

**Moving a Generation Towards
Better Health:
Early Childhood Home Visiting
as a Critical Foundation**

Janet Saul, PhD

Division of Violence Prevention

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Key Points

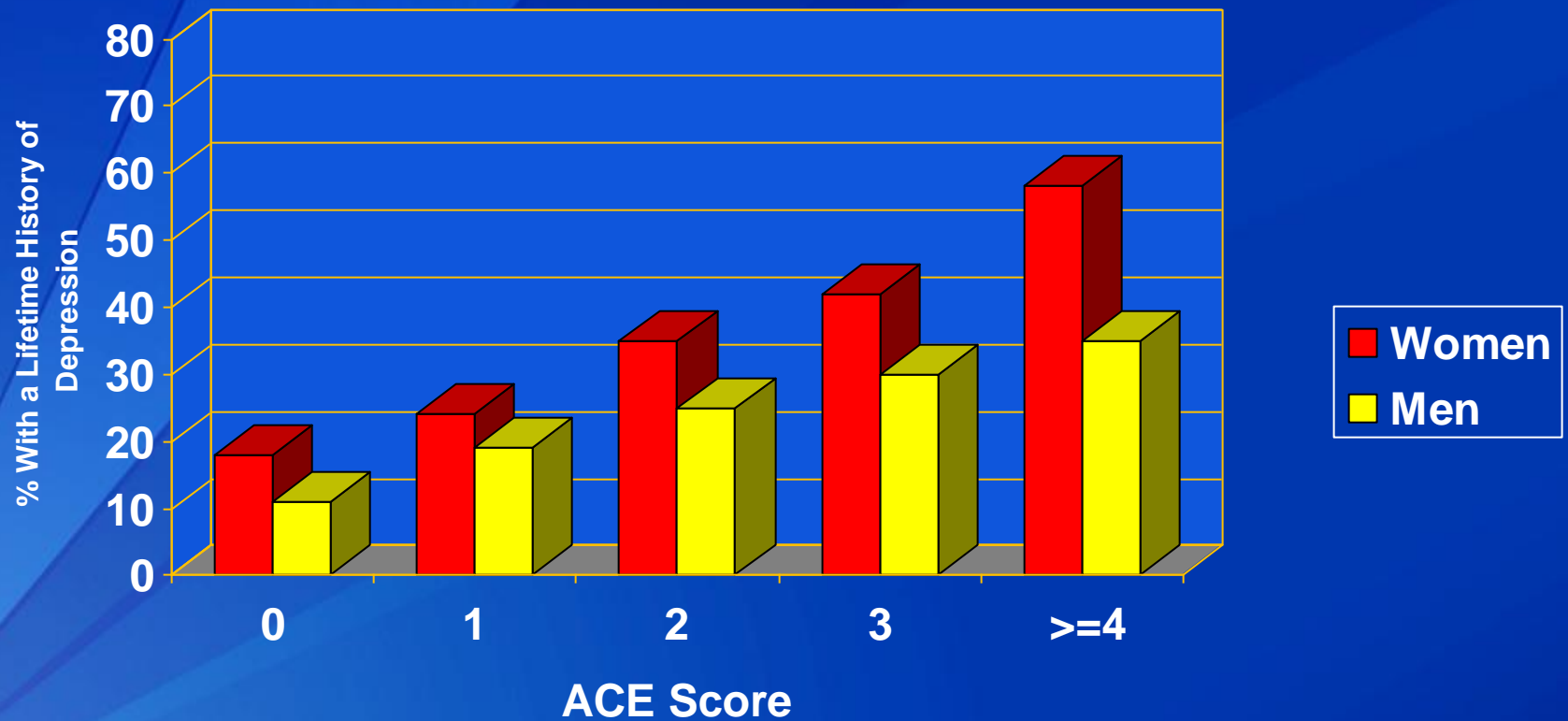
- **Adversity in childhood can make us sick**
- **Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments make us well**
- **Investing in positive relationships and environments for children is critical for the public's health**
- **Division of Violence Prevention (CDC) Activities**

**Adversity in Childhood can
Make us Sick**

Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences

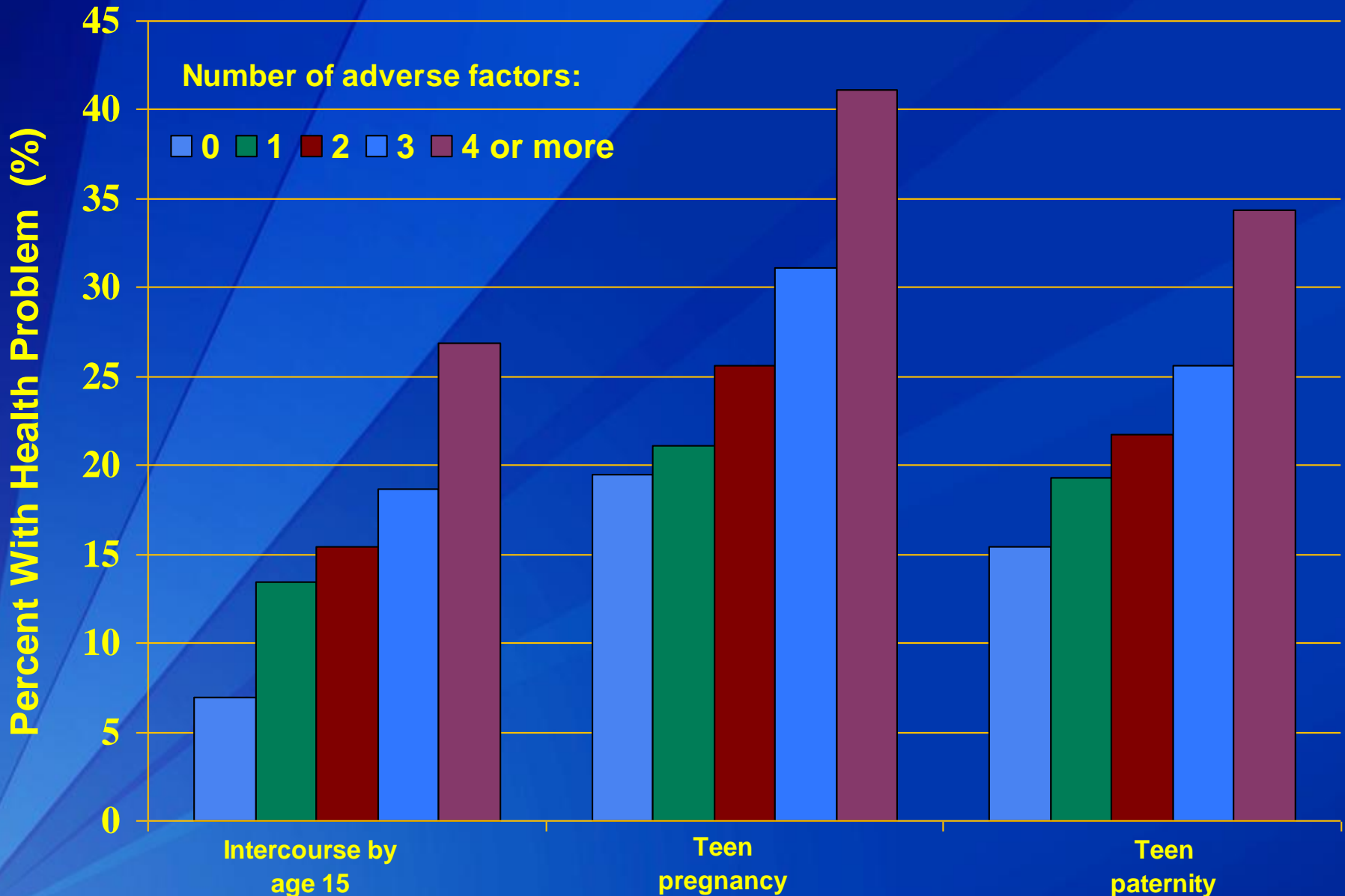
ACE Category		Total (N = 17,337)
Abuse		
	Emotional Abuse	10.6
	Physical Abuse	28.3
	Sexual Abuse	20.7
Neglect		
	Emotional Neglect	14.8
	Physical Neglect	9.9
Household Dysfunction		
	Mother Treated Violently	12.7
	Household Substance Abuse	26.9
	Household Mental Illness	19.4
	Parental Separation or Divorce	23.3
	Incarcerated Household Member	4.7

Childhood Experiences and Chronic Depression



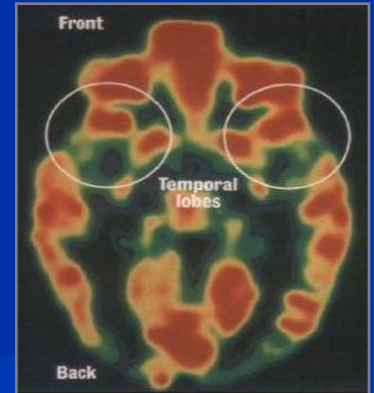
Source: Felitti, VJ et al. Am J Prevent Med 1998; 14(4):245-58.

Number of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Teen Sexual Behaviors

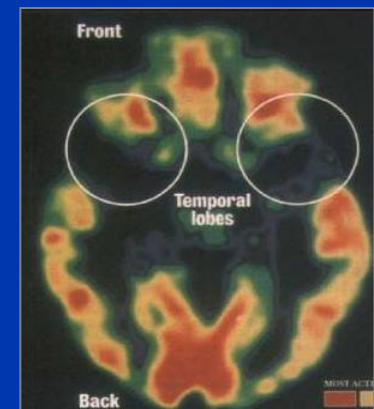


Toxic Stress Damages Brain Architecture

- Excessive and repeated stress causes the release of chemicals that impair cell growth and interfere with the formation of healthy neural circuits in the brain



Healthy Brain



Abused Brain

Safe, Stable and Nurturing Relationships Make Us Well



SSNRs Influence on Early Brain Development

- **Healthy development depends on the quality and reliability of a young children's relationships with the important people in their lives**
- **Nurturing, responsive, and individualized interactions build healthy brain architecture that provides a strong foundation for future learning, behavior, and health**

SSNR Definitions

Safety: The extent to which a child is free from fear and secure from physical or psychological harm within their social and physical environment

Stability: The degree of predictability and consistency in a child's social environment

Nurturing: The extent to which a parent or caregiver is available and able to sensitively respond to and meet the needs of their child

SSNRs: The Positive End of the Continuum

Relationships/Environments

Positive

Safe

Stable

Nurturing

Negative

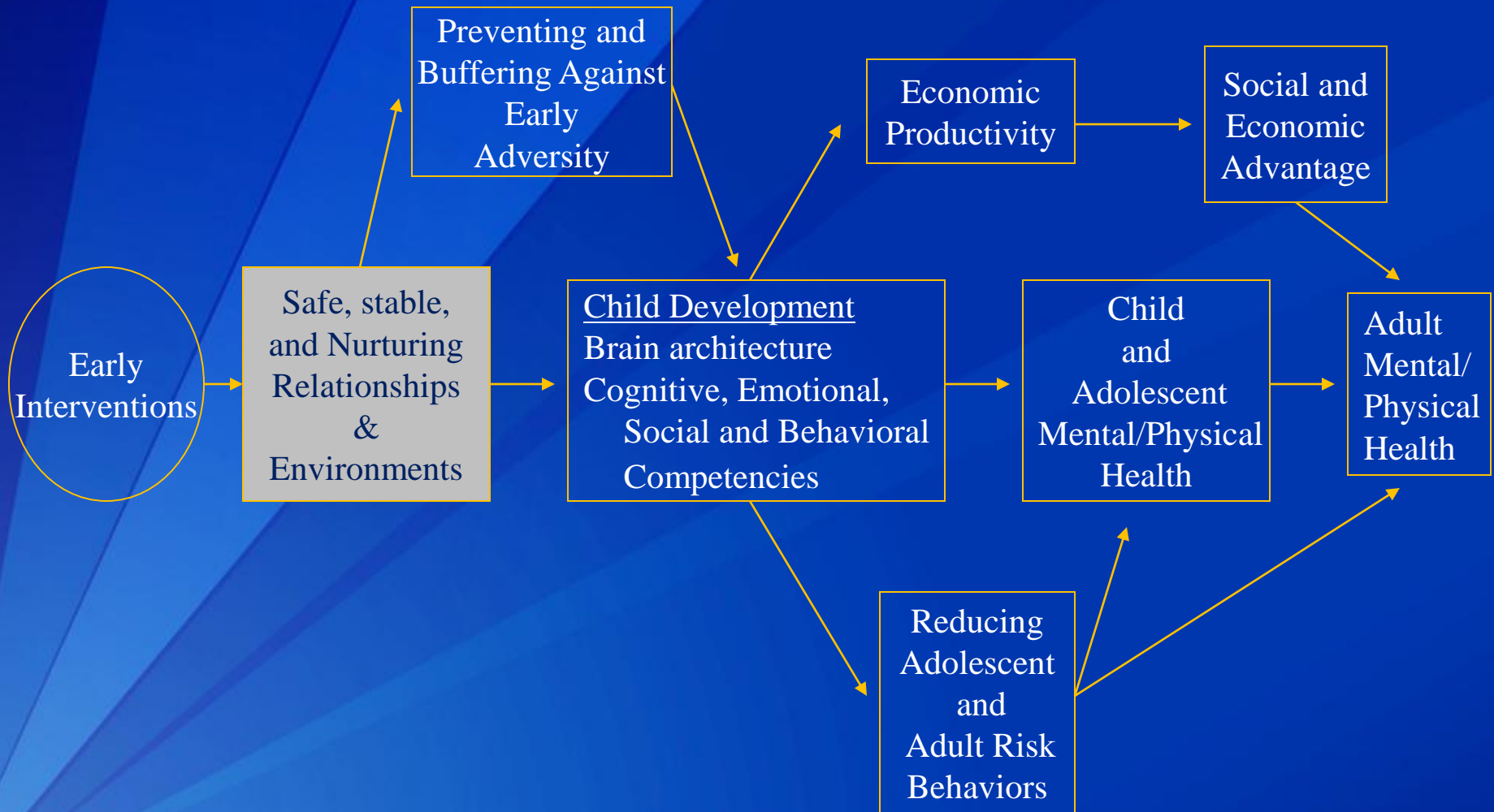
Neglectful/Violent

Unpredictable/Chaotic

Hostile or Cold/Rejecting

**Investing in Early Childhood
is Critical for Public Health**

Linking early prevention to short- and long-term health outcomes



Priority Should be Given to Policies and Programs that Intervene Early in the Life Cycle

- **The plasticity of the nervous system and the ability to change behavior patterns decrease over time as brain circuits stabilize**
- **It's easier and more efficient to get it right the first time than to try to fix it later**

Division of Violence Prevention, CDC Activities

- **Areas of violence prevention**
 - **CM, IPV, SV, YV, Suicide**
- **Types of Activities**
 - **Surveillance**
 - **Etiology**
 - **Effectiveness Research**
 - **Implementation Research**
 - **Funding Programs**

Public Health Perspective

*If I help just one child or family, it will
be worth it*



*If I help a generation of children and
families, it will be worth it*

For more information

**Visit CDC's National Center for
Injury Prevention and Control web site:**

www.cdc.gov/ncipc

Note: The findings and conclusions of this presentation have not been formally disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy.