

Trauma, Homelessness and the Resilience

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What is trauma?

- ▶ “an emotional response to a terrible event” (apa.org)
- ▶ “results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced...as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (samhsa.gov)
- ▶ “occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and responds with intense fear, horror, and helplessness. Extreme stress overwhelms the person’s capacity to cope.” (thenationalcouncil.org)



Three Types of Trauma

- ▶ Acute: results from a single incident
- ▶ Chronic: repeated and prolonged incident(s)
- ▶ Complex: exposure to a variety of traumatic events

Who experiences trauma?

- ▶ Anyone and everyone!
 - ▶ Varying degrees
 - ▶ Some populations impacted more heavily
- ▶ 60% of men; 50% of women experience at least 1 traumatic event (ptsd.va.gov)
- ▶ Over 90% of public behavioral health clients have experienced trauma (thenationalcouncil.org)
 - ▶ Trauma is a risk factor for nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders



Symptoms of Trauma

- ▶ Increases in physical ailments
 - ▶ Headaches, pain, heart palpitations, GI upsets, decreased immunity
- ▶ Increases in drug and alcohol use
- ▶ Changes in sleep, appetite and sexual patterns
- ▶ Increases in symptoms of anxiety and depression
 - ▶ Fear, emotional swings, anger, isolation, guilt or shame, diminished interest
- ▶ Nightmares and flashbacks
- ▶ Difficulty trusting others and maintaining relationships



“Common” Events that Create Trauma

- ▶ Childhood abuse or neglect
- ▶ War and other forms of violence
 - ▶ Witnessing violence
- ▶ Grief and loss
- ▶ Physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- ▶ Accidents and natural disasters
- ▶ Medical interventions
- ▶ Cultural, intergenerational, systemic and historical trauma



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Physical and/or emotional abuse by a parent
- Sexual abuse by anyone
- Growing up with an alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- Experiencing the incarceration of a household member
- Living with a family member experiencing mental illness
- Domestic violence
- Loss of a parent
- Physical and/or emotional neglect

ACEs can have lasting effects on...



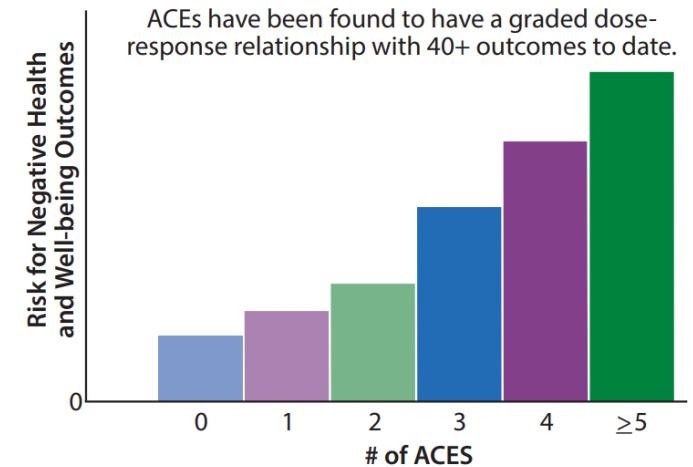
Health (obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)



Behaviors (smoking, alcoholism, drug use)



Life Potential (graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time from work)



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

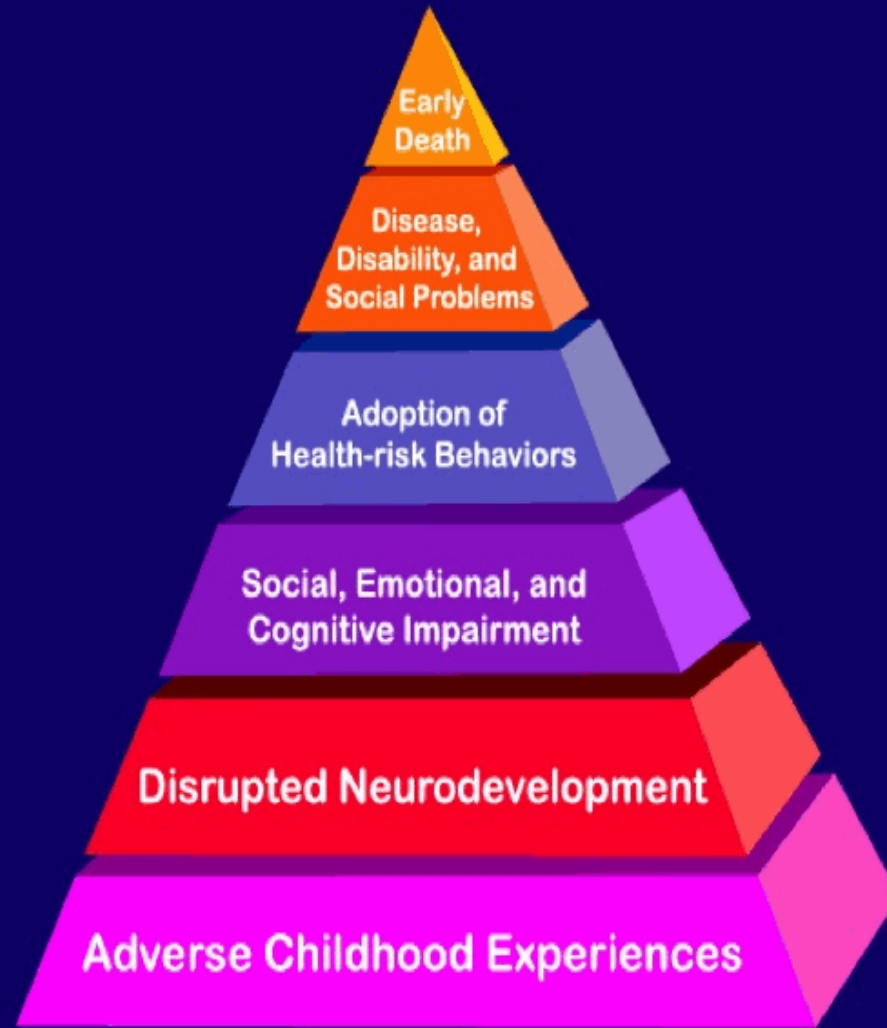
This graph is not an accurate numerical representation



Death



Conception



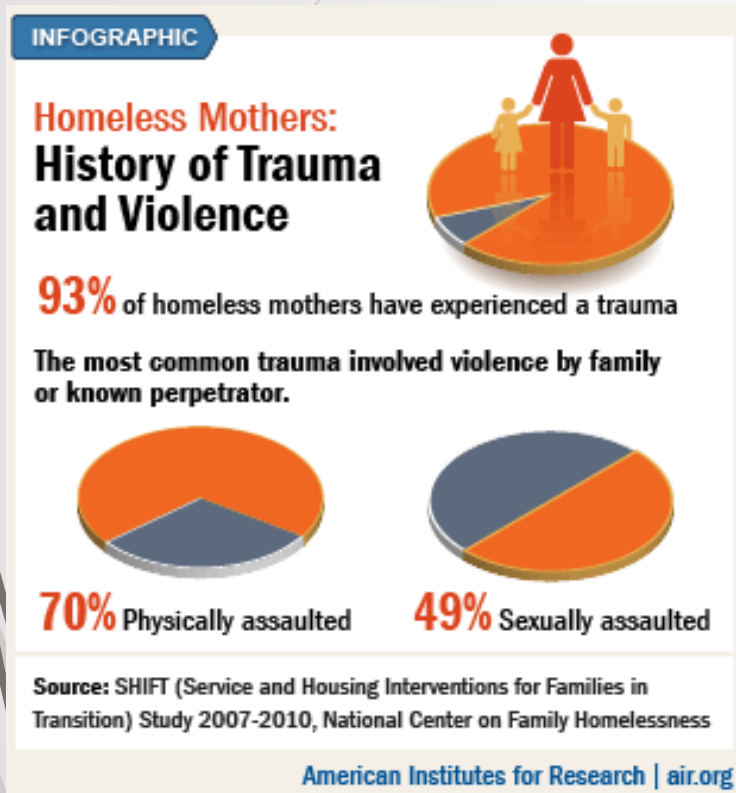
Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan



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The SHIFT Study



- ▶ SHIFT: Service and Housing Interventions for Family in Transition
 - ▶ 292 families from mid-sized cities in NY
 - ▶ Examine housing stability over time
- ▶ 15-month Predictors of Instability
 - ▶ Unemployment, lower levels of education, poor health and low self-esteem
- ▶ 30-month Predictors of Instability
 - ▶ Symptoms of Trauma
 - ▶ Low self-esteem



What is the relationship between trauma and homelessness?

- ▶ High ACEs score is correlated with homelessness (aceresponse.org)
- ▶ Trauma is correlated with homelessness
- ▶ HMIS System Data:
 - ▶ In 2019 of the 767 households who received an intake at CFTH, 571 reported “yes” to the following question:
 - ▶ Have you experienced any emotional, physical, psychological, sexual or other type of abuse or trauma in your life which you have not sought help for, and/or which has caused your homelessness?
 - ▶ 74% of the 2019 intakes are openly reporting trauma



VI-SPDAT DATA

(Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool)

- ▶ ****Disclaimer**** this data only includes assessments for non-youth households, with no children that are not re-entry (meaning they are not re-entering homelessness from prison). This population tends to be more vulnerable so is not necessarily representative of the entire homeless population in Clark County

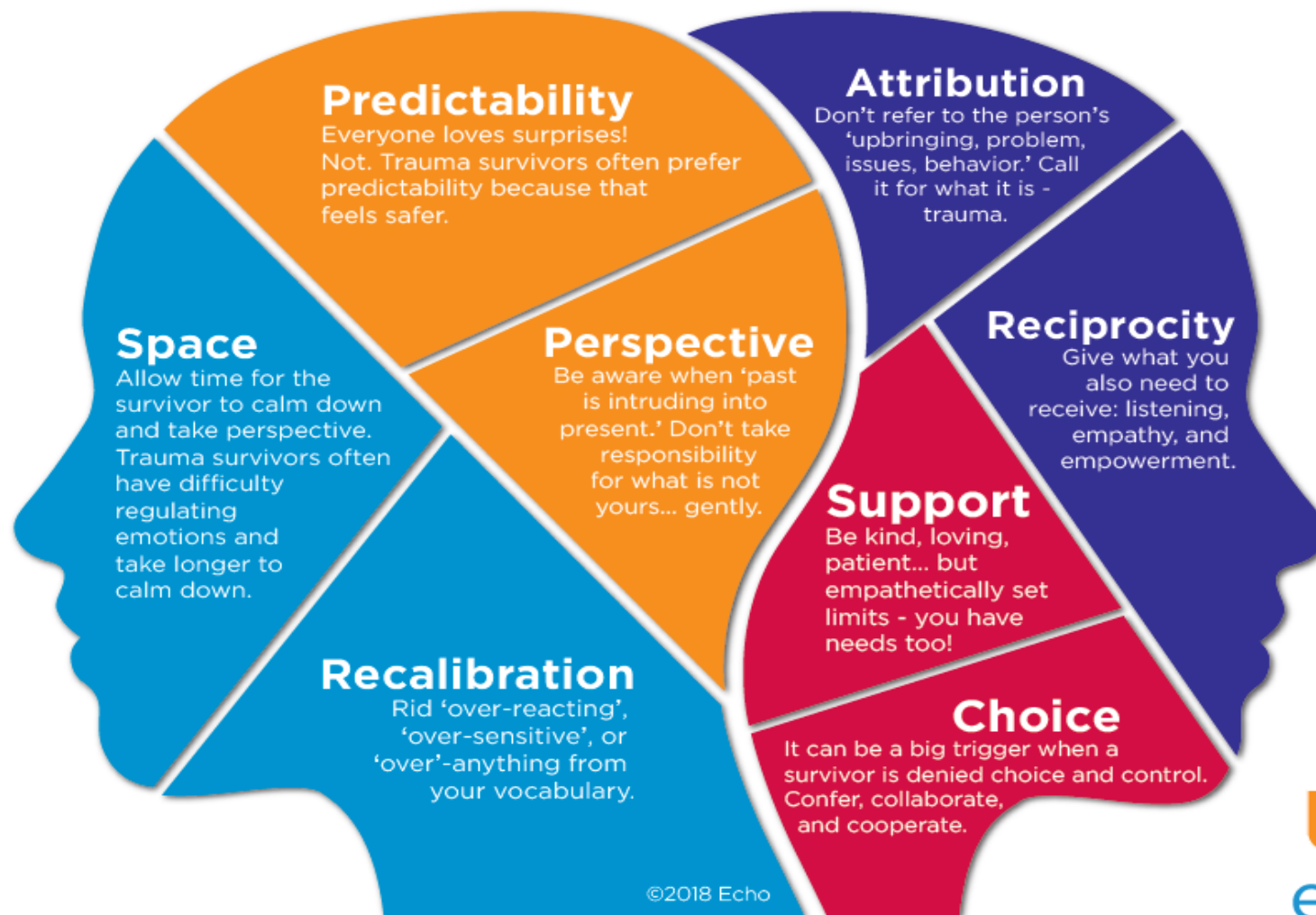


Question	% Responded "Yes" (N=949)
Have you been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless?	41.1%
Have you ever had problematic drug or alcohol use, abused drugs or alcohol, or told you do?	66%
Questions regarding substance use within the last 6 months:	25.8%*
Have you ever had a serious brain injury or head trauma?	40.6%
Have you been diagnosed with heart disease, arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeat?	30.8%



Question	% Responded "Yes" (N=949)	U.S. National Average (CDC)
Have you been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless?	41.1%	1.5% (BSJ)
Have you ever had problematic drug or alcohol use, abused drugs or alcohol, or told you do?	66%	6% (NSDUH)
Questions regarding substance use within the last 6 months:	25.8%*	
Have you ever had a serious brain injury or head trauma?	40.6%	<1%
Have you been diagnosed with heart disease, arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeat?	30.8%	12.1%
Have you been diagnosed with asthma?	32.8%	7.7%

How to Support Someone Who Has Experienced Trauma



Building Resilience

- ▶ What is resilience?
 - ▶ Process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress (apa.org)
 - ▶ “Bounce Back” and personal growth
 - ▶ Takes time and intention
- ▶ What resilience is NOT?
 - ▶ Experiencing no difficulty or distress
 - ▶ A personality trait
 - ▶ “Extraordinary”
 - ▶ Easy



How to Build Resilience



- ▶ Build Connection
 - ▶ Resources/ Join Groups
 - ▶ Prioritize Relationships
 - ▶ Communicate
 - ▶ Set Boundaries



- ▶ Foster Wellness
 - ▶ Body & Mind
 - ▶ Avoid negative outlets
 - ▶ Increase Insight/Empathy
 - ▶ Morality/Spirituality

How to Build Resilience



- ▶ Find Purpose
 - ▶ Create and work toward goals
 - ▶ Be proactive/ Initiate
 - ▶ Help others



- ▶ Embrace Healthy Thoughts
 - ▶ Perspective/Appraisal
 - ▶ Accept change
 - ▶ Maintain hope
 - ▶ Use humor

Take Away

- ▶ Trauma is *everywhere*
- ▶ Be mindful of how trauma impacts people, including yourself
 - ▶ Don't take others' actions so personally
 - ▶ What's traumatic for you may not be traumatic for another individual
- ▶ Show compassion—for yourself too!
- ▶ PEOPLE CAN AND DO RECOVER FROM TRAUMA



Resilience Discussion

- ▶ What have you learned about yourself during this challenging time?
- ▶ Are there any new hobbies or activities you attempted?
- ▶ What do you hope stays with you when things return to “normal”?





Questions?

