



Creating Sanctuaries for Children

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**My List of.....
Worries / Perspectives / Disclaimers /
Apologies / Excuses**



Group Care

Key Conflicts:

- **What's Wrong with This Kid?**
 - Bad Parenting vs. Bad Genetics
 - Original Sin vs. Biological Defect
 - Psychiatric Conditions vs. Social Problems
- **What Do We Do About It?**
 - Psychoanalytic vs. Behavioral
 - Individual vs. Milieu
 - Authority vs. Democracy
 - Protecting the Child vs. Protecting Society

Group Care

- **More Interventions than You Can Shake a Stick at:**
 - Individual / Group / Family / Medication / Special Education / Recreation Therapy Behavioral Therapy / Speech & Language Therapy / Psychoeducational Approaches / Occupational Therapy& many more!!!
- **Results:**
 - Fragmented Treatment Approach
 - Poor Communication

Group Care

- Staff Positions:
 - *Clinical Staff - Children are Sick (Permissive)*
 - *Milieu Staff – Children are Bad (Punitive)*

*Who has time to work this out &
come to an agreement??*

Trauma Theory

- Reframes the Problem:

*Child is Not Sick or Bad,
but Injured*

- Reframes the Question:

*Not What is Wrong with You,
But What Has Happened to You?*

*So Why All the Fuss About
Trauma Treatment???*



The Relationship of Adverse Childhood Experiences to Adult Health Status

A collaborative effort of Kaiser Permanente and The Centers for Disease Control

Vincent J. Felitti, M.D.
Robert F. Anda, M.D.



The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- The largest study of its kind ever done to examine the health and social effects of adverse childhood experiences over the lifespan (18,000 participants)
- The majority of participants were 50 or older (62%), were white (77%) and had attended college (72%)
- Sixty-six percent of the women reported at least one childhood experience involving abuse, violence or family strife

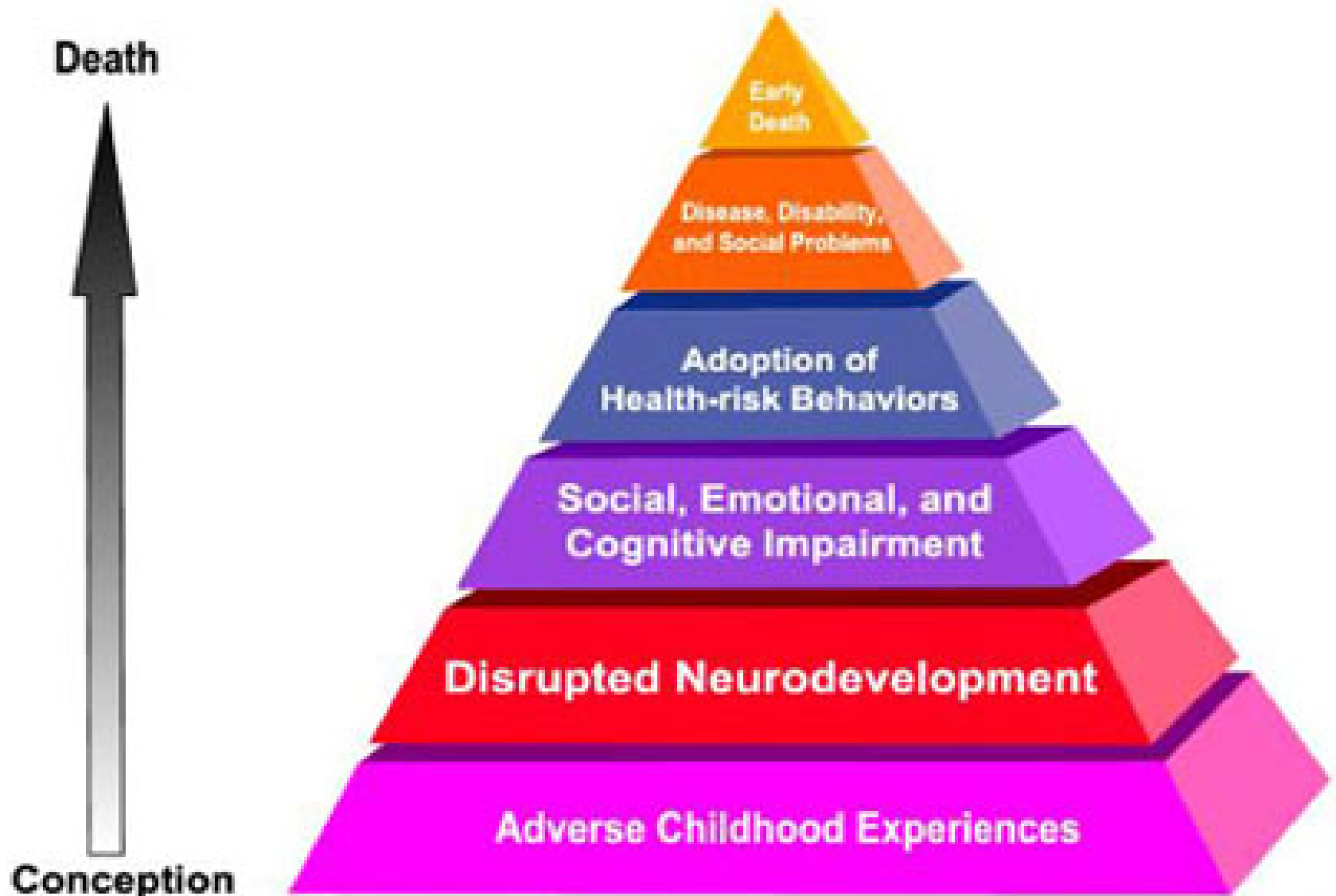
What Are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

- Experiences that represent medical and social problems; childhood abuse and neglect, growing up with domestic violence, substance abuse or mental illness in the home, parental loss, or crime

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

Summary of Findings:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences are very common
- Are strong predictors of later health risks and disease
- This combination makes ACEs the leading determinant of the health and social well-being in the US



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

Categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences

| Abuse, by Category | |
|---|-----|
| Psychological (by parents) | 11% |
| Physical (by parents) | 11% |
| Sexual (anyone) | 22% |
| Household Dysfunction, by Category | |
| Substance Abuse | 26% |
| Mental Illness | 19% |
| Mother Treated Violently | 13% |
| Imprisoned Household Member | 3% |



Adverse Childhood Experiences Score

| ACE Score | Prevalence |
|-----------|------------|
| 0 | 48% |
| 1 | 25% |
| 2 | 13% |
| 3 | 7% |
| 4 or more | 7% |

•More than half have at least one ACE

ACEs Study

Additional Findings:

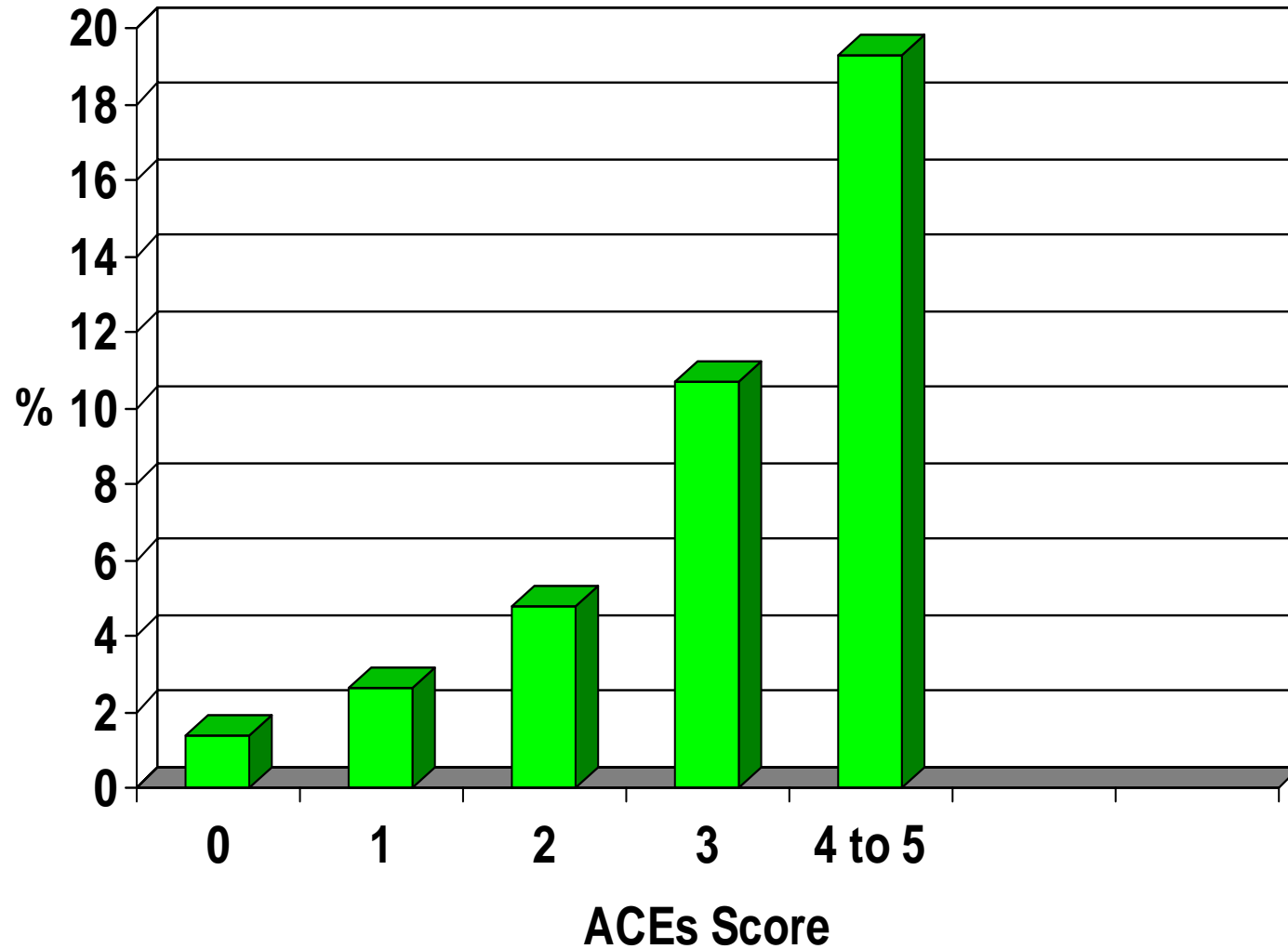
- One in four was exposed to two categories of abusive experience
- One in 16 to four categories
- Given an exposure to one category, there is 80% likelihood of exposure to another

ACEs Study

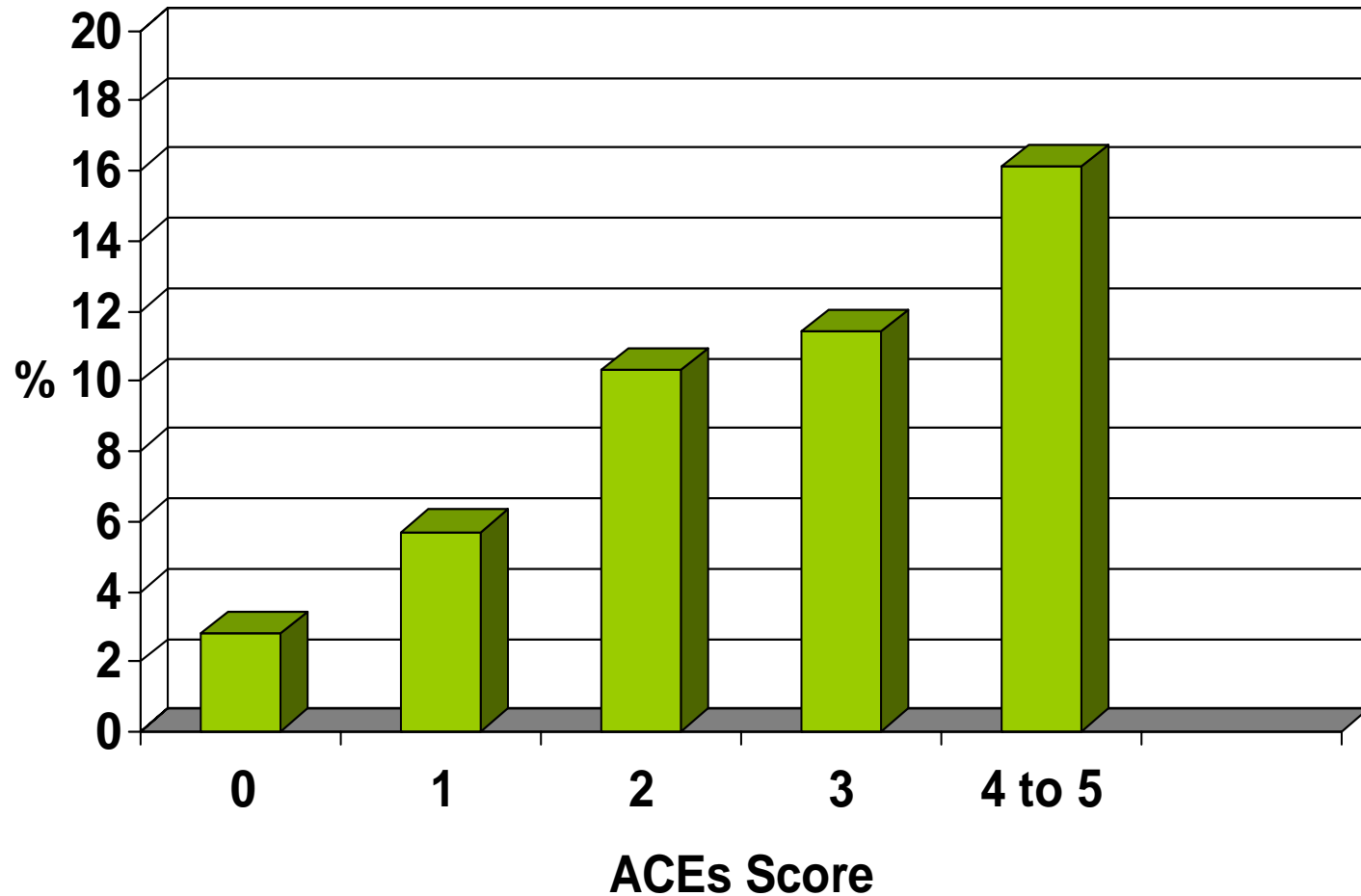
Strong, Graded Relation to What Happened in Childhood & Incidents of:

- smoking
- hepatitis
- heart disease
- fractures
- diabetes
- obesity
- alcoholism
- other substance abuse
- depression and attempted suicide
- sexually transmitted diseases
- occupational health
- job performance
- teen pregnancy – including paternity

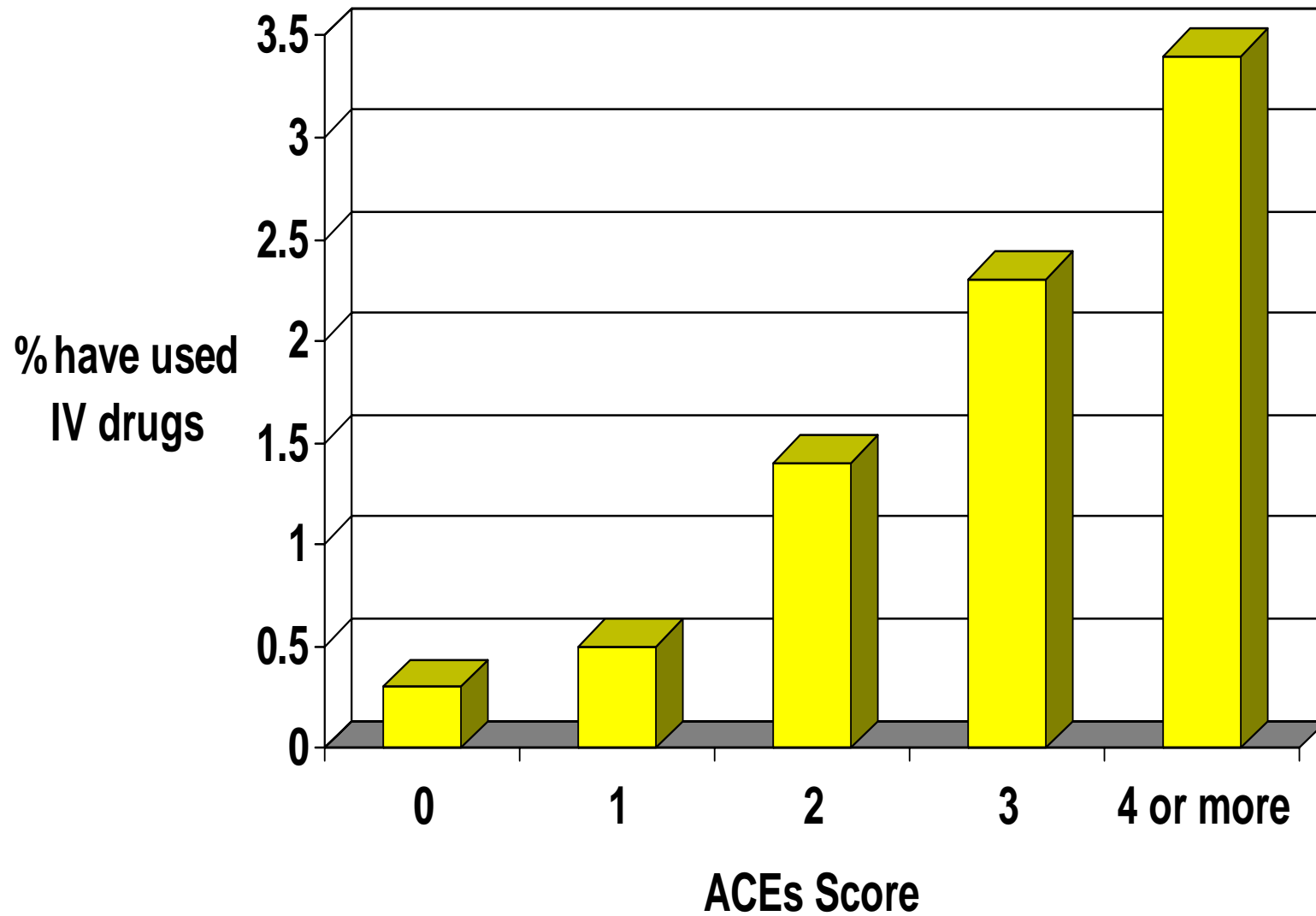
ACEs and Attempted Suicide



ACEs and Adult Alcoholism



ACEs and IV Drugs



ACEs Study

Adverse Childhood Experiences determine the likelihood of the ten most common causes of death in the United States.

- Top 10 Risk Factors: smoking, severe obesity, physical inactivity, depression, suicide, alcoholism, illicit drug use, IV drug use, 50+ sexual partners, history of sexually transmitted disease
- With an ACE Score of 0, the majority of adults have few, if any, risk factors
- However, with an ACE Score of 4 or more, the majority of adults have multiple risk factors for disease or the disease itself

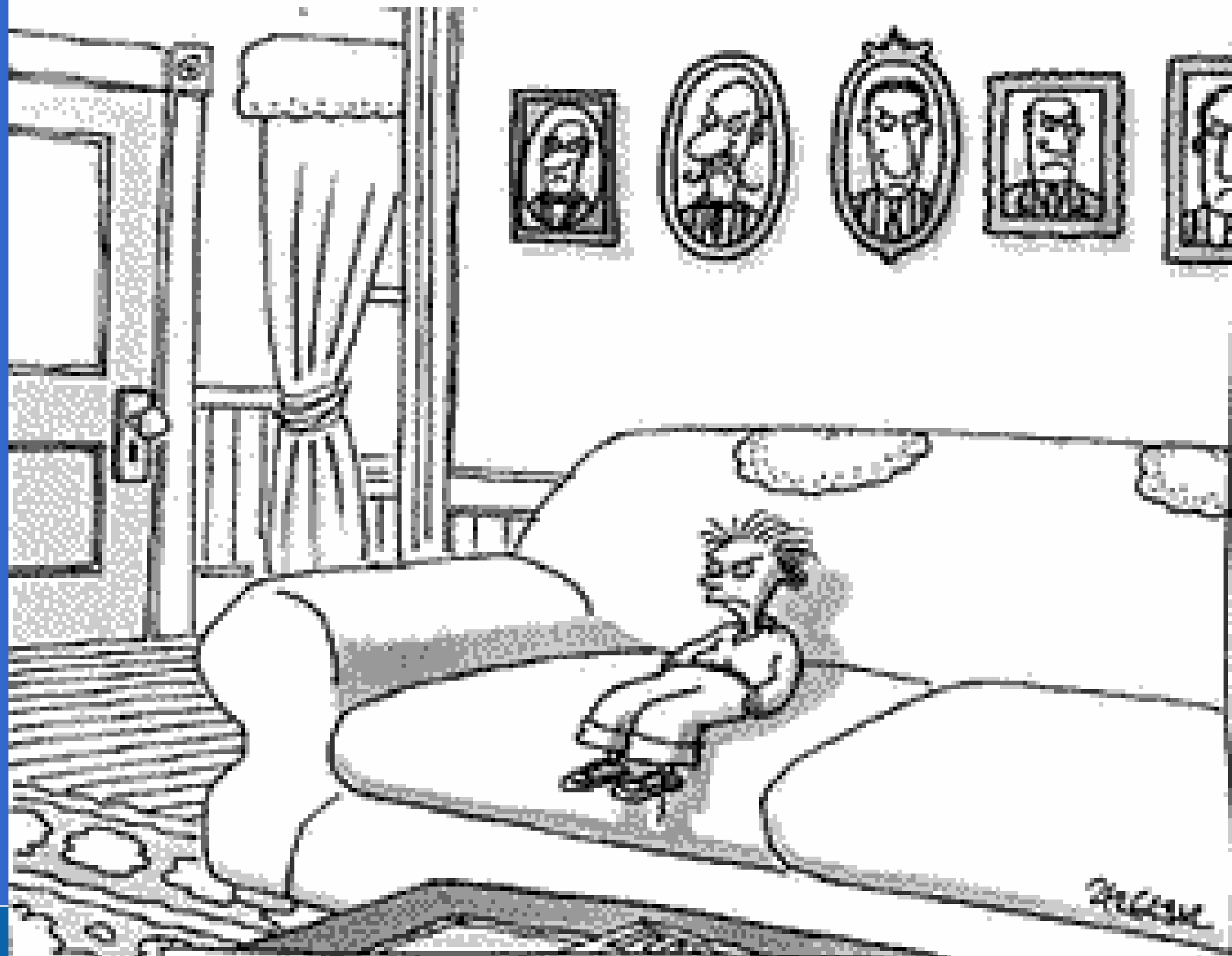


So....

*Childhood Trauma is the Most Critical Public
Health Issue in the United States....*

& Nobody is Talking About It





TIMMY, SIXTH-GENERATION PAIN IN THE ASS

A Threat Occurs

Human Stress Response

- State of high alert, hypervigilance
- Action, not thought
- Decreased ability to think clearly - extremist thinking
- Increased aggression – loss of impulse control
- Fight / flee / freeze
- Dissociation buffers CNS but fragments mental functioning
- Speechless terror – loss of words

The Threat Occurs Over & Over

- CNS is reset at high threat level
- Loss of, or failure to develop, affect modulation
- Hyperarousal interferes with cognitive development
- Dissociation becomes chronic
- Aggression becomes chronic
- Trauma is continuously reenacted
- Inability to grieve - numb
- Resistance to change - trapped

Impact of Trauma in Out of Home Care

We Ain't Just Talking About the Kids

- Traumatized kids have been in care from the beginning
- They have shaped our practices in RTC's as much, if not more than, we have shaped their lives
- Practices we call "treatment" often serve to re-traumatize the children we hope to help

*So, if Traumatic Stress has Such
an Adverse Impact on the Kids
We Serve...*

*What's it Doing to Me and the
Place I Work?*

Parallel Process

The Organization is a Living, Growing, Changing System with Its Own Unique Biology...It is Every Bit as Susceptible to Stress, Strain & Trauma as the Individuals Who Live and Work in the Organization



Parallel Process

Complex interaction between traumatized clients, stressed staff, pressured organizations, and the social and economic environment.

Our systems frequently replicate the very experiences that have proven to be so toxic for the people we are supposed to treat.

Parallel Process!



Trauma's Impact on the Organization

- Crisis Driven
- Fragmented
- Feeling Ineffectiveness & Helplessness
- Autocratic / Coercive / Punitive
- Resistant to Change / Stuck
- Engages in Constant Reenactment
- Loss of Hope / Loss of Meaning

- "If you don't like how things are, change it! You're not a tree."

~ [Jim Rohn](#)

Business Philosopher &
Motivational Speaker

WHERE DO WE EVEN BEGIN???

Address the Culture!!

We Cannot Hope to Change the Lives of Children, If We Cannot Change the Environments in Which Treatment is Rendered



HOW DO WE CREATE A CULTURE THAT:

- Promotes and supports positive change in the children, their families and ourselves?
- Maximizes each other's strengths and minimizes each other's weaknesses?
- Buffers us from the impact of repetitive stress?

Creating Sanctuary = Resolving Trauma

Offering an Alternative Reality

- Commitment to nonviolence
- Commitment to emotional intelligence
- Commitment to social learning
- Commitment to democracy
- Commitment to open communication
- Commitment to social responsibility
- Commitment to growth and change

S.E.L.F

A Map for the Journey

- *Safety:*
 - Physical, Psychological, Social, Moral
- *Emotions:*
 - Handling feelings without becoming self/other destructive
- *Loss:*
 - Getting over loss, preparing for change
- *Future:*
 - Re-establishing the capacity for choice

Our Experience

Lessons Learned

- Teaching About Trauma
- Talking About Trauma
- Flattening the Hierarchy is Not Just a Leadership Issue
- Fragmentation is a Major Professional Issue – We See Kids Through Our Own Lens
- The Old Stuff Doesn't Always Apply...But It May

Our Experience

Lessons Learned

- Change & Growth is for Everyone
 - Organizational Growth Mirrors Growth in Kids
 - Old Habits are Hard to Break
 - Everyone has to Get Better
- Safety Matters, but is Not the Whole Game
- Punishing Kids & Creating Pain is Deeply Rooted & Its Very Difficult for Us to Let It Go
- It is Very Important for Us to Maintain the Fantasy that We are in Control
- Loss & Grief are Bigger Issues Than We Think
- Reenactment Happens at All Levels





Andrus Center for Learning & Innovation

Sanctuary Leadership Development Institute at Andrus

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