

Creating an environment where each student can thrive:

# ADDRESSING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



## HELPFUL RESOURCES:

[www.traumasensitiveschoolkit.com](http://www.traumasensitiveschoolkit.com)

[www.collaborativetoolbox.ca](http://www.collaborativetoolbox.ca)

[Brain Story Certification](#)

PRESENTED BY:

Dr Matt Burkey

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# ACEs 101

Dr Matt Burkey

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Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Interior Health  
Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC

# Objectives

- What are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and why are they important for schools?
- What can schools do to support children affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences?

# Take Home Messages

1. ACEs are ubiquitous
2. ACEs impair attention, learning, and socio-emotional development
3. Schools can help by creating environments with: safety, acceptance, and supportive relationships with caring adults

# What is toxic stress?

## POSITIVE STRESS

Mild/moderate, short-lived stress response necessary for healthy development

## TOLERABLE STRESS

Serious temporary stress response buffered by supportive relationships

## TOXIC STRESS

Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships

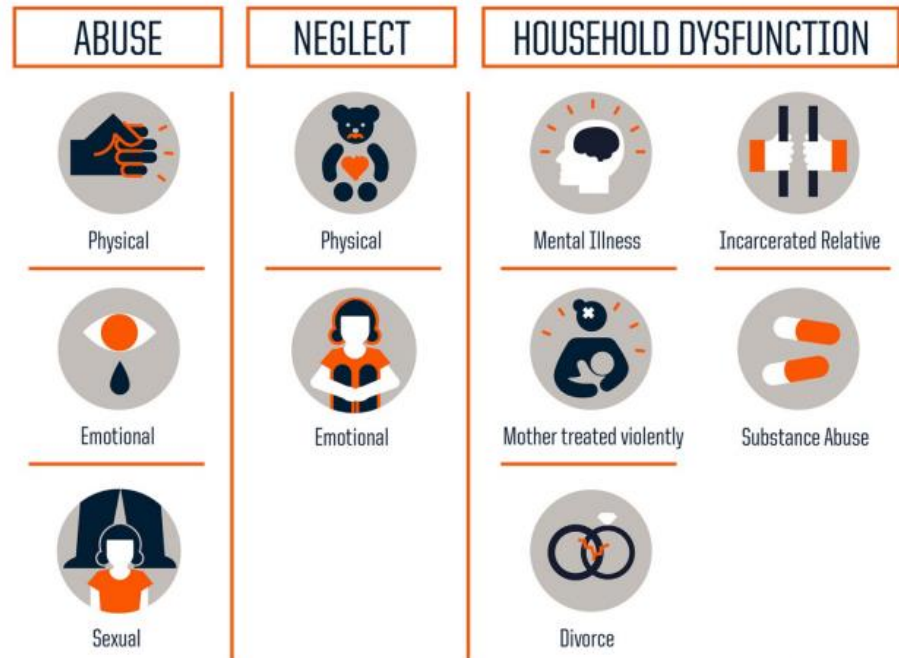
Intense, prolonged, repeated, unaddressed

Social-emotional buffering, parental resilience, early intervention

# What do we know about toxic stress?

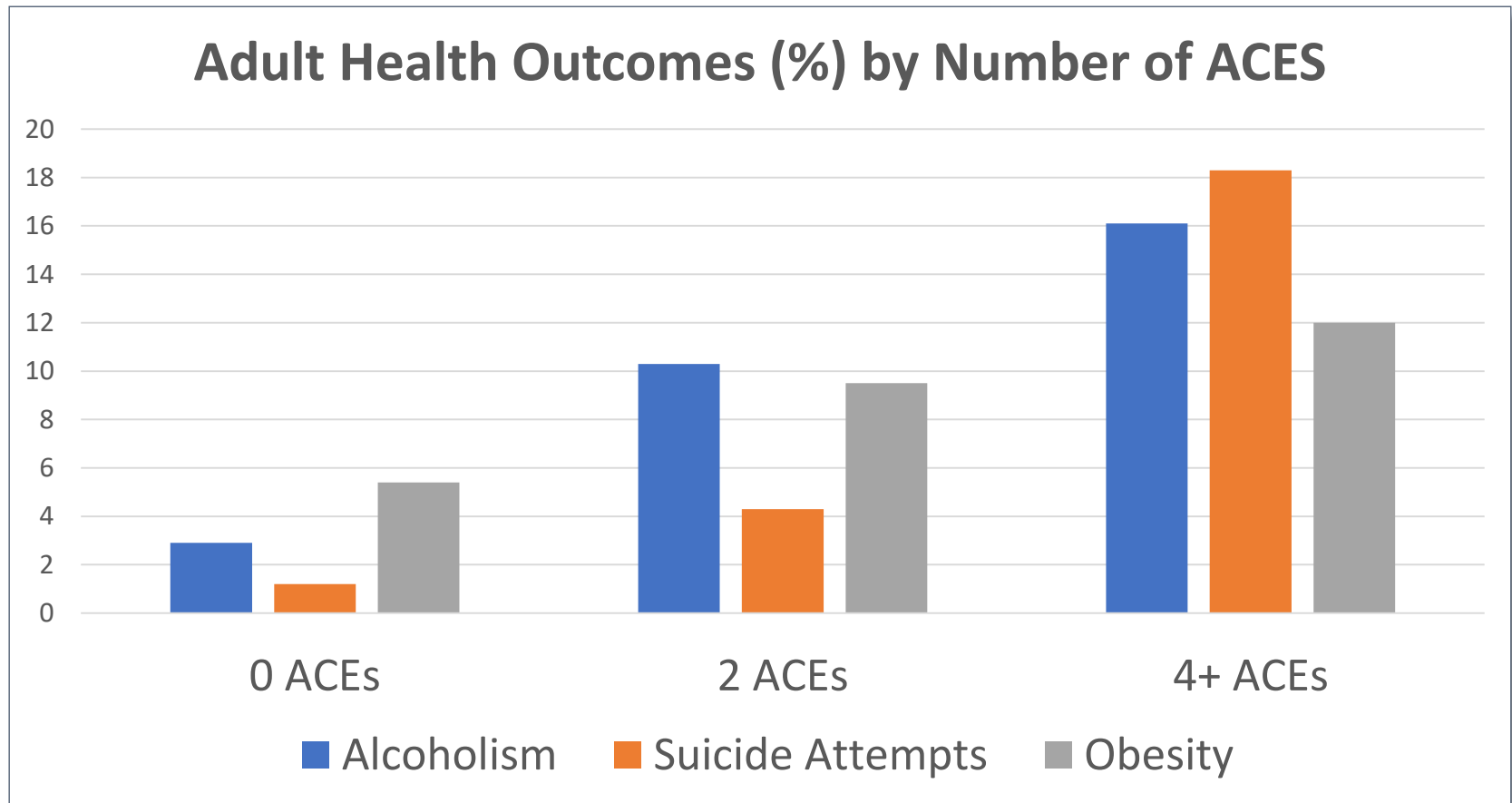
## The ACES study

- Landmark study of 17,000+ adults
- Adverse Childhood Experiences = ACEs
- Lifelong health, behavioral, social outcomes



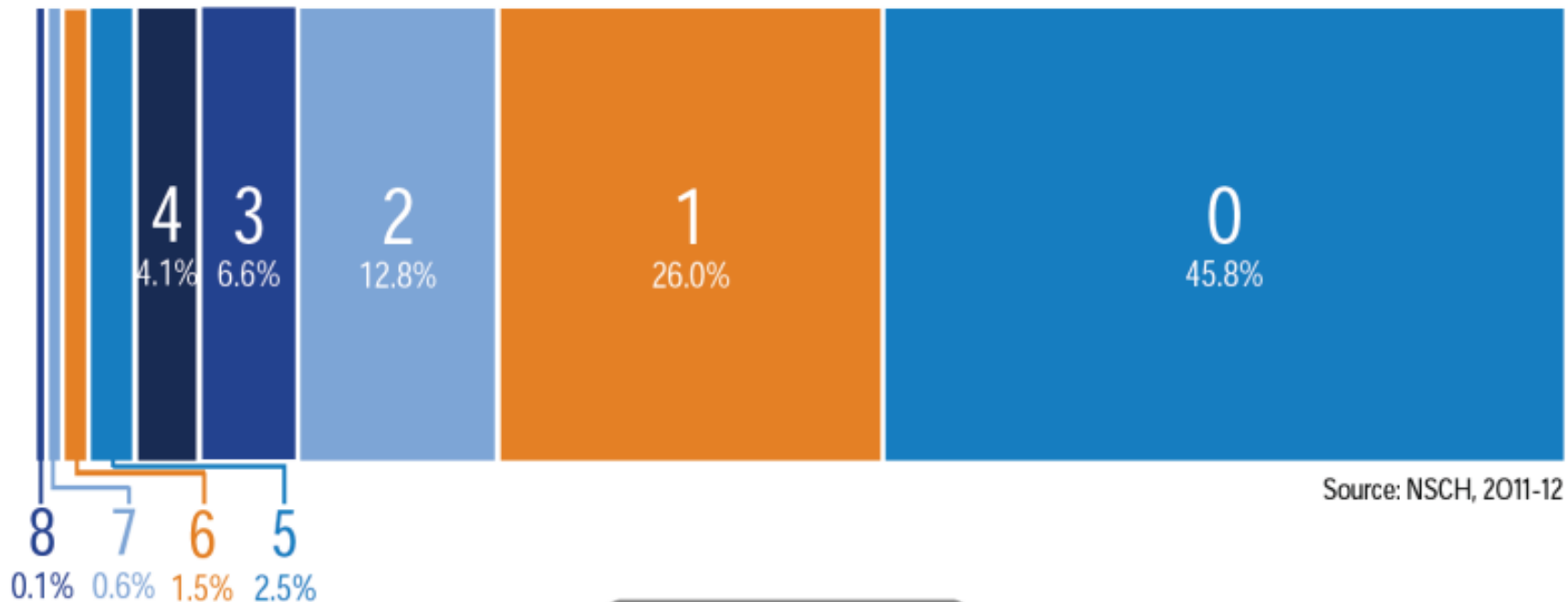


*Toxic stress has serious lifelong consequences*  
ACEs & alcoholism, suicide attempts, obesity

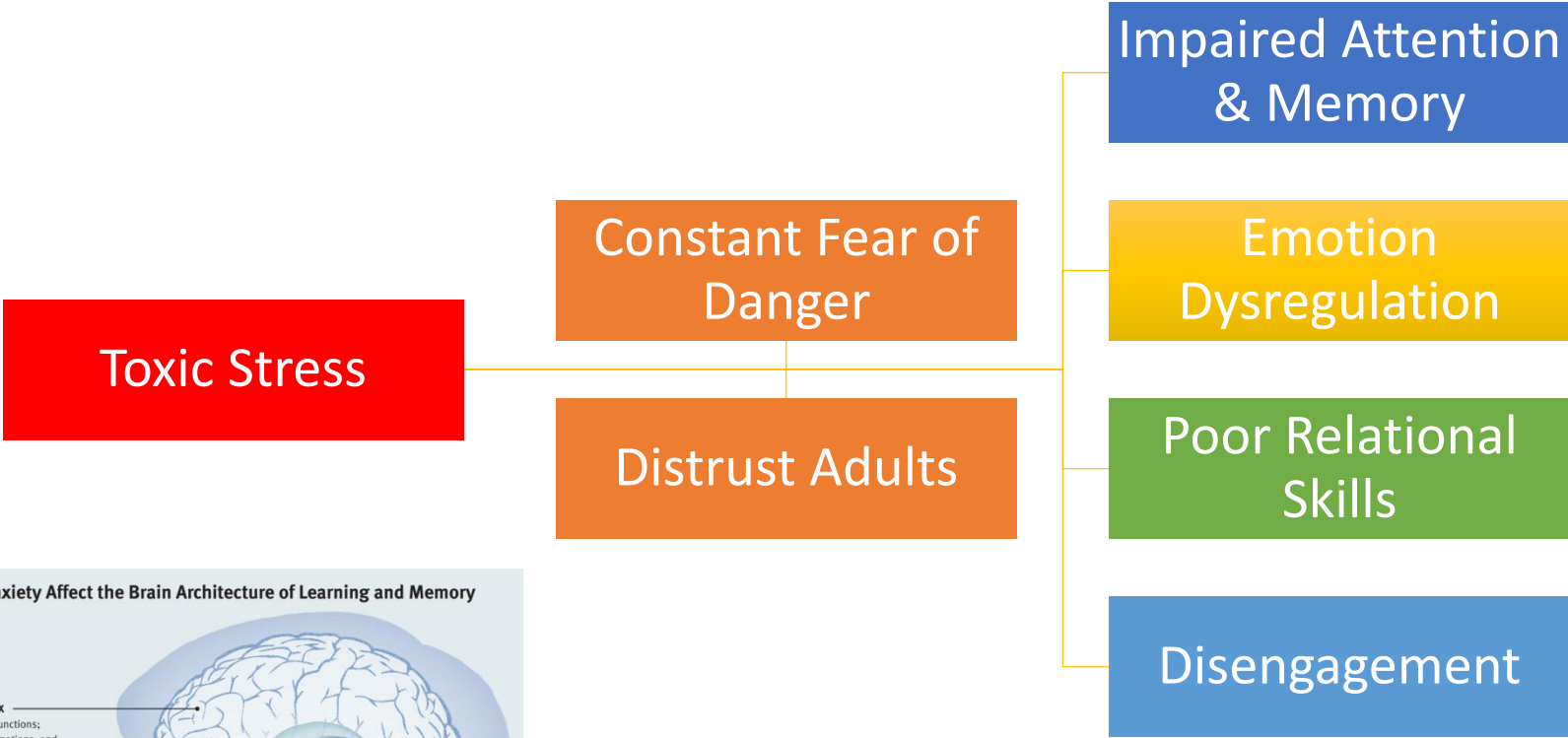


# ACEs are COMMON in kids

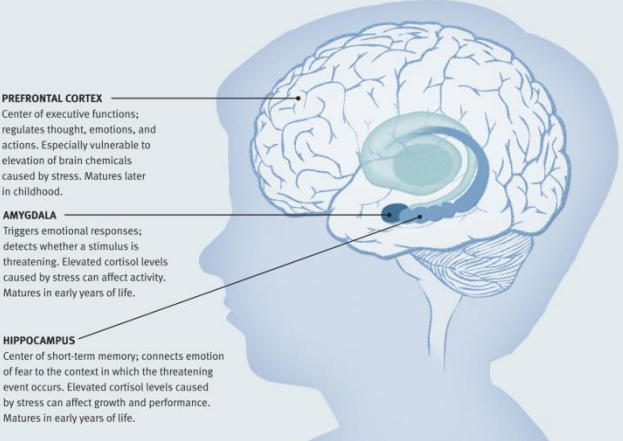
Number of Adverse Childhood Experiences Among Adolescents Ages 12-17, by Percent



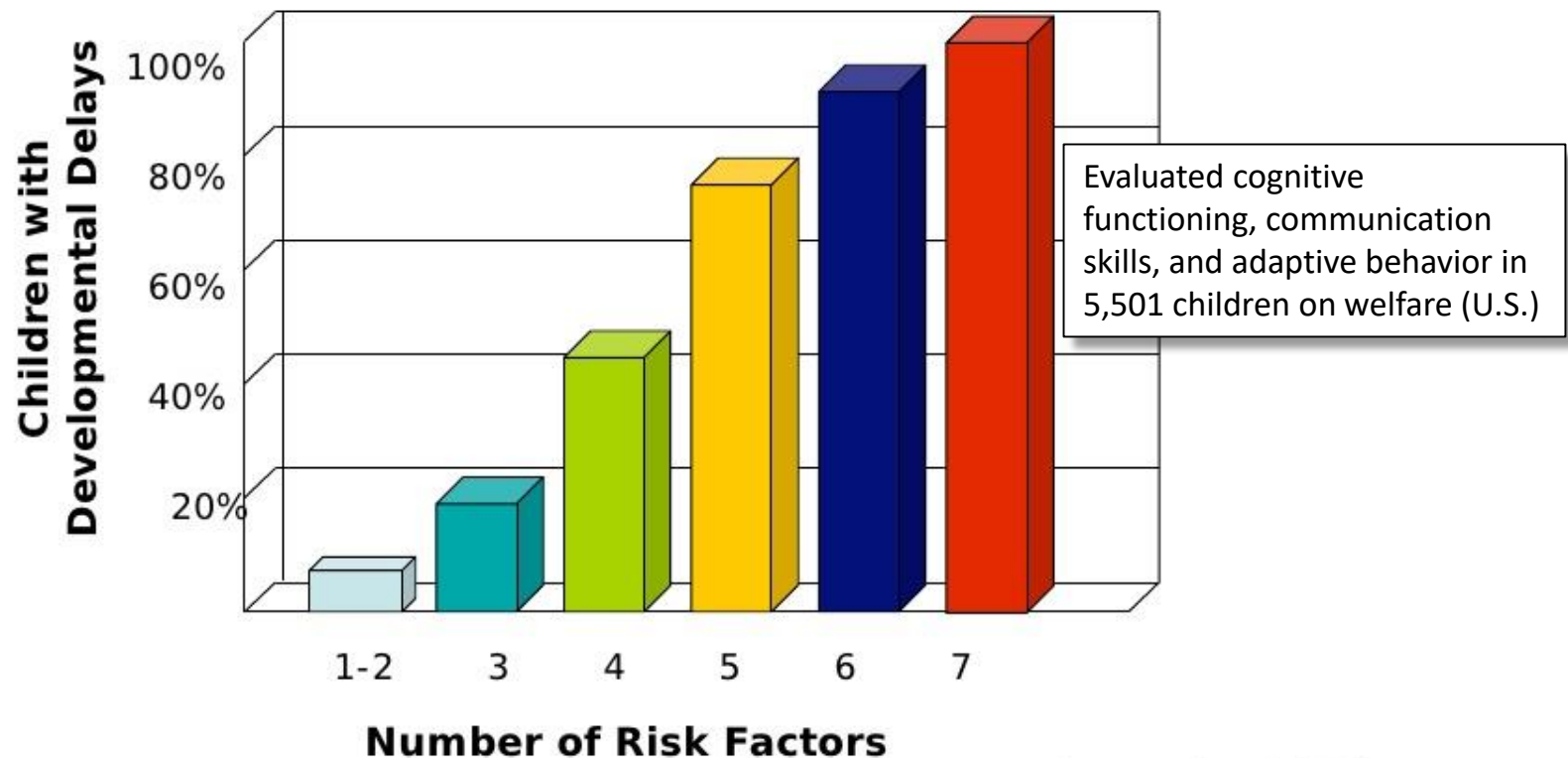
# Toxic Stress Impairs Abilities Required for School Success



Fear and Anxiety Affect the Brain Architecture of Learning and Memory

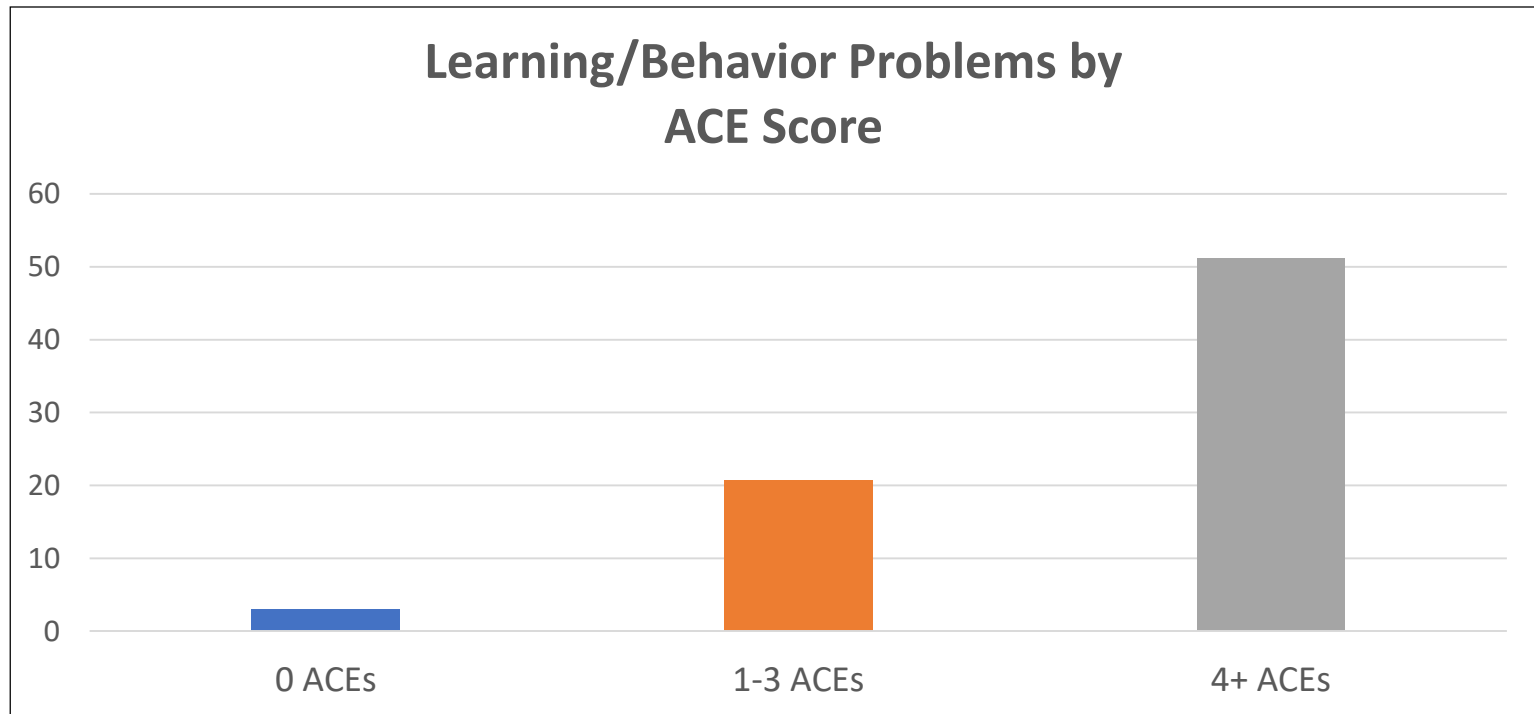


## Significant Adversity Impairs Development in the First Three Years



Source: Barth, et al. (2008)

# ACEs affect learning, behavior, & graduation rates



Burke et al, 2011

***Youth with 4+ ACEs are 2.3x more likely not to graduate***

*-Metzler et al, 2017*

# Changing the Course

“When children have the right support—including, always, a **relationship with a safe, trusted adult**—the same mechanisms that impair a child’s developing brain can build health & resilience.”

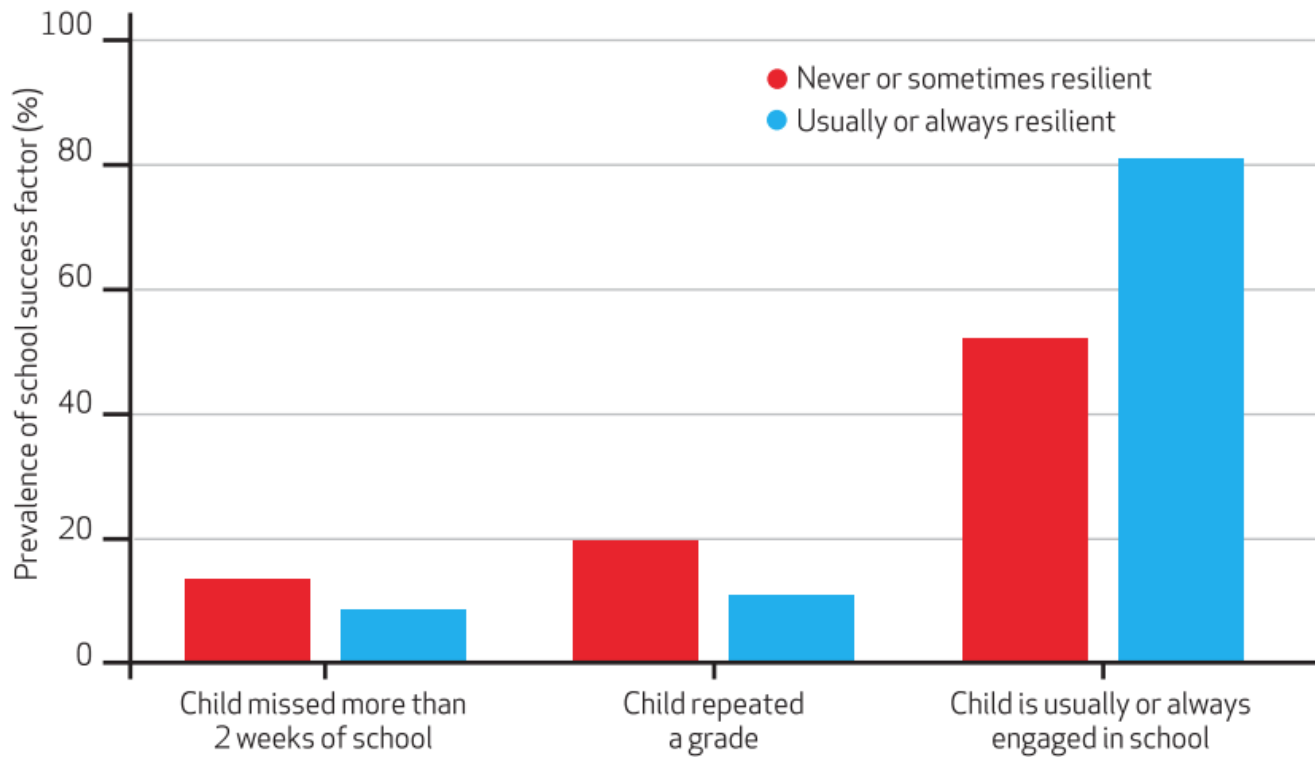
- Sheila Walker, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health  
(adapted)



# Resilience buffers ACEs effects at school

## EXHIBIT 4

### Prevalence Of School Success Factors Among Children With Special Health Care Needs Who Had Two Or More Adverse Childhood Experiences, By Resilience, 2011-12



# Where can schools begin?

Begin with  
Staff  
Attitudes

- Learn about ACEs
- Build compassion, wellness in staff

*Start with a champion  
at each school*

Support  
Belonging

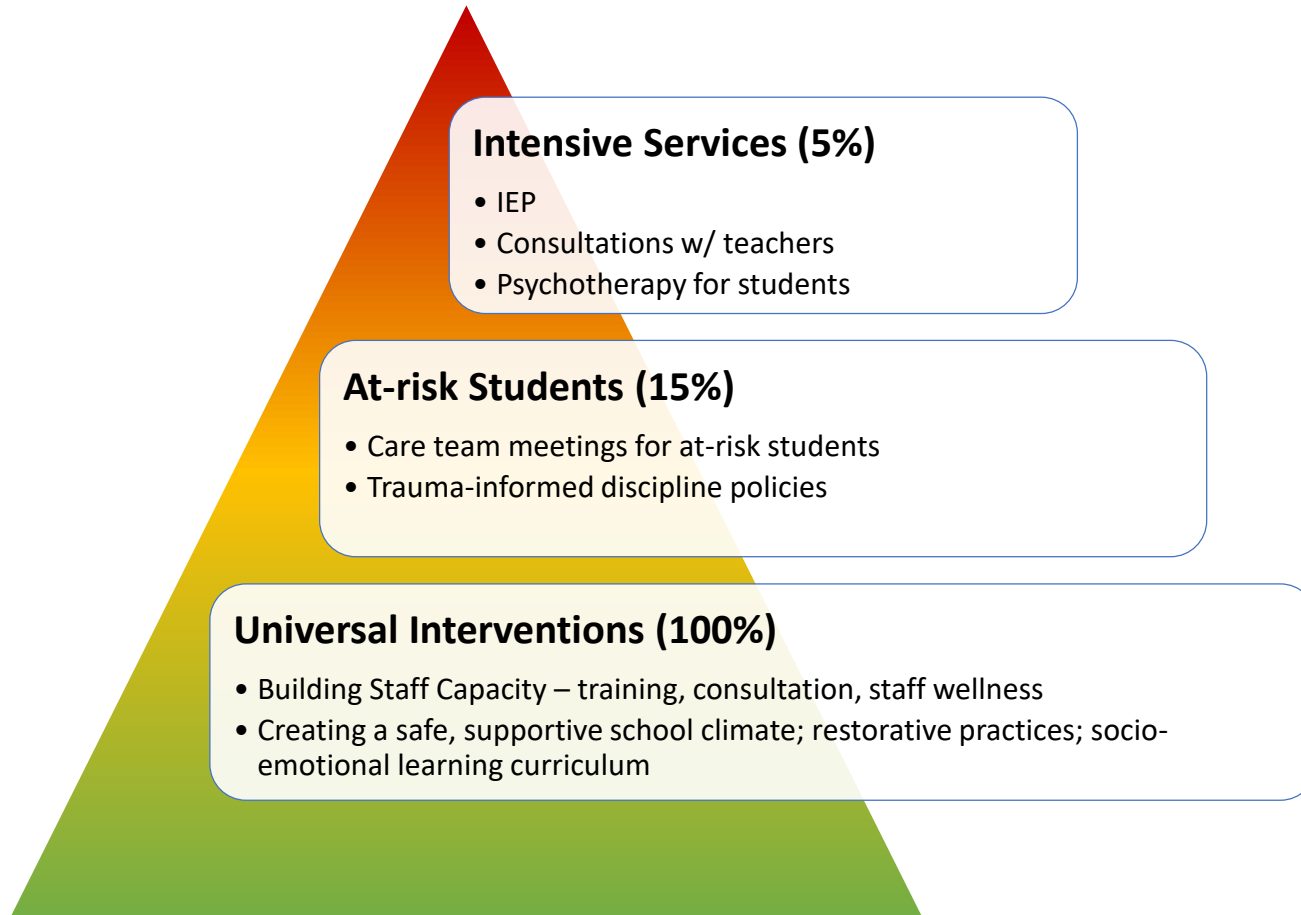
- Welcome students by name

Create Safe  
Spaces

- E.g., “Cool down” spots



# UCSF HEARTS: A tiered approach to addressing toxic stress in schools



# OUR JOURNEY

Laurie Edmundson

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Project Lead Surrey,  
North Delta Local Action Team

CYMHSU Collaborative Steering Committee

Mental Health Advocate





Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia  
AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY

EDMUNDSON, LAURIE  
DOB 16 Oct 1993  
PHN [REDACTED]7

MRN 0941398

06 December 2006

**CHILD PSYCHIATRY TEACHING AND CONSULTATION CLINIC**

**DATES SEEN:**

November 10, 2006; November 20, 2006; December 6, 2006, and December 18, 2006.

**CHIEF COMPLAINT:**

"I do stuff I do not want to. It is getting worse. I can not control my anger."

**REASON FOR REFERRAL:**

Increasing difficulty of mother coping at home with impulsivity and violent anger outbursts from Laurie. Of note, Laurie has been the one spearheading this referral, as she is concerned about her behavior.

BORDERLINE  
PERSONALITY  
DISORDER

“I want to create a society where it's normal to tell people how you're actually feeling, without fear of being judged for it.”  
Laurie Edmundson, Host & Speaker, Surrey BOM Summit

#BOMSummit



KNOWLEDGE  
IS POWER

ACTIONS  
FOR ACCESS

INSIGHT  
ON TRAUMA



# LEGACY

PROGRESS OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL  
HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE COLLABORATIVE



WHAT HAS THE  
COLLABORATIVE  
MEANT

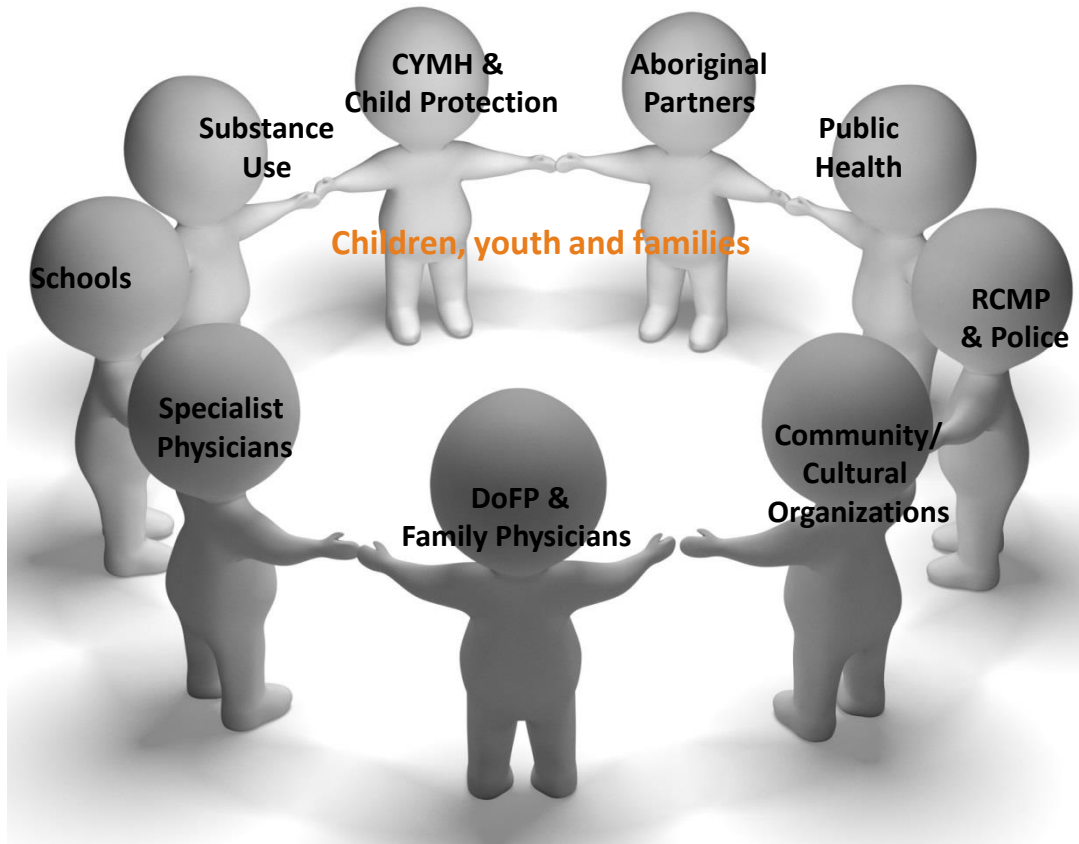
*To you?*



# CYMHSU Collaborative Goals

1. To increase the number of children, youth and families seeking and receiving timely access to INTEGRATED mental health and substance use services and supports throughout the province.
2. To document examples and results of the involvement of children, youth and families in decision making and policy development.

# Driving Community Change



# The Reach of the Collaborative

64

Local Action Teams  
across BC

2500+

Participating in Local  
Action Teams



**150+**  
Participating in  
System Working Groups

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Working Groups:**

Physician Compensation  
Info Sharing Group  
Transitions – Age/Setting  
Physician Recruitment  
Evaluation and Measurement

**MENTAL HEALTH  
CLINICAL FACULTY**

**Working Groups:**

ER Protocol  
Specialist Support  
Rural and Remote/Tele-Health  
Youth and Young Adult Services  
School Based Care

**SUBSTANCE USE  
CLINICAL FACULTY**

Ensures all Working Groups are attentive  
to substance use.

# ACEs First Impressions



- Triggering
- Dangerous
- Negative
- Unhelpful

# What I Believe Now

- Education about ACEs is the key to being non-traumatic and negative.
- We all experience ACEs in some way and it isn't inherently a bad thing
- It's a perfect tool to identify vulnerable people!
- We can STOP THE CYCLE!



# What has the Collaborative Done about ACEs?

- Hosted workshops, training, invited speakers, and fostered trauma-sensitive schools and communities.
- Featured ACEs experts in keynote presentations
- Connected with Vermont and Alberta to learn about their ACEs policies.
- Produced a document 'Trauma-Informed Practice and Services Resource List' with all resources in BC.
- Started a physician 'Community of Practice' uniting doctors interested in ACEs to work together to try and address issues.
- The ACEs Summit

# What would have helped me in school?

If I had been identified earlier with a high ACEs score, I could have:

- been referred earlier to services
- had the opportunity to build resilience from a young age
- learned skills earlier to regulate my emotions
- understood the impact of ACEs and how they can affect you and generations to come





**LET'S USE THIS KNOWLEDGE SO WE NEVER LET  
ANOTHER STUDENT FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS  
LIKE I DID FROM 6-19**

# Creating Success in the Cariboo

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**Silvia Siebert-Dubray**


Director of Instruction, Student Support Services

School District #27

**Calvin Dubray**

Principal, Marie Sharpe Elementary

School District #27



**How Marie Sharpe  
Elementary School**  
recognized the need to  
support our students  
differently.

# Indicators

- o low attendance in all grades
- o lack of attachment to their school (sense of belonging)
- o lack of pride in their school
- o closed system
  - office referrals high
  - suspensions
  - closed doors
  - lack of trust between staff and students (lack of trusting relationship)
- o low parent involvement
- o low or no interactions between staff and parents

## 4 Key Questions for creating a vision for a Trauma Sensitive School

1. Why do we feel an urgency to become a trauma sensitive school.
2. How do we know we are ready to create a trauma sensitive action plan?
3. What actions will address staff priorities and help us move towards becoming a trauma sensitive school?
4. How do we know we are becoming a trauma sensitive school?

## Where We Started

- o Partnered with CYMH
- o A clinician came in to explain to staff how trauma affects the developing brain
- o Shared indicators of how trauma presents itself in youth
- o Recognized that we needed to create a 'Sense of Belonging' in the building. Needed a culture shift from a closed school to an open school.



WE ARE THE  
MARIE SHARPE  
FAMILY

# Hardwiring Happiness

- o As a staff we choose to read a book by Rick Hanson titled 'Hardwiring Happiness'
- o We recognized that we needed to acknowledge our own trauma and our responses to youth exhibiting behaviours associated with trauma
- o Needed to understand how to rewire the brains and build resilience in our students



## Changes staff worked on

- o build common, supportive, positive consistent language
- o staff committed to monthly Trauma Informed planning and reflecting meetings
- o all agreed to use foundational program 'Zones of Regulation' – Leah Kuypers
- o sponsored staff to attend a session with Dr. Mate at TRU

# Zones Identification



# What zone is the staff member in ...

The ZONES of Regulation® Reproducible E The Zones of Regulation Visual

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control

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WHAT ZONE AM I IN?

HOW AM I FEELING ?

# Emotion Board



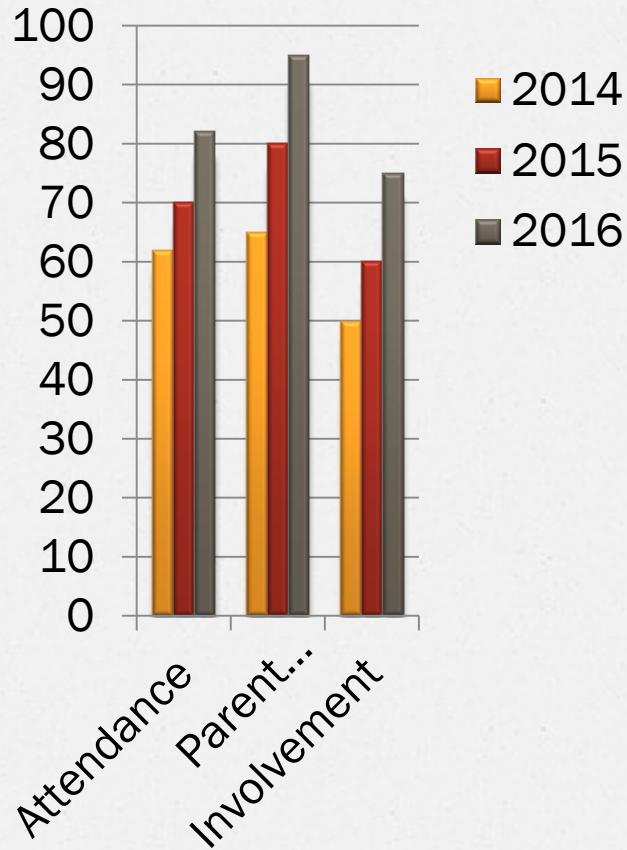
## Barriers

- o convincing the staff that all students were capable of learning and that all students deserved positive environments
- o people were looking for quick change – a fix it because it is broken attitude
- o Finding ways to sustain the commitment the staff had made over a long period of time (now into year three)
- o Funding
- o Applied for money from the Ministry of Justice Forfeiture Grants

## Early Success – Measures of Change

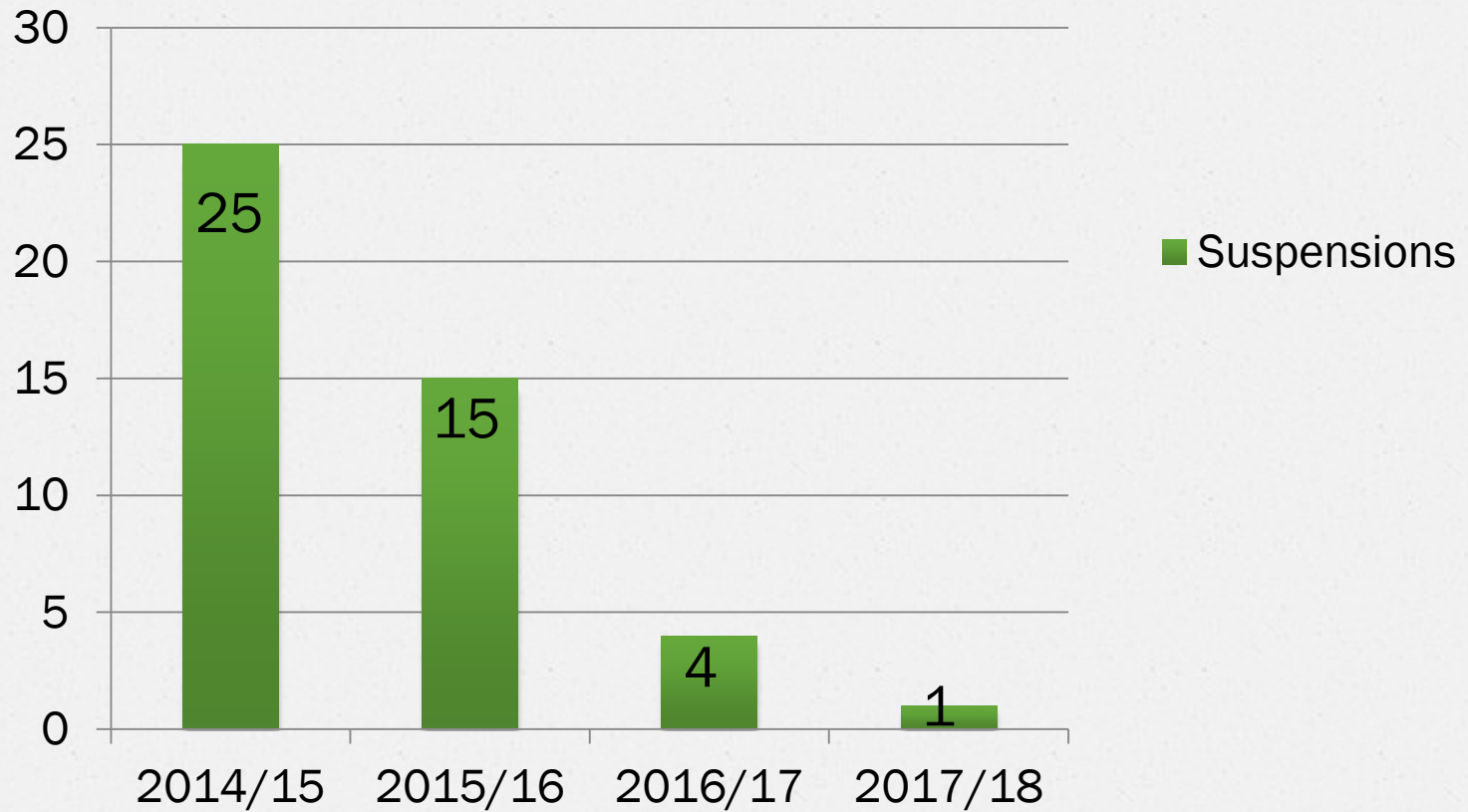
- o overall student attendance went from 62% to 82% with the first 2 years
- o parent teacher interviews – parent attendance went from 65% in 2014 to 95% in 2016
- o parent involvement in school wide events and activities has increased dramatically
- o Welcome back BBQ in 2015 had 60 parents
- o 2016 had 140 parents
- o student suspension and office referrals have gone down by 86% over a three year period.

# Sense of Belonging



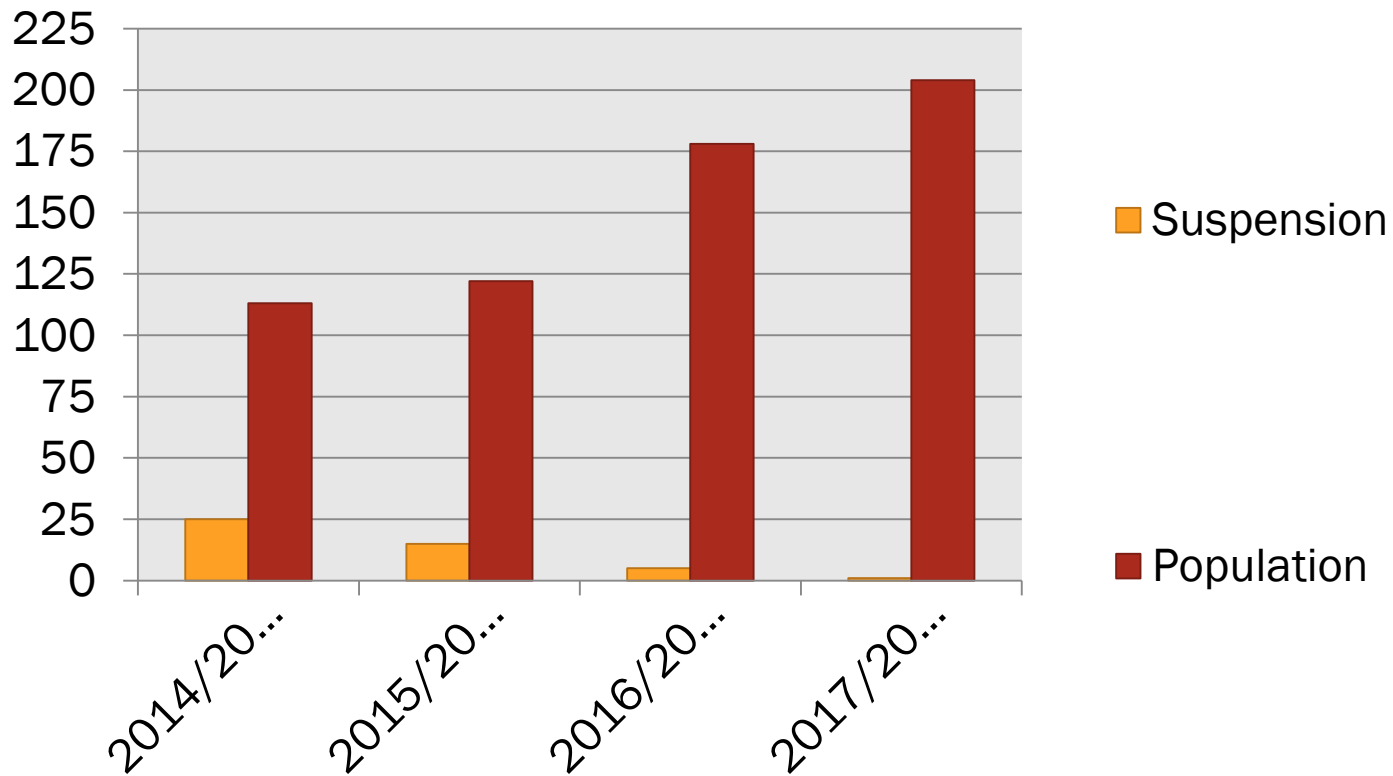
	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 2017
Student Attendance	62	70	82
Parent Attendance	65	80	95
Parent Involvement	50	60	75

## Suspension Rate dropped by 86%





## Suspension and Population changes



# Achievements

- o Parent involvement in their child's school life has increased dramatically with more parent participation in activities at school and interactions with school staff.
- o Providing opportunity for kids to shine
- o Aboriginal day parade
- o Stampede Parade
- o Provincial Elders Gathering
- o Increased enrollment from 122 in 2014 to 204 in 2017 in a district with declining enrolment.
- o Parents were asking for information and posters around Zones of Regulation and how they could use it at home

## Family night teaching educational games



## FAST - Family and Schools Together



# Hoop Dancing for Parents



# Hoop Dancing at the First Nation Role- Model Contest



# Hoop Dancing for Orange Shirt Day



# Christmas Turkey Dinner





# Drumming



# Seven Sacred Teachings



# Checking out the picture wall



# Yoga stretches



## Relaxing with Yoga Stretches



# Remote Control Cars



## Teachers' Tea



# Sensory Room for Everyone

## sensory space

**ORAL SENSORY INPUT**  
Chest Sheet

Oral Arousal Behaviors	Oral Soothing Behaviors
• Drinking warm liquids • Sucking on hard candy • Chewing on gum • Chewing on bread • Chewing on paper	• Sucking on bubble gum • Sucking on licorice • Sucking on ice • Sucking on a straw • Sucking on a spoon

**Oral Motor Activities**

- Blow bubbles
- Blow streamers
- Blow paper fans
- Blow out birthday candles
- Blow out a candle
- Blow out a string of beads
- Blow out a string of pom-poms
- Blow out a string of paper
- Blow out a string of pom-poms
- Blow out a string of paper
- Blow out a string of pom-poms

**Visual**  
Chest Sheet

Visual Arousal Behaviors	Visual Soothing Behaviors
• Looking at bright colors • Looking at high contrast • Looking at patterns • Looking at textures • Looking at movement	• Looking at neutral colors • Looking at low contrast • Looking at simple patterns • Looking at simple textures • Looking at simple movement

**Visual Activities**

- Color matching
- Color tracing
- Color dot markers
- Color dot markers
- Color dot markers
- Color dot markers

**Olfactory**  
Chest Sheet

Olfactory Arousal Behaviors	Olfactory Soothing Behaviors
• Smelling strong scents • Smelling spicy scents • Smelling pungent scents • Smelling sharp scents	• Smelling mild scents • Smelling sweet scents • Smelling pleasant scents • Smelling soft scents

**Olfactory Activities**

- Smelling scents
- Smelling scents
- Smelling scents
- Smelling scents
- Smelling scents
- Smelling scents

**Vestibular**  
Chest Sheet

Vestibular Arousal Behaviors	Vestibular Soothing Behaviors
• Spinning • Jumping • Bouncing • Swinging	• Rocking • Swinging • Bouncing • Spinning

**Vestibular Activities**

- Rocking
- Swinging
- Bouncing
- Spinning
- Rocking
- Swinging

**Tactile**  
Chest Sheet

Tactile Arousal Behaviors	Tactile Soothing Behaviors
• Touching rough textures • Touching sharp edges • Touching sticky textures • Touching cold textures	• Touching smooth textures • Touching soft edges • Touching warm textures • Touching fuzzy textures

**Tactile Activities**

- Touching textures
- Touching textures
- Touching textures
- Touching textures
- Touching textures
- Touching textures

**Proprioception**  
Chest Sheet

Proprioceptive Arousal Behaviors	Proprioceptive Soothing Behaviors
• Pushing hard • Pulling hard • Pushing hard • Pulling hard	• Pushing gently • Pulling gently • Pushing gently • Pulling gently

**Proprioceptive Activities**

- Pushing
- Pulling
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Pushing
- Pulling

**Auditory**  
Chest Sheet

Auditory Arousal Behaviors	Auditory Soothing Behaviors
• Loud sounds • Fast sounds • Loud sounds • Fast sounds	• Quiet sounds • Slow sounds • Quiet sounds • Slow sounds

**Auditory Activities & Tools**

- Quiet sounds
- Slow sounds
- Quiet sounds
- Slow sounds
- Quiet sounds
- Slow sounds





sensory  
space

crash  
pad !

Crash Pad Entry



# MINDFUL SPACE



Good meditation is for us...



QUIET ZONE

THE ZONES OF REGULATION



## Next Steps for the Future

- o working on embedding the Successful Learner Traits into the core competencies
- o Continue to build our Sensory Room and make it available to all learners with different needs
- o Continue to work with outside agencies to support our students and families
- o Aboriginal Agencies – Fun Friends Program
- o FAST
- o Starfish, BBBS mentorship

# Creating Success in Smithers

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**Cheryl Hofweber**

**Project Lead, Smithers Local Action Team**

**Jaksun Grice**

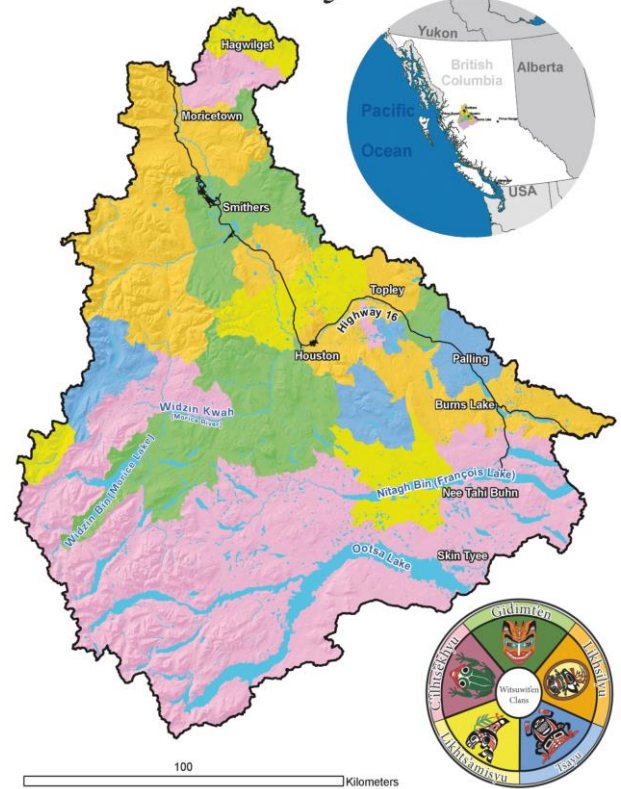
**Principal, Smithers Secondary School**

# Smithers

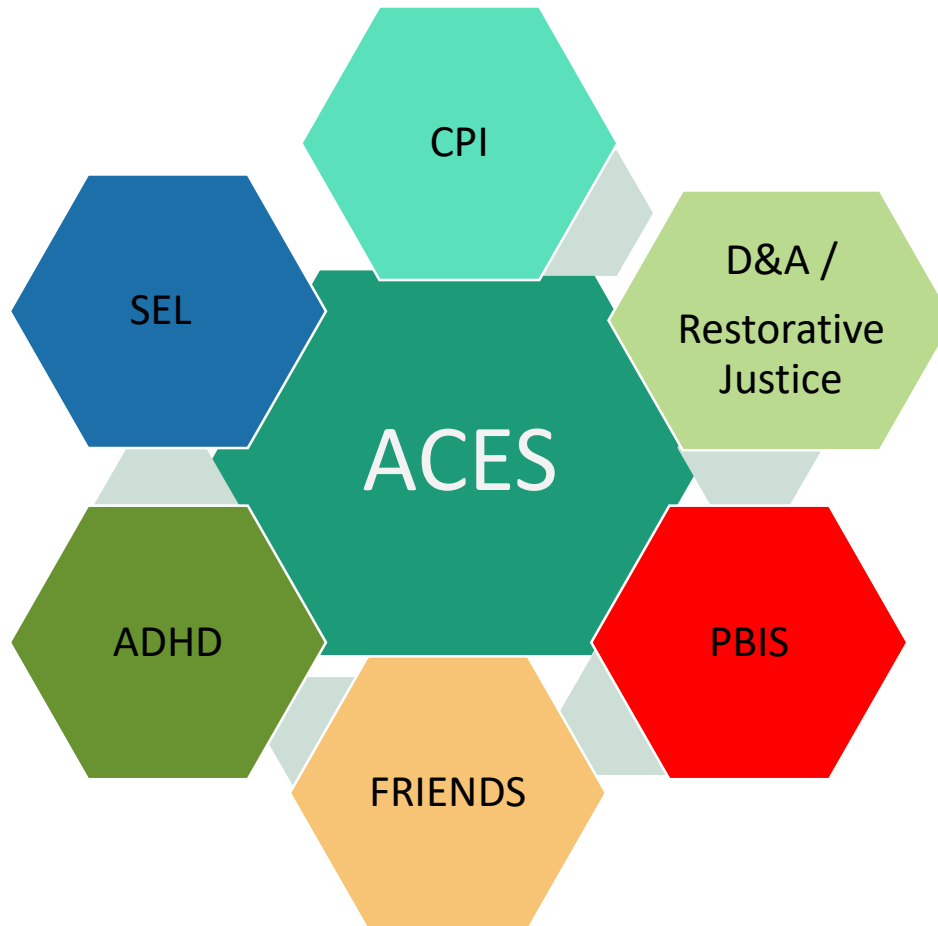


**ACEs  
Aware**

## *Witsuwit'en Territory*



# Why my excitement about ACEs & Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools?



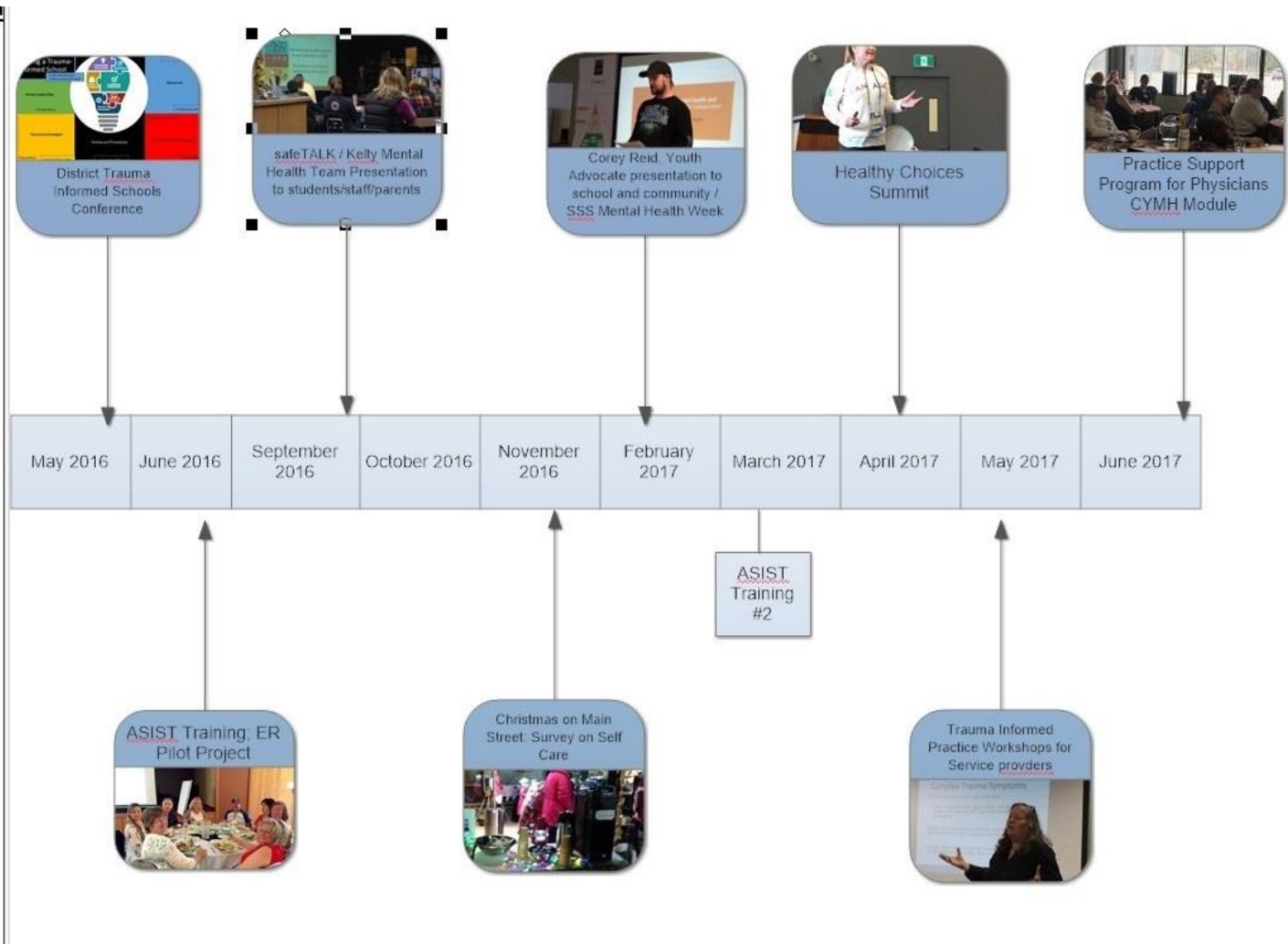
# Why?

- What worked before, is no longer working...
- Increase in complexity and awareness of student challenges / mental health
- Gap in “what we do vs. what we should do”
- Classroom practices may be harming students...





The Local Action Team partnered with School District 54 to host a Trauma Informed Conference - May 2016.



# SD#54's Intro to Trauma-Informed Schools

May 20, 2016:

***Trauma Informed Schools  
Conference*** with a keynote by  
Dr. Linda O'Neill, UNBC  
Northern Trauma Foundation

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125 teachers and administrators  
attended.

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SSS has now developed a  
“Compassion Team” to carry on  
this work at the school level.



# SD #54 New District Position

## *Social Emotional Helping Teacher*

**Objective:** Build teachers' capacity to implement social-emotional components of the curriculum.

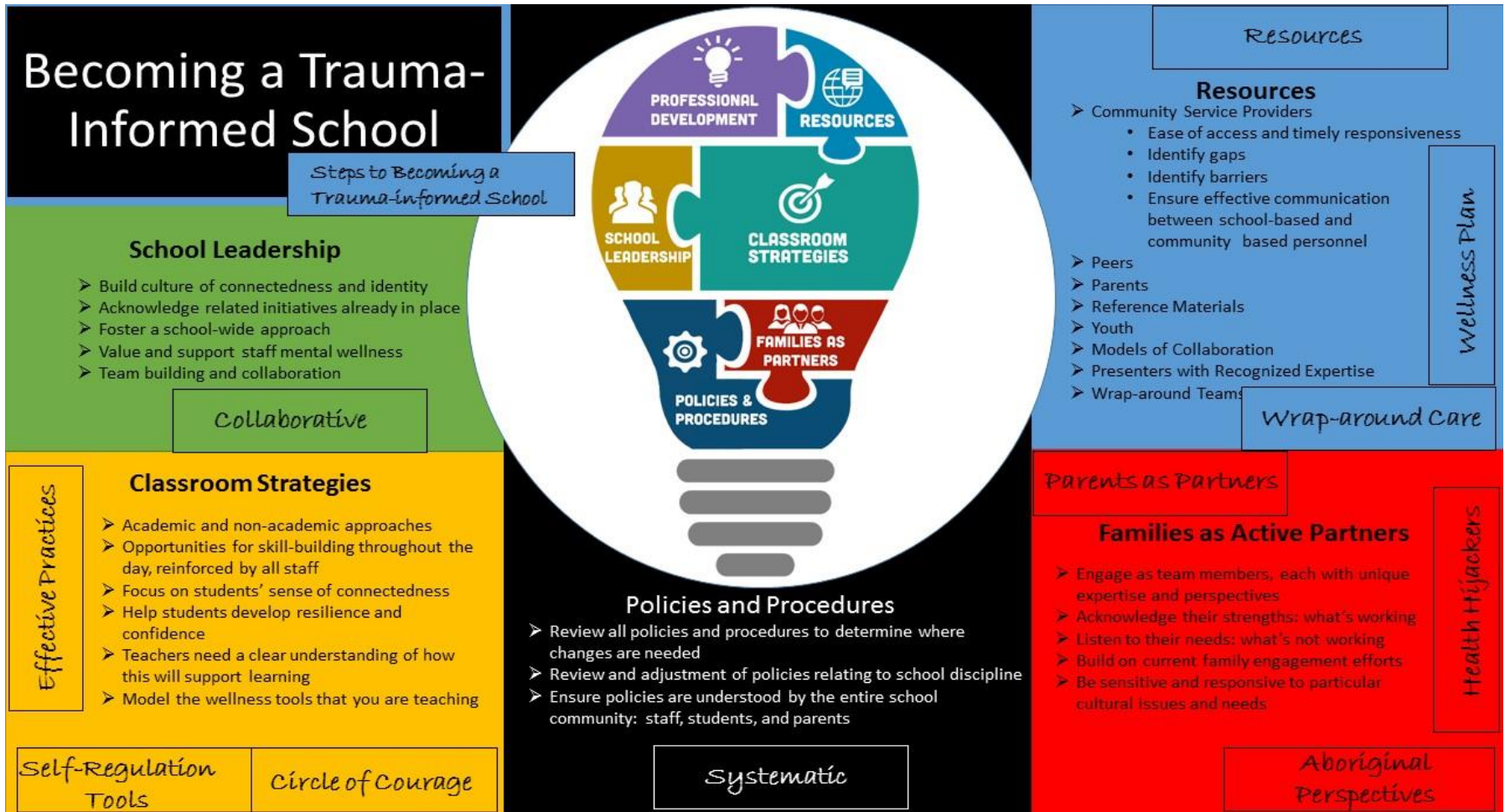
- Collaboration and co-teaching with teachers based on the needs of their class.
- Strategies will vary depending on class and teacher.
- Helping teachers see the connection between good practice, strong relationships, and ACEs.

These are all OUR KIDS!!!



# School District #54 Trauma Informed Schools Conference

Keynote presentation followed by 12 breakout sessions.



# Compassionate Schools in a Systems Framework

## Tier 3 (for students impacted by trauma)

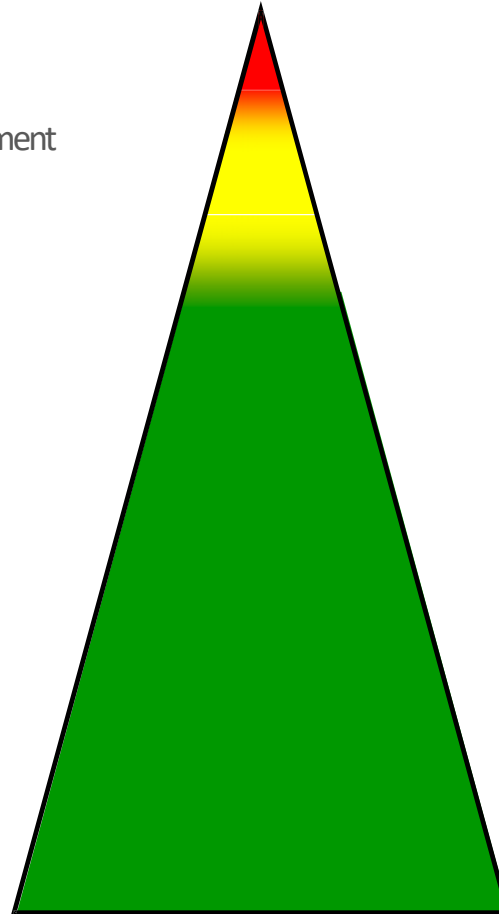
- Case management
- Monitoring (e.g., Check & Connect)
- Coordination with community-based treatment
- Wrap-around programs
- Parent & caregiver training & support

## Tier 2 (for students with symptoms)

- Differentiated instruction
- Adult mentors
- Small groups for SEL
- Parent & caregiver education
- Monitoring (e.g., Check In – Check Out)
- Sensory opportunities to manage anxiety

## Tier 1 (for all students)

- SEL instruction
- Predictable routines
- Choices
- Physical activity breaks
- “Calm zones”
- Adults model emotional regulation



## Tier 3

- Individualized services
- Comprehensive FBA
- Behaviour Plans & IEPs
- Staff avoid “trauma triggers”

## Tier 2

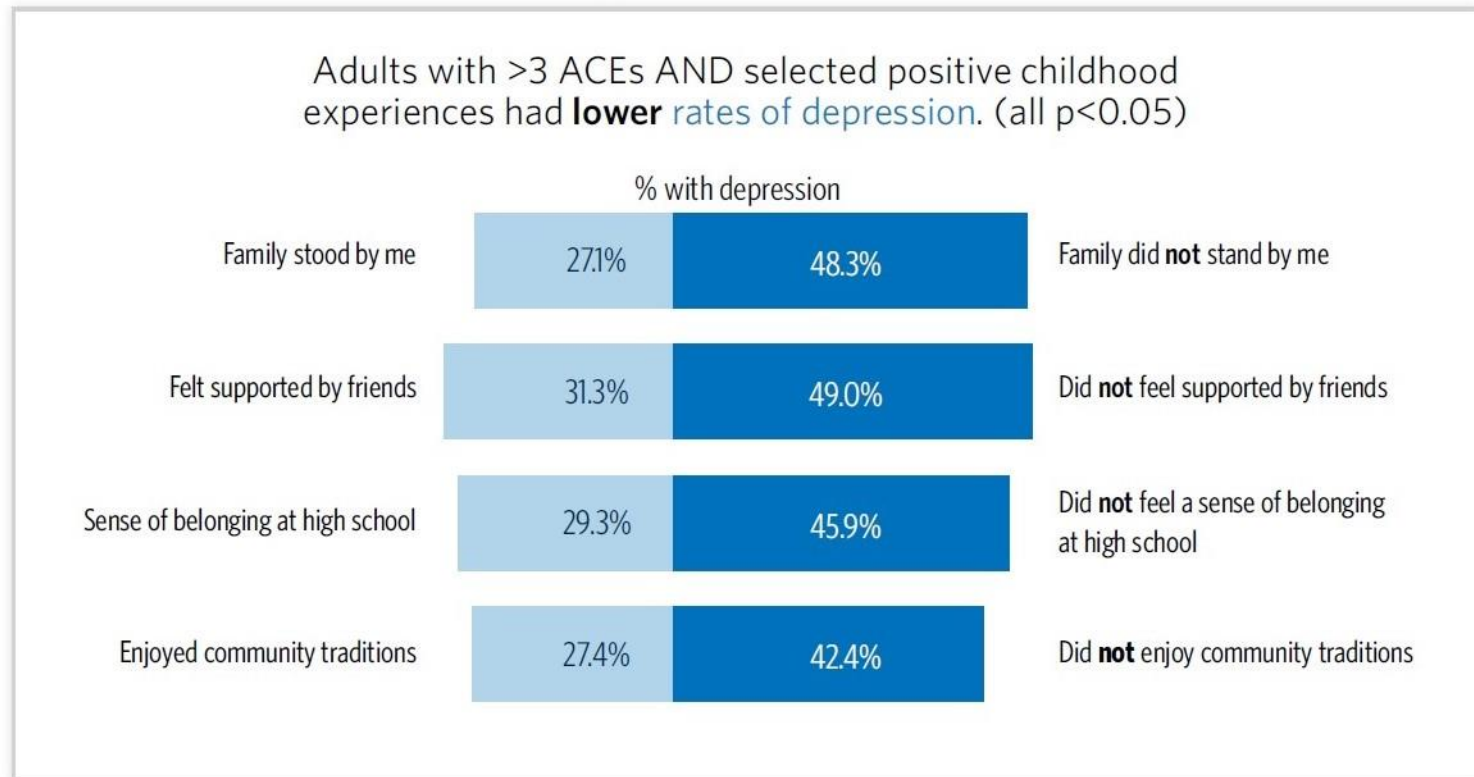
- Brief functional behaviour assessments
- Building Consultation Team
- Classroom supports
- Support services accessible & approachable
- Staff awareness of higher-risk groups

## Tier 1

- School policies promote a safe climate for staff and students
- Proactive behavior management
- Discipline system minimizes exclusion
- School builds environmental assets
- Opportunities for students to help others
- Professional development
- Classroom consultation

# Protective Factors

FIGURE 4. FACTORS THAT MODERATE THE EFFECTS OF MORE THAN 3 ACEs ON ADULT DEPRESSION



Source: Jones, J., Bethell, C.D., Linkenbach, J. & Sege, R. (2017). Health effects of ACEs mitigated by positive childhood experiences.(manuscript in preparation).<sup>14</sup>

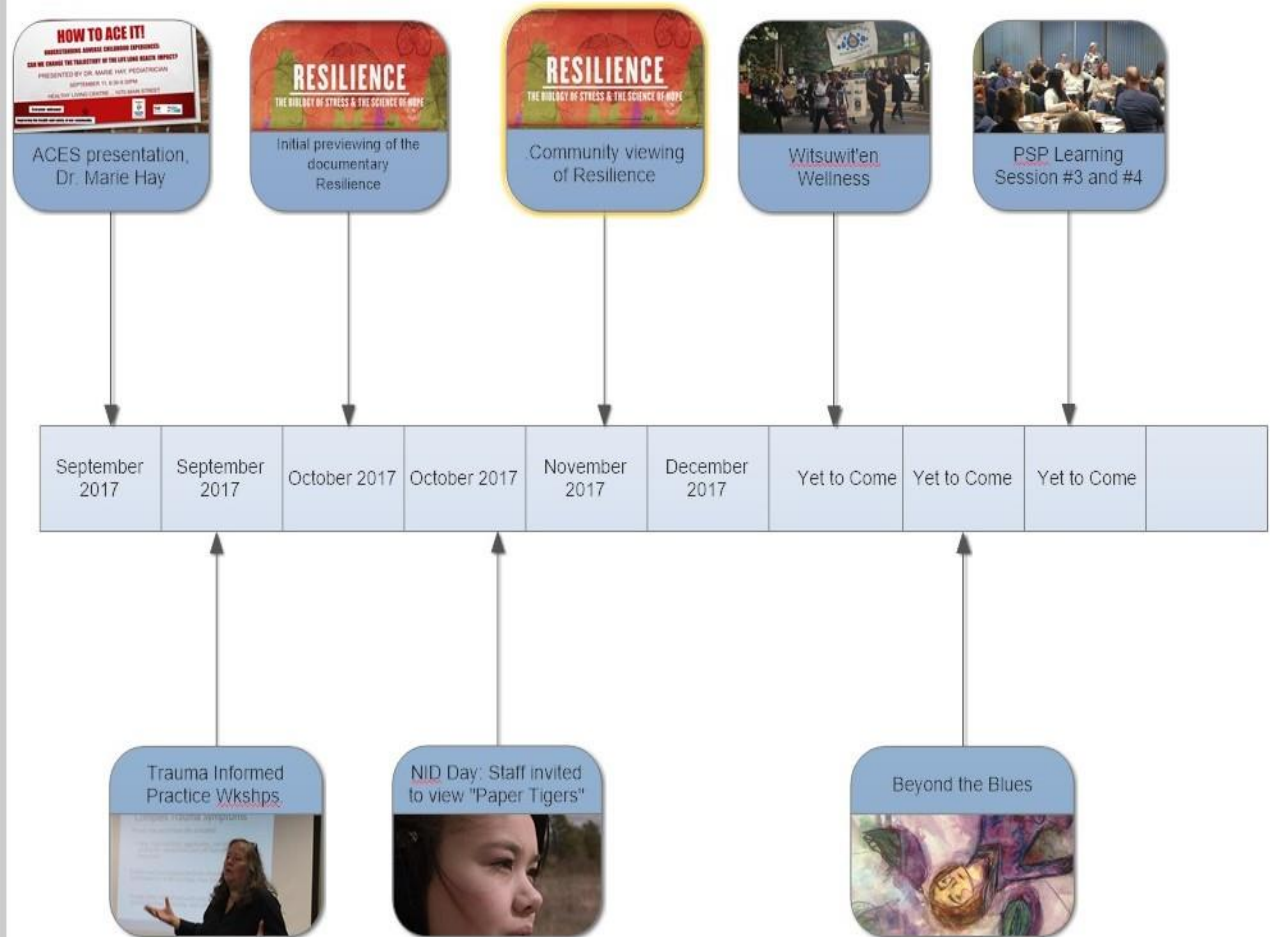
<https://www.cssp.org/publications/documents/Balancing-ACEs-with-HOPE-FINAL.pdf>

# Focusing the Journey

- Believe that all students are trying their best given the tools they have – Ross Green
- Help adults see their role in supporting students
- Create spaces that de-regulate
- Identify support networks / structures for students
- Identify key allies on staff to help support and move staff learning about ACEs forward
- Accept that this is a process – stop looking for the magic solution

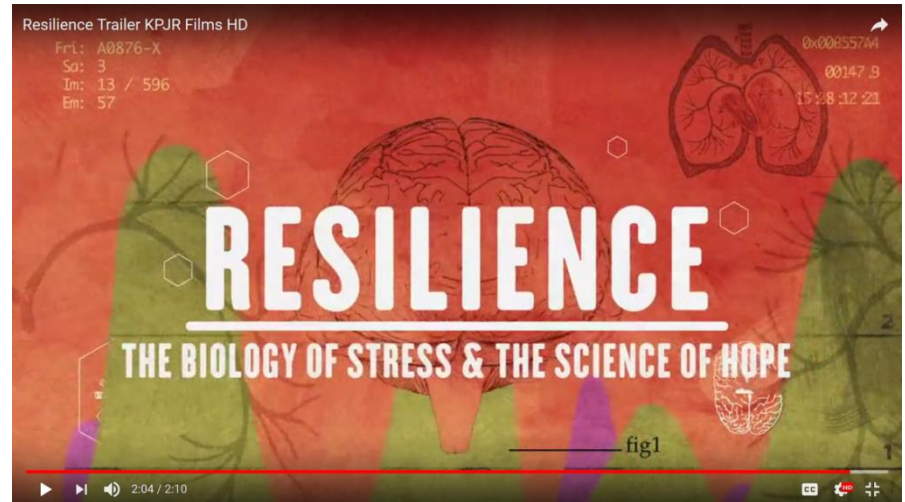


Next steps for the Local Action Team will be engaging the community in learning about ACEs and how to develop and support safe and resilient children and youth.





# Building Community Awareness



[kpjrfilms.co](http://kpjrfilms.co)

# QUESTIONS?

