



# Child Welfare Systems and Prevention of Child Maltreatment

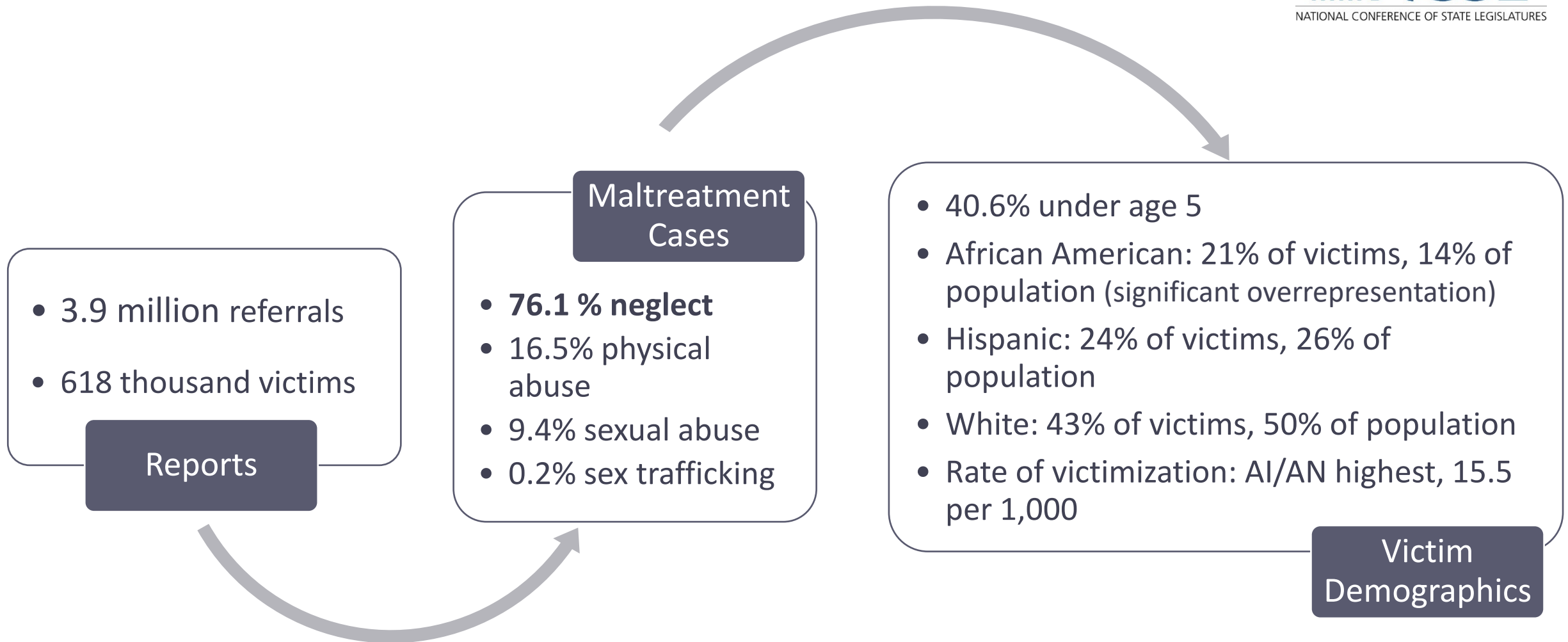
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# Child Maltreatment: The Latest National Data



[2020 Child Maltreatment Report](#), published Jan. 19, 2022

Compiled from data reported by the 50 states, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico

# Types of Child Maltreatment

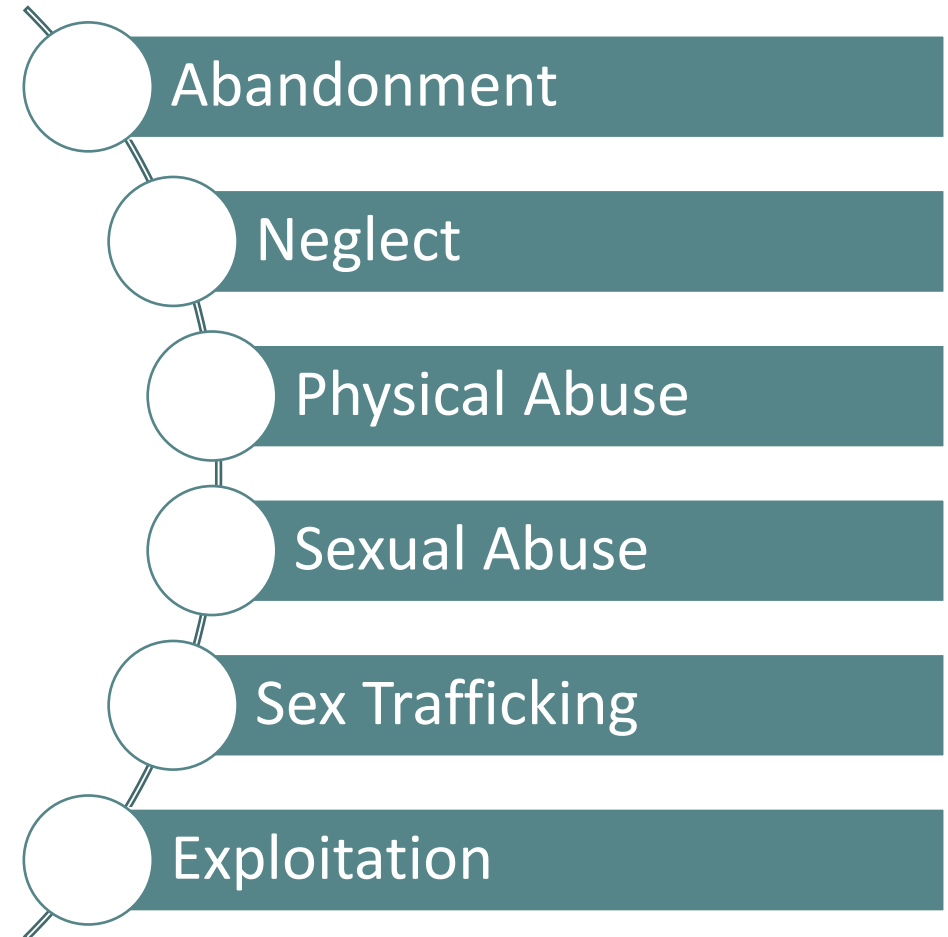
## Federal Definitions from CAPTA:

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation.”

“An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

## However...

- States determine their own definitions in statute.
- Child maltreatment is not a monolith.



# State Legislator Survey Responses

Perceived Causes of Child Maltreatment	# of Mentions
Economic Insecurity (referred to as poverty by most respondents)	26
Substance Abuse/Misuse	19
Inadequate Supports for Parent, Children and Families	18
Mental Illness	13
Intergenerational Cycle of Abuse/Violence/Trauma	12
Parenting (negative)	5
Housing Insecurity	4
Lack of Affordable High-quality Child Care	4
Stress	3
Education (undefined)	3
Inadequate Health Care	2
Reporting	2
Family Structure	2
Food Insecurity	1

# What Happens when Maltreatment is Confirmed?

## National Data on Removal (2020)

- 22% of victims removed
- Reasons for removal:
  - **Neglect (64%)**
  - Parental drug abuse (35%)
  - Caretaker's inability to cope (13%)
  - Physical abuse (13%)
  - Housing (9%)
  - Child behavioral problem (8%)
  - Parental incarceration (6%)
  - Sexual Abuse (4%)

## Child Welfare Systems

Impact of removal on children and parents

Many types of placements:

- Foster care, kinship care
- Therapeutic foster care, congregate care, Qualified Residential Treatment Programs
- Emergency, respite

Pathways to Permanency

- Reunification
- Parental rights terminated & adoption

# Neglect and Poverty

- Neglect and poverty are closely correlated, but not the same.
  - Those in poverty often have more contact with government systems.
  - More contacts → More reports.
  - Poverty is also correlated with race and ethnicity → disproportionality.
- Most parents don't intend to neglect their children.
- **Child welfare systems were not designed to prevent poverty.**

# Race and Poverty Bias in the Child Welfare System

- Data shows pervasive links between poverty, race and the over-representation of Black children in child welfare systems
  - A recent study found **poor Black children 2-3x more likely than poor white children** to be reported, have maltreatment substantiated, and be removed (Briggs et al, 2022).
  - Geographic factors, including inadequate infrastructure in high-poverty areas, contribute to racial disproportionality in child welfare and researchers are working to better understand these impacts (Dettlaff and Boyd, 2021; Maguire-Jack et al, 2020).
- American Indian, Black and Hispanic children are more likely to live in poverty.
  - 31% of Black children lived in poverty in 2019
  - 30% of American Indian/Alaska Native children lived in poverty in 2019
  - 23% of Hispanic children lived in poverty in 2019

# Mismatch between CPS and Poverty

- Lack of child supervision often goes hand in hand with lack of child care.
- **Inability** to provide food, safe housing or clothing is not synonymous with an **unwillingness** to provide these essentials.
- Learning opportunities and mental health resources for families help address common risks of neglect.
- Poverty complicates other forms of violence that impact children.
- Other examples?



# Common Systemic Shortcomings or Failures

Doesn't deal well with poverty and racial disparities.

Perpetuates harm for children and families through trauma of removal and fear of surveillance.

Prioritizes permanency via adoption over reunification with family.

And more... what have you seen?

# Preventing Child Maltreatment

## Primary

- Universally available interventions
- Example policies:
  - Public awareness
  - Family strengthening programs
  - Public education on child development

## Secondary

- Interventions available to those with higher risk
- Example policies:
  - Targeted economic supports
  - Family resource centers
  - Home visiting programs

## Tertiary

- Interventions to prevent further maltreatment when it has already occurred
- Example policies:
  - Family preservation services
  - Behavioral health services



**Prevention Continuum**

# State Legislator Survey Responses

Child Welfare Spending Areas	Avg. Current Prioritization	Avg. Desired Spending
Primary prevention	4 <sup>th</sup>	32% of budget
Secondary prevention	3 <sup>rd</sup>	25% of budget
Tertiary prevention	1 <sup>st</sup>	24% of budget
Foster Care, Kinship Care and Adoption	2 <sup>nd</sup>	20% of budget



Children do better when the adults in their lives do better.



# Child Maltreatment and Adverse Childhood Experiences: Pathways to Prevention

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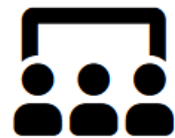
**Injury & Violence  
Prevention Center**  
colorado school of public health

# The Injury and Violence Prevention Center at CU Anschutz



## Research

Conduct cutting-edge research on injury and violence prevention



## Research to practice

Conduct high-quality injury and violence prevention activities with our partners



## Training

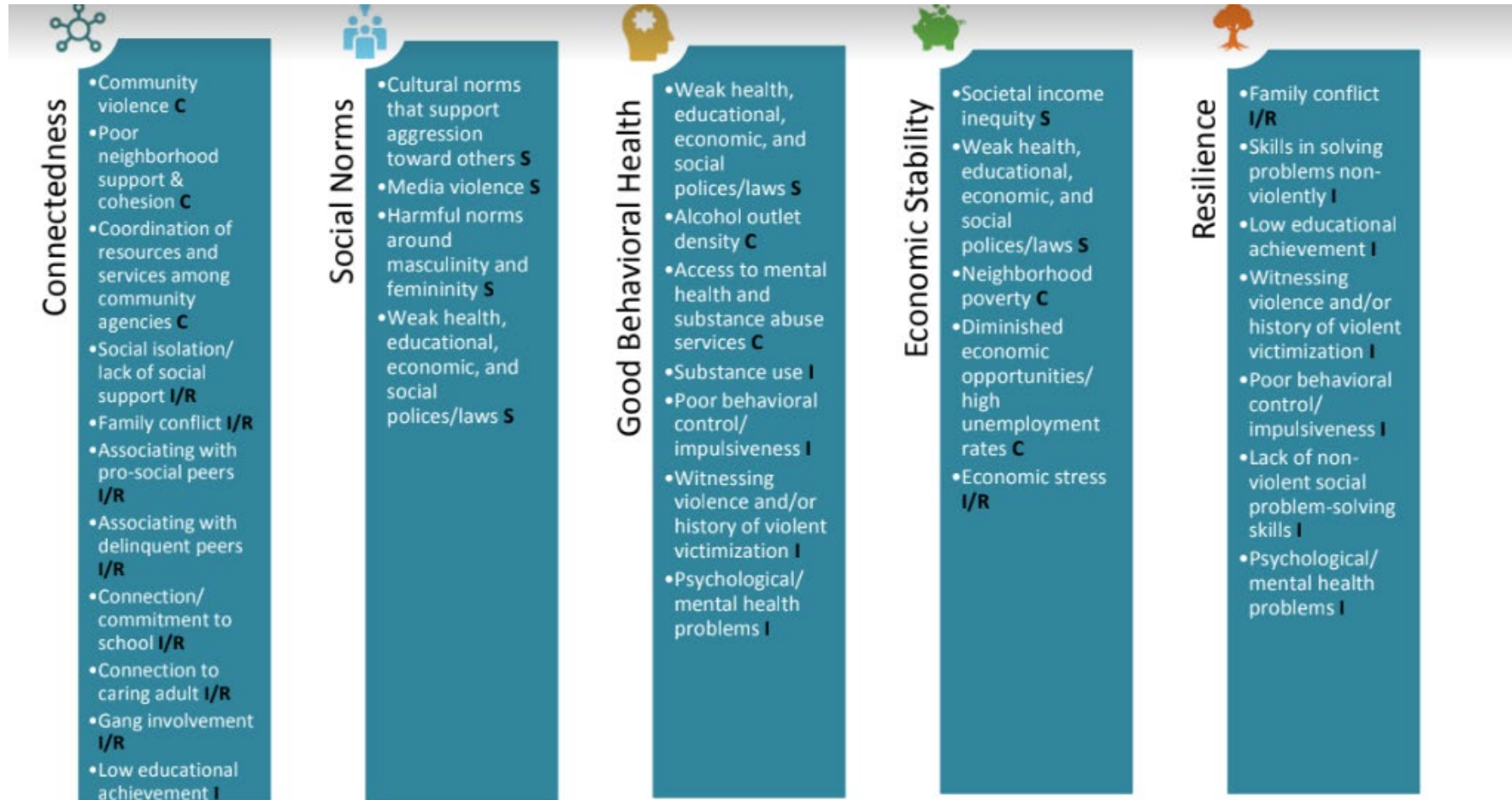
Train researchers and public health professionals in injury and violence prevention



## Policy translation

Work to improve national, state, and local policies addressing injury and violence prevention

# Violence and Injury Outcomes Share Common Risk and Protective Factors



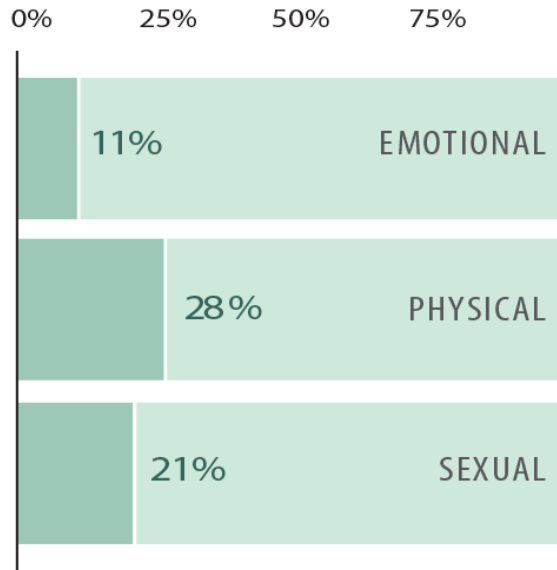
Levels of the social ecology: Societal (S), Community (C), Interpersonal/Relationship (I/R), Individual (I)



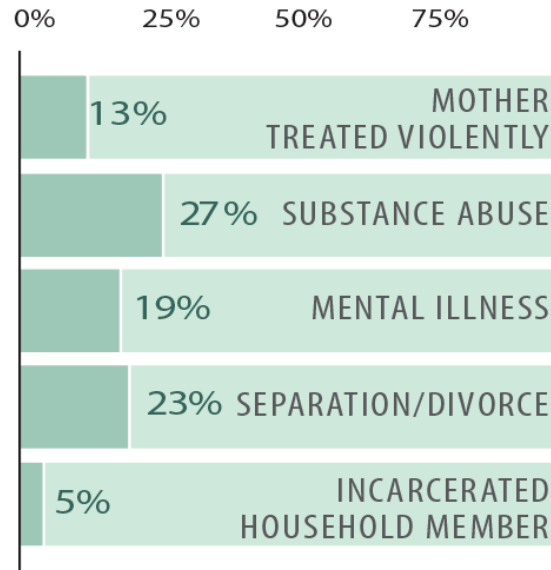
# TYPES *of* ACES

The ACE study looked at three categories of adverse experience: **childhood abuse**, which included emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; **neglect**, including both physical and emotional neglect; and **household challenges** which included growing up in a household where there was substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment of a mother or stepmother, parental separation/divorce or had a member of the household go to prison. Respondents were given an **ACE score** between 0 and 10 based on how many of these 10 types of adverse experience to which they reported being exposed.

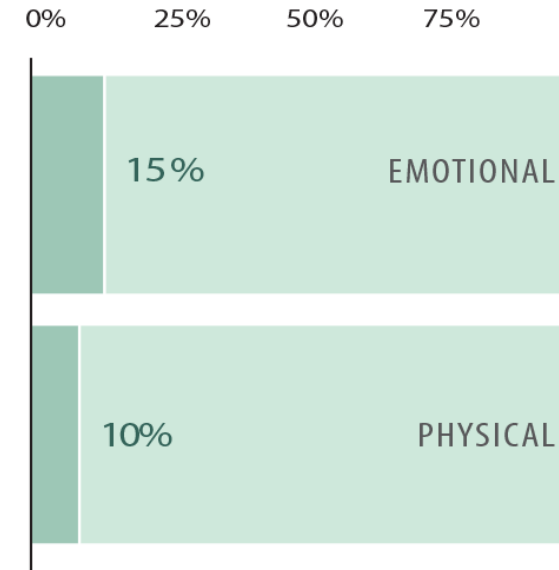
## ABUSE



## HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES

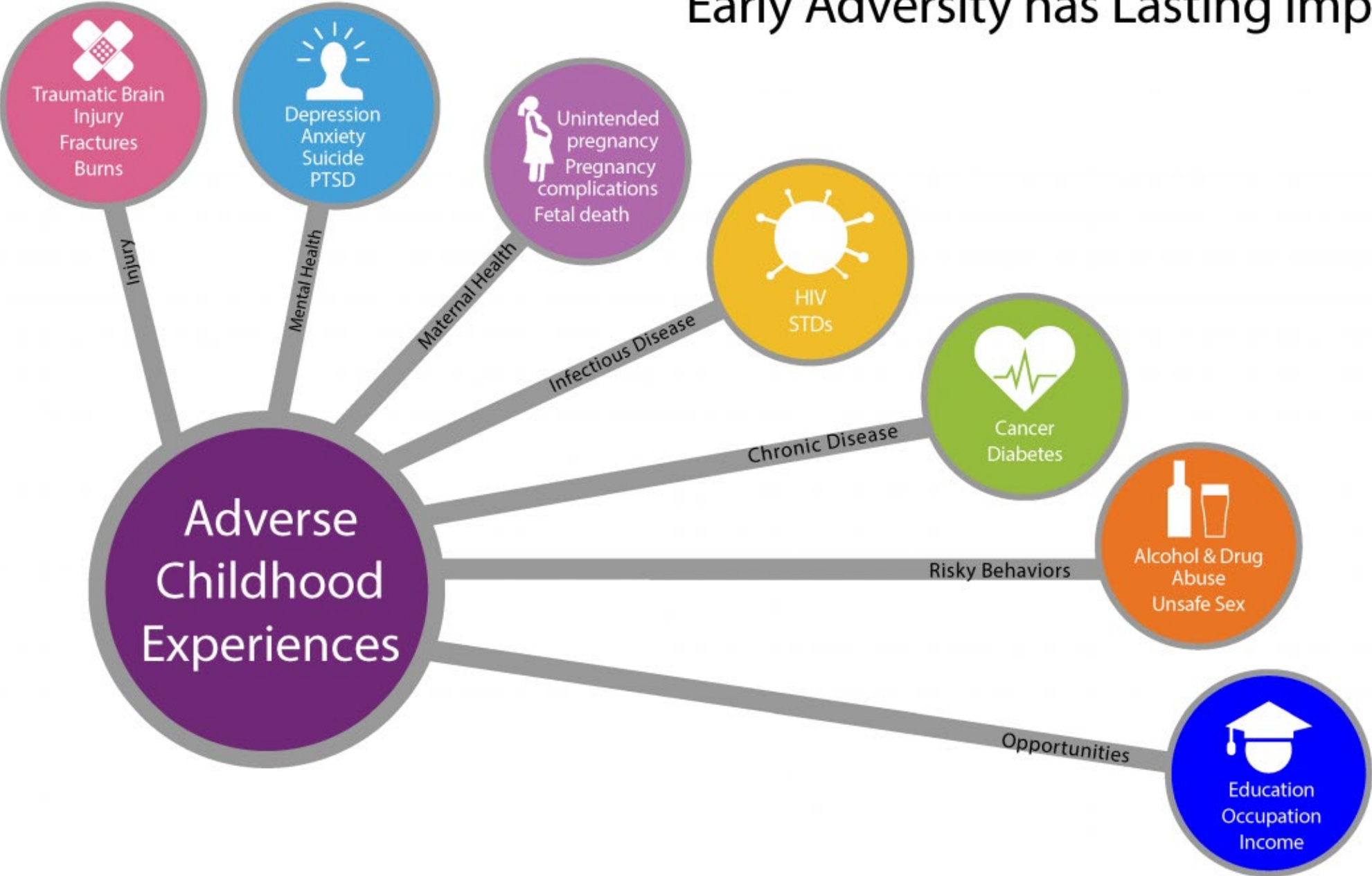


## NEGLECT

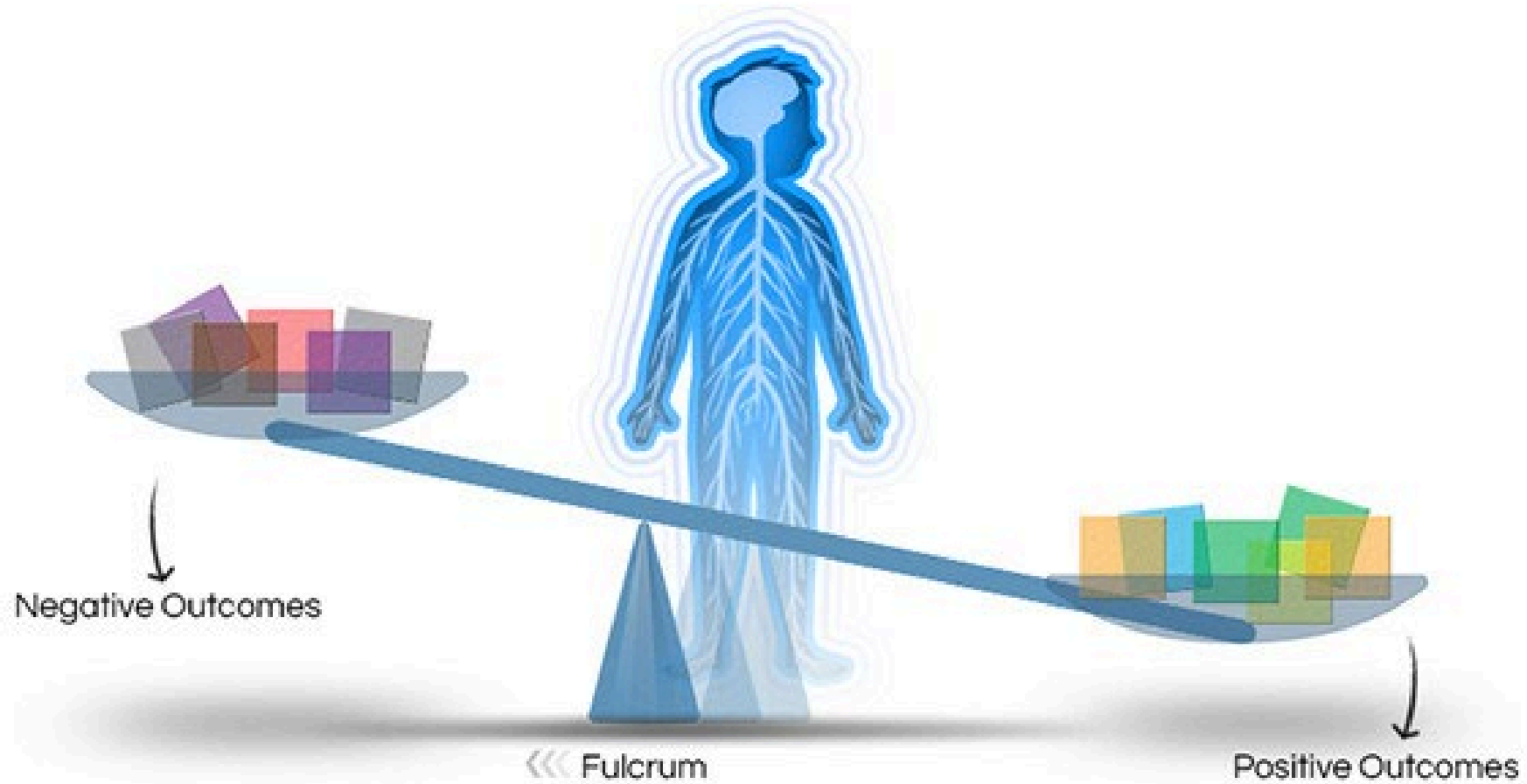




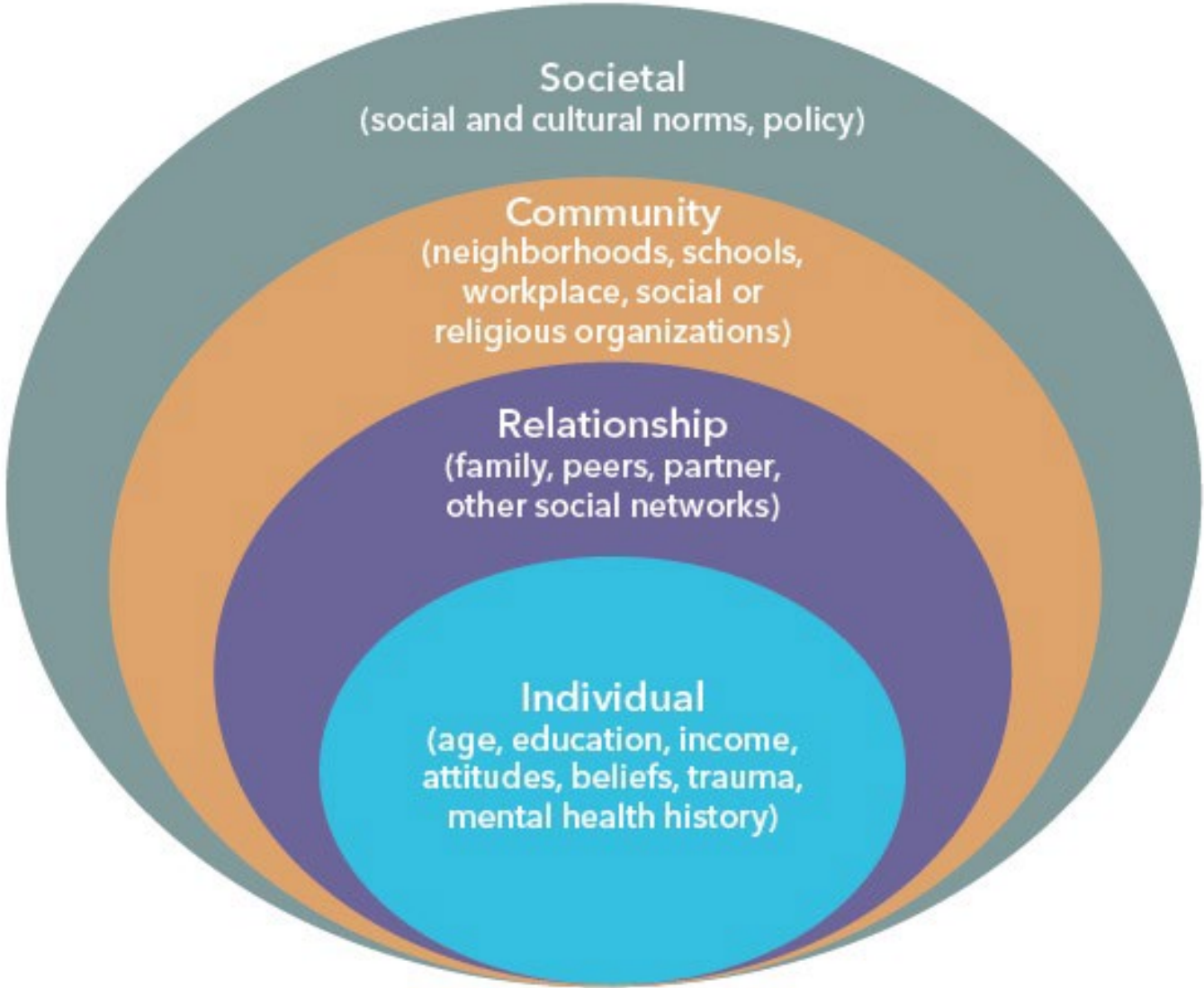
# Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts




# Childhood Experiences Impact Brain Architecture



# Prevention Can Happen at Multiple Levels



# Research-Informed Strategies to Prevent ACEs

 <b>Preventing ACEs</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Approach</b>
<b>Strengthen economic supports to families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening household financial security</li> <li>• Family-friendly work policies</li> </ul>
<b>Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public education campaigns</li> <li>• Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment</li> <li>• Bystander approaches</li> <li>• Men and boys as allies in prevention</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure a strong start for children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood home visitation</li> <li>• High-quality child care</li> <li>• Preschool enrichment with family engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Teach skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social-emotional learning</li> <li>• Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs</li> <li>• Parenting skills and family relationship approaches</li> </ul>
<b>Connect youth to caring adults and activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring programs</li> <li>• After-school programs</li> </ul>
<b>Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced primary care</li> <li>• Victim-centered services</li> <li>• Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs</li> <li>• Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence</li> <li>• Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders</li> </ul>



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