



Trauma Informed Practices

School Safety Summit

October 20, 2023

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COLORADO
Department of Public Safety

Objectives



Participants will have a basic understanding of what trauma is and the prevalence of childhood trauma

Participants will gain awareness on how student behaviors may be result of past or current trauma exposure

Participants will learn effective, trauma-informed tools and techniques to utilize with all students

What is trauma?



- Acute, chronic, or complex
- Impact of trauma
 - Proximity
 - Frequency
 - Severity
- Historical trauma
- Racial trauma
- Activates the stress response

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study

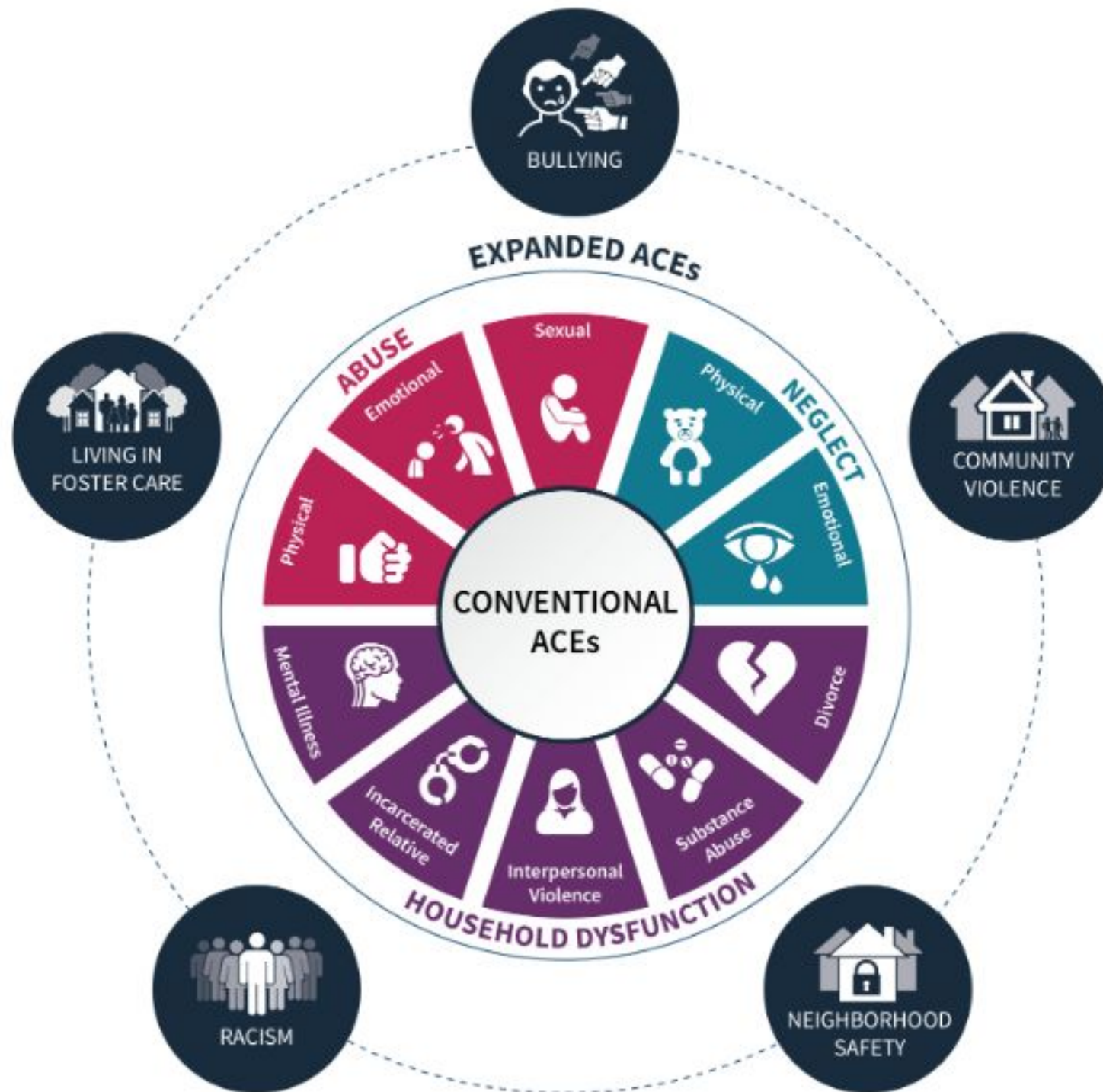
- Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, CA
 - Originally 286 patients
 - 17,000 participant sample

- What is missing?



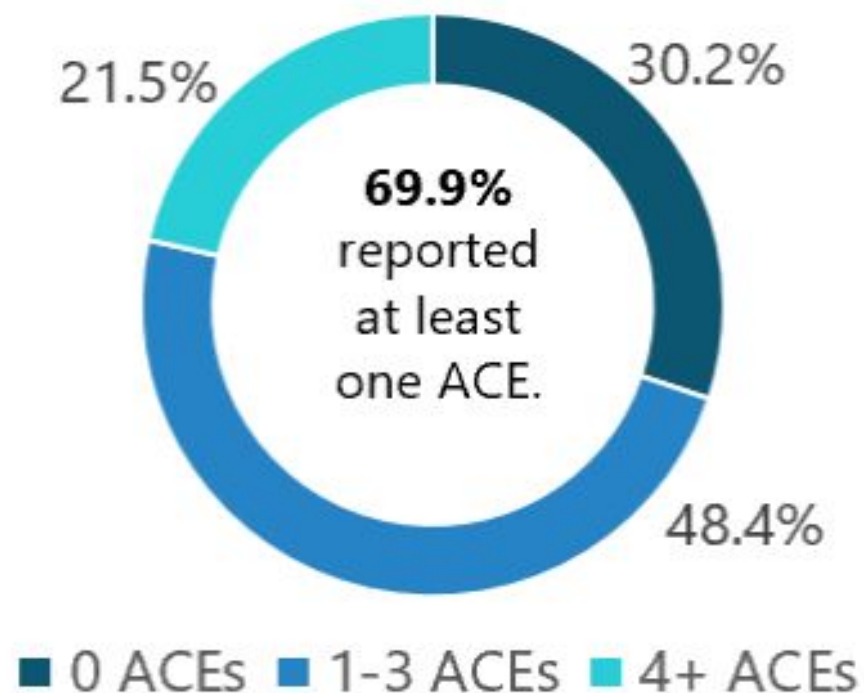
advokids.org

Philadelphia ACE Project



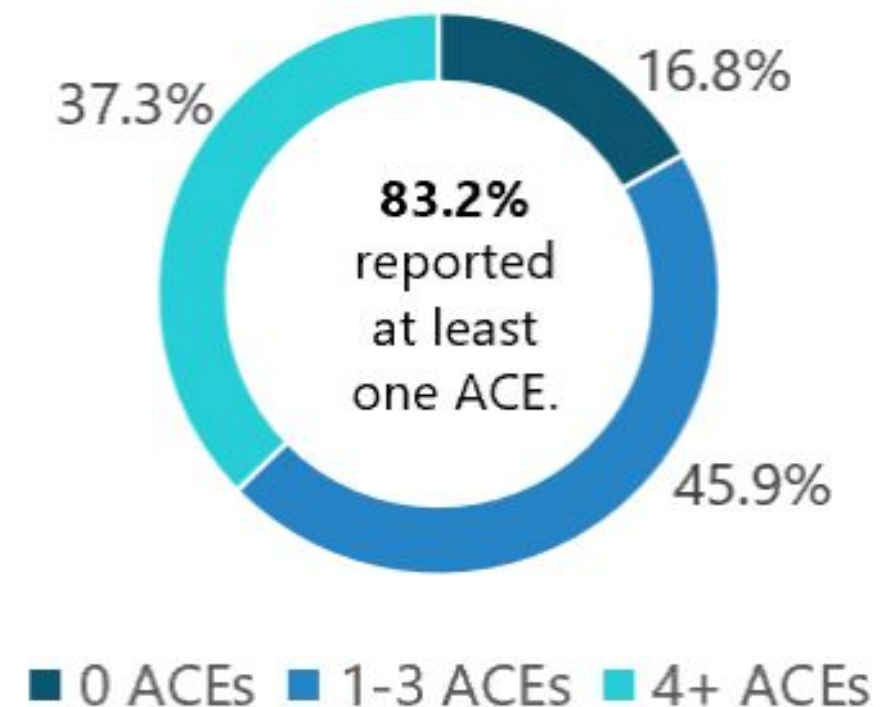
Prevalence data

Out of **17,337**
participants...



Original ACE Study

Out of **1,784**
participants...



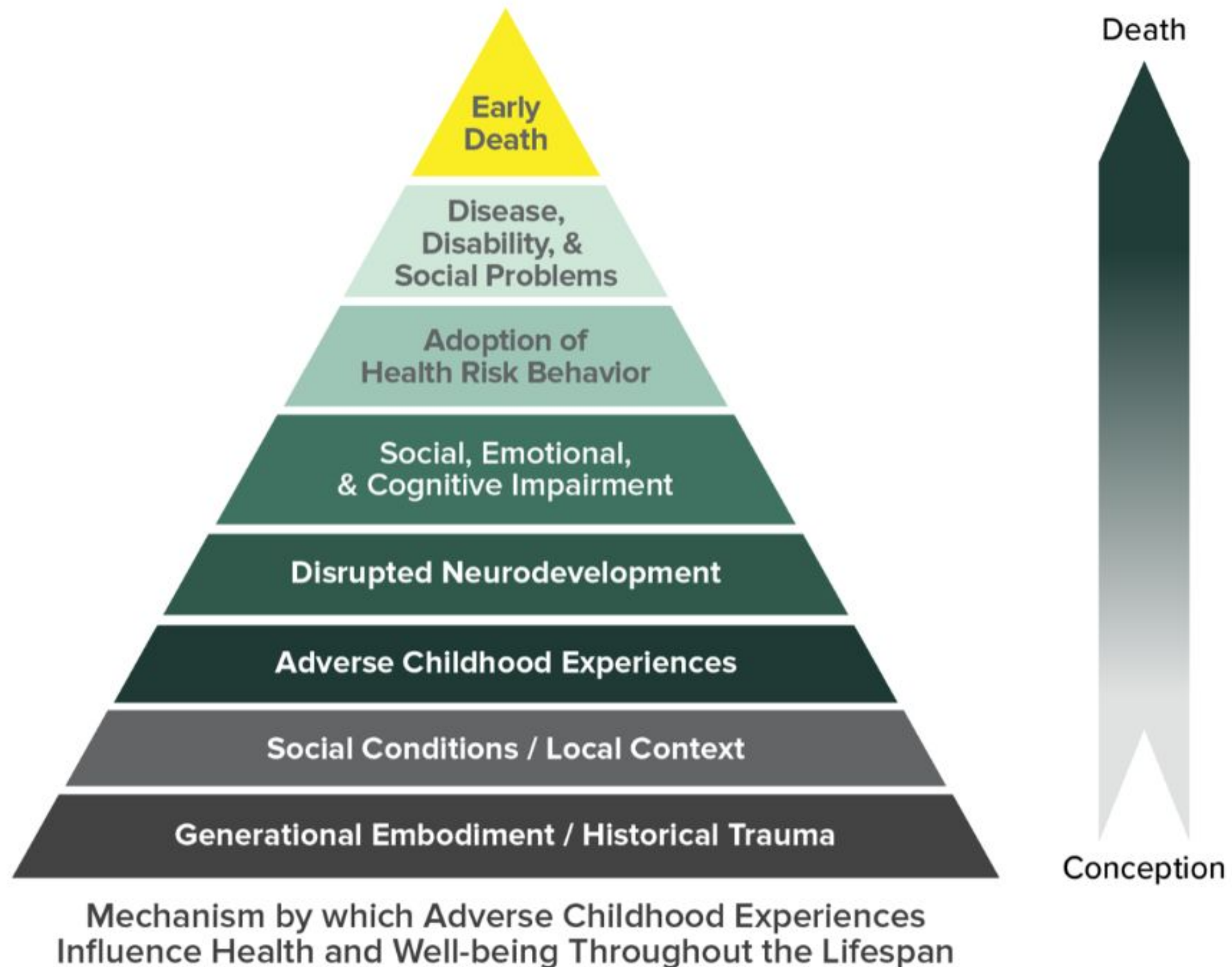
Expanded ACE Study

Merritt, M.B., Cronholm, P., Davis, M., Dempsey, S., Fein, J., Kuykendall, S.A.,... Wade, R. (2013). *Findings from the Philadelphia Urban ACE Survey*. Institute for Safe Families. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2013/09/findings-from-the-philadelphia-urban-ace-survey.html>

Comparing ACE Scores:

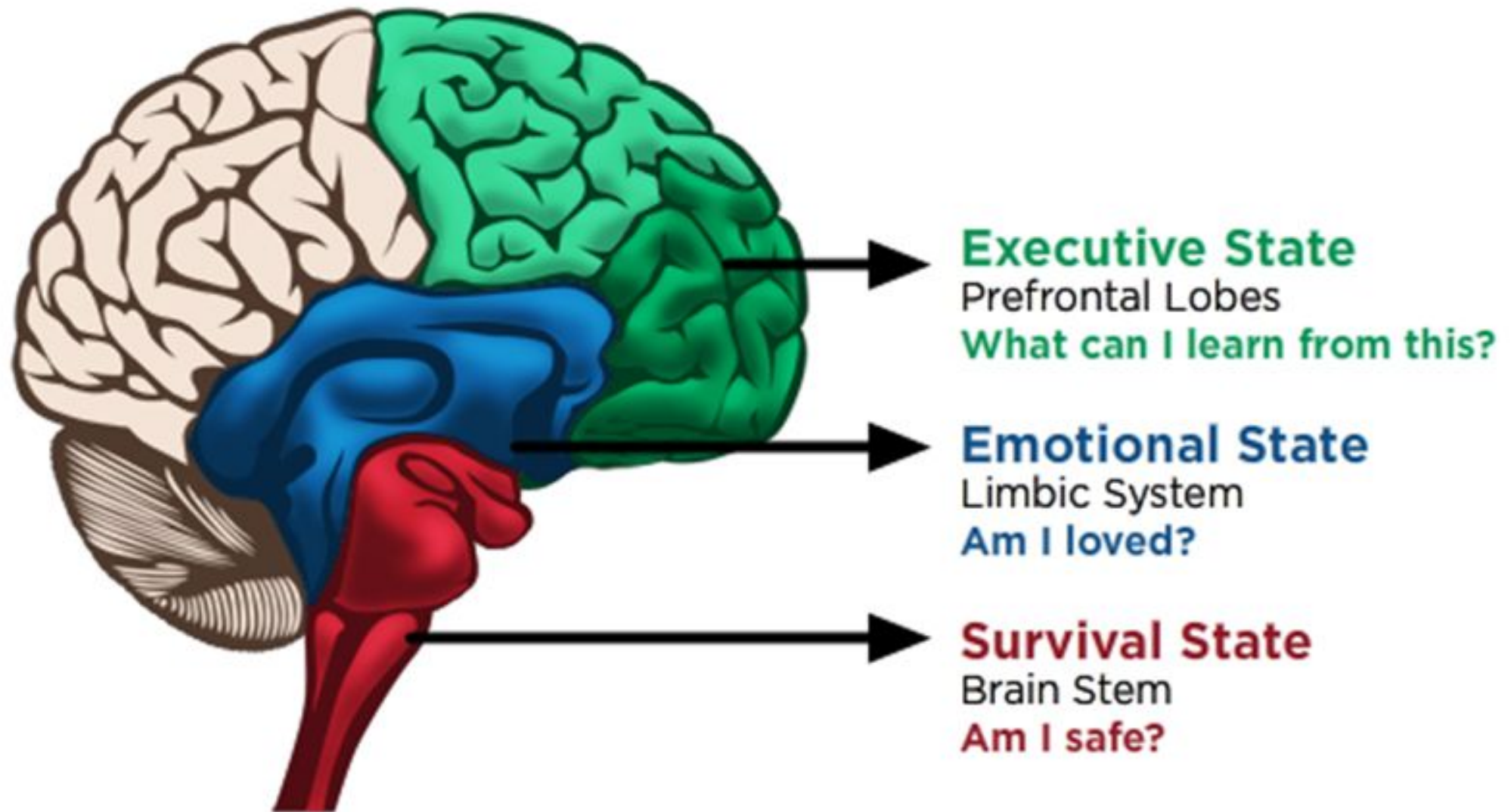
4 or more compared to 0

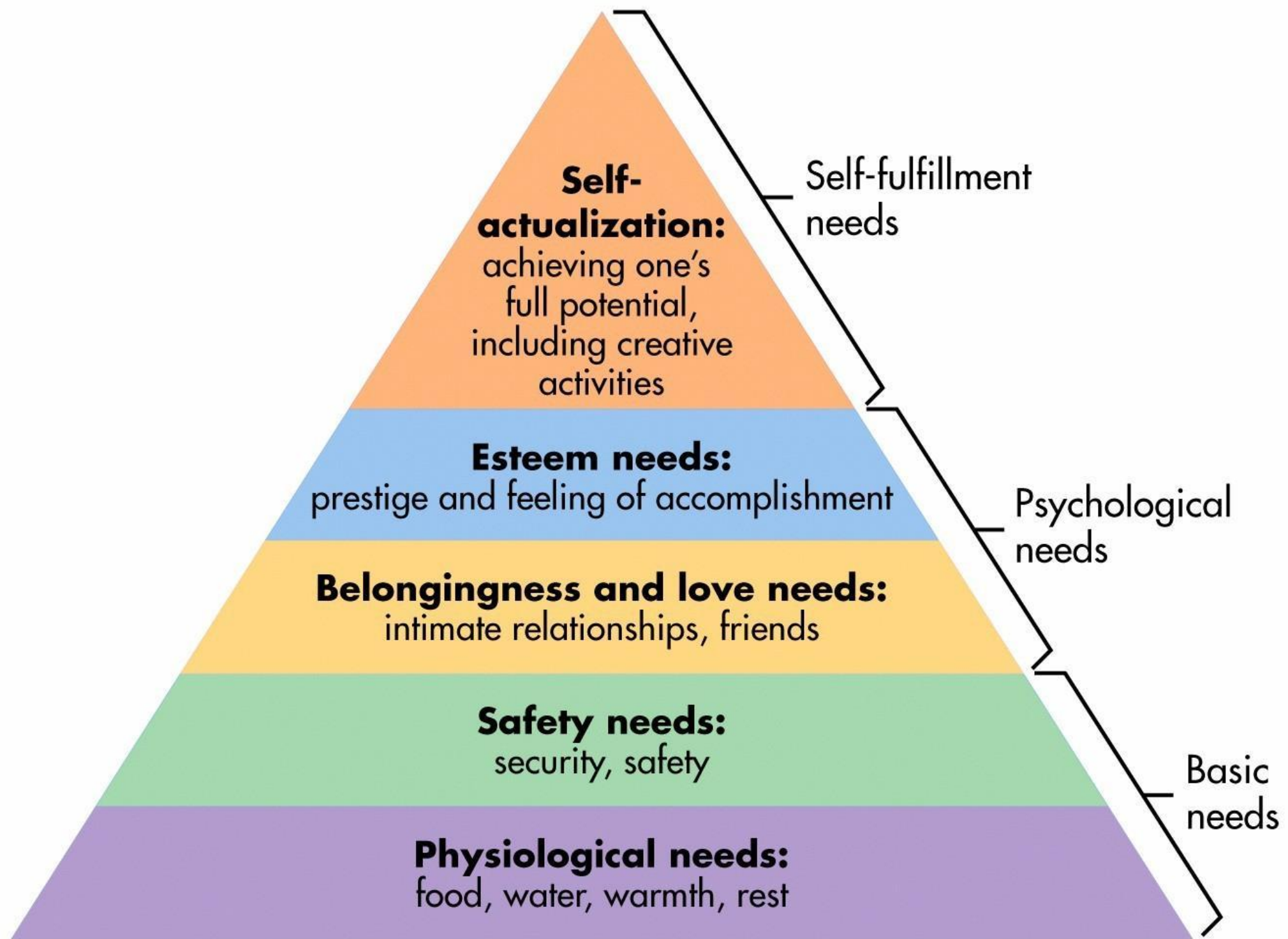
- 7.5 times more likely to be an alcoholic
- 10 times more likely to inject drugs
- 7 times more likely to have 50 or more sexual partners
- 2.5 times more likely to have had an STD and/or hepatitis
- 2 times more likely to have heart disease and/or cancer
- 2.5 times more likely to suffer from a stroke
- 4 times more likely to have chronic bronchitis or emphysema



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Violence prevention: *The ACE pyramid* (adapted by KYSE Youth Center).
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>

Let's Talk Brain





Trauma and School Performance

- Single event, connected series, or chronic lasting stress
- 2.5 times more likely to fail a grade
- Score lower on standardized achievement tests
- More likely to have struggles in expressive and receptive language
- Suspended and expelled more often
- More frequently placed in special education
- 51% of children with an ACEs score of 4+ demonstrated learning and behavior challenges in school compared with 3% of children reporting no score

Triggers



- What are they?
 - Seeing, feeling, or hearing something that reminds student of past trauma
 - Activates the alarm system
- Remember, this is an **INVOLUNTARY** response
- It can take time to realize you are dealing with a trigger
- Student's responses do not always match our explanation

Behavior



THIS...

- Oppositional
- Overly compliant
- Outburst
- Anger
- Depressed
- Argumentative
- Rapid escalation

MIGHT MEAN THIS...

- Avoid rejection
- Avoid emotions
- Built up
- Deny hurt feelings
- Anger turned inward
- Test relationships
- Heightened alarm system

Trauma Informed

What does this mean?

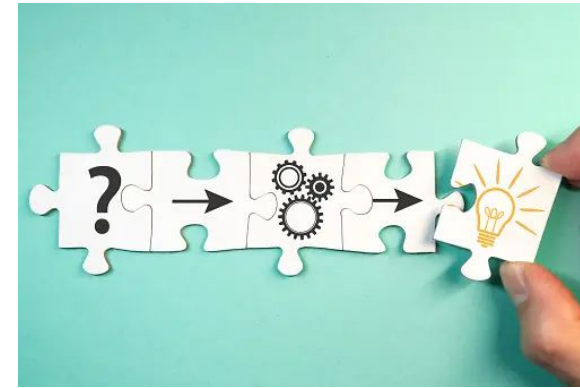
Understand what trauma is

Understand how trauma manifests itself

Adjust OUR _____ style to meet the needs of traumatized students

Know where to turn and what resources are available for students they suspect have experienced trauma

A Paradigm Shift

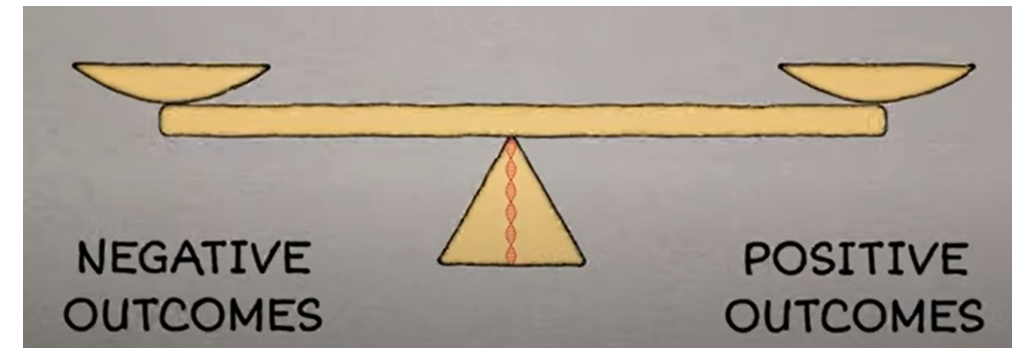


Moving away from thinking about students in terms of

**“What’s wrong with you?” to
“What happened to you?”**

**Trauma EXPLAINS behavior, it does NOT
EXCUSE behavior**

Resiliency



Genes respond differently to certain environmental situations

The genes turn up or down the expression of chemicals and circuits in the brain and circuntry in the entire body that govern our responses

Positive experiences and coping skills, the fulcrum can slide



Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



[How Resilience is Built](#)

To Address Trauma:

Create a sense of

SAFETY

Meaningful relationships or-

CONNECTIONS

Teach/ practice

SELF-REGULATION

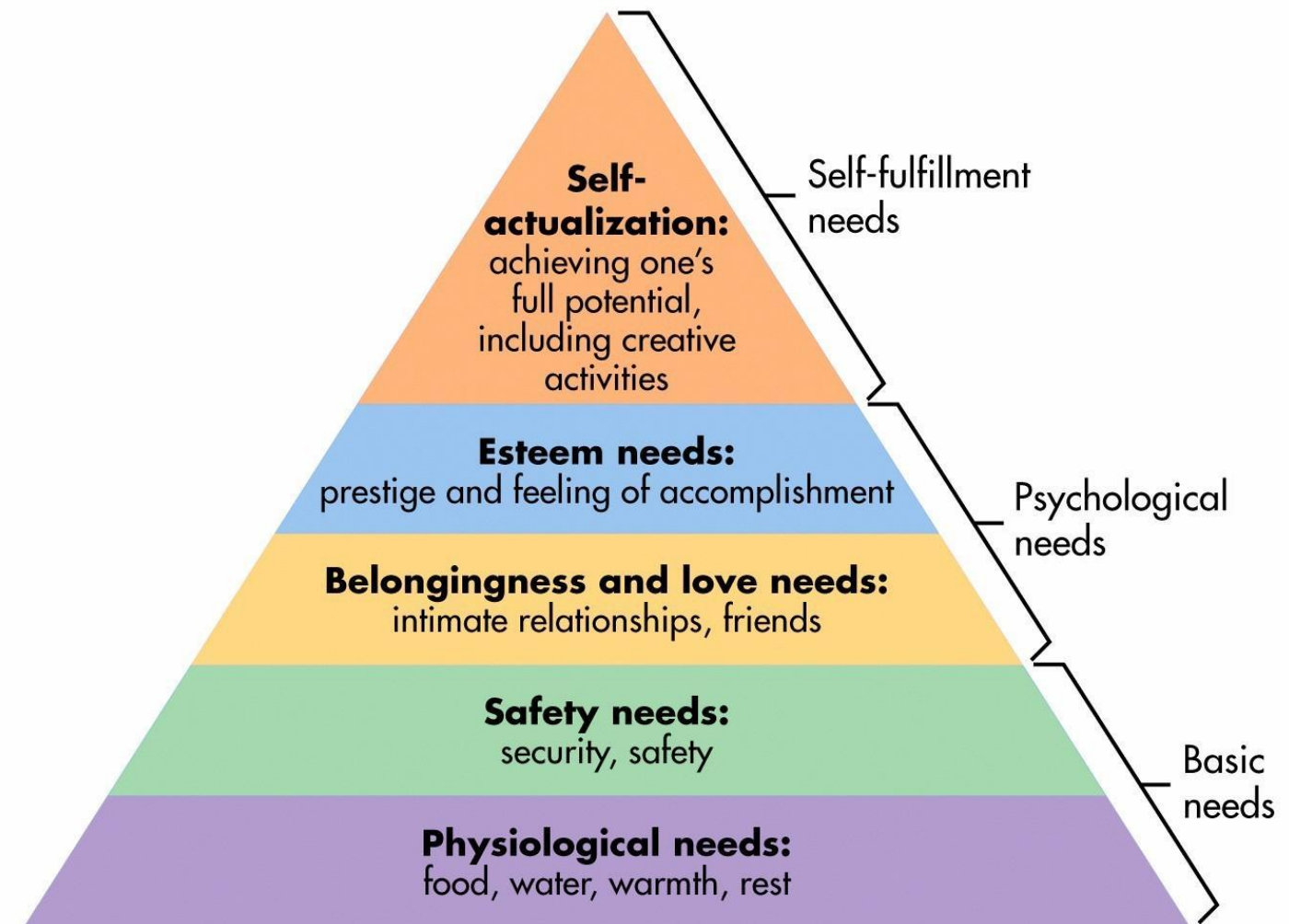


Safety

Trauma is a loss of sense of safety

Safety is a human being's BASIC need

Emotional safety is created by...



Setting Limits

- Name the rationale for the limit
- Link consequences to the behavior not the person
- Name the boundaries of the limit
- Move on. The limit has been set and consequences given
- Use direct, specific, and positive language for verbal and written rules and directions
- Make adaptations
- Time in, not time out



Connections

Children need to feel *belonging & significance* before we can expect them to respond or care about our rules

Healthy relational interactions with safe and familiar individuals *can buffer and heal trauma related problems*

Connections are created by:

- Role-modeling
- Listening
- Being present
- Respectful and genuine interactions
- Building on successes

Must be built at all levels

Refocus the Lens

Restorative	Non- Restorative
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The person who caused the harm is required to be part of repairing the harm.▪ The person(s) impacted the most by the harm, should be able to participate in the resolution.▪ To achieve community safety it is more important to build community peace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accountability means accepting the imposed sanctions and/or punishment.▪ The two important parties are the person who caused the harm and the justice system.▪ To achieve community safety, public safety personnel need to enforce the laws.

Self-Regulation

Trauma impacts the way in which self-regulation skills are formed and directly impacts how a student develops coping skills

Schools that build safe and nurturing environments where relationships are valued are more likely to promote and foster positive coping skills for their students

Mirror neurons

School-based programs that support self-regulation:

- PBIS
- Restorative Practices
- Social-emotional learning programs

Self-Regulation

Build vocabulary

MODEL

Connect emotions with:

- Body sensations
- Thoughts associated with feelings
- Behaviors

Context

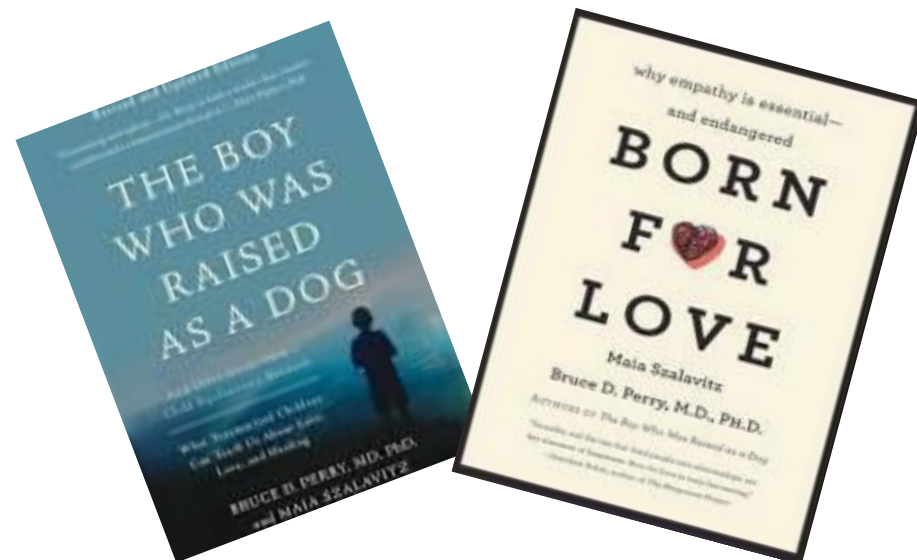
- External: smells, sounds
- Internal: tired, hungry





2X10

“There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship”



4:1 Ratio

“A child whose behavior is creating issues is not trying to cause a problem. They’re trying to solve a problem.”

American Journal of Pediatrics, November 1956

Things to Remember



- Behavior is a form of communication
- What the student has practiced will always feel the most normal
- The student is not out to get us
- They act in a way that makes sense according to their understanding of how the world works

[Rita Pierson](#)

“

Do the best you can until you
know better. Then when you know
better, do better.

Maya Angelou



Questions

