

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

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- Childhood traumas can result in toxic stress
- Prolonged exposure to toxic stress can damage the developing brain and body of children and affect overall health
- Toxic stress may prevent a child from learning or playing in a healthy way and can cause long-term health problems

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Include:

- **Abuse:** emotional/physical/sexual
- **Neglect:** physical/emotional
- **Household Dysfunction:** substance abuse/mental illness/domestic violence/incarceration/parental abandonment, divorce, loss
- **Bullying/violence** of /by another child, sibling or adult
- **Violence** in community

ACEs can also include:

- Homelessness
- Involvement in child welfare system
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters and war
- Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination

Signs of Experiencing ACEs:

- Fear of other people
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Bedwetting
- Changes in their Mood
- Difficulty showing affection
- Difficulty learning in school
- Avoiding situations or events that relate to a traumatic experience

ACEs can create toxic stress which can have the following effects on children:

- **Increase child's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension**
- **Thinking brain is knocked off-line, and self-protection becomes priority**
- **Lower tolerance for stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, checking out, or defiance**
- **Increase difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships**

Effects of ACEs -continued

- Increase problems with learning and memory
- Reduce the ability to respond, learn, or figure things out, which can result in problems in school
- Increase stress hormones which affect the body's ability to fight infection
- May cause lasting health problems

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often ...Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? Or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often ... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever...Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Questionnaire

4. Did you often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? Or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

5. Did you often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

7. Was your mother or stepmother: Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? Or Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? Or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

No_____ If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Questionnaire

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?

No _____ If yes enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?

No _____ If yes enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

No _____ If yes enter 1 _____

Add up your “Yes” answers: _____ This is your ACE Score.

Risk of disease, social and emotional problems **increases** with increasing ACEs Score.

17,000 ACE Study Participants:

64% have experienced at least **1** ACE:

1 ACE 26%

2 ACE 16%

3 ACE 9.5%

4+ ACE 12.4%

36% have experienced **0** ACEs

17,000 ACE Study Participants:

Number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Score)	Women	Men	Total
0	34.5	38.0	36.1
1	24.5	27.9	26.0
2	15.5	16.4	15.9
3	10.3	8.6	9.5
4 or more	15.2	9.2	12.5

Source: What ACEs/PCEs do you have? « ACEs Too High

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Are Common

Household Dysfunction

- Substance Abuse 27%
- Parental Sep/Divorce 23%
- Mental Illness 17%
- Battered Mother 13%
- Criminal Behavior 6%

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Are Common

Abuse

- Physical 28%
- Sexual 21%
- Psychological 11%

Neglect

- Emotional 15%
- Physical 10%

More than 70 publications have shown:

- **Childhood trauma is very common**, even in employed white middle-class, college-educated people with great health insurance
- Direct link between childhood trauma and adult onset of **chronic disease, as well as depression, suicide, being violent and a victim of violence**
- More types of trauma increase the risk of **health, social and emotional problems**
- People usually **experience more than one** type of trauma

Exposure to ACE can increase the risk of:

Heart Disease

Stroke

Cancer

COPD

Asthma

Diabetes

Liver Disease

Obesity

Exposure to ACE can increase the risk of:

Depression

Suicide

Smoking

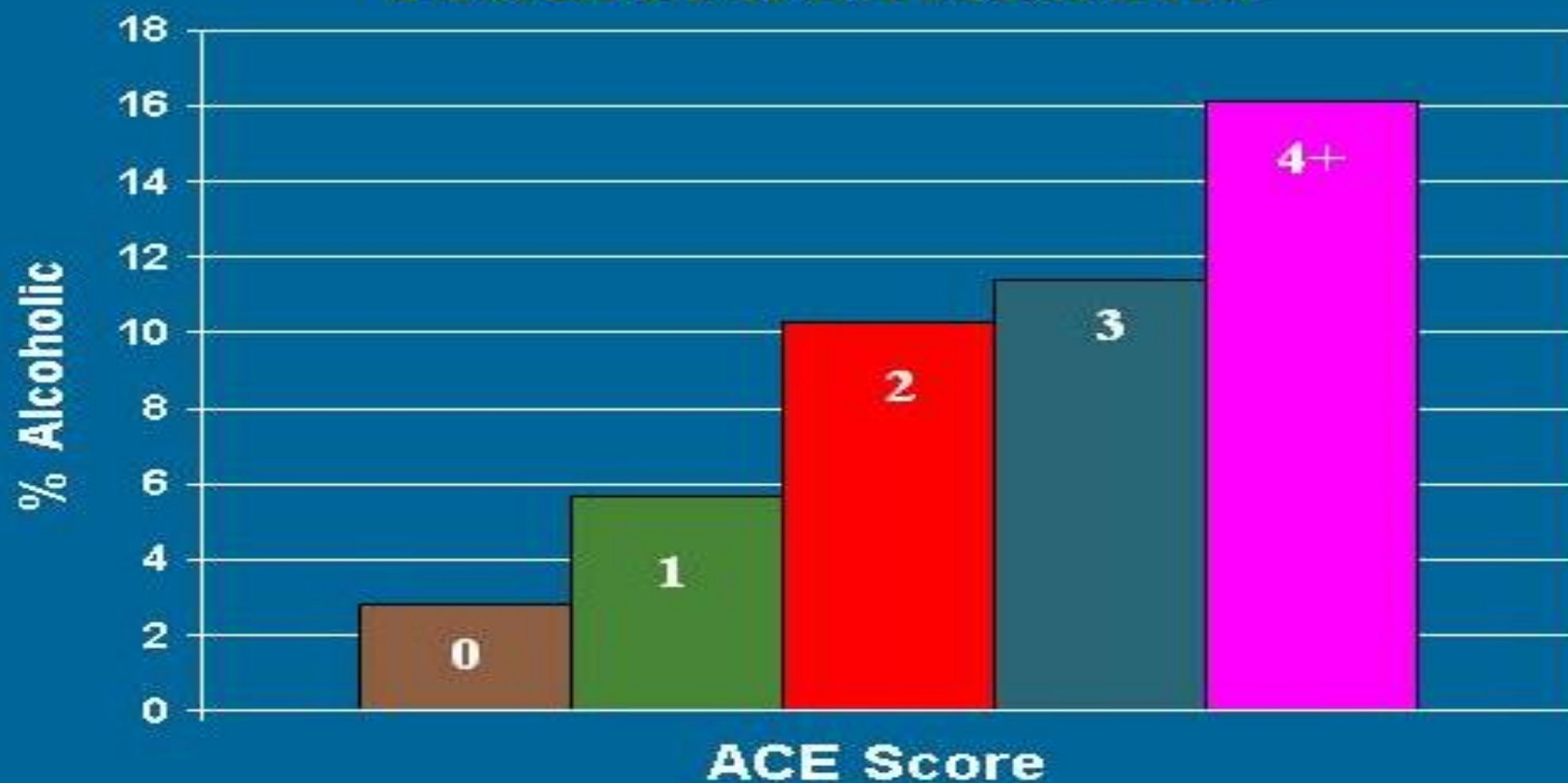
Alcohol and drug abuse

Intimate partner violence

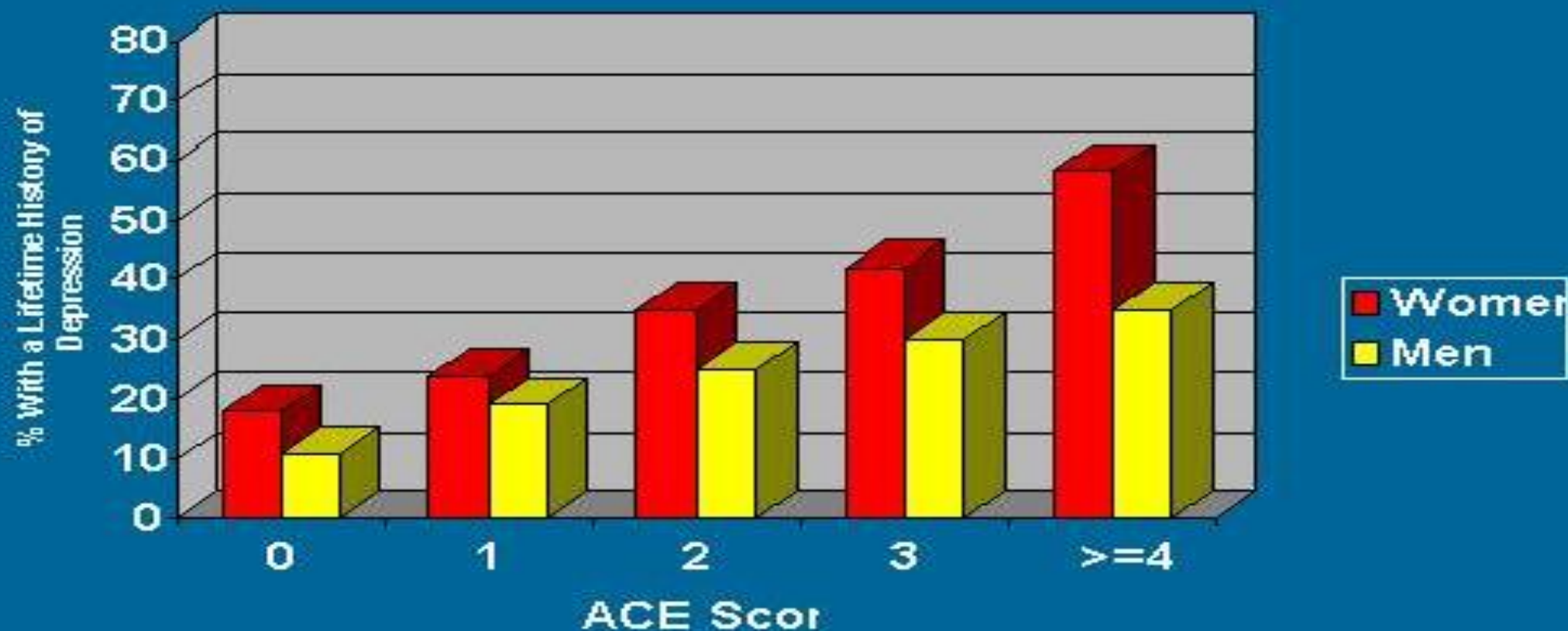
Sexually-transmitted infections

Adolescent pregnancy

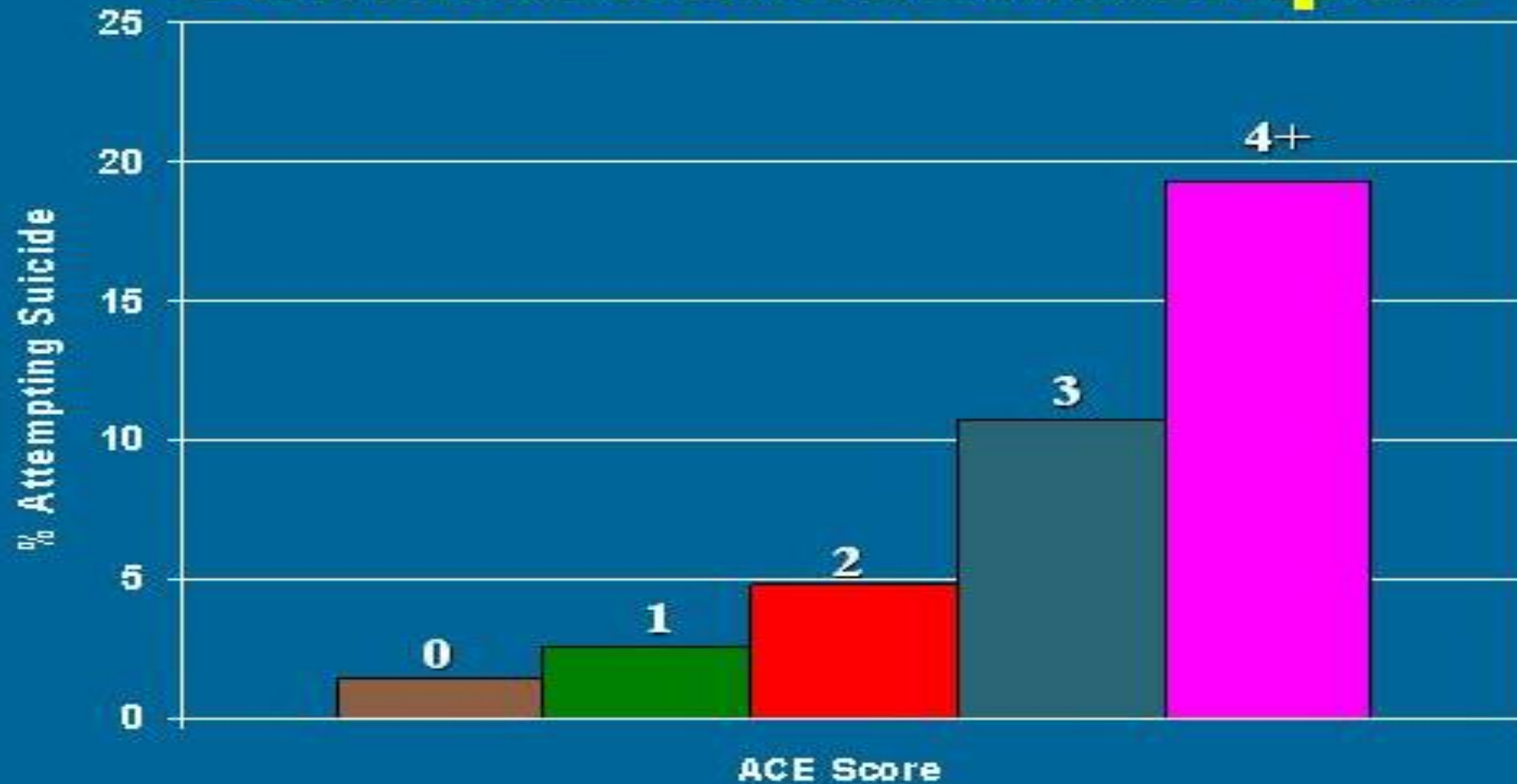
Childhood Experiences vs. Adult Alcoholism



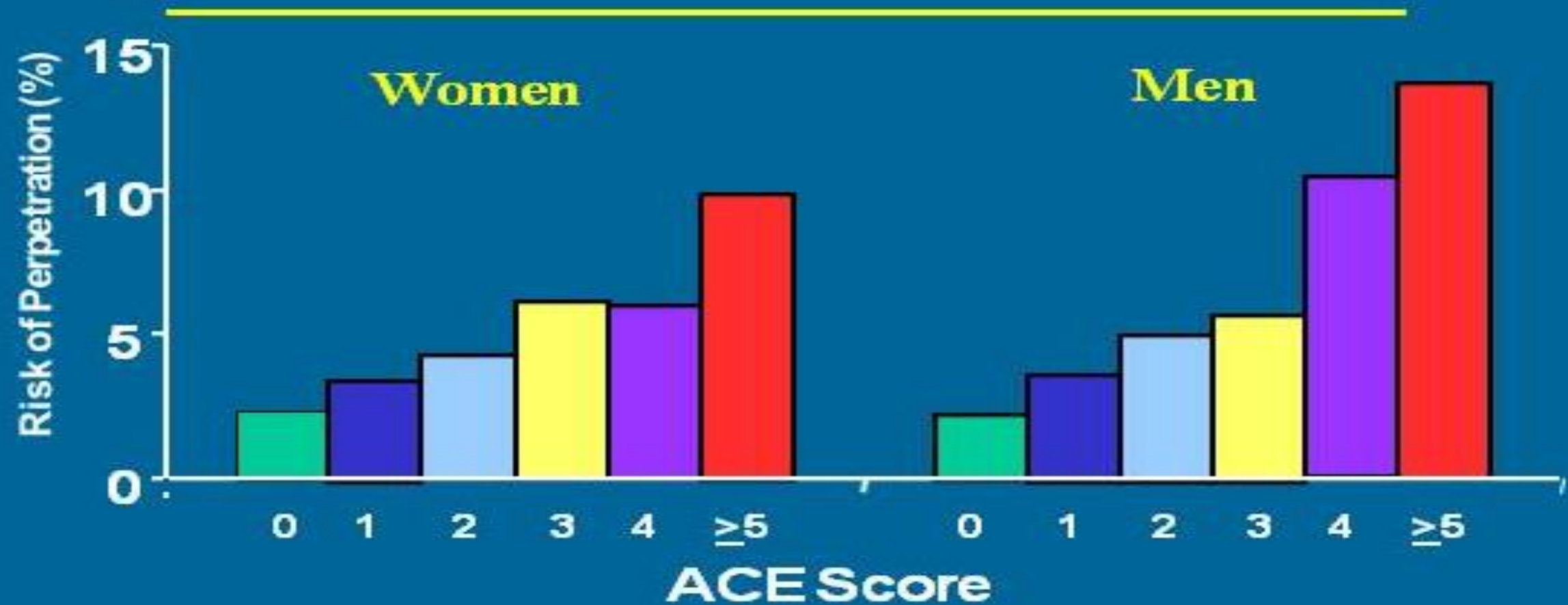
Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression



Childhood Experiences Underlie Suicide Attempts



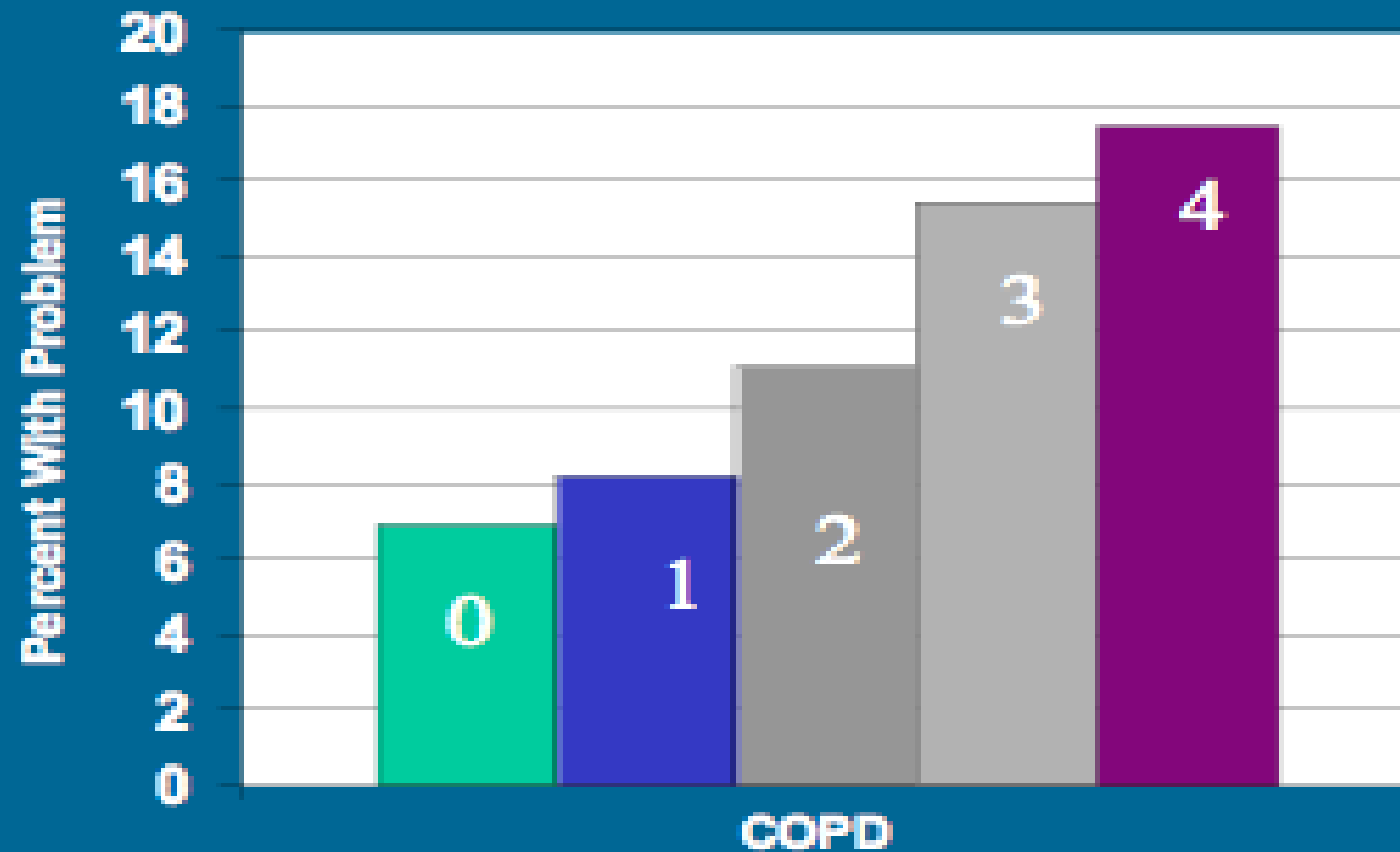
ACE Score and the Risk of *Perpetrating* Domestic Violence



Adverse Childhood Experiences vs. Smoking as an Adult



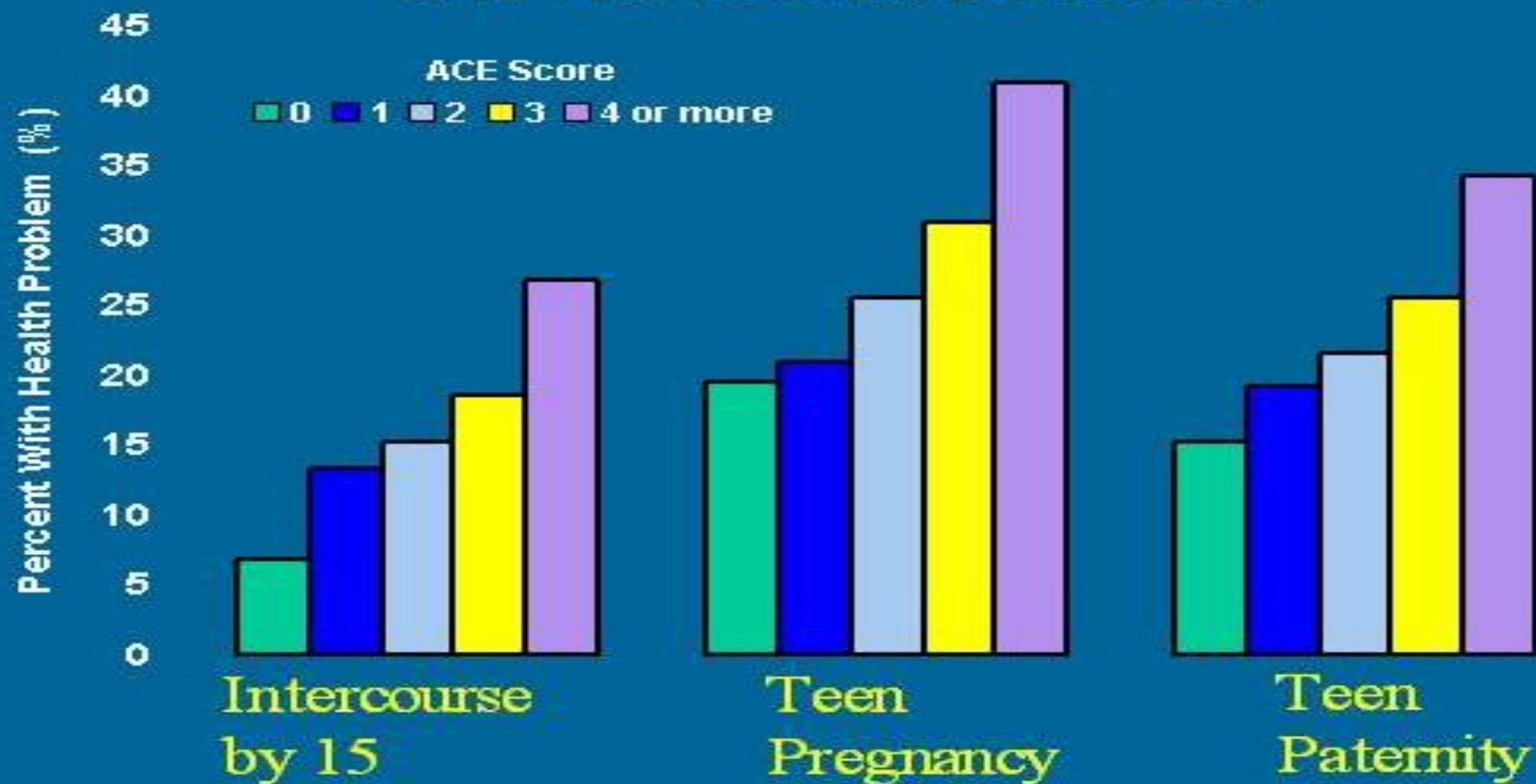
ACE Score vs. COPD



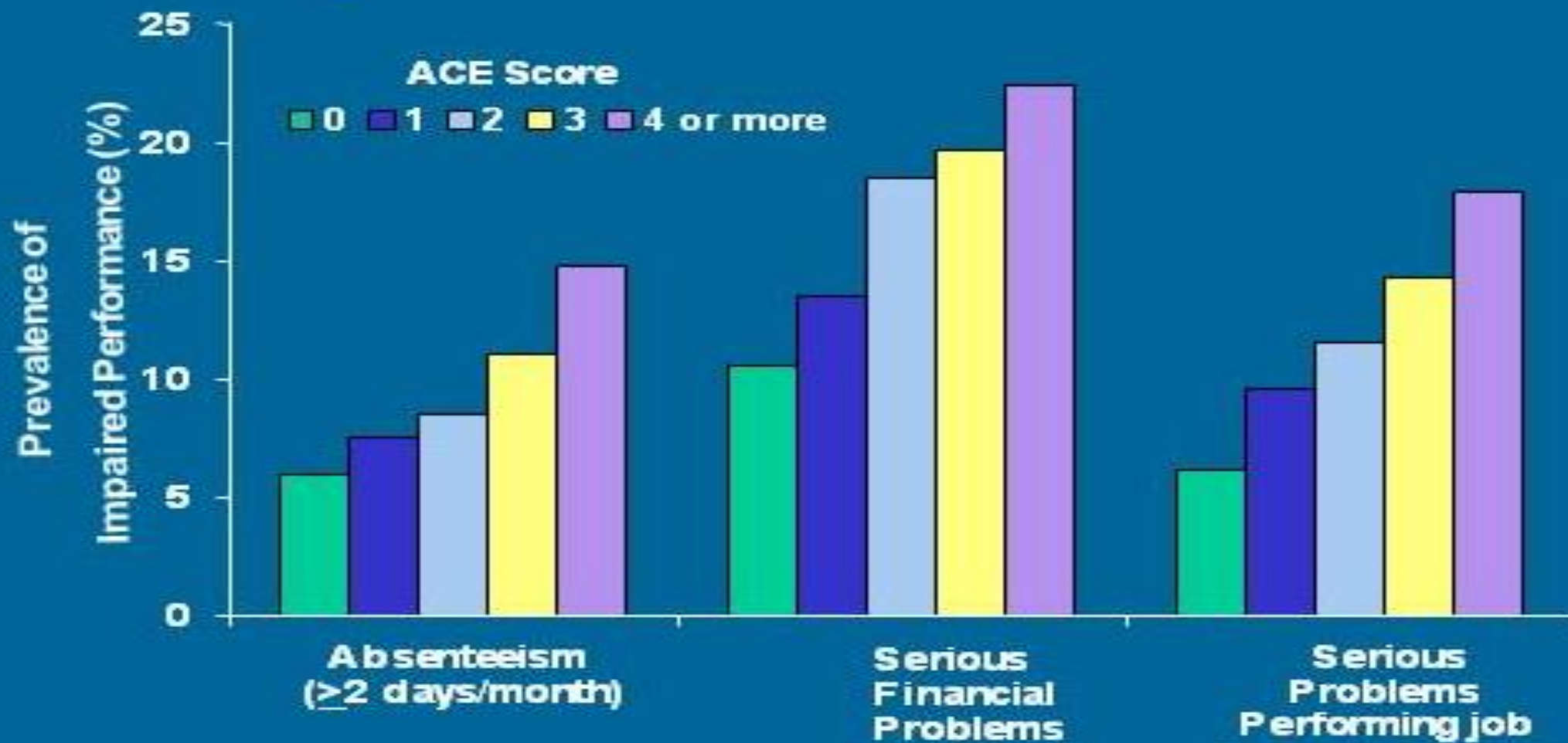
Childhood Experiences Underlie Later Being Raped

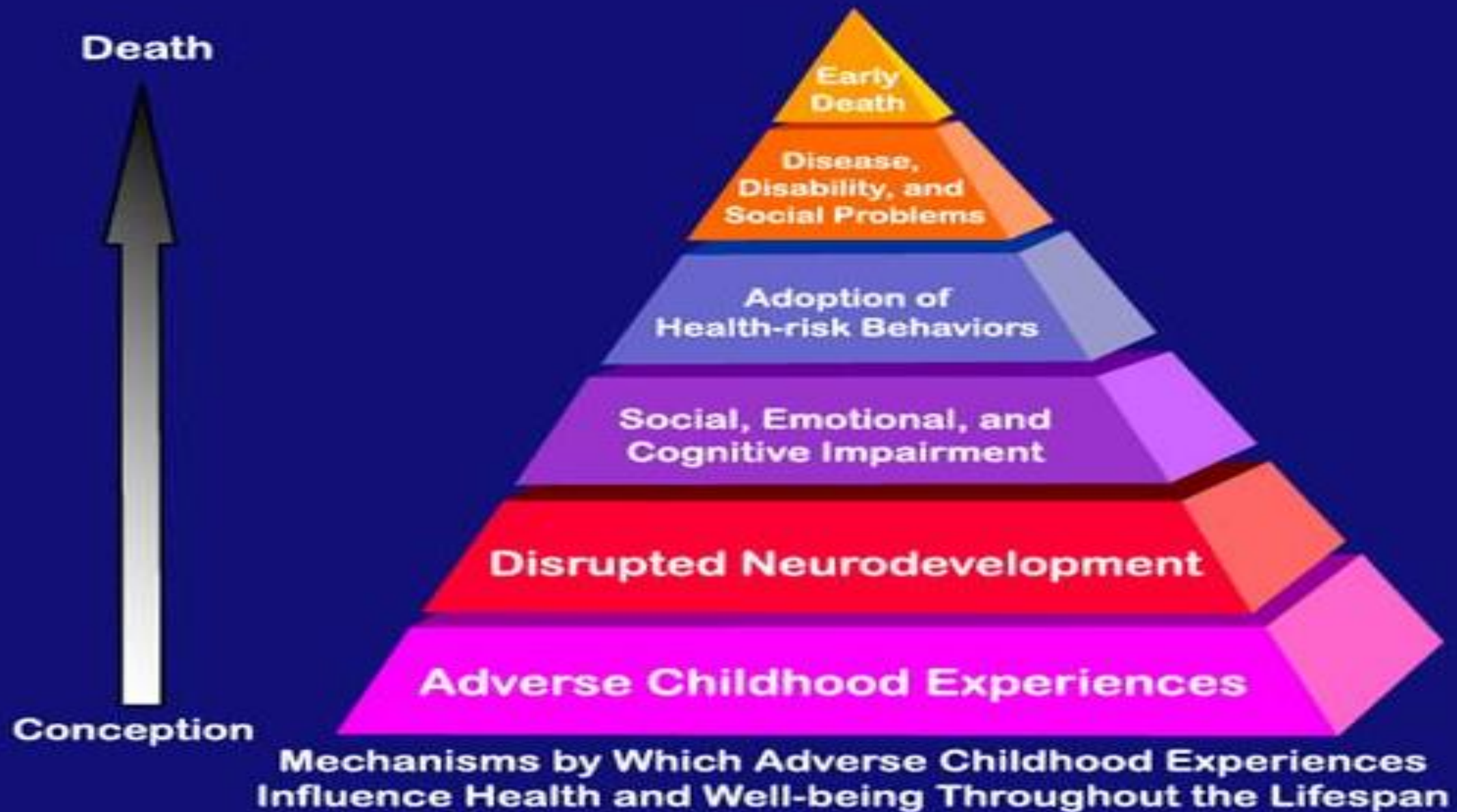


ACE Score and Teen Sexual Behaviors



ACE Score and Indicators of Impaired Worker Performance





Risk Factors For ACEs

- Young caregivers or single parents
- Limited understanding of children's needs or development
- Low levels of education
- Low income
- High levels of parenting stress
- Conflict and negative communication styles

Risk Factors For ACEs

- Caregivers who were abused or neglected as children
- Caregivers who use spanking and other forms of corporal punishment for discipline
- Inconsistent discipline and/or low levels of parental monitoring and supervision
- Caregiving challenges related to children with special needs

Risk Factors For ACEs

- Don't feel close to parents/caregivers
- Can't talk to parents/caregivers about their feelings
- Isolated from and not connected to other people
- Few or no friends
- Friends who engage in aggressive or delinquent behavior
- Attitudes accepting or justifying violence/aggression
- Start dating early or engaging in sexual activity early

Community Risk Factors For ACEs

- Limited educational and economic opportunities
- High unemployment rates
- High rates of poverty
- High rates of violence and crime
- Easy access to drugs and alcohol

Community Risk Factors For ACE

- Neighbors don't know or look out for each other
- Low community involvement among residents
- Few community activities for young people
- Unstable housing and residents move frequently
- Families frequently experience food insecurity
- High levels of social and environmental disorder