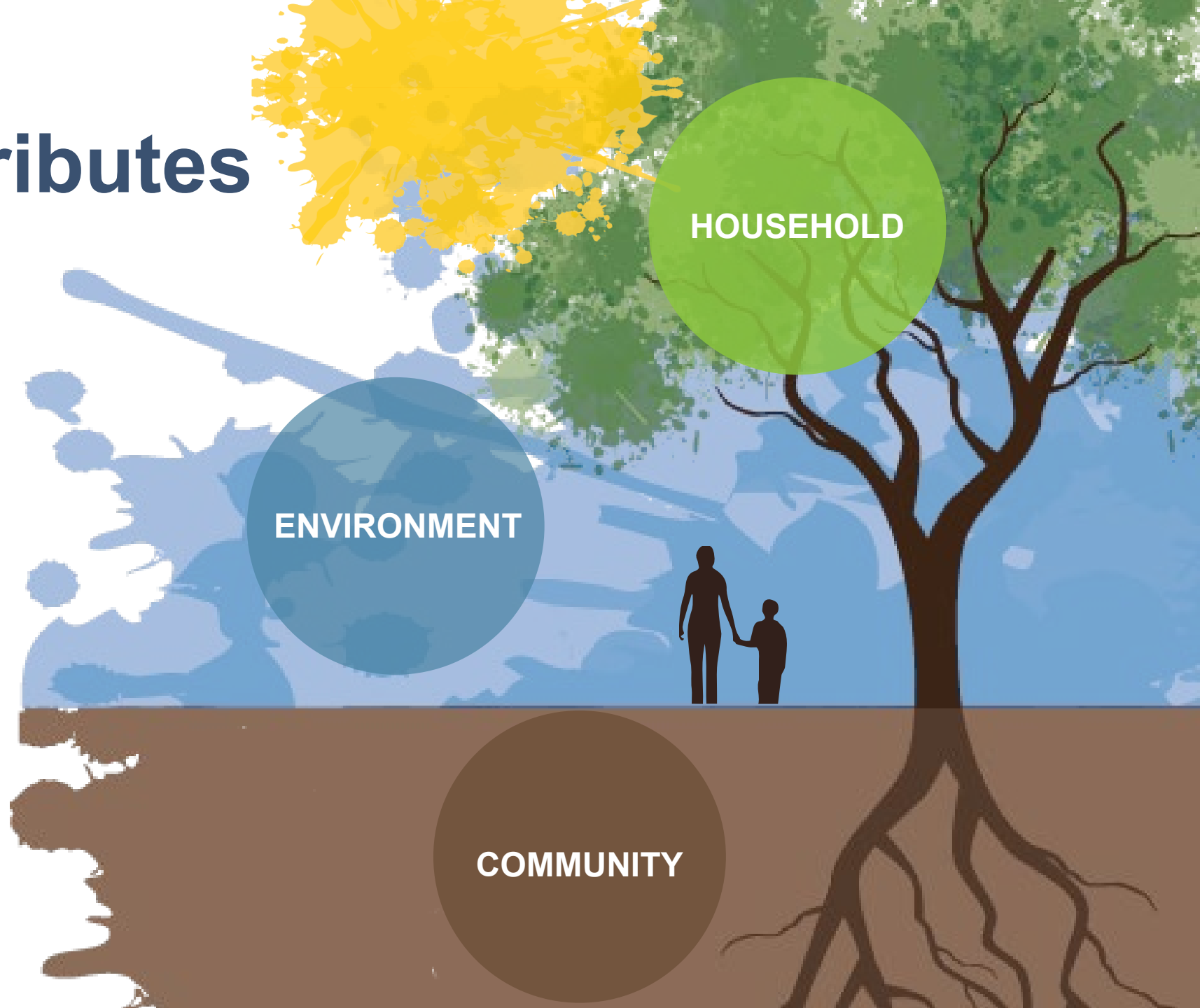


What Contributes to ACEs?

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



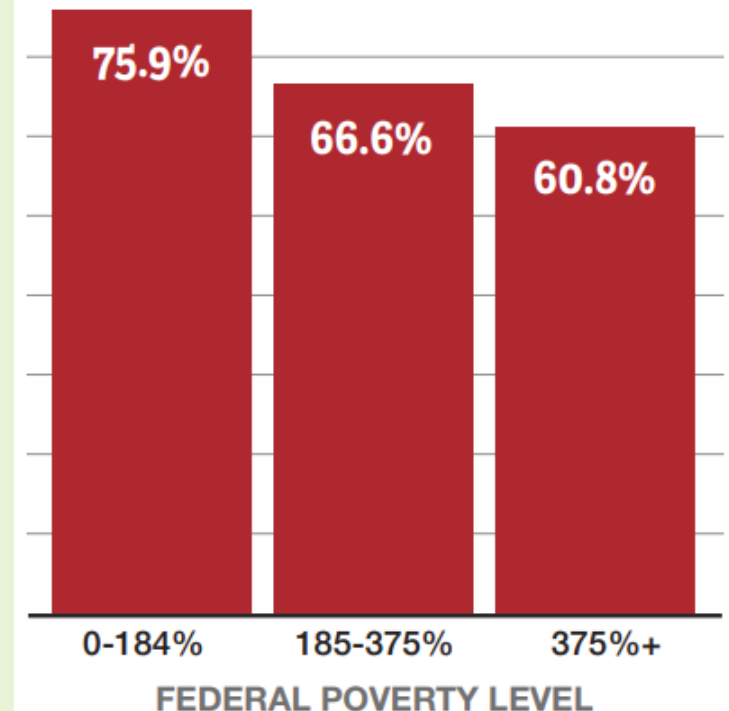
Environmental and Community Trauma

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

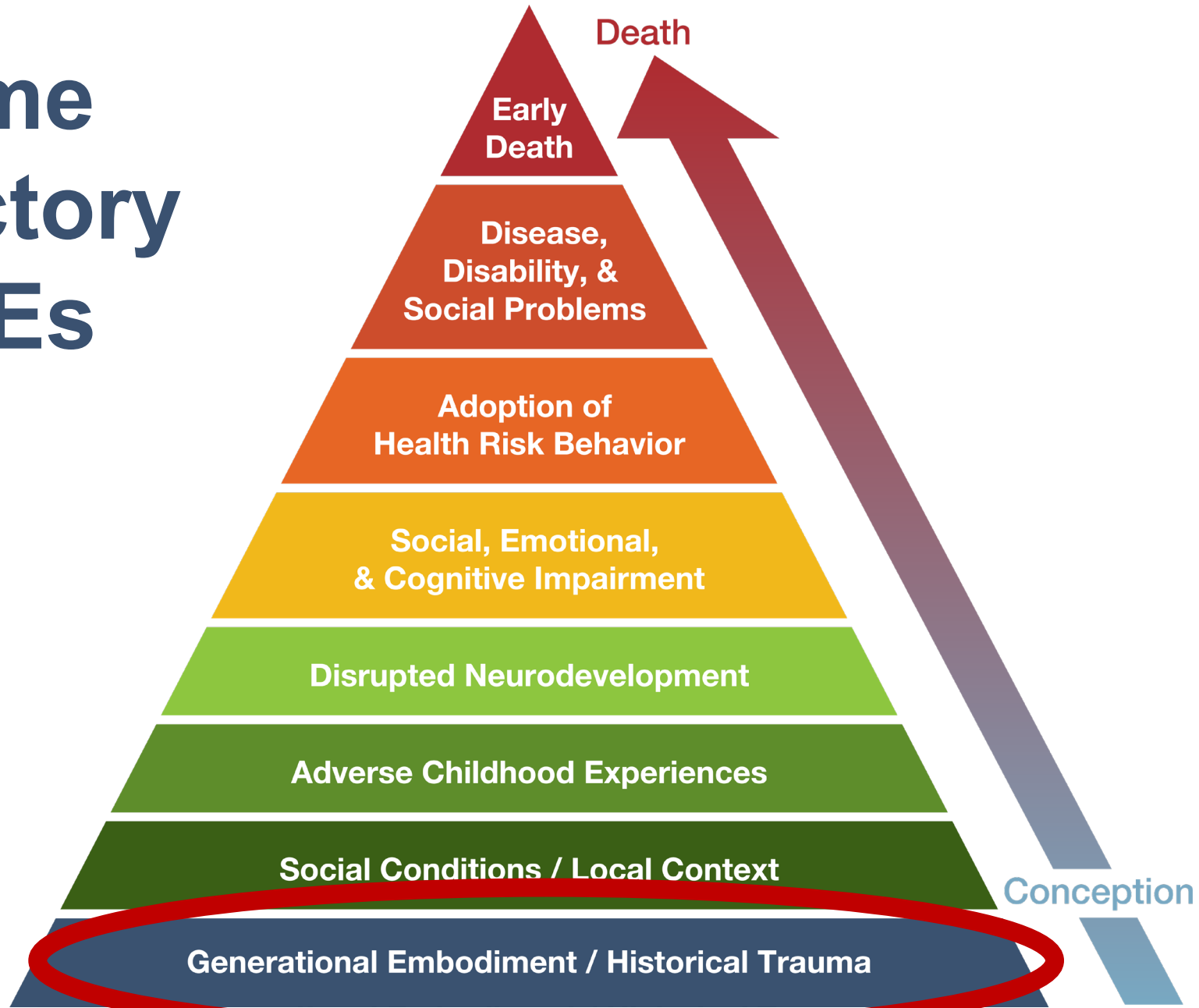
- Adults of color
- Women
- Adults with less than a high school education
- Below 184% of the federal poverty level



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



Lifetime Trajectory of ACEs



Strengthening Our Communities





ACES AND RESILIENCE



ACEs
Poverty
Violence
Marginalization
Parental stress



Supportive relationships
Guided learning
Skills for coping and adapting
Economic supports
**Access to physical and
mental health care**
Safe community
Faith and cultural traditions



The Hope Framework



SOURCE: RESPONDING TO ACES WITH HOPE: HEALTH OUTCOMES FROM POSITIVE EXPERIENCES, 2017



FOR ADULTS THAT REPORTED FOUR OR MORE ACES/NEGLECT:

- 22.9% felt rarely supported by friends
- 29.9% rarely had genuine interest from two adults
- 52.4% were rarely able to talk about feelings with family
- 28.7% felt family rarely stood by them in difficult times





Iowa's Response to ACEs

Systems change is about shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place.

The Water of Systems Change, FSG

Why Focus on Systems Change?

- Create conditions that allow families to thrive.
- Remove barriers that stand in the way.
- Lasting change



Strengthening Our Communities



Responding with Families

Communities and systems can work to build these protective factors with families:

- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports to meet basic needs
- Development of social and emotional competence and self-regulating behaviors in children




“It wasn’t hard to step into this role. The hardest part was finding the support to do it.”

- Jonat Gonzalez

Responding with Policies and Community

We can infuse ACEs responses into communities and systems in these ways:

- Advocate for policies that address family stress and give children access to services.
- Learn about trauma and use tools within scripture, traditions, and communities of faith that can promote positive relationships
- Identify who in the community needs to hear this information and engage them in the conversation.



“It makes you look at the world differently. It really shifts the message, giving people tools they can use, as well as increased compassion for others.”

- Jean Sullivan, *Lemonade for Life*
trainer and pastor

TAKE ACTION

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

What is one way you could address ACEs in your work or in the community?



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** 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!

