

# Trauma, Community Violence and Community Healing in a Socio-Ecological Model

Co-Presentation

OurSOLES (Our Students of Leadership ~ Empowerment ~ Service)

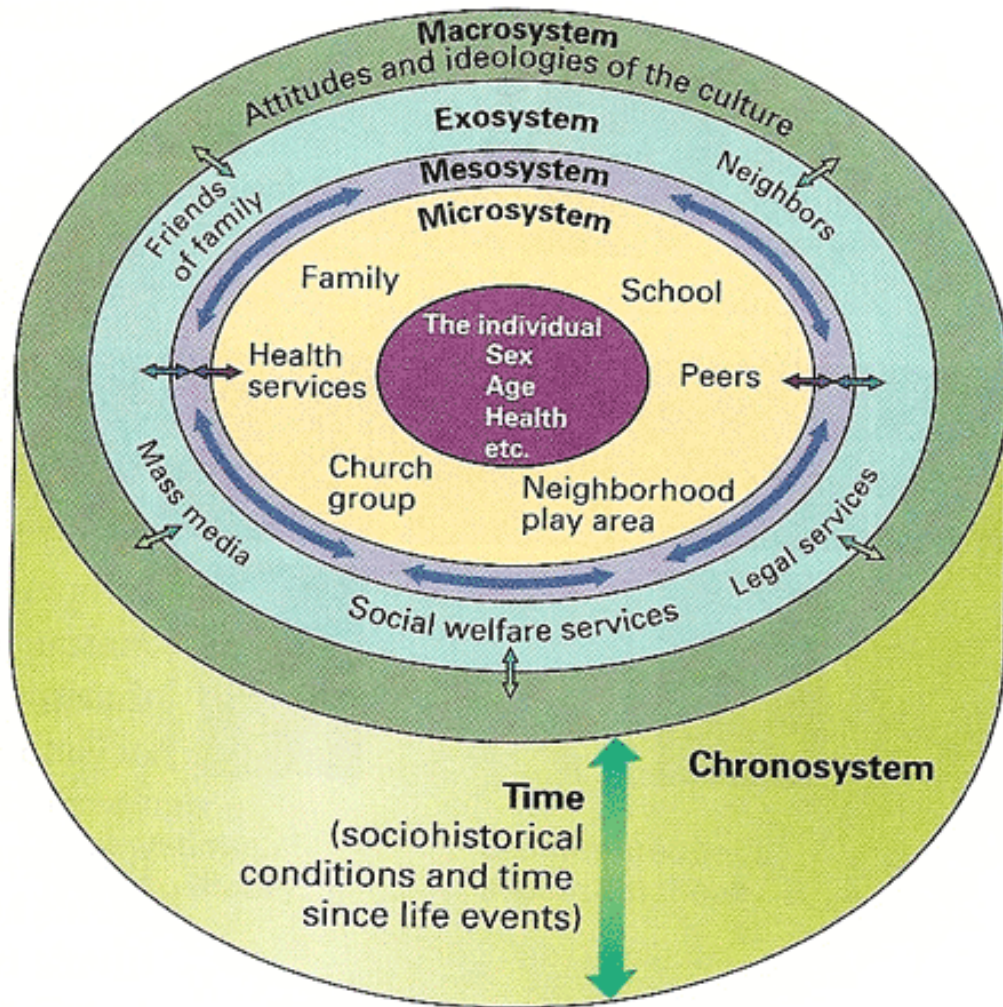
Summer 2015

Diego Valley Charter School



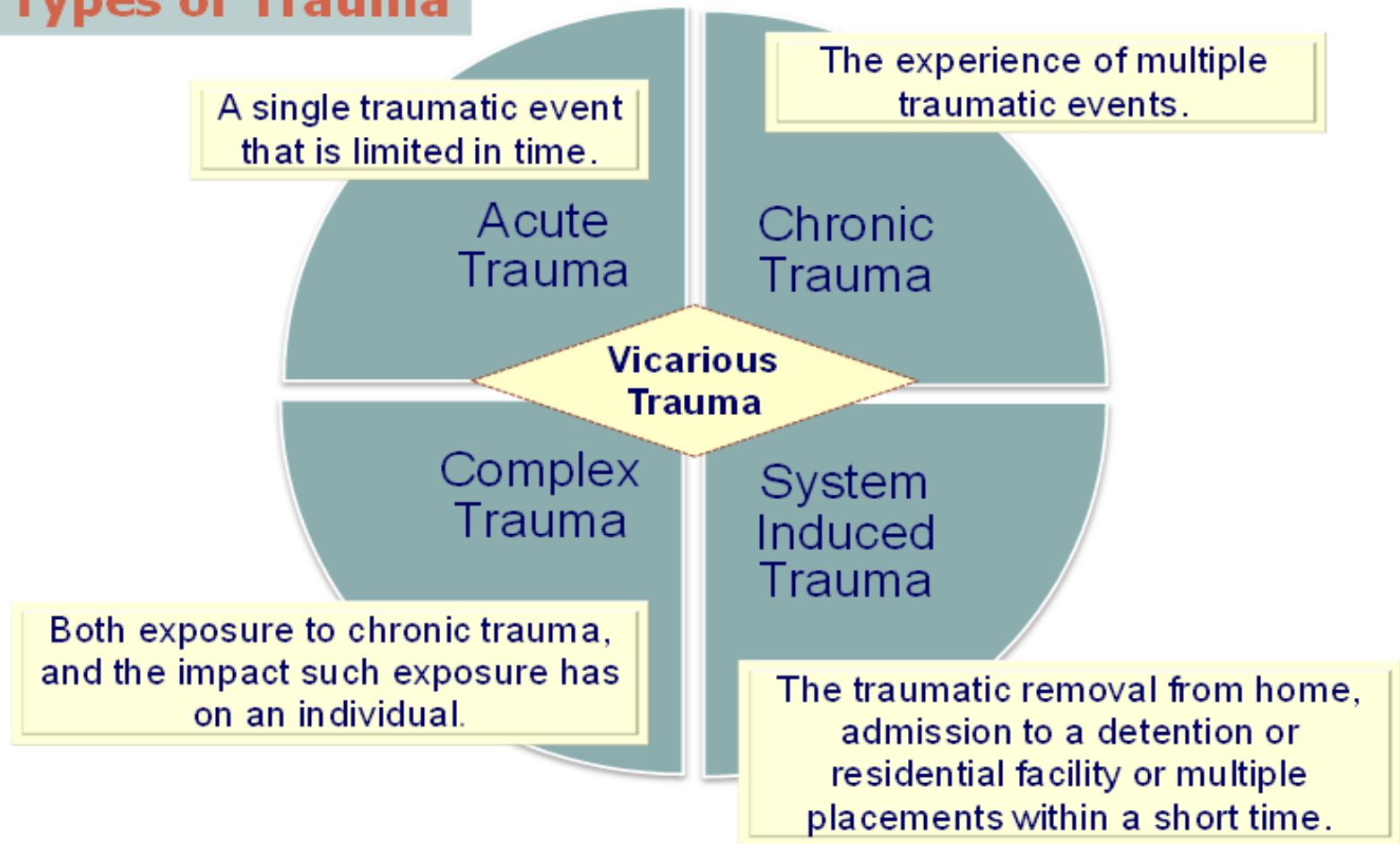
# SYSTEMS IMPACT

## Community Violence and Cumulative Trauma



- Poverty
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Gang and Gun Violence
- Refugees
- Lack of Access to Physical and Behavioral Healthcare
- Traumas Involving Community Agencies and Systems (e.g., Schools, Child Welfare Services, Law Enforcement, Courts, Immigration)

## Types of Trauma



Training provided by San Diego Trauma-Informed Guide Team

**Many individuals and families have experienced Acute, Chronic, Complex, and/or System-Induced Trauma which create Toxic-Stress and Impact their well-being and capacity to thrive.**



## Small Group Activity

Share one example of the Trauma Graphic of individuals (or families) you have supported who have been impacted by one or several aspects of the graphic.  
**NO NAMES PLEASE.**

**Com-pas-sion** [kuhm-pash-uhn]

*noun* : a feeling of deep sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.





Children with toxic stress live much of their lives in fight, flight or fright (freeze) mode. They respond to the world as a place of constant danger. With their brains overloaded with stress hormones and unable to function appropriately, they can't focus on learning. They fall behind in school or fail to develop healthy relationships with peers or create problems with teachers and principals because they are unable to trust adults. Some kids do all three. With despair, guilt and frustration pecking away at their psyches, they often find solace in food, alcohol, tobacco, methamphetamines, inappropriate sex, high-risk sports, and/or work and over-achievement. They don't regard these coping methods as problems. Consciously or unconsciously, they use them as solutions to escape from depression, anxiety, anger, fear and shame.

***"The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study — the largest, most important public health study you never heard of — began in an obesity clinic."***

**By Jane Ellen Stevens.... [ACEsTooHigh News](#)**

**October 3, 2012**





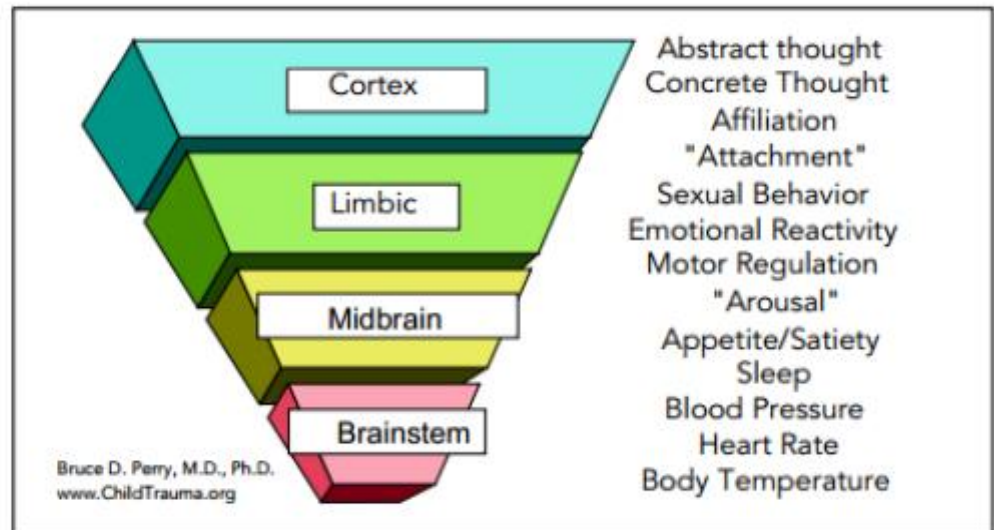
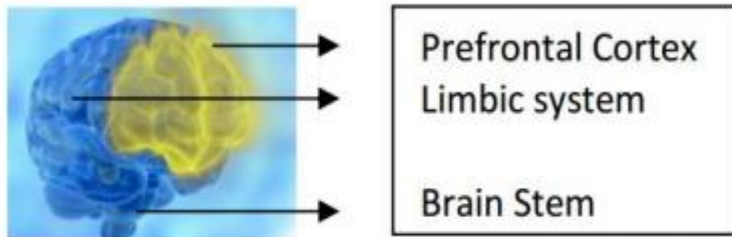
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G ht2vAYPoc>

## Lisa (6 years old) 9-1-1 phone call



- **Trauma-Informed Means Understanding the Neuro-Biological Impact of Trauma**

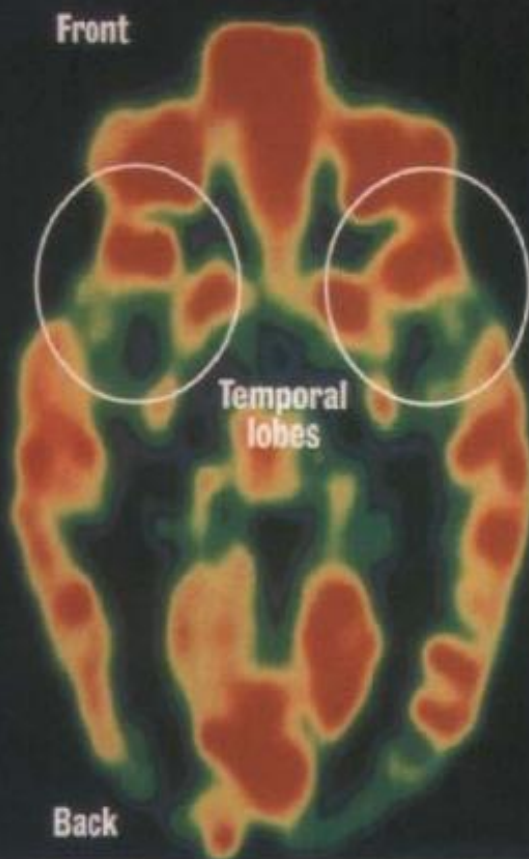
- Trauma induces Fight or Flight response
- Fear and trauma responses activate limbic system of brain that governs arousal and emotional reactivity
- Ability to access pre-frontal cortex which governs abstract thought and problem-solving is compromised in children experiencing trauma
- Toxic stress inhibits learning
- There are long-term consequences on brain development



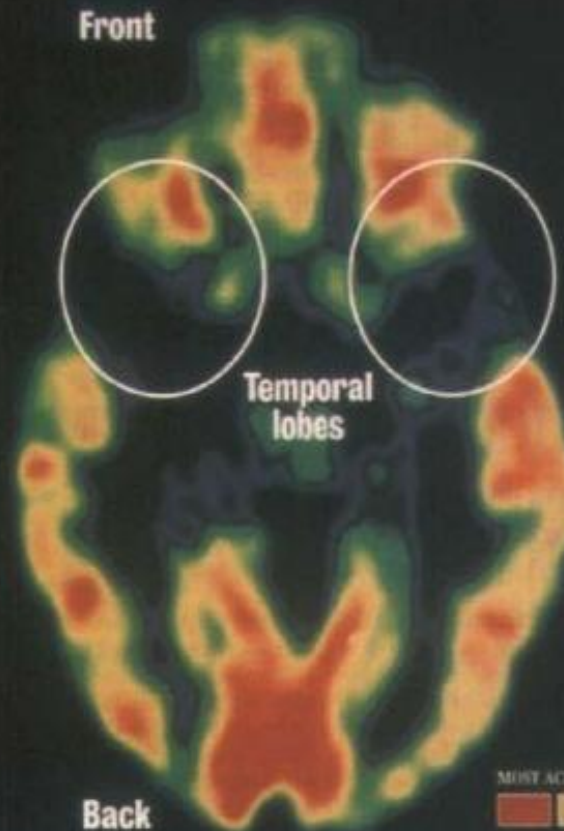


## Healthy Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.



Front



## An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.

MOST ACTIVE      LEAST ACTIVE

A horizontal color scale legend with five boxes. From left to right: red, orange, green, blue, and black. The red and orange boxes are under the text 'MOST ACTIVE' and the blue and black boxes are under the text 'LEAST ACTIVE'.

**CDC**  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL  
AND PREVENTION





# Understanding trauma effects on learning and behaviors

Trauma effects on children interfere with their development of social-emotional and behavioral skills needed to learn and thrive in the classroom

- **Attention and Information Processing**
- **Executive Functions: Planning and Problem-solving**
- **Attentiveness to Classroom Tasks**
- **Emotional Regulation**
- **Aggression, Impulsivity, and Reactivity**



Teachers may describe them as:

- **Spacey or zoned out**
- **Disrespectful or rude**
- **Lacking intelligence**
- **“Out of control”**
- **Anxious**
- **Annoying**
- **Aggressive**

# TRAUMA INFORMED AND COMPASSIONATE PRACTICES WITHIN A SCHOOL & COMMUNITY CULTURE

- **Identification of behaviors associated with trauma:**



## Trauma Symptoms - Heightened Arousal

- fears and anxieties
- startles and hypervigilance
- sleeping problems (nightmares)
- overreactivity, anger outbursts, and irritability
- overcontrolling, “grown up”, excessively responsible behaviors



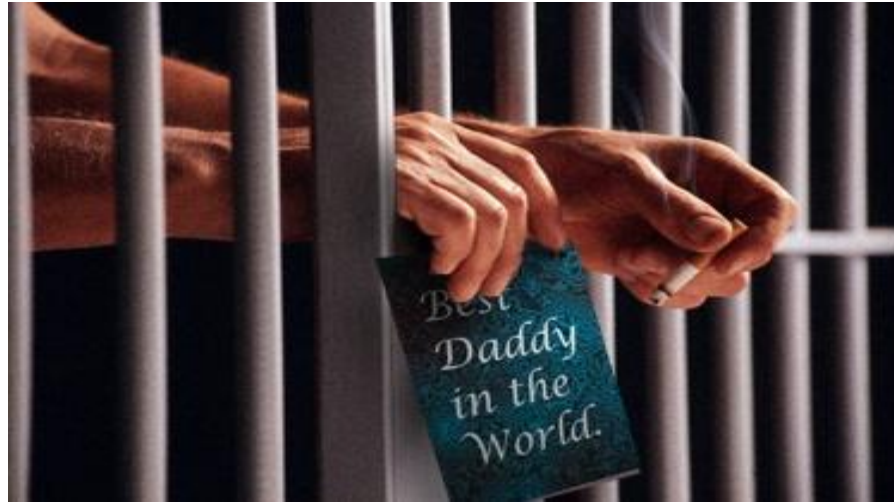
## Avoidance (Dissociative and Depressive Symptoms)

- withdrawal, passivity, and non-responsiveness
- emotional numbing
- memory and concentration problems
- denial and somatic complaints
- other depressive symptoms





<http://www.upworthy.com/sesame-street-made-a-video-but-its-not-cute-and-its-not-funny-its-just-heart-wrenching?c=reccon>



**"I'm putting [my dad's] letter under my pillow! I ain't gonna worry. He's coming home soon."**

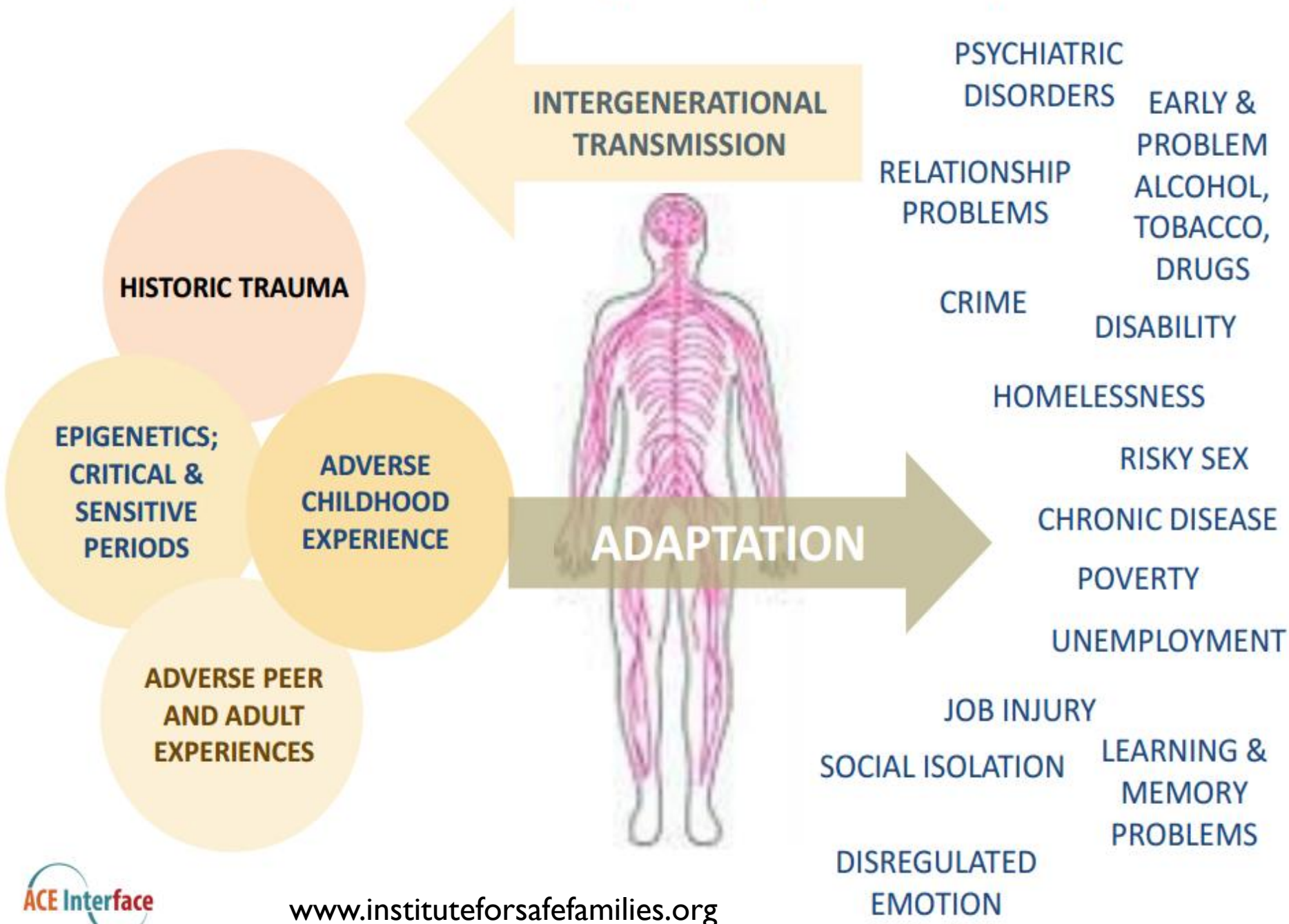


# Long-Term Consequences: Adverse Childhood Experiences-ACE Study

<p><b><u>Chronic Disease</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autoimmune Disease</li> <li>• Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease</li> <li>• Frequent Headaches</li> <li>• Health-Related Quality of Life</li> <li>• Ischemic Heart Disease</li> <li>• Liver Disease</li> <li>• Lung Cancer</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Reproductive Health/Sexual Behavior</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fetal Death</li> <li>• Promiscuity</li> <li>• Sexual Risk Behaviors in Women</li> <li>• Sexually Transmitted Diseases</li> <li>• Teen Pregnancy</li> <li>• Unintended Pregnancy</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Health Risk Behaviors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol Abuse</li> <li>• Drug Abuse</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Smoking</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Special Populations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children of Alcoholics</li> <li>• Child Sexual Abuse Victims</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Mental Health</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobiographical Memory Disturbances</li> <li>• Depression/Depressed Affect</li> <li>• Hallucinations</li> <li>• Neurobiology</li> <li>• Suicidality</li> <li>• Work Absenteeism</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Victimization and Perpetration</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimate Partner Violence</li> </ul>



# Cascade of Often Co-Occurring Effects; Societal Response Matters



# Scratch marks Inside an Auschwitz gas chamber





# PTSD at Different Ages

<u>Preschool</u>	<u>School-Aged</u>	<u>Adolescence</u>
<p><b>Regress in functioning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- losing bladder and bowel control</li> <li>-irritable and crying</li> <li>-sucking thumbs</li> <li>-fears, separation anxiety</li> <li>-eating and sleeping problems</li> </ul> <p><b>Reenact the trauma through play</b></p>	<p><b>Fears and anxieties</b></p> <p><b>Somatic complaints</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- headaches, stomachaches</li> </ul> <p><b>School problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- inattention, decrease in performance</li> </ul> <p><b>Social problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fighting or withdrawing from peers</li> </ul> <p><b>Sleep disturbances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nightmares, bedwetting</li> </ul> <p><b>Elaborate play reenactment</b></p>	<p><b>Somatic complaints</b></p> <p><b>Social problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- withdrawal or aggression</li> </ul> <p><b>Antisocial behaviors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-substance abuse</li> <li>-delinquency</li> </ul> <p><b>Loss of appetite and sleep</b></p> <p><b>School problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-failure, drop-out</li> </ul> <p><b>Suicidal thoughts</b></p>









# What Does This Look Like?

Teen that is:

- Edgy, hot tempered
- Impulsive
- Hyper-vigilant

# By adolescence, children seek relief through:

- Drinking alcohol
- Smoking tobacco
- Sexual promiscuity
- Using drugs
- Overeating/eating disorders
- Delinquent behavior







## CAPABILITY

- Intellectual & employable skills
- Self-regulation – self-control, executive function, flexible thinking
- Ability to direct and control attention, emotion, behavior, positive self-view
- Efficacy

## ATTACHMENT & BELONGING

- Bonds with parents and/or caregivers
- Positive relationships with competent and nurturing adults
- Friends or romantic partners who provide sense of security/help with emotion coaching
- Social/emotional support

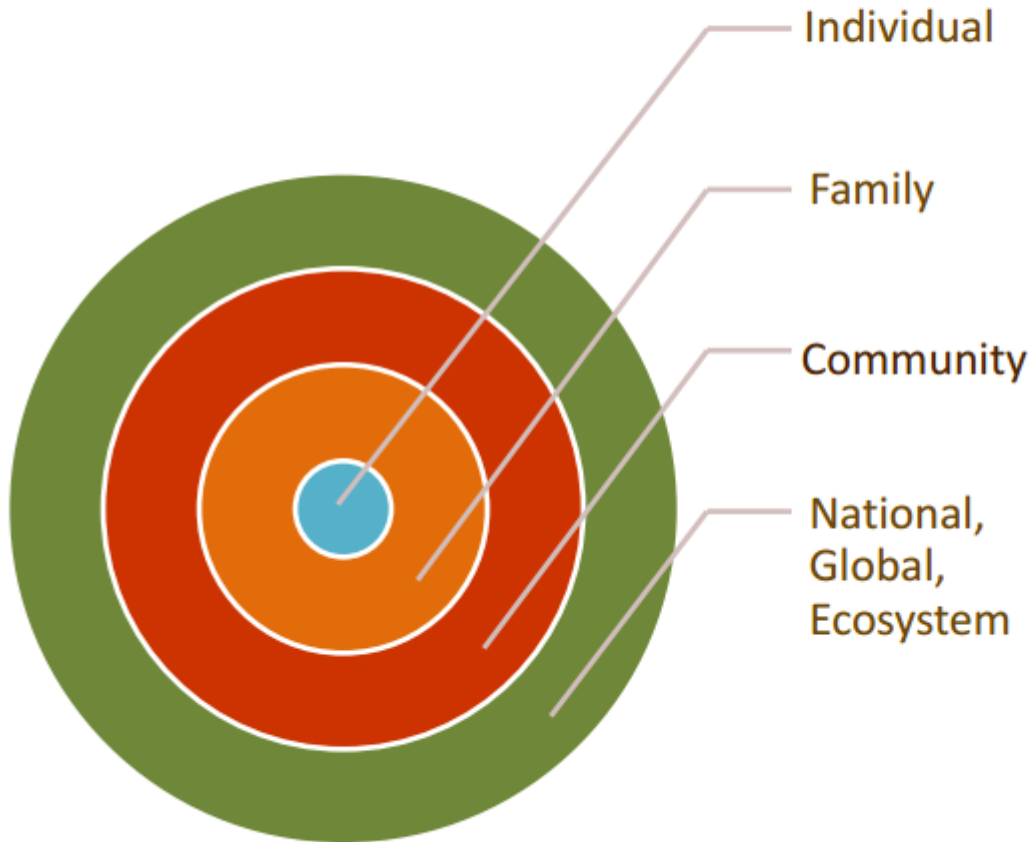
## COMMUNITY, CULTURE, SPIRITUALITY

- Faith, hope, meaning
- Engagement with effective organizations – schools, work, pro-social groups
- Network of supports/ services & opportunity to help others
- Cultures providing positive standards, expectations, rituals, relationships & supports

# Resilience

The natural human capacity to navigate life well.

(HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003)



**RESILIENCE  
OCCURS AT  
ALL LEVELS**

