



# Upstream Prevention

Breaking the Cycle of  
Adverse Childhood  
Experiences (ACEs)

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INSTITUTE FOR  
PUBLIC  
STRATEGIES





A public health  
agency focused  
on partnering  
with communities  
to create social  
change.

IPS...





Today's  
Presenters...

Carolina Gabaldon

Prevention Specialist  
IPS, San Bernardino County

Aaron Robinson

Community Organizer  
IPS, San Bernardino County



# Why we're here...

## Learning Objectives:

**Data collection and policy analysis strategies** to assess the root causes of community trauma and toxic stress

**Real-world examples of communities** that have successfully used policy to advance equity and lower the incidence of ACEs

**How to build a coalition of advocates** equipped to make their communities more resilient



Data

Upstream Strategies

Policy

Tools  
&  
Resources

Advocacy

A collage of smiling children's faces, with a large green circle in the center containing text. The children are of various ethnicities and are all smiling broadly, showing their teeth. The background is a mix of their faces and clothing, creating a warm and positive atmosphere.

What we  
already know  
about Adverse  
Childhood  
Experiences



## The Original 10 ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

### Abuse



PHYSICAL



EMOTIONAL



SEXUAL

### Neglect



PHYSICAL



EMOTIONAL

### Household Challenges



DIVORCE



INCARCERATION



SUBSTANCE  
USE



DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE



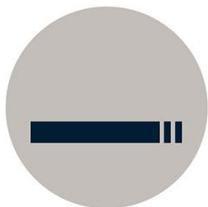
MENTAL  
ILLNESS

# Health Impacts of ACEs

## BEHAVIOR



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

## PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



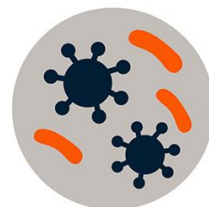
Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



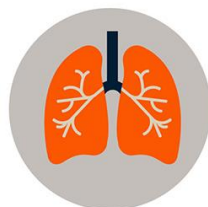
Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD



Broken bones

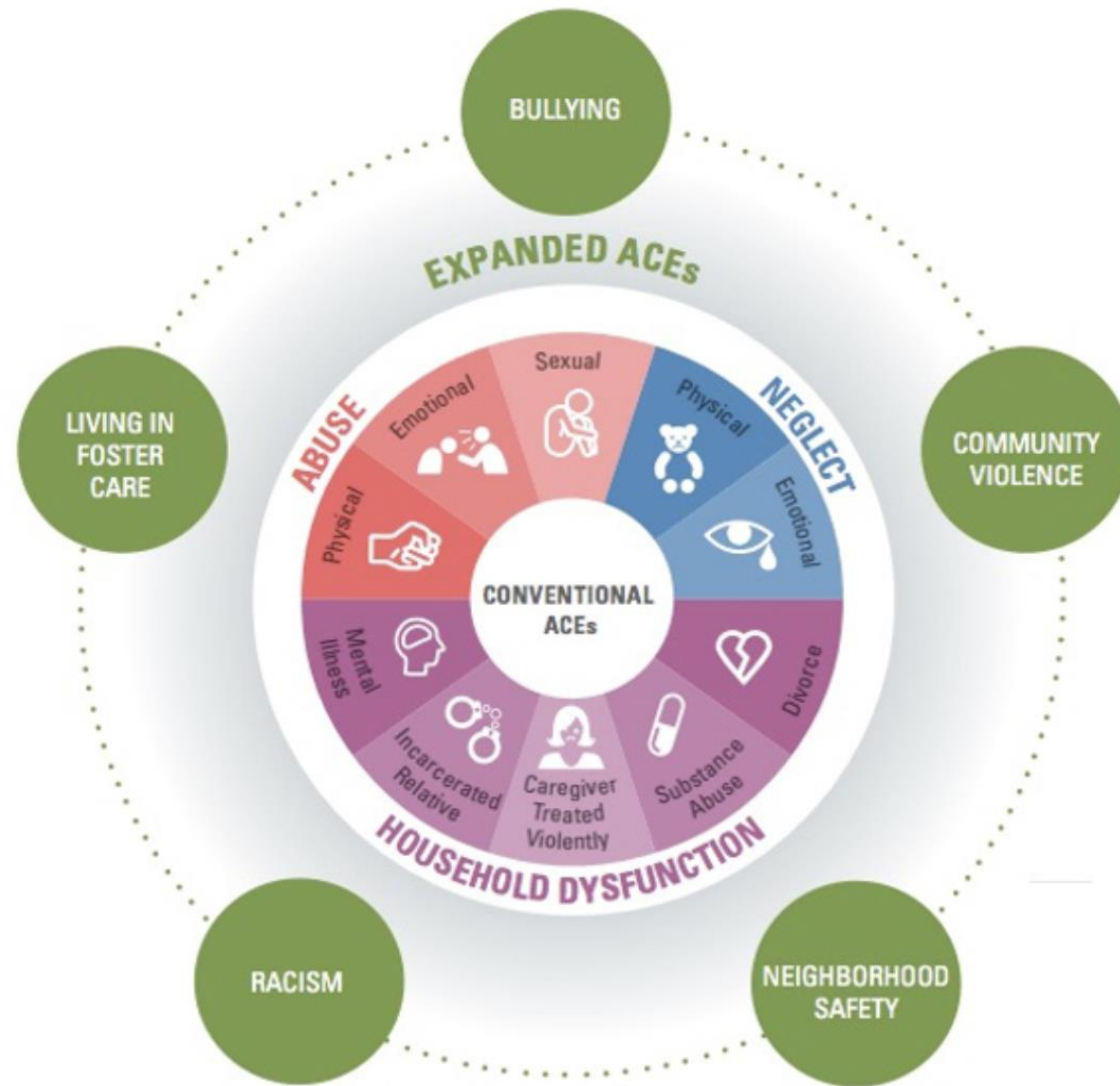
The background of the slide features a collage of smiling children's faces, including a young girl with blue eyes and a boy with dark skin, all looking upwards. Two large, semi-transparent circular overlays are positioned over the image: a yellow one on the left and a red one on the right.

**WHAT'S NEW?**

The scope of  
ACEs since  
the original  
study

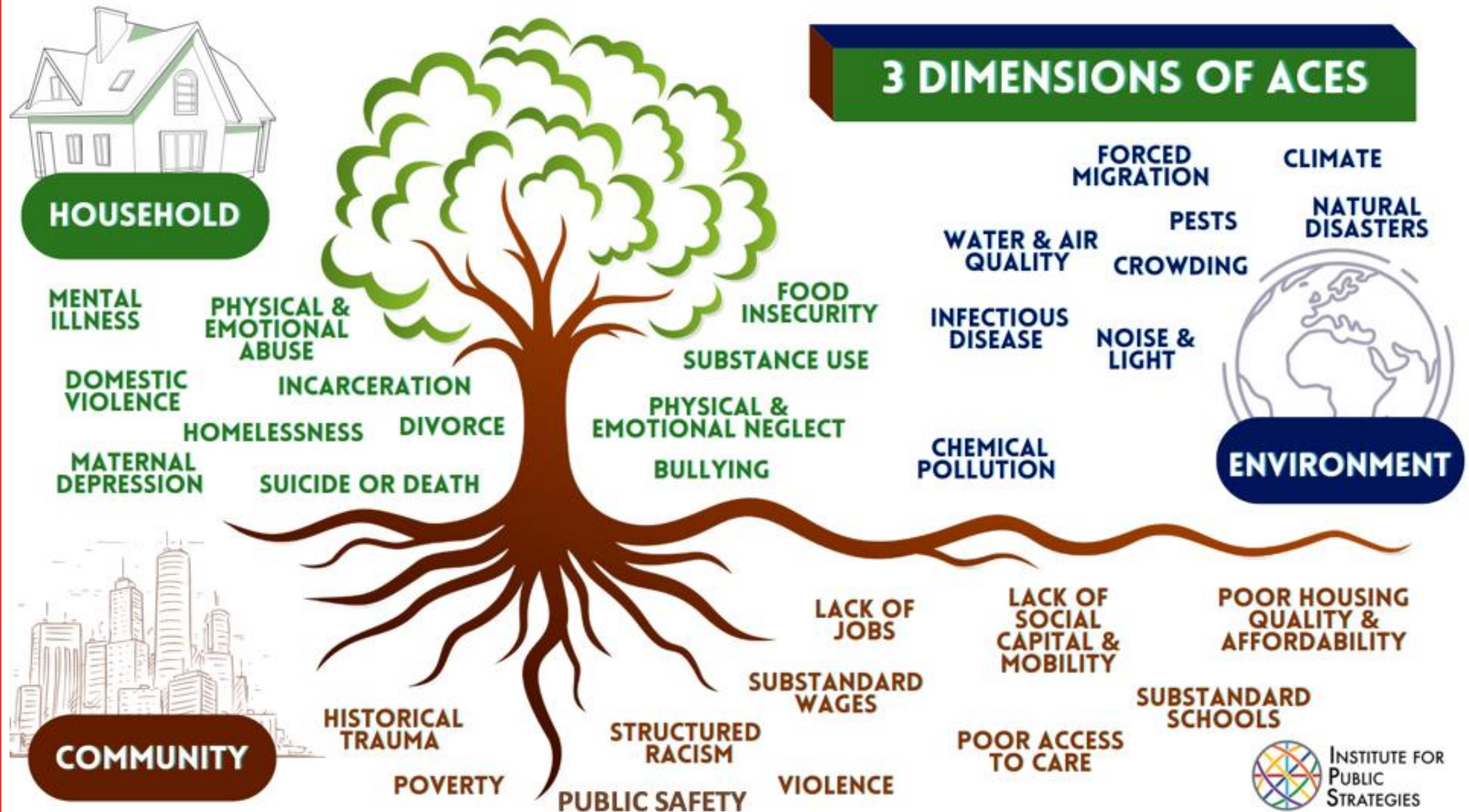


# Expanded ACEs



Source: Cronholm, P. F., Forke, C. M., Wade, R., Bair-Merritt, M. H., Davis, M., Harkins-Schwarz, M., Pachter, L. M., & Fein, J. A. (2015). Adverse childhood experiences: Expanding the concept of adversity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49(3), 354–361.

## 3 DIMENSIONS OF ACES





# Addressing the Problem

**INSIGHT**

# Data Collection





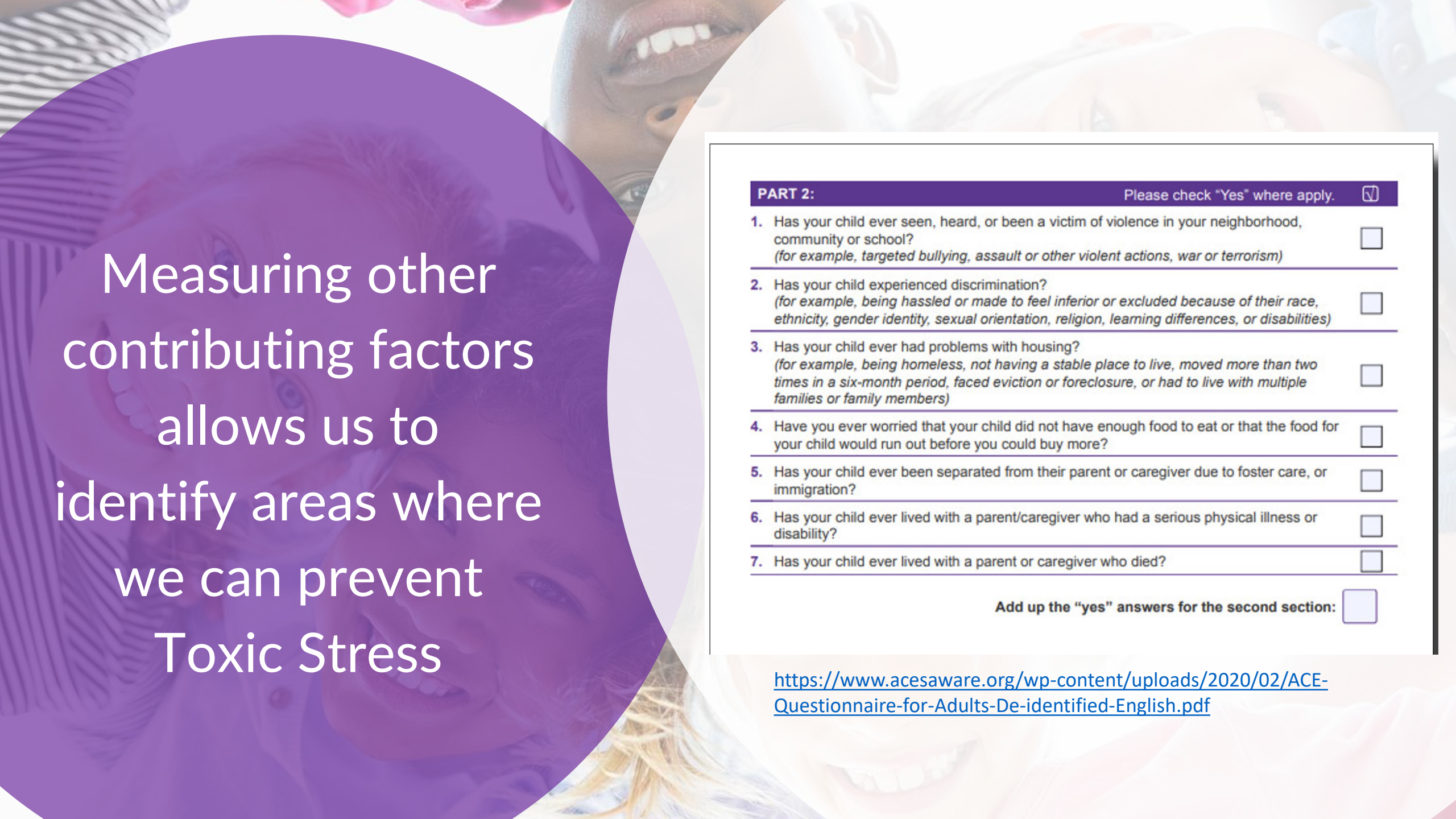
# Quantitative Data



There are three versions of the tool, based on age and reporter, for a total of 17-19 questions (10 ACE categories and seven to nine SDOH categories):

- **PEARLS child tool**, for ages 0–11, to be completed by a caregiver
- **PEARLS adolescent tool**, for ages 12–19, to be completed by a caregiver
- **PEARLS for adolescent self-report tool**, for ages 12–19, to be completed by the adolescent

Screening  
Tools



Measuring other  
contributing factors  
allows us to  
identify areas where  
we can prevent  
Toxic Stress

**PART 2:**

Please check "Yes" where apply.



1. Has your child ever seen, heard, or been a victim of violence in your neighborhood, community or school?  
*(for example, targeted bullying, assault or other violent actions, war or terrorism)* ☐
2. Has your child experienced discrimination?  
*(for example, being hassled or made to feel inferior or excluded because of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, learning differences, or disabilities)* ☐
3. Has your child ever had problems with housing?  
*(for example, being homeless, not having a stable place to live, moved more than two times in a six-month period, faced eviction or foreclosure, or had to live with multiple families or family members)* ☐
4. Have you ever worried that your child did not have enough food to eat or that the food for your child would run out before you could buy more? ☐
5. Has your child ever been separated from their parent or caregiver due to foster care, or immigration? ☐
6. Has your child ever lived with a parent/caregiver who had a serious physical illness or disability? ☐
7. Has your child ever lived with a parent or caregiver who died? ☐

Add up the "yes" answers for the second section:

☐

<https://www.acesaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ACE-Questionnaire-for-Adults-De-identified-English.pdf>

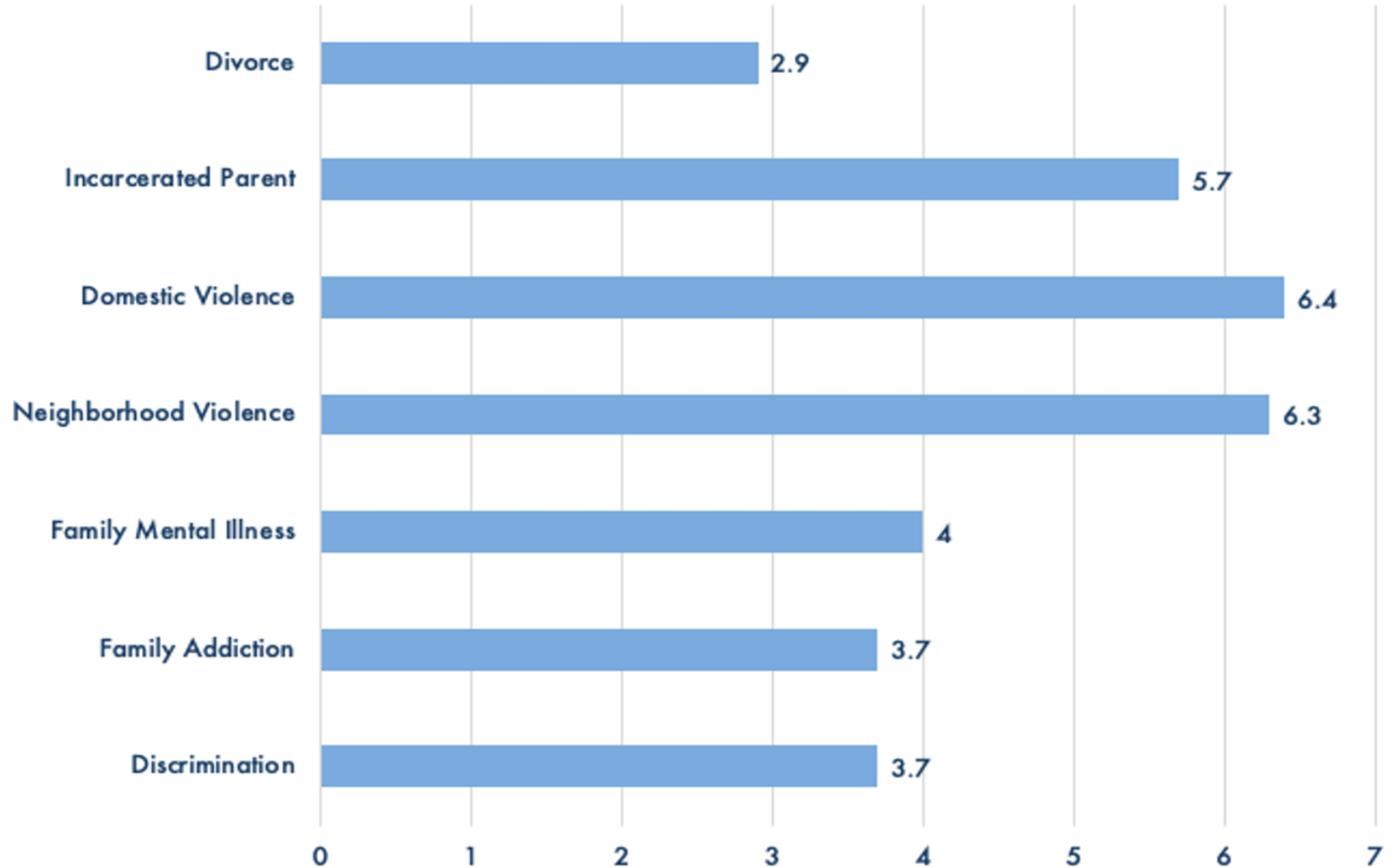




Food Insecurity  
Climate Change  
Access to Care  
Transportation  
Substance Use  
Intimate Partner Violence  
Discrimination

# Food Insecurity

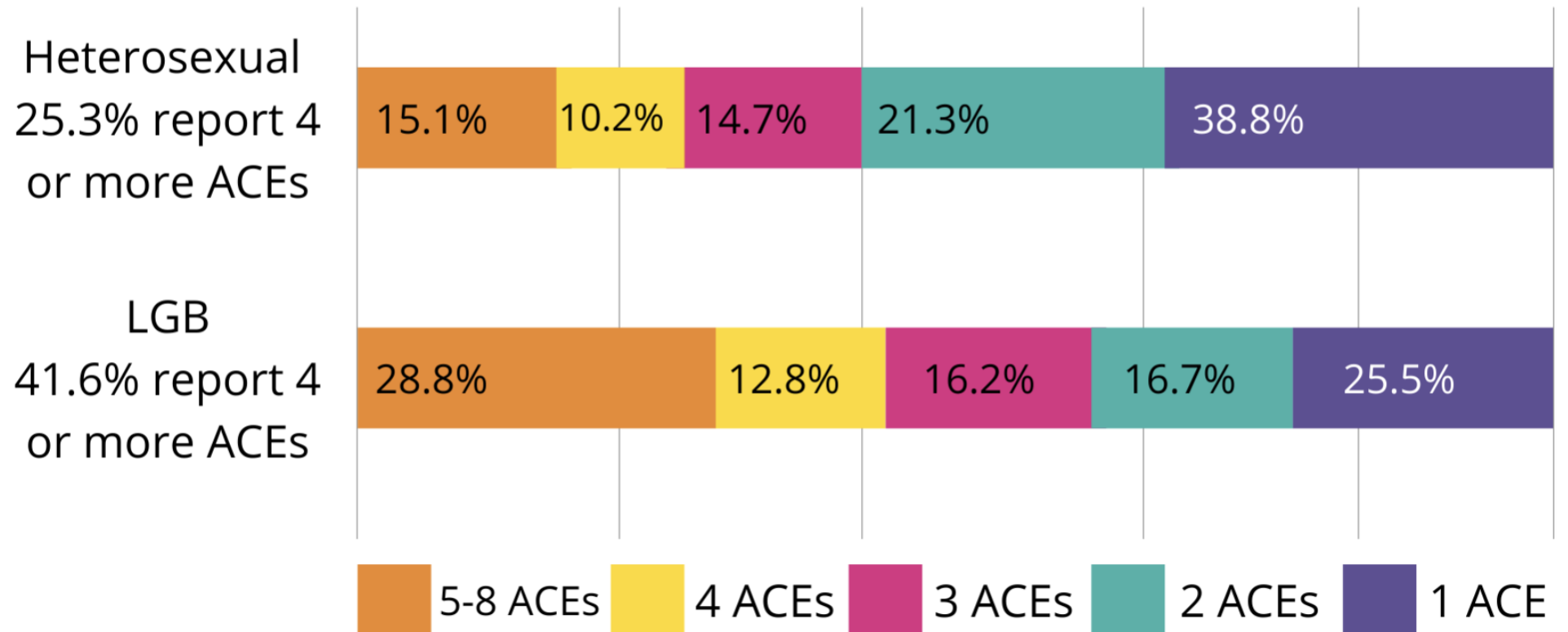
## INCREASED RISK OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN FOOD-INSECURE HOMES





# Sexual Orientation

## Prevalence of ACE Score by Sexual Orientation Among those Reporting One or More ACEs



#Out4MentalHealth is a collaborative project funded by the California Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) and the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC)

# Intimate Partner Violence



Brigitte Walker, MSCJ Harmony House | 2017  
Reference: "Understanding the Nature and Dynamics of Domestic Violence" MCADSV





## Increased Risk of Substance Use

- A person with four or more ACEs is:
  - 2.9 times as likely to smoke
  - 7.4 times as likely to experience alcoholism
  - 10.3 times as likely to use injection drugs

## Socioeconomic Disparities

- 21% as likely to live at or below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- 27% as likely to have not graduated college
- 39% as likely to be unemployed

## Geographic Disparities

- Los Angeles County – 60.7% of residents have 1 or more ACEs
- San Diego County – 59% of residents have 1 or more ACEs
- San Bernardino County – 62.5% of residents have 1 or more ACEs

**Making  
the  
Connection**

Qualitative  
Data

Opinions  
IDEA  
Data  
Group  
Interview  
Beliefs  
Interactive  
DATA  
People  
Analysis  
Ideas  
SURVEY  
REVIEWS  
Opinions  
Questions  
People  
Responses  
Research  
Perceptions  
Collect  
Discuss  
Interviews  
PEOPLE  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH  
ATTITUDES  
CONDUCTED  
Questions  
Review  
Viewpoint  
Focus Group

Listen



# Community Organizing for Change



**SHARED  
VISION**





# Strategic Partnerships

Prevention  
Services  
Checklist





Food  
Insecurity

Coalitions

Intimate  
Partner  
Violence

Geographic  
Interest





**Individual**

**Family**

**Schools**

**Neighborhoods**

**Increase Awareness**

**Reduce Toxic Stress**

**Support Positive  
Parenting and  
Relationship Norms**

**Reduce Contextual  
Conditions**

**Build Resiliency**

**Community**

**Organizations**

**Systems**

**Policies**





**Framing the  
Conversation**

**Reframing Childhood Adversity:  
Promoting Upstream Approaches**

**Roadmap for Resilience:  
The CA Surgeon  
General's Report on  
ACEs, Toxic Stress, and  
Health**

# Policy Analysis

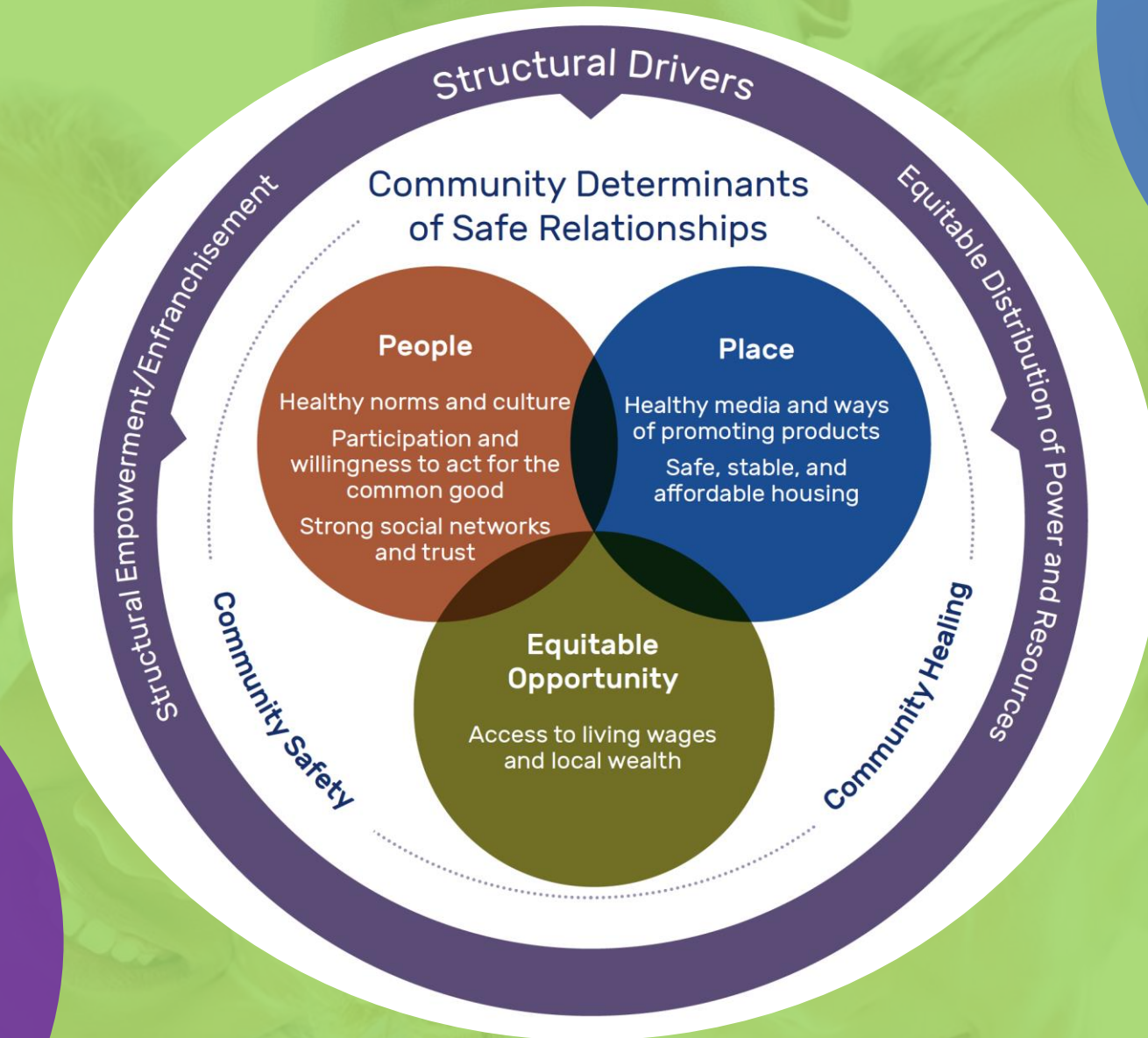
Policy	Intervention	Time	Action Level	Equity for Underserved Immigrants		
				Legal Accessibility	Language Barriers	Cultural Appropriateness
First 5 California	Parental engagement	Primary	Community	(+)	(+)	(+)
	Family resource centers	Secondary	Community			
	Increasing access to health care	Primary	Household			
	Early screening for learning programs	Secondary	Individual			
	Early learning programs	Primary	Individual			
	Promote inclusion of funding for children ages 0-5	Tertiary	Individual			
ACEs Aware	ACEs screening and referral	Secondary	Individual			
California Home Visiting Program	Parental education and support	Primary	Household			
	Referrals to substance use or mental health treatment programs for parents	Primary	Household			
	Screening for developmental disorders in children	Secondary	Individual			

(+) = is equitable; (-) = is not equitable; (/) = unable to be determined and/or variable results

## Review for Equity



# Advancing Equitable Policies



Moving the  
Needle on  
Equity

Source: Prevention Institute

# How has IPS addressed Adverse Childhood Experiences?



Trauma  
Informed  
Projects

Building  
Partnerships

Institute for Public Strategies  
has worked to reduce ACEs  
through...

Promote  
Screenings





Thank  
You!

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# Survey

(Thank you!)



**IPS Training and TA:**

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