

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Research: Extension, Integration & Implications

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# The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

The largest study of its kind ever done to examine the health and social effects of adverse childhood experiences over the lifespan (Felitti & Anda)



- Experiences while growing up that deeply impact a young person and profoundly affect emotional and physical health later in life.



(Thank you to Vincent Felitti for slides)

# Categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences

## Abuse, by Category

	Category	Prevalence (%)
• Psychological (by parents)		11%
• Physical (by parents)		11%
• Sexual (anyone)		22%

## Household Dysfunction, by Category

• Substance Abuse in family		26%
• Mental Illness in family		19%
• Domestic Violence		13%
• Imprisoned Household Member		3%
• Loss of parent		23%

# Adverse Childhood Experiences Score

Number of categories of childhood experiences are summed

## ***ACE Score***

***Prevalence*** (after Wave 2)

<b>0</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>5 or more</b>	<b>11%</b>



- Approximately *two-thirds* have at least one ACE
- More than *one-third* have experienced 2 – 4 ACE categories

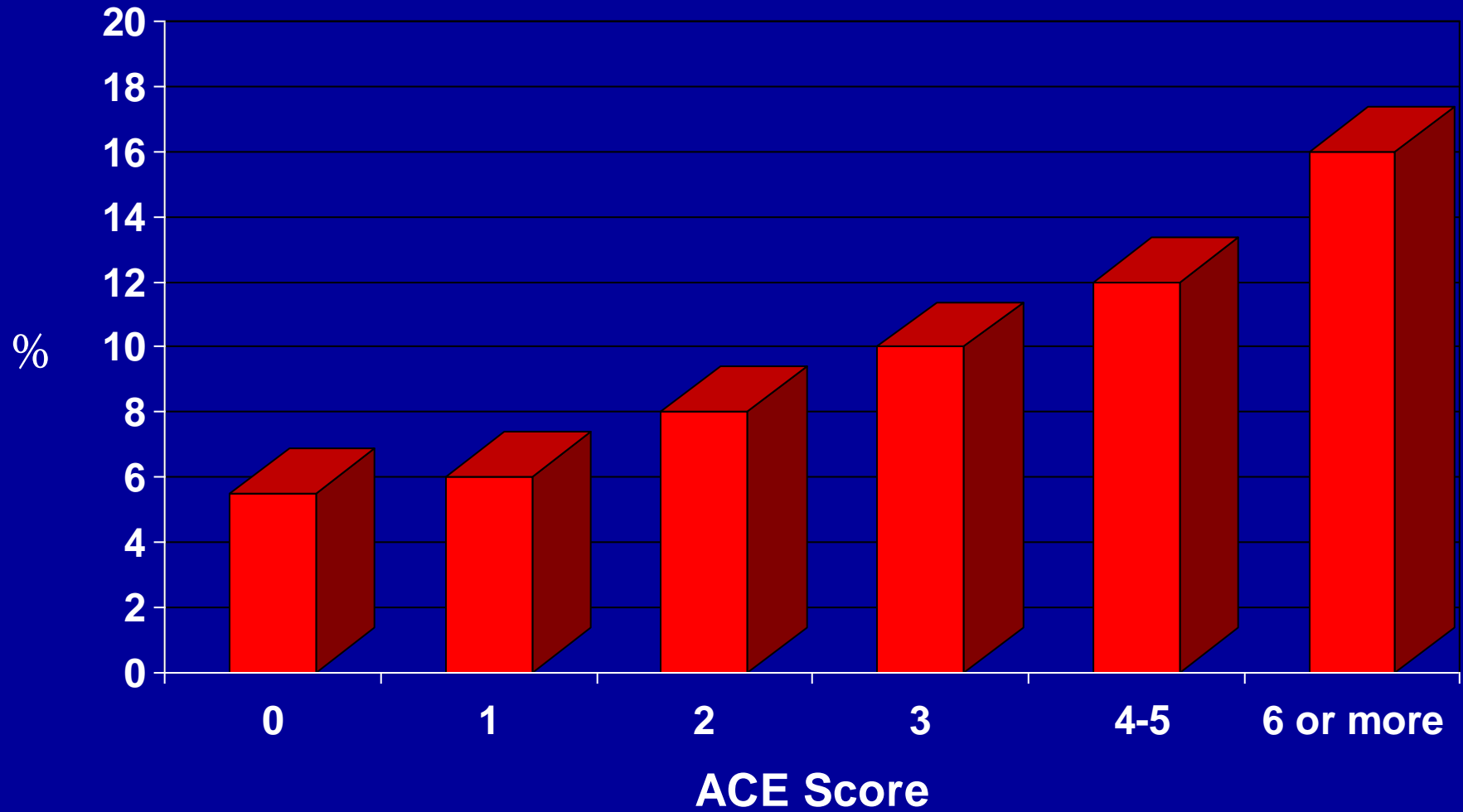
# The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

## Summary of Findings:

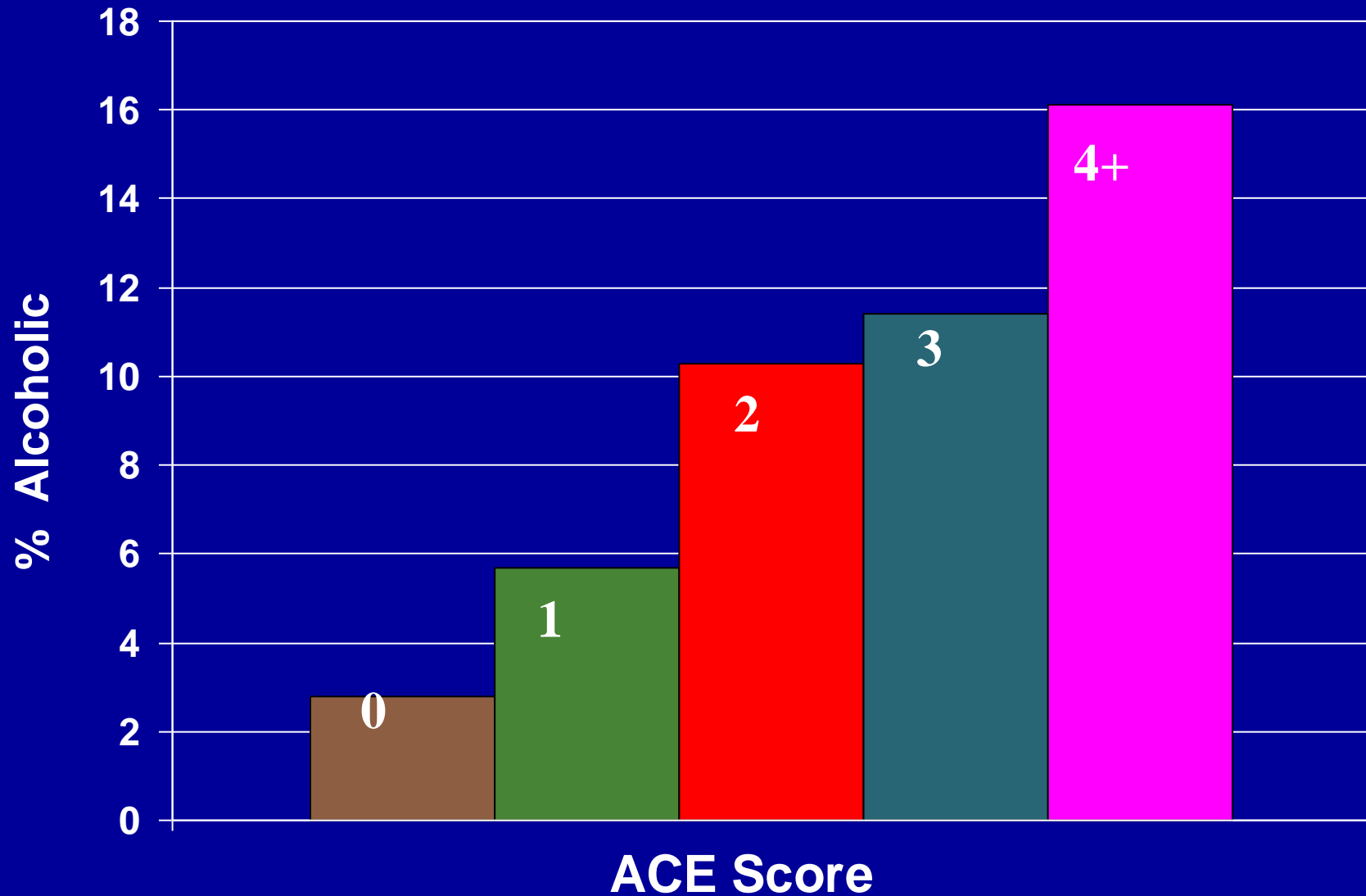
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are very common
- ACEs are strong predictors of adult health risks and disease
- ACEs are implicated in *the 10 leading causes of death in the U.S.!*
- “I was actually stunned and I wept over what I saw.” ACEs researcher Rob Anda, M.D.
- **Virtually every study shows that ACEs are strong predictors of homelessness (Burt, 2001)**



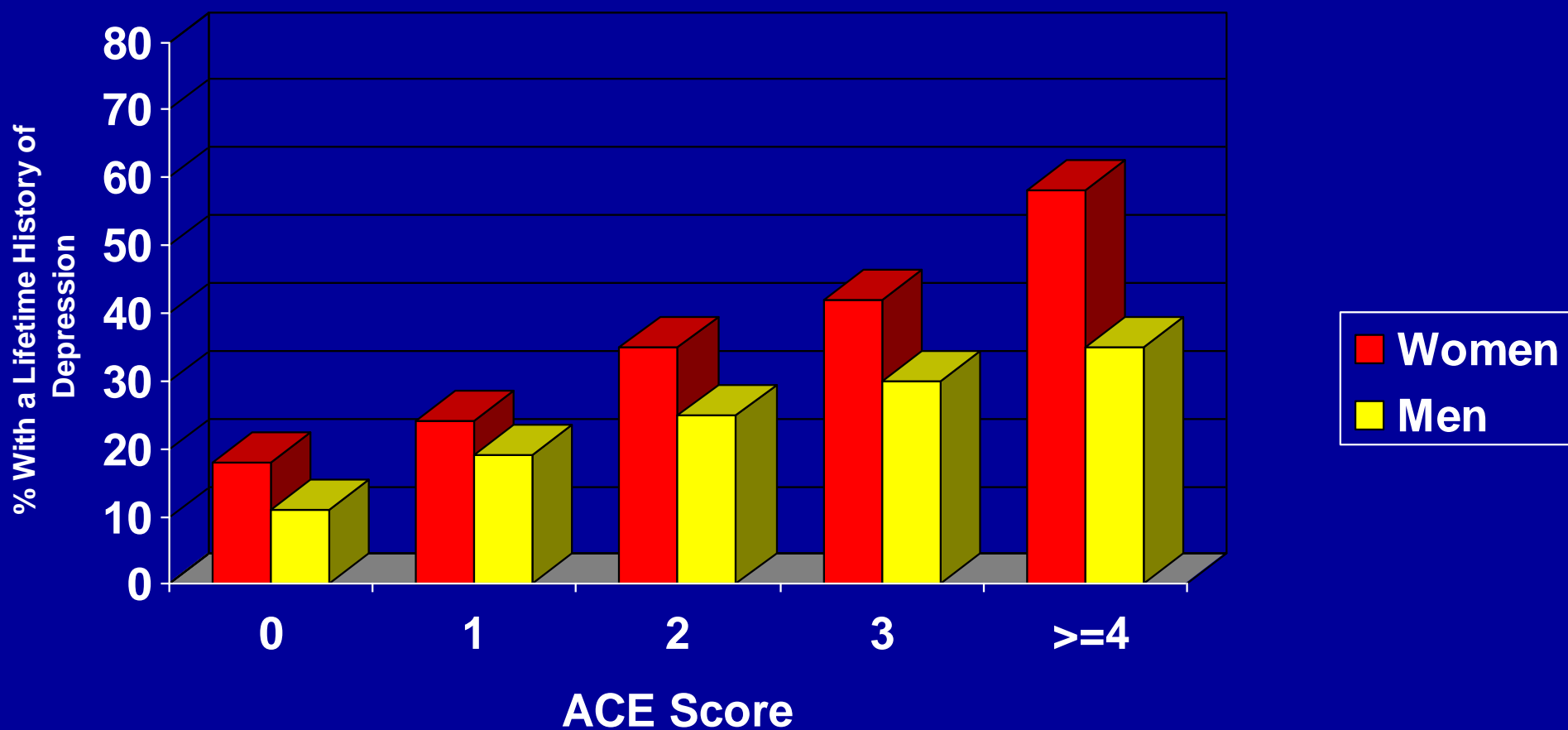
# Adverse Childhood Experiences and Current Smoking



# Childhood Experiences and Adult Alcoholism

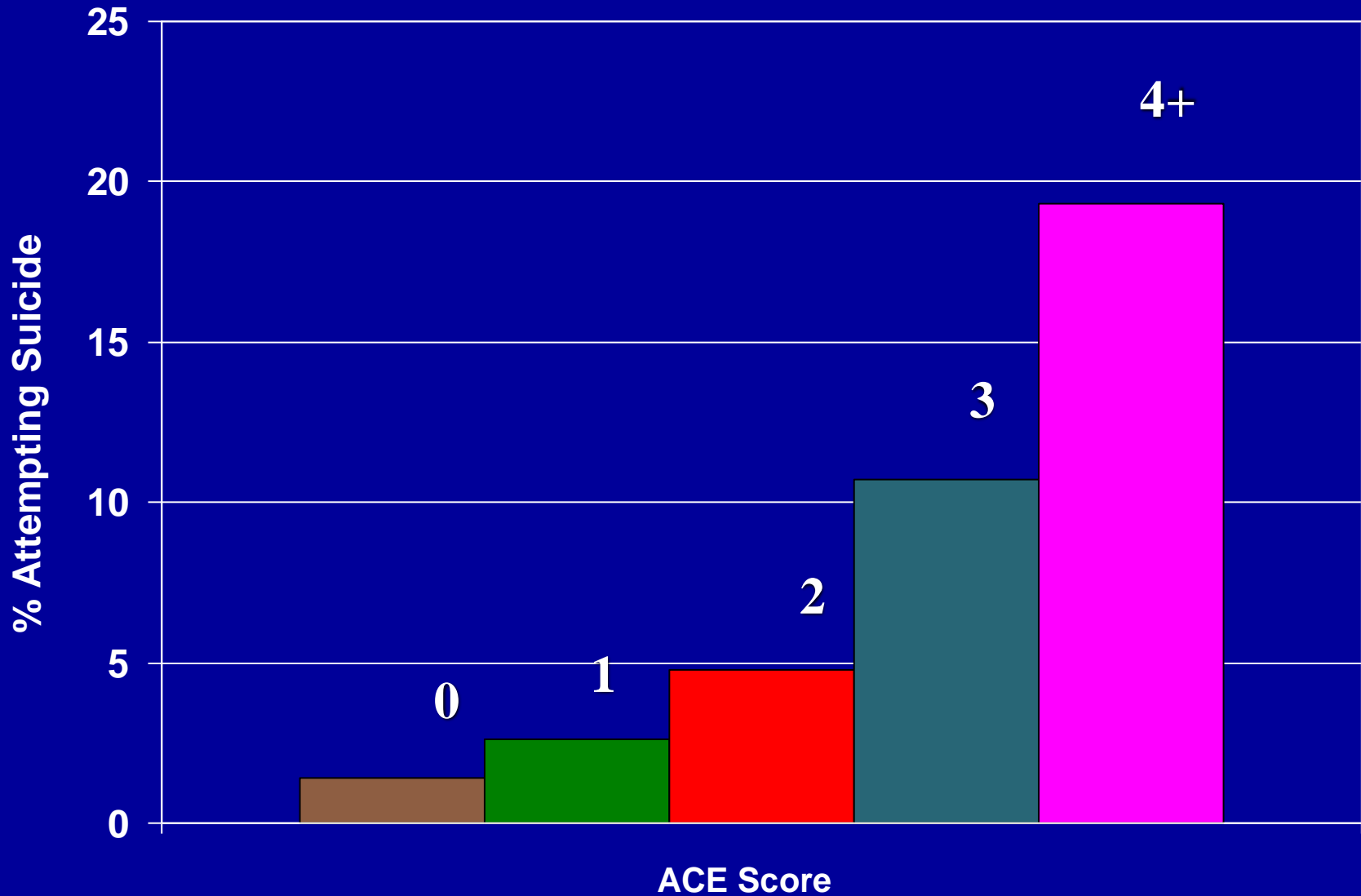


# Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression

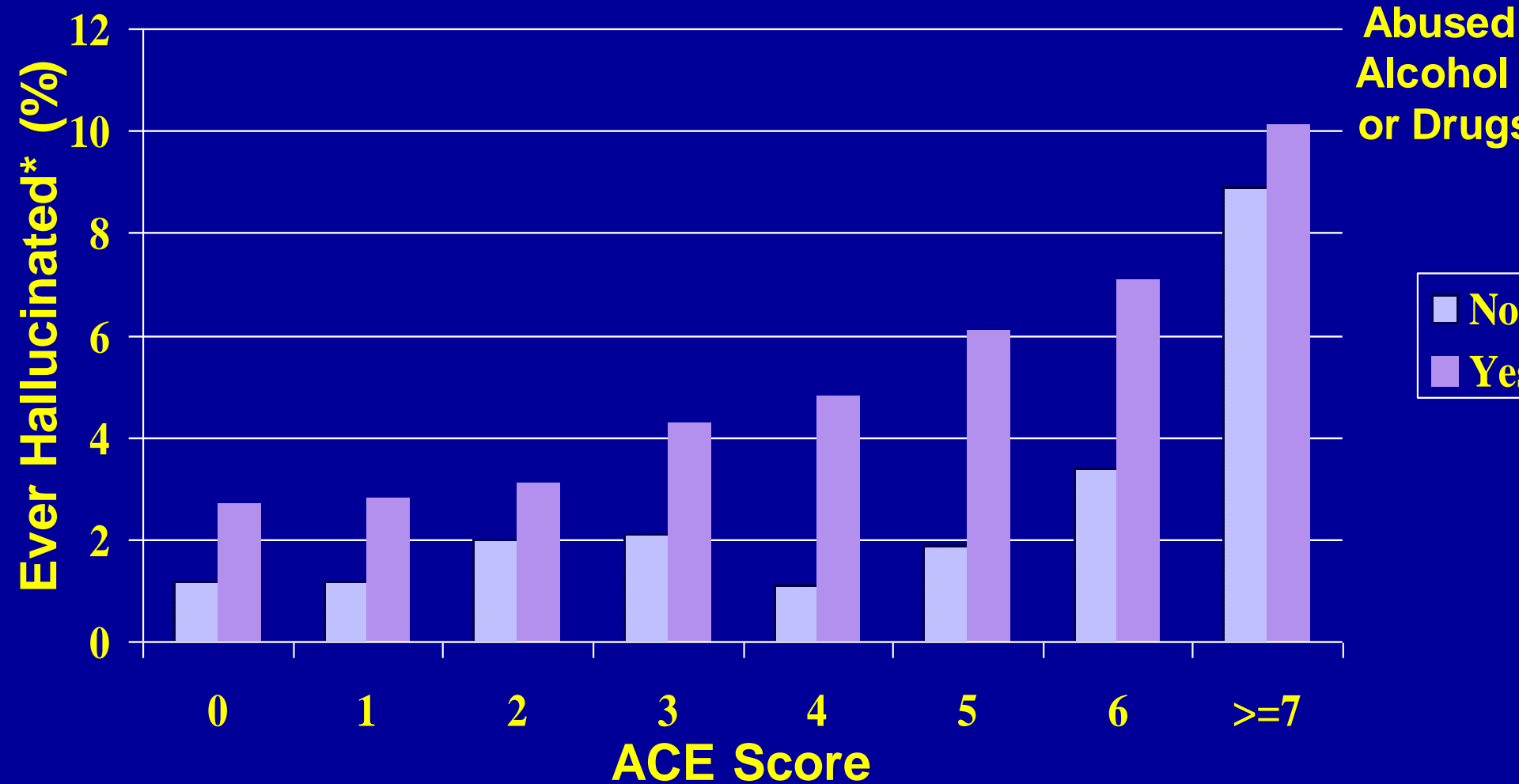




# Childhood Experiences Underlie Suicide

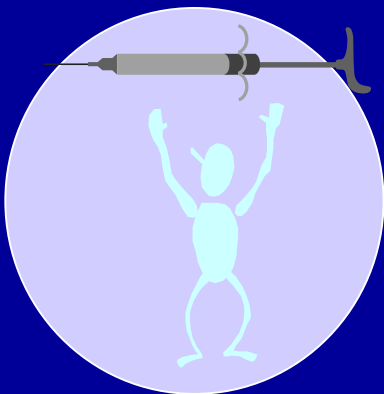
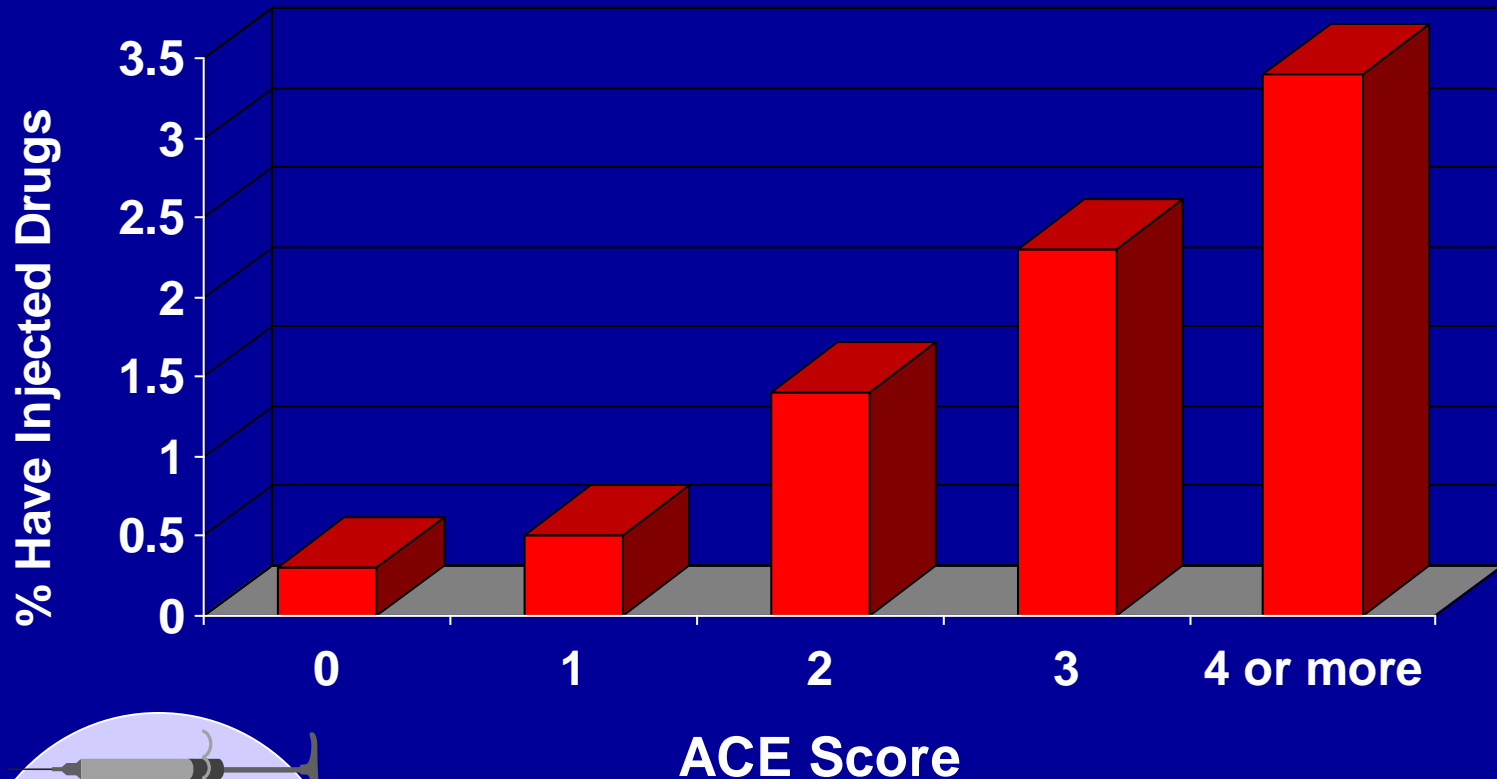


# ACE Score and Hallucinations



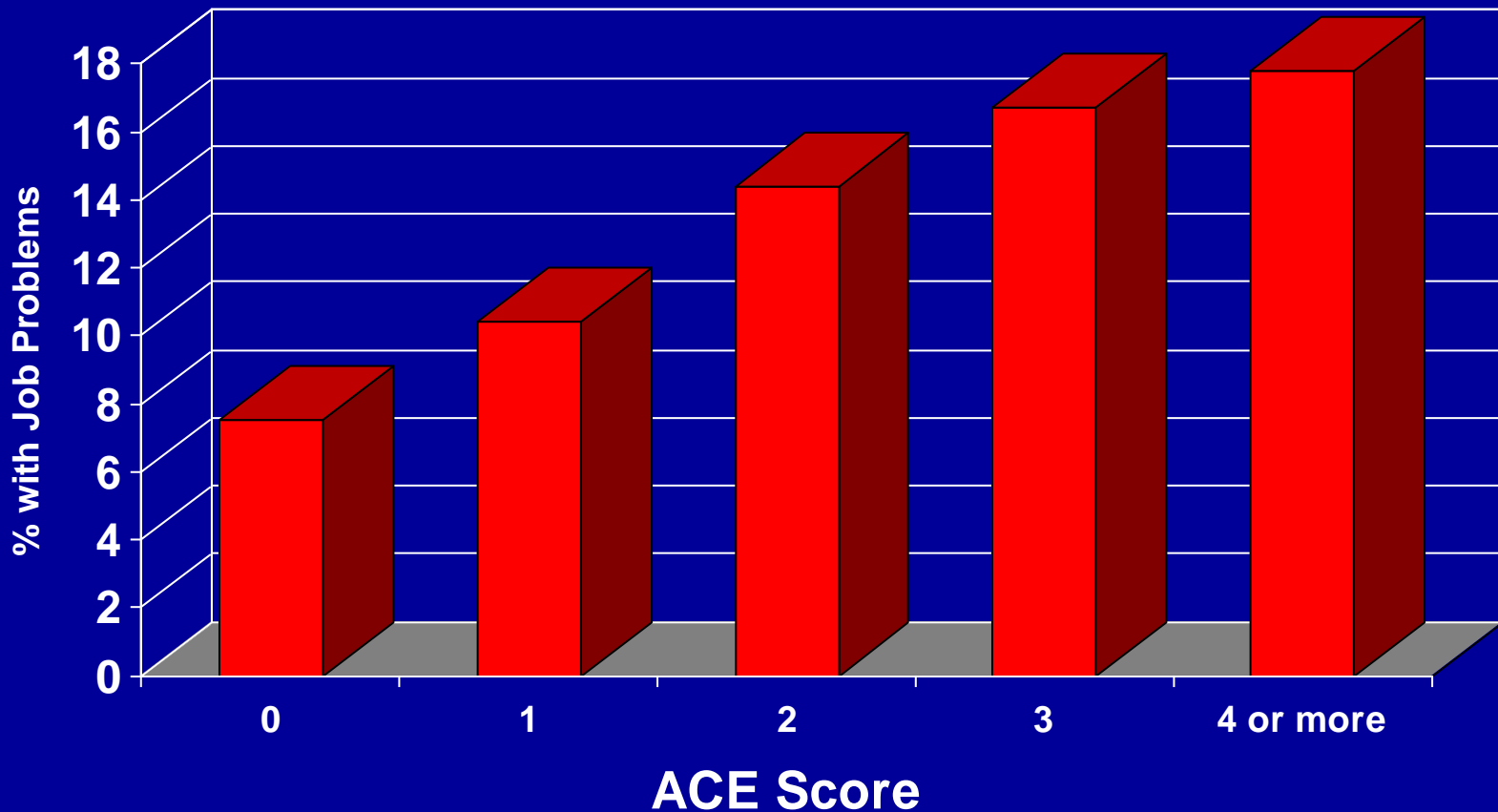
\*Adjusted for age, sex, race, and education.

# ACE Score and Intravenous Drug Use

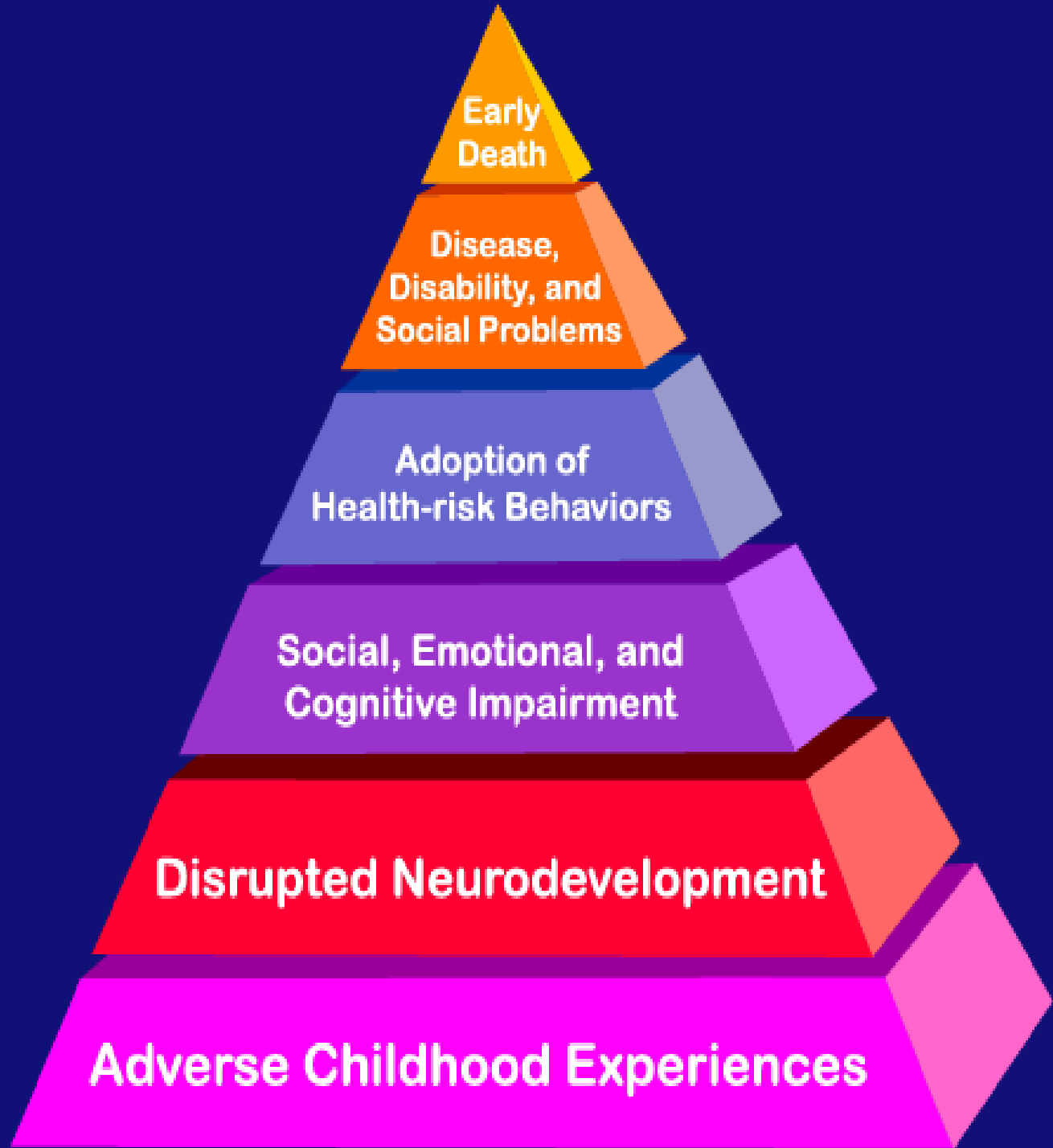
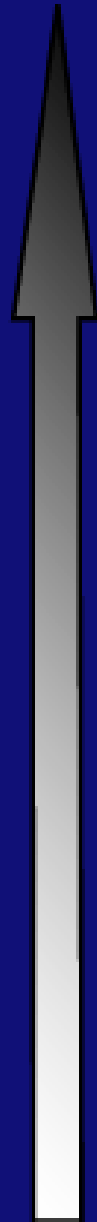


**N = 8,022**    **p < 0.001**

# ACE Score and Serious Job Problems



**Death**



**Early  
Death**

**Disease,  
Disability, and  
Social Problems**

**Adoption of  
Health-risk Behaviors**

**Social, Emotional, and  
Cognitive Impairment**

**Disrupted Neurodevelopment**

**Adverse Childhood Experiences**

**Conception**

# A Connection with Homelessness

- Mental illness and substance abuse problems are more common among homeless people
- ACEs connection to substance abuse and mental illness
- Even non-homeless people with either substance abuse problems or mental illness are less likely to hold a job

# University at Albany School of Social Welfare: ACE Response

- Enhance our understanding of ACEs
- Integrate with literature on resiliency and protective factors
- Prevention and Intervention for each ACE outcome
- Support systems transformation

# Person-in-Environment: A complex interplay of risk and resources

ACE impact on developing self (overwhelming feelings, activation of defense mechanisms, etc.)

Health Risk Behaviors (substance abuse, sexual and other risk-taking, etc.)  
Medical problems (both short & long-term)  
Changes in developing brain

INDIVIDUAL

COLLECTIVE

Family meanings  
Cultural values  
Social taboos

Victim blaming

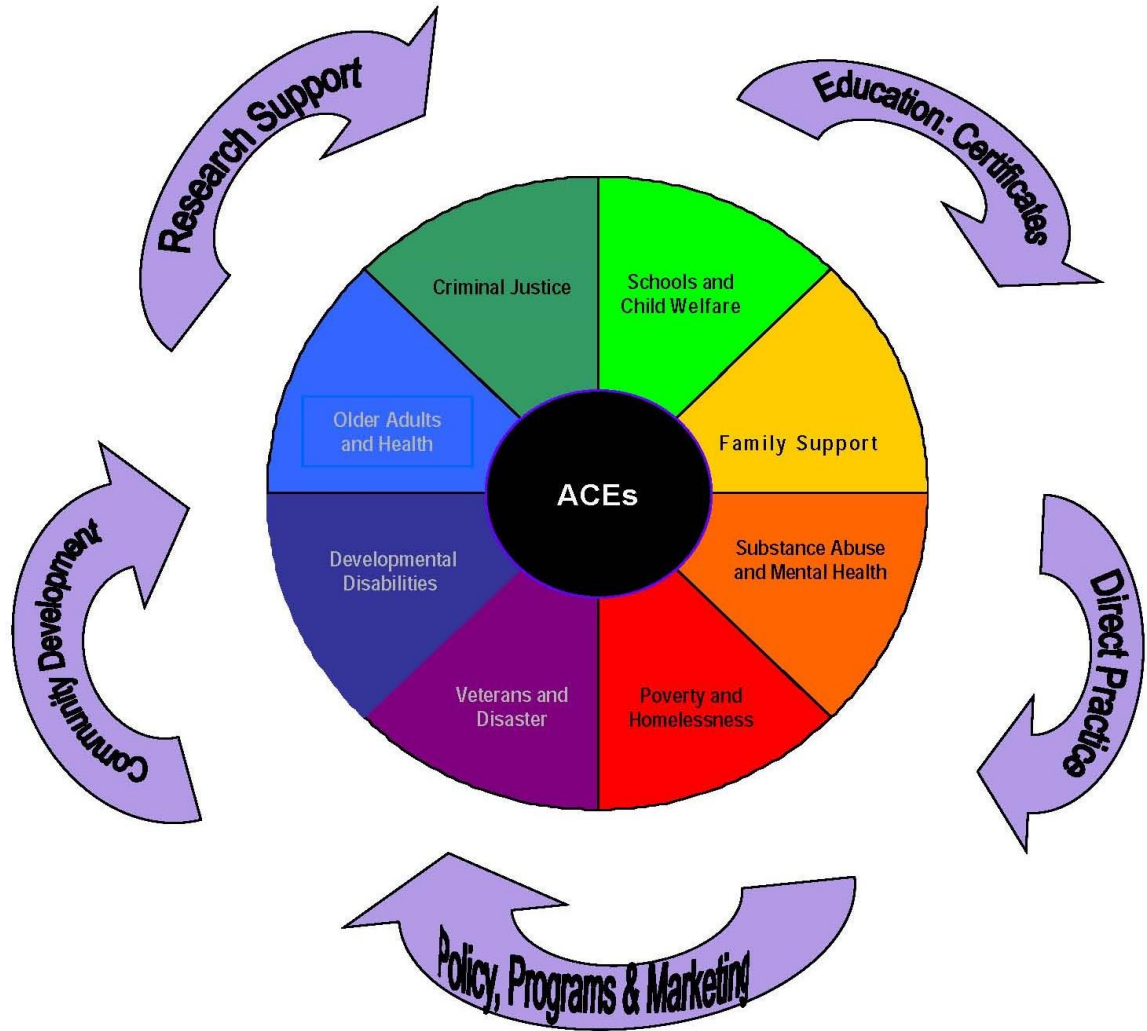
“rugged individualism”

Family relational system/ACEs  
Social violence  
Health, Mental health, & Substance abuse services  
Social service , school, & criminal justice systems  
Public health policy responses



# Development, behavior, health, culture, and systems

- Developmental theorists (Piaget, Kohlberg, Gilligan, Loevinger, Freud, and others)
- Impact of ACEs and health risk behaviors on development
- The role of culture and social systems
- Service interventions that prevent or effectively treat ACEs sooner might prevent homelessness (& other serious health and social outcomes) later in life



# Key Milestones

- Felitti and Anda visits – 2007, 2008, 2009
- Policy Lunch – May 2009
- Council on Children and Families – June 2009, September 2009
- ACE Think Tank and Action Teams
  - Rob Anda, Vincent Felitti, Fred Bolton
- ACE Steering Committee
- NYS Omnibus Survey
- Multi-state ACE Learning Community
- ACE Response website – January 2011  
([www.aceresponse.org](http://www.aceresponse.org))

# Implications

- ACE Response: Fostering resilience & mobilizing protective factors
- Workforce development
- Practice, programs, policies that take trauma into account
- Cross-system linkages/ service integration  
(TRANSFORMATION)