



Positive Childhood Experiences: The Other Side of ACEs

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Agenda

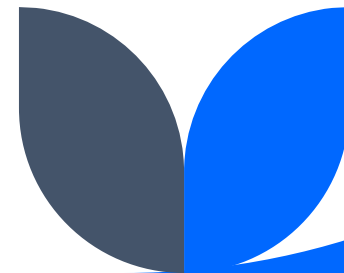
Review of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

Connection between ACEs and PCEs

State of TN data for PCEs

Practical Implications



ACEs: A Quick Review

- ACES = Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Origins
 - Major research study that compared current adult health status to childhood experiences
 - Dr. Robert Anda & Dr. Vincent Felitti
 - Began with observations from a weight loss study at Kaiser Permanente in San Diego in the 1980s

ACEs: Review

- The official ACES study started in the 1990s with results first published in 1998
 - ACEs are both common and destructive
 - Powerful correlation with adult health even over 50 years later
- 10 items on ACES questionnaire for adults
- Each Yes answer = 1 point
- Dose-response correlation to adulthood outcomes



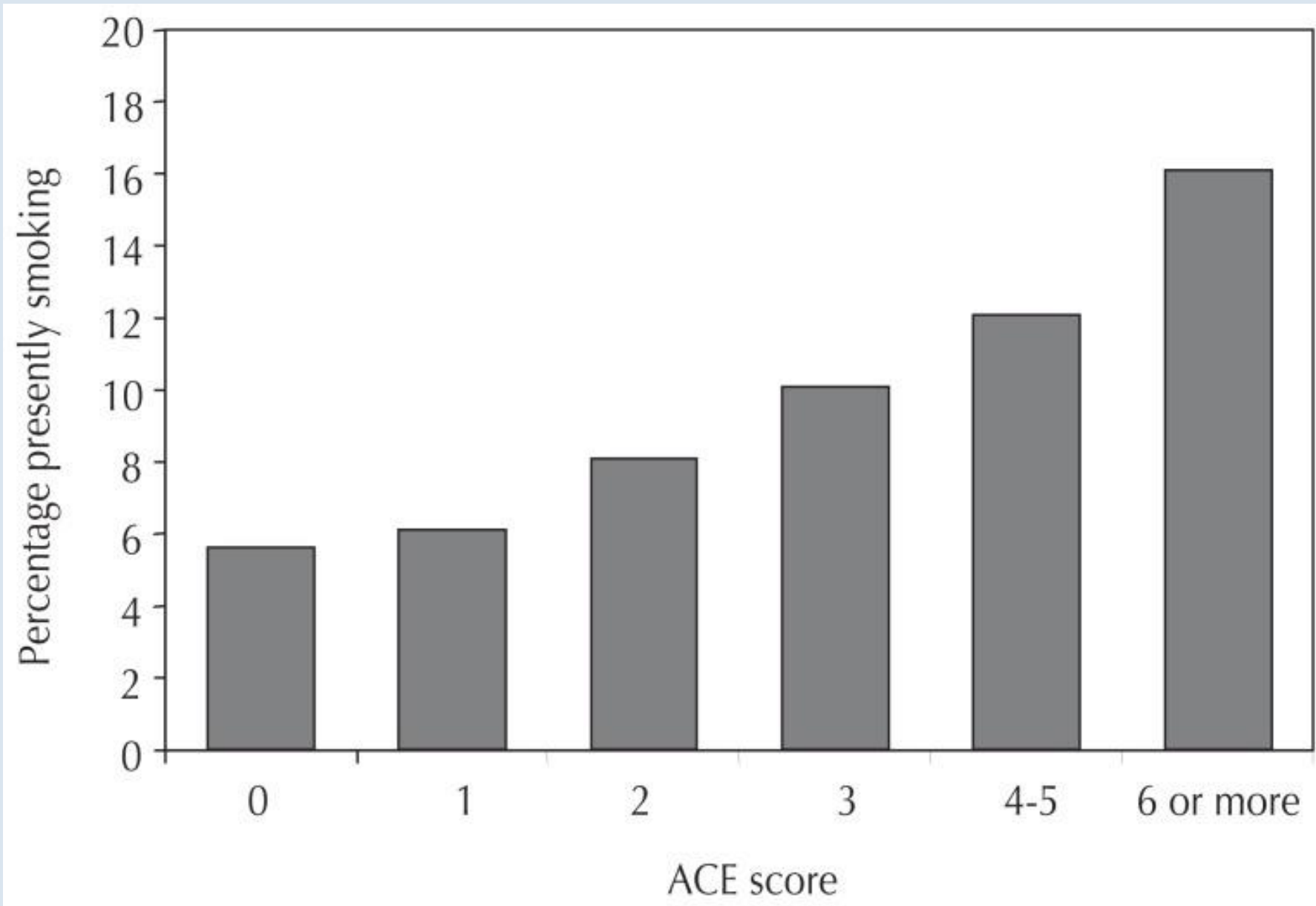


While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very 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?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**...
Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?
or
Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
Yes 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
Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
4. Did you **often or very 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?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
5. Did you **often or very 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?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
7. Was your mother or stepmother:
Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
or
Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?
or
Ever repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____
10. Did a household member go to prison?
Yes No If yes enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____ This is your ACE Score.

Example of Dose-Response



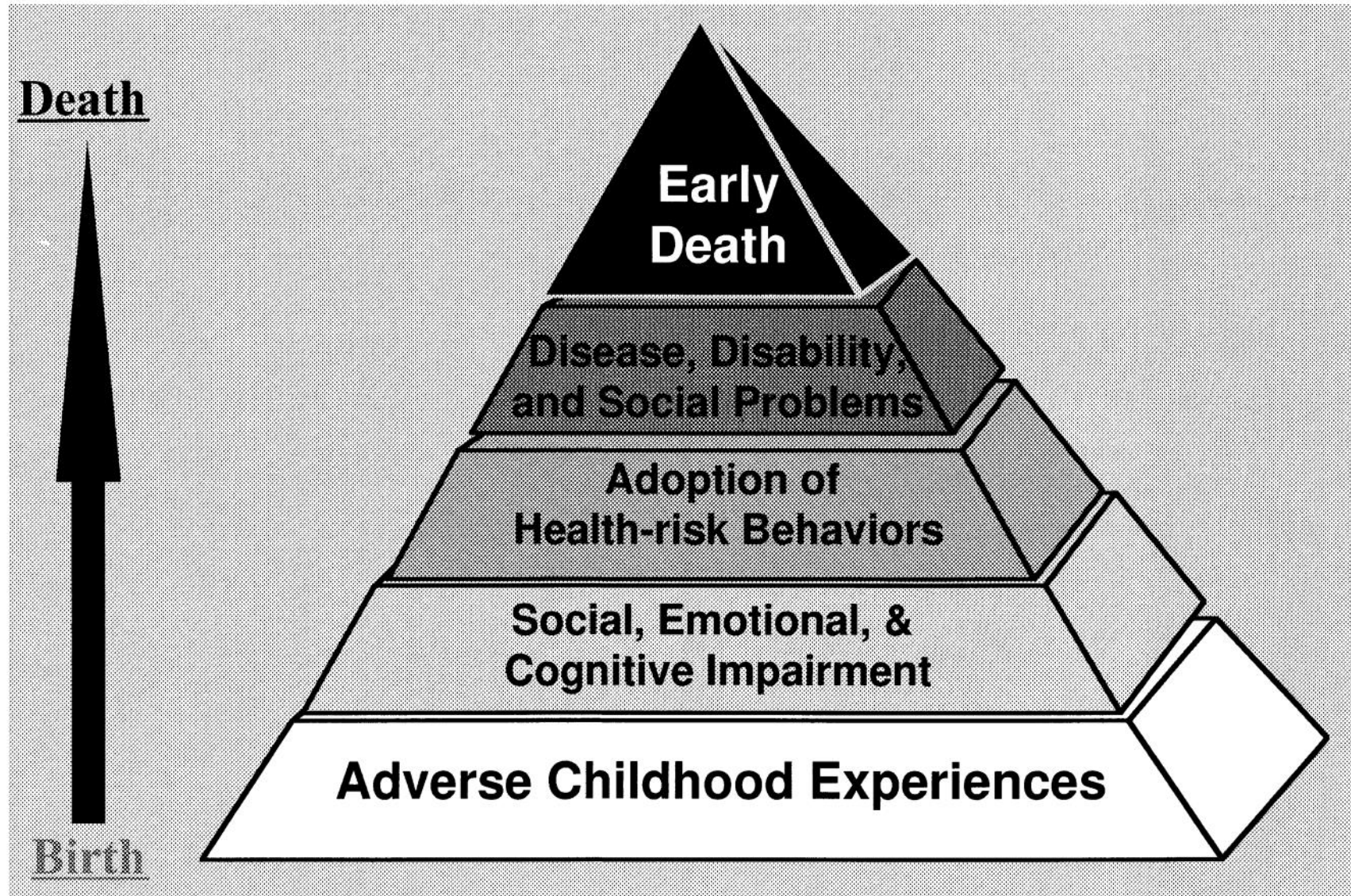
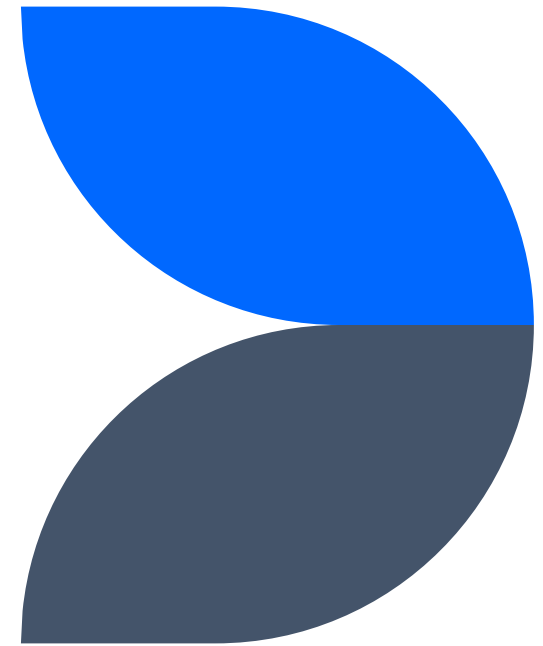


Figure 2. Potential influences throughout the lifespan of adverse childhood experiences.

Positive Childhood Experiences



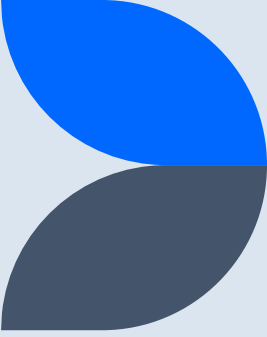
PCEs

Experiences during childhood that promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments.

Can help children develop

- Sense of belonging
- Connectedness
- Build resilience

(CDC, 2023)

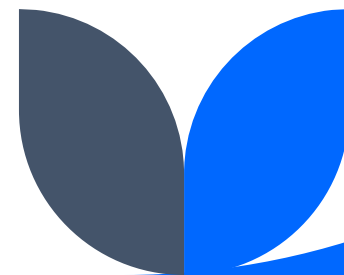


PCEs

Research has shown four categories for PCEs

- 1) Being in nurturing, supportive relationships
- 2) Living, developing, playing, and learning in protective and equitable environments
- 3) Opportunities for constructive social engagement and developing connectedness
- 4) Learning social and emotional competencies

(Crouch et al., 2020; Sege & Browne, 2017)

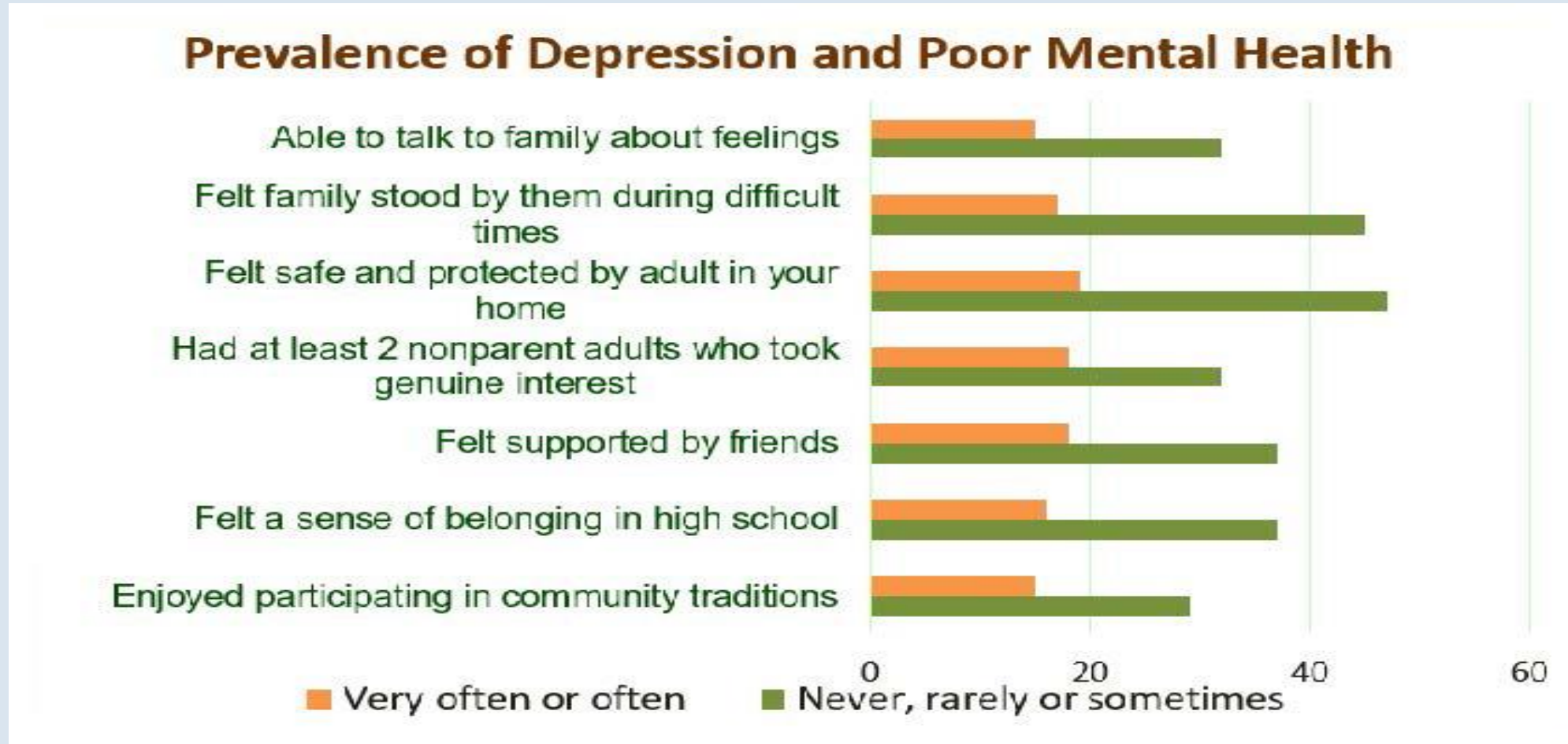
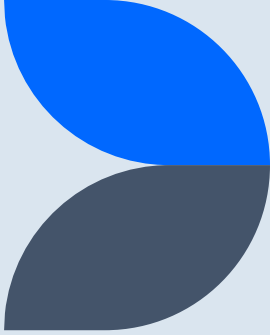


PCEs defined

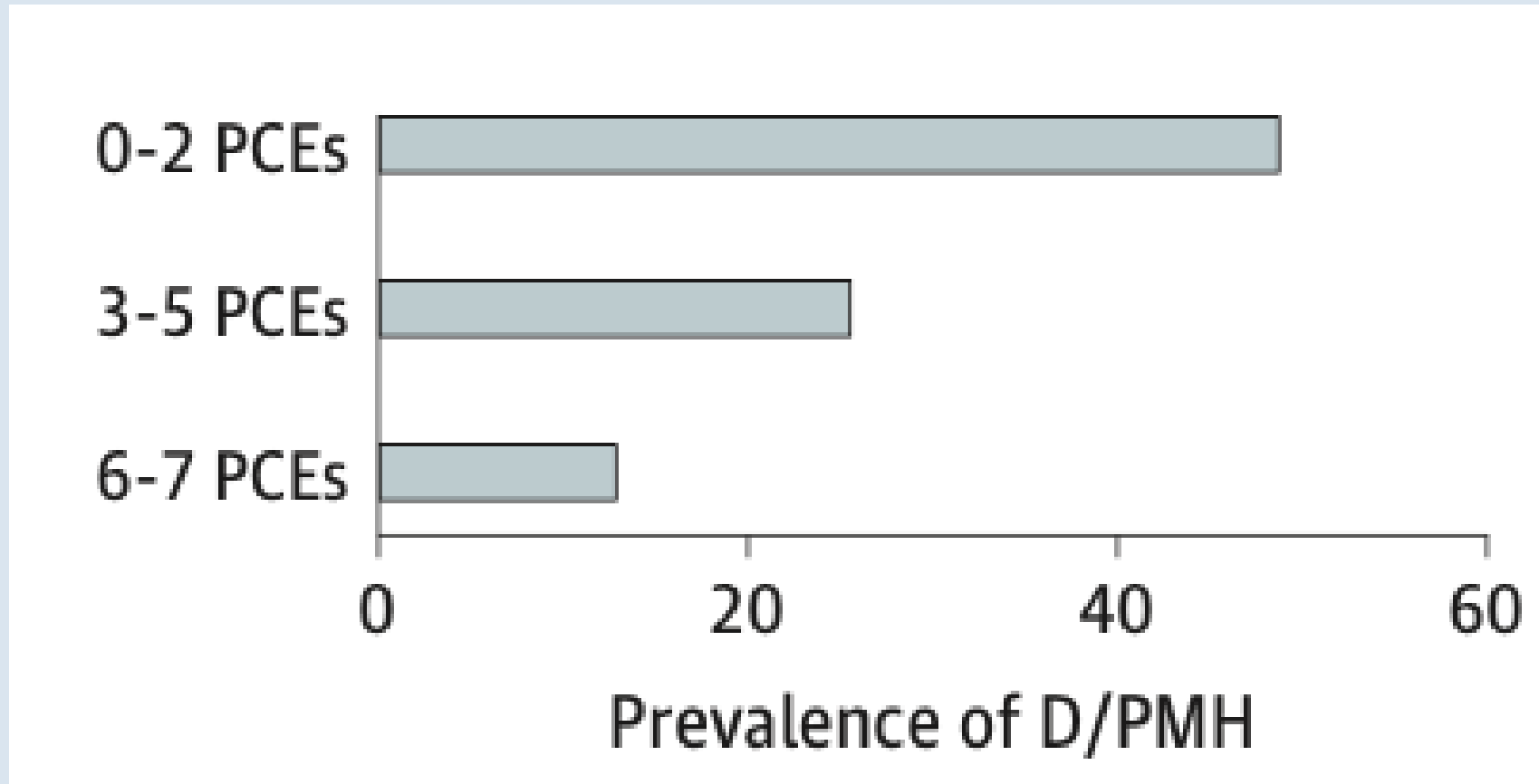
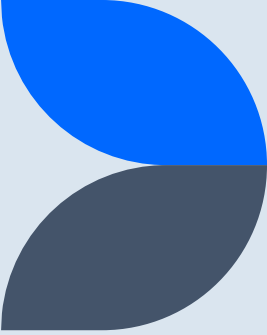
1. Able to talk to family about feelings
2. Felt family stood by them during difficult times
3. Felt safe and protected by adult in your home
4. Had a least two nonparent adults who took genuine interest
5. Felt supported by friends
6. Felt a sense of belonging at high school
7. Enjoyed participating in community traditions

(Bethell et al., 2019)

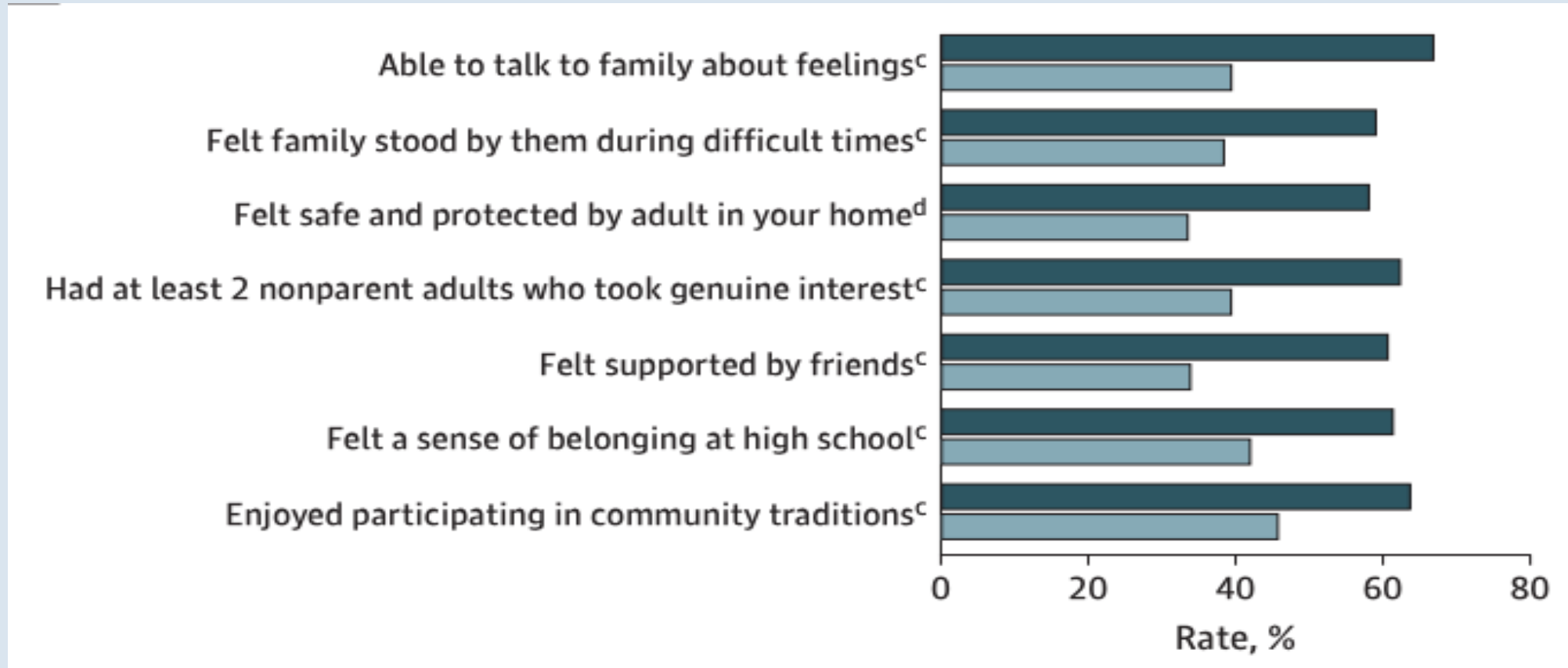
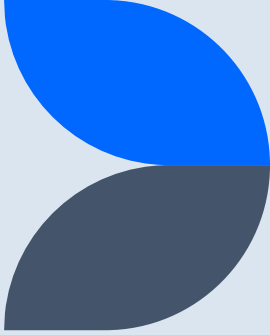
Depression and PCEs (Single items)



Depression and PCEs (Cumulative score)

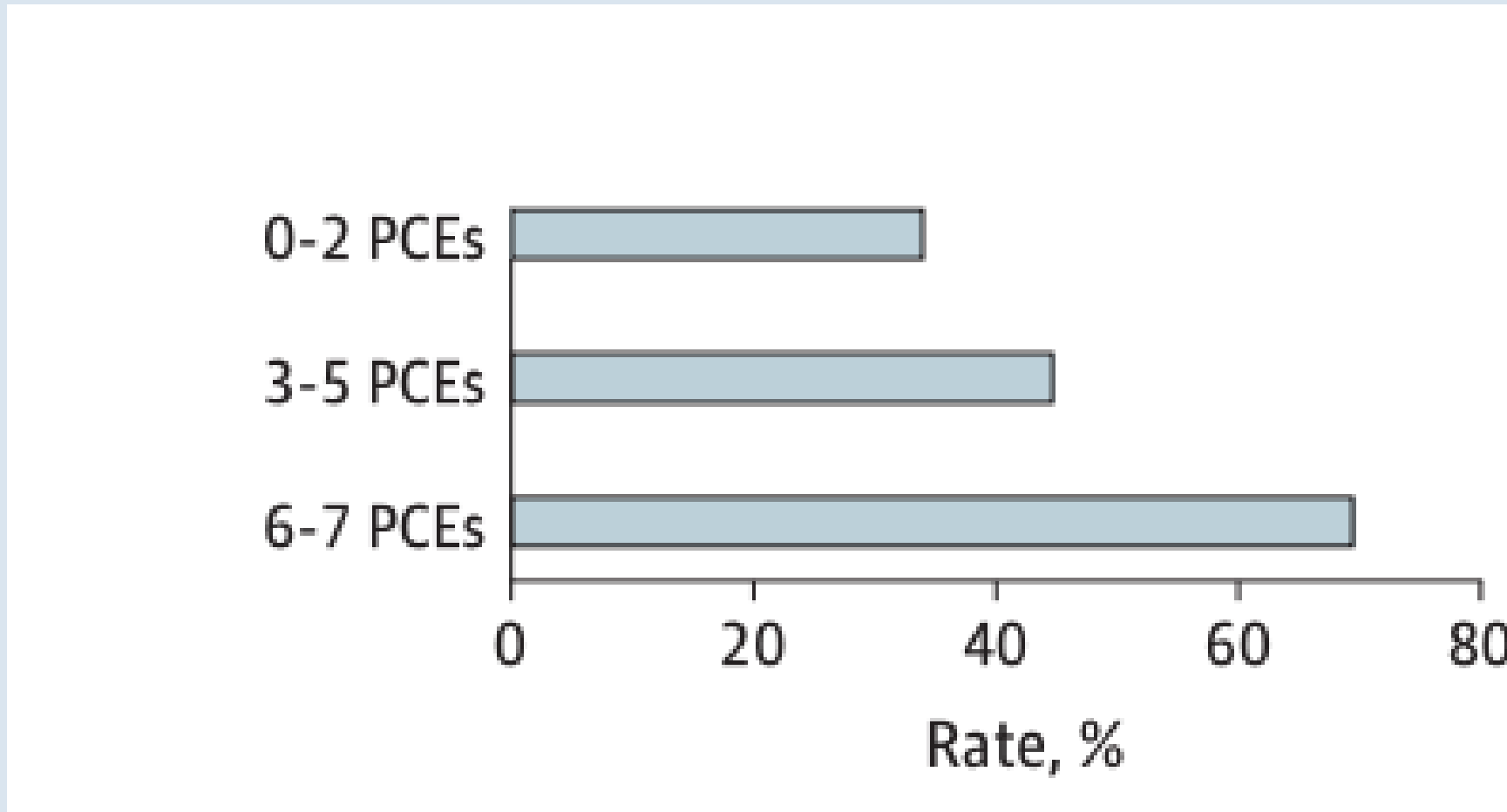
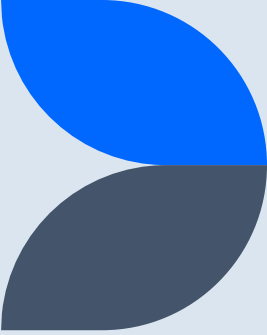


Social Emotional Support and PCEs



(Bethell et al., 2019)

Social Emotional Support and PCEs (Cumulative Score)

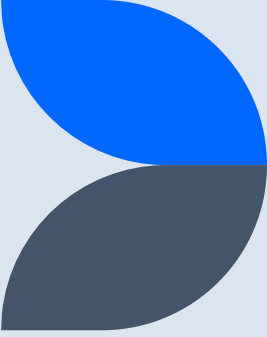


(Bethell et al., 2019)

Counter ACEs – AKA: PCEs

- Should focus on a collective number of counter-ACEs that are stronger than one single advantageous event because together they can lead to resilience and better lifelong health (Crandall et al., 2020).
- The presence of counter ACEs can have a more important influence on mental health than the presence of ACEs (Anda et al., 2020; Bethell et al., 2019; Crandall et al., 2019; Narayan et al., 2018).

Counter ACEs - AKA: PCEs



- Counter ACEs include positive parenting, school connectedness, meaningful beliefs, and close relationships with family, friends, and non-parent adults (Bethell et al., 2019; Masten & Barnes, 2018; Narayan et al., 2018).
- Higher levels of social support, self-efficacy, and emotional stability during adolescence countered ACEs with a better mental health quality of life (Cohrdes & Mauz, 2020).

Connection between ACEs and PCEs

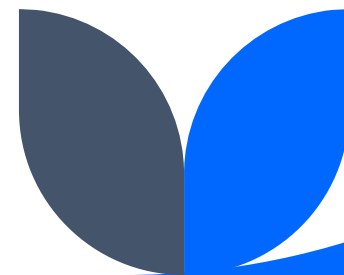
- ACEs and counter ACEs (PCEs) that occur during adolescence can alter brain development which in turn could influence health and behavior outcomes (Flaherty et al., 2013).
- Even when ACEs were present, counter ACEs (PCEs) predicted less risky sexual behavior, reduced depression, less substance abuse, and a more positive body image in young adults. The more counter ACEs that were present decreased the presence of the negative outcomes (Crandall et al., 2020).

Connection between ACEs and PCEs

- Positive family experiences in childhood were associated with lower rates of adolescent pregnancy across all ACEs exposure levels (Hillis et al., 2010).
- Pregnant women and young adults exposed to ACEs reported protective effects from interpersonal PCEs against mental health problems in adulthood (Chung et al., 2008; Kosterman et al., 2011)

Connection between ACEs and PCEs

- PCEs provide young adults with strong social networks that mitigate the damaging effects of ACEs by helping them learn to handle adversity resulting in growth after traumatic circumstances. The result can be increased resilience (Balistreri & Alvira-Hammond, 2016; Bethell et al., 2014).



Multicultural Considerations

- All racial-ethnic minority groups of children had a lower likelihood of experiencing three or more PCEs than their Non-Hispanic White counterparts.
- Female children had higher odds of exposure to three or more PCEs than males.
- Children with special healthcare needs had lower odds of exposure to PCEs than children without special healthcare needs.
- Children with a guardian with a high school education or less had a lower likelihood of experiencing three or more PCEs.

(Crouch et al., 2021)



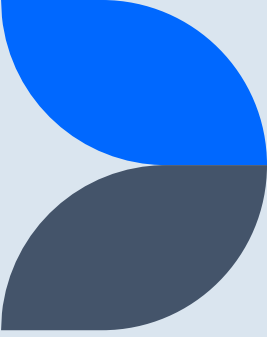
PCEs & Tennesseans

Tennessee Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

- A national telephone-based random digit dialed survey
- Focused on health behavior and chronic disease prevalence in adults (18+ years)
- All 50 states and three U.S. territories participate in the BRFSS with CDC support.
- Tennessee has been participating in the BRFSS since its inception in 1984.



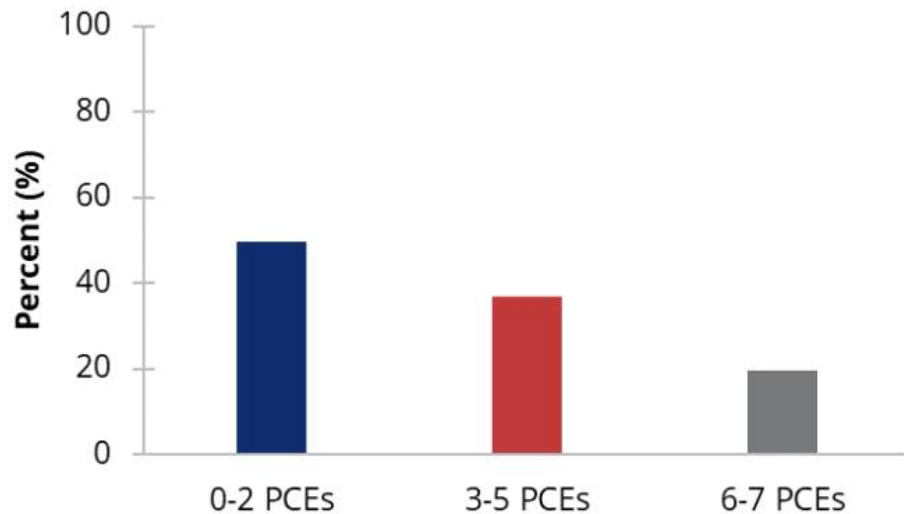
BRFSS Results: 2021



- Added PCE questionnaire to the survey
- Over 4,000 participants
- Most adult Tennesseans reported feeling **safe and supported at home** and **by their friends** while growing up.
- Almost 50% of adults reported experiencing all 7 PCEs.
- Only 7.4% reported 2 or fewer PCEs.
- Least common PCE was “I felt a sense of belonging in high school” (71.3%).

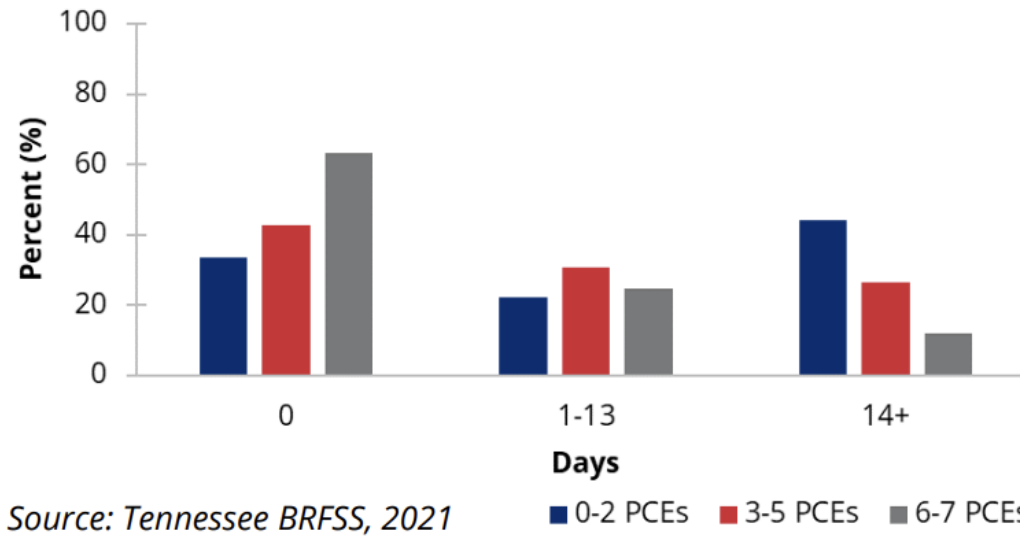
PCEs & Mental Health in TN

Ever Diagnosed with Depression



Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 2021

Days with Poor Mental Health in the Last 30 Days

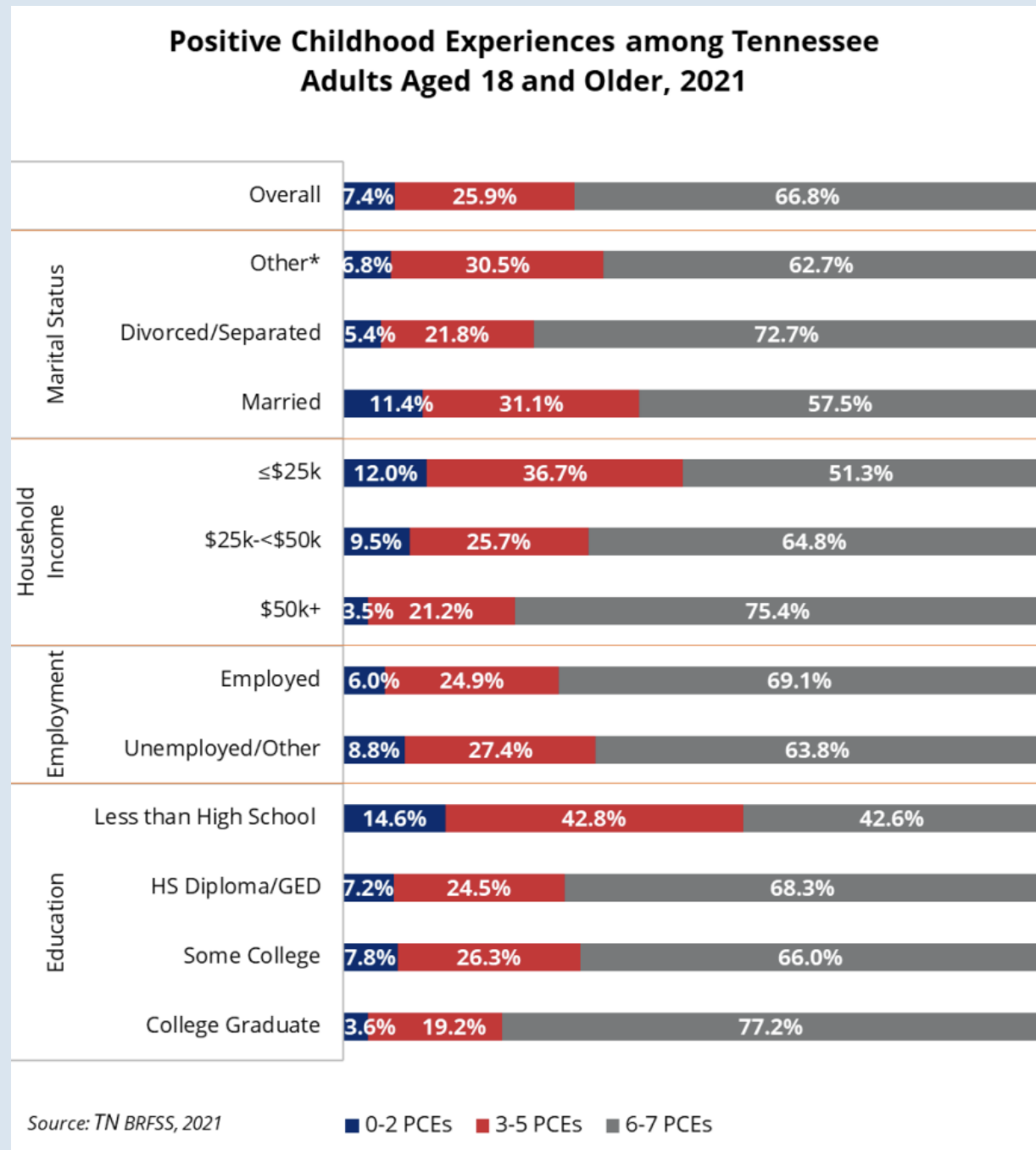


Source: Tennessee BRFSS, 2021

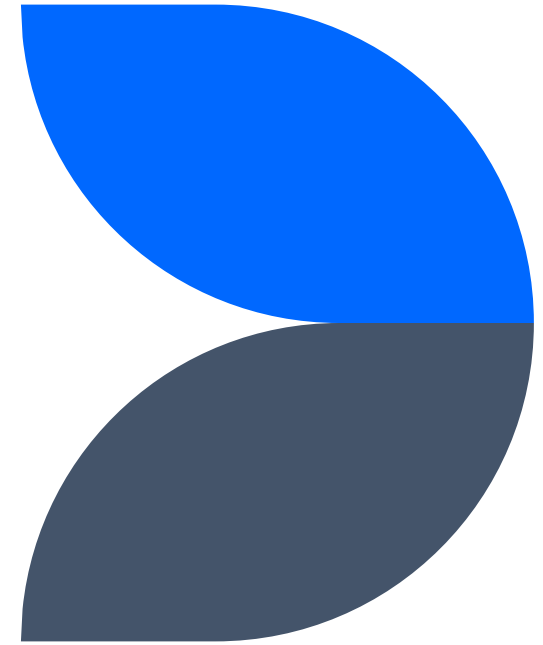
Legend: ■ 0-2 PCEs ■ 3-5 PCEs ■ 6-7 PCEs



PCE Variations by Demographics



Practical Implications



Resilience

- The experience of PCEs is associated with resilience (Sege & Browne, 2017).
- Resilience is a result of promotive and protective factors from multiple interactions over time that support biological, psychological, and social functioning (Ioannidis et al., 2020)
- Resilience factors and adaptive skills are associated with improved childhood development and adult health outcomes (Bethell et al., 2019).

Protective Interventions

- Upstream approaches focus on the social context of health.
- Midstream approaches focus on individuals and families by providing and reinforcing protective factors.
- Downstream efforts focus on addressing trauma prevention and care.
- Lasting improvements focus on upstream and midstream approaches to change the causes of family trauma.

(Crandall et al., 2020)

Resources

- H.O.P.E - Healthy Outcomes Positive Experiences

<https://positiveexperience.org/>

- SEEK – Safe Environment for Every Kid

<https://seekwellbeing.org/>

- The Family Center

<https://www.familycentertn.org/>

- TN Voices: Strengthening Families Approach

<https://tnvoices.org/trainings/strengthening-families/>

- Positive Childhood Experiences Quiz

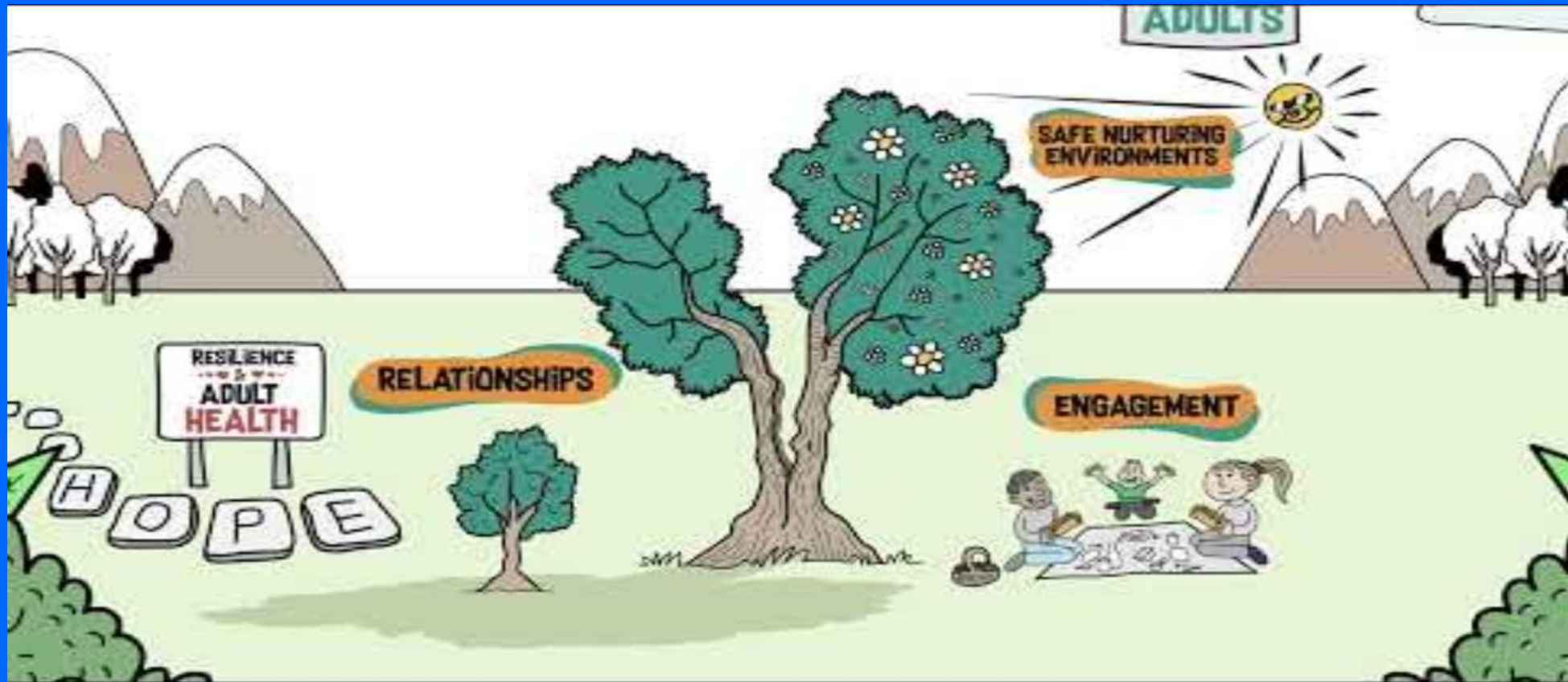
<https://americanspcc.org/take-the-pces-quiz/>

- ACEs and Resilience Tests

<https://pinetreeinstitute.org/aces-trauma/>



H.O.P.E. (Healthy Outcome Positive Experiences)



Activity

Positive Parenting

School Connectedness

Meaningful Beliefs

Close Relationships



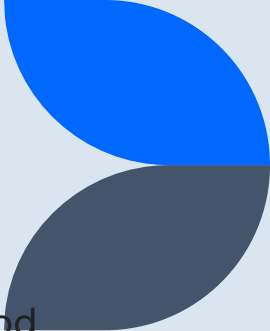
**Questions or
Comments?**

THANK YOU

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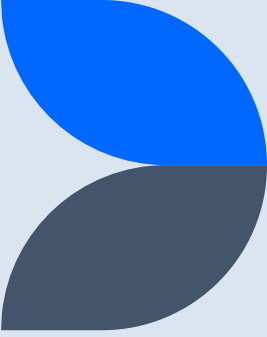
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