

“It is our sacred responsibility to
nurture the child”*

Dr. Deena Hinshaw
MCH and CPNP Sharing Circle
October 16, 2024

*Nistawatsiman: Exploring First Nations Parenting: A literature review and expert consultation with Blackfoot Elders



“For millennia, Aboriginal peoples have provided a safe, sustainable and optimal environment most conducive to the development of children. Emerging research into the relational neurobiology of parenting offers scientific proof supporting the fact that Aboriginal parenting practices fostered ideal conditions for healthy brain development in Aboriginal infant[s] and children.”

- Nistawatsiman: Exploring First Nations Parenting: A literature review and expert consultation with Blackfoot Elders, p. 56-57

https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/exploring_first_narions_parenting_a_literature_review_and_expert_consultation_with_blackfoot_elders.pdf

Why invest in children, youth and families?

- The first six years of life set the foundation for the future
- Community impact
- Every child's rights should be protected
- Return on investment:
 - Comprehensive, high-quality birth to age 5 intervention can return as much as 13% per year in improved education, economic, health and social outcomes.*

*<https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/video/brain-story-making-the-economic-case>

AFWI Brain Story

“Brains aren’t just born, they’re also built”



HOW BRAINS ARE BUILT:
INTRODUCING THE BRAIN STORY

Palix Foundation

Brain Architecture, Addiction, Serve and Return, Air Traffic Control, Stress

Palix Foundation, October 2013

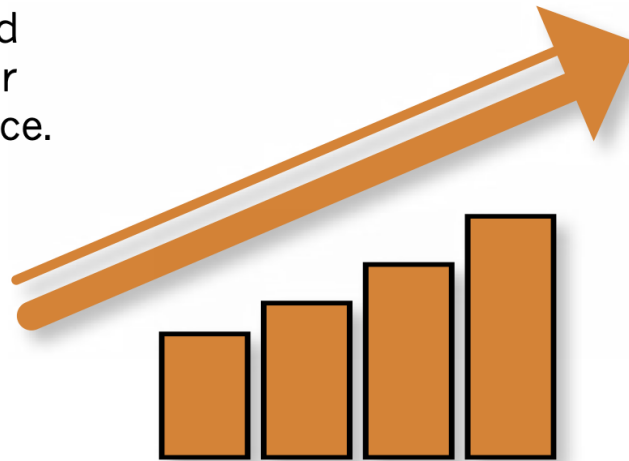
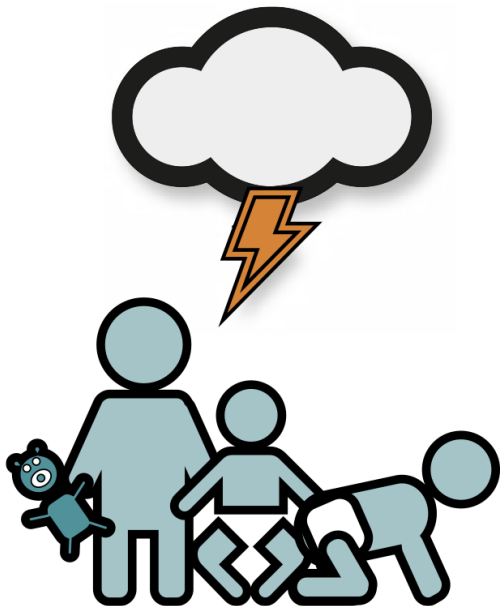
Get an introduction to the Brain Story in this accessible and engaging video. The AFWI developed the video with considerable input from our partners at the Harvard Center on the Developing Child and the FrameWorks Institute. Using metaphors developed by FrameWorks and tested with audiences both in the US and in Alberta, “How Brains are Built” infuses core story concepts with energy, accessibility, and high fidelity to the science.

<https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/watch/how-brains-are-built-core-story-of-brain-development>

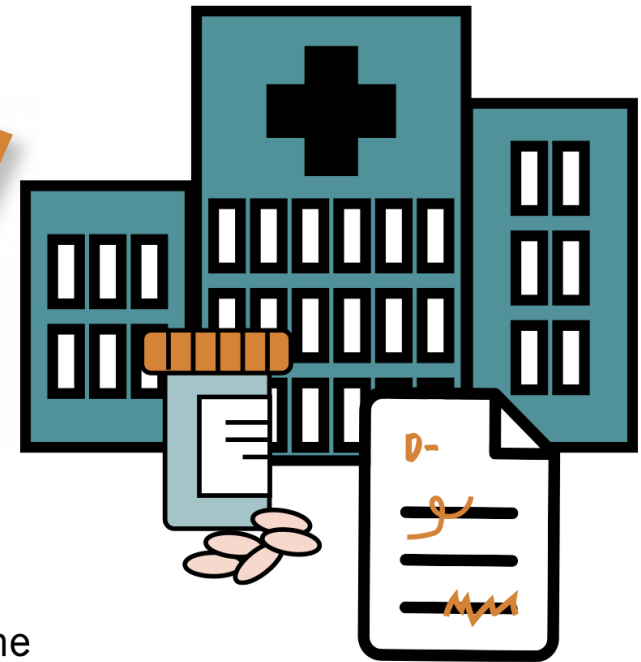
WHAT ARE ACES?

AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO TOXIC STRESS?

“ACEs” stands for “Adverse Childhood Experiences.” These experiences can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence.

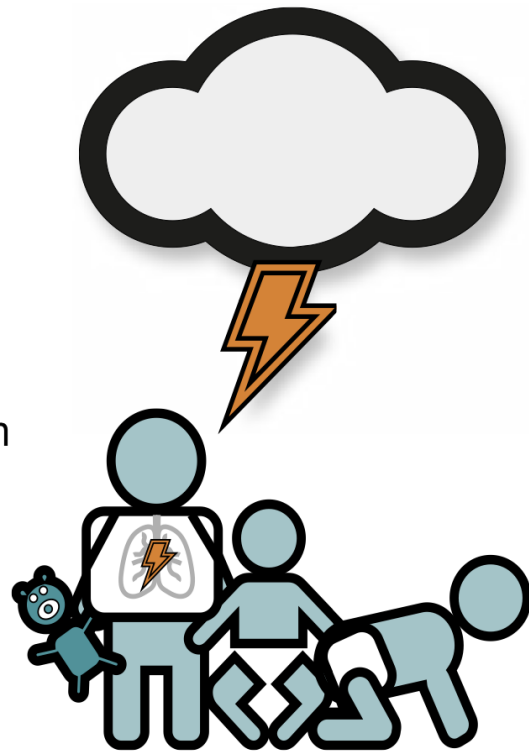


The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely he or she is to suffer from things like heart disease and diabetes, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life.



TOXIC STRESS EXPLAINS HOW ACEs "GET UNDER THE SKIN."

Experiencing many ACEs, as well as things like racism and community violence, without supportive adults, can cause what's known as **toxic stress**. This excessive activation of the stress-response system can lead to long-lasting wear-and-tear on the body and brain.



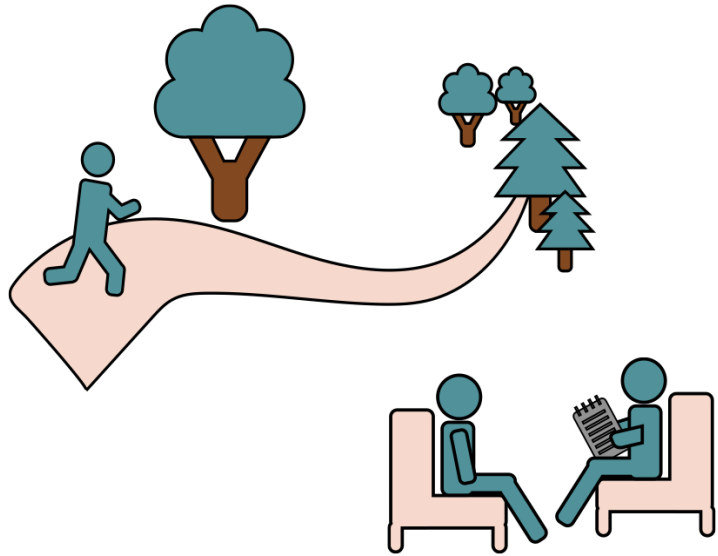
The effect would be similar to revving a car engine for days or weeks at a time.



“Shame corrodes the very part of us that believes we are capable of change”

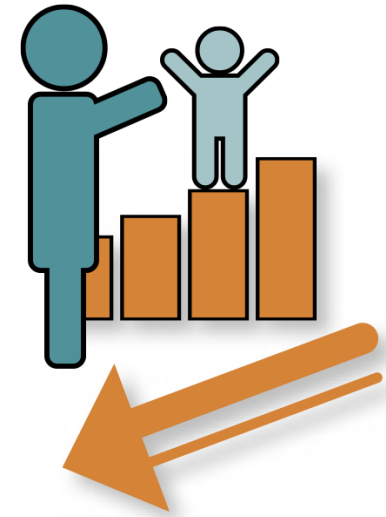
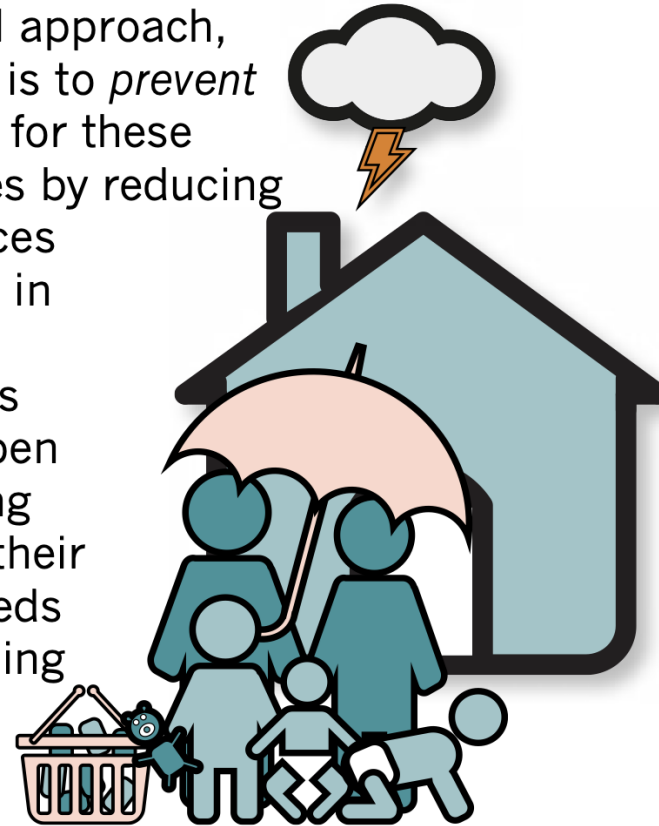
- Brené Brown

WE CAN REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF ACES AND TOXIC STRESS.



For those who have experienced ACEs, there are a range of possible responses that can help, including therapeutic sessions with mental health professionals, meditation, physical exercise, spending time in nature, and many others.

The ideal approach, however, is to *prevent* the need for these responses by reducing the sources of stress in people's lives. This can happen by helping to meet their basic needs or providing other services.



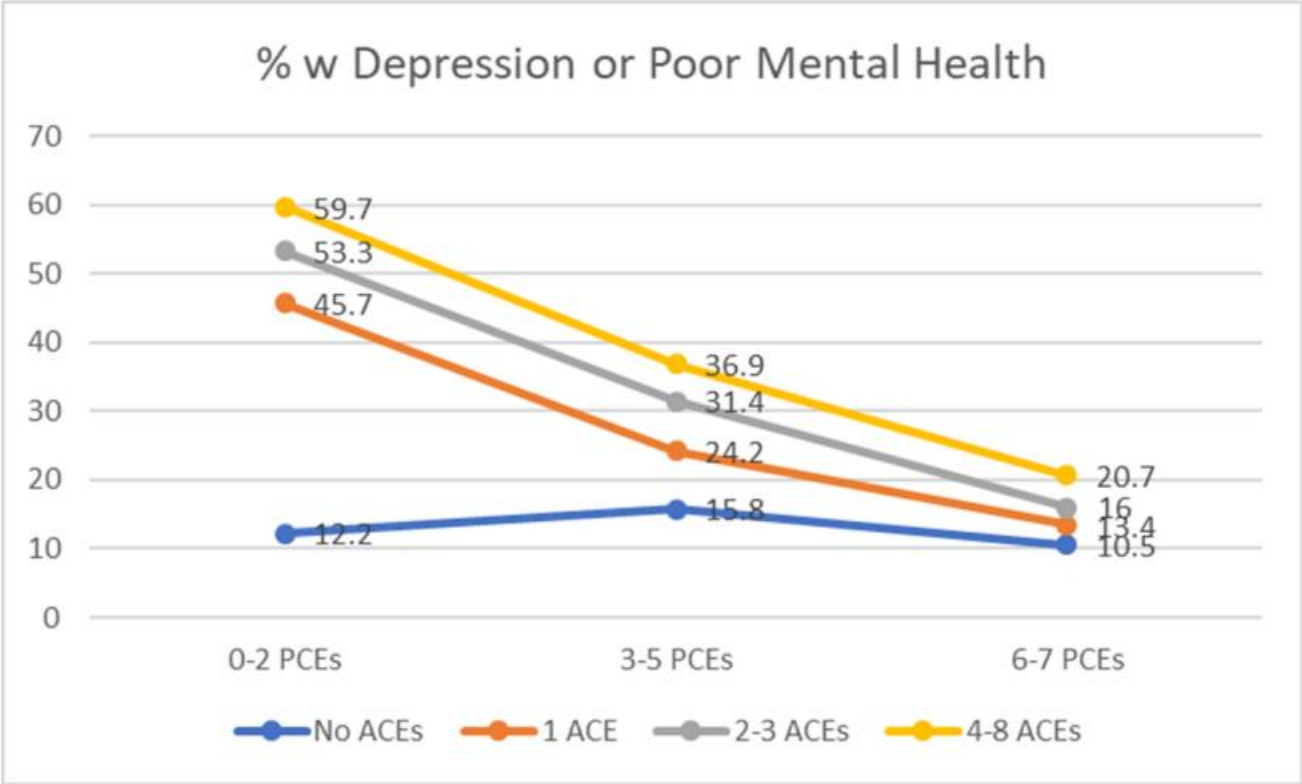
Likewise, fostering strong, responsive relationships between children and their caregivers, and helping children and adults build core life skills, can help to buffer a child from the effects of toxic stress.

Positive Childhood Experiences – “We are the medicine”

Positive Childhood Experiences questions asked how often the respondent:

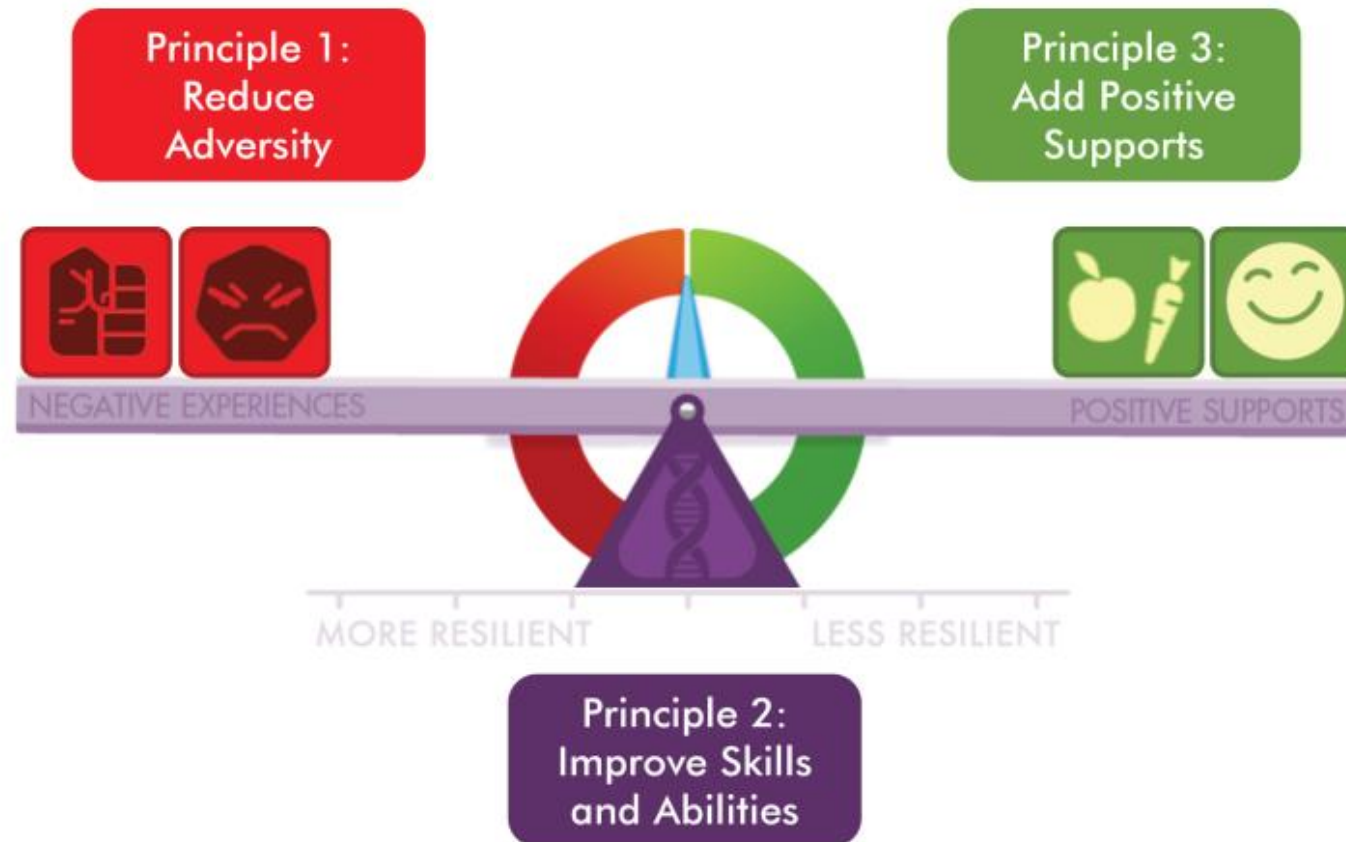
1. Felt able to talk to their family about feelings
2. Felt their family stood by them during difficult times
3. Enjoyed participating in community traditions
4. Felt a sense of belonging in high school
5. Felt supported by friends
6. Had at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them
7. Felt safe and protected by an adult in their home

Positive Childhood Experiences – “We are the medicine”



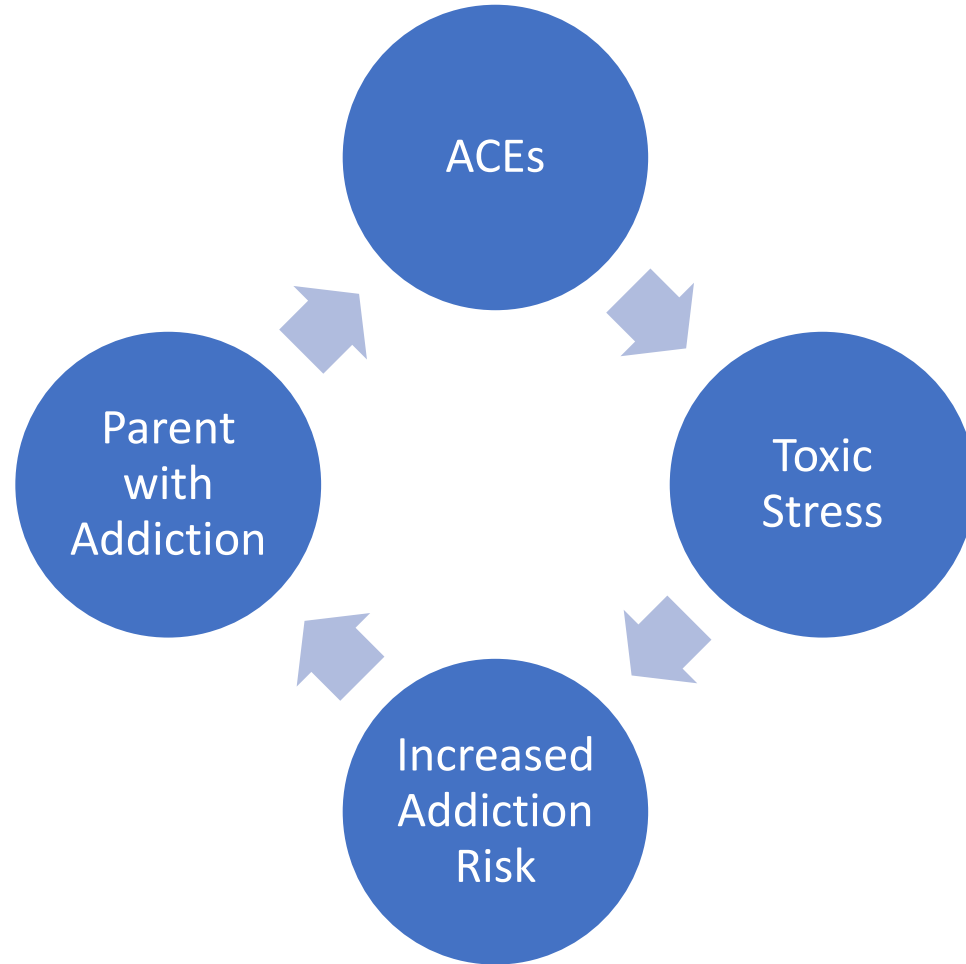
<https://positiveexperience.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BRFShandout2-18.pdf>

AFWI Resilience Scale



<https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/what-we-know/resilience-scale/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Addiction





GM

Dr. GABOR MATÉ

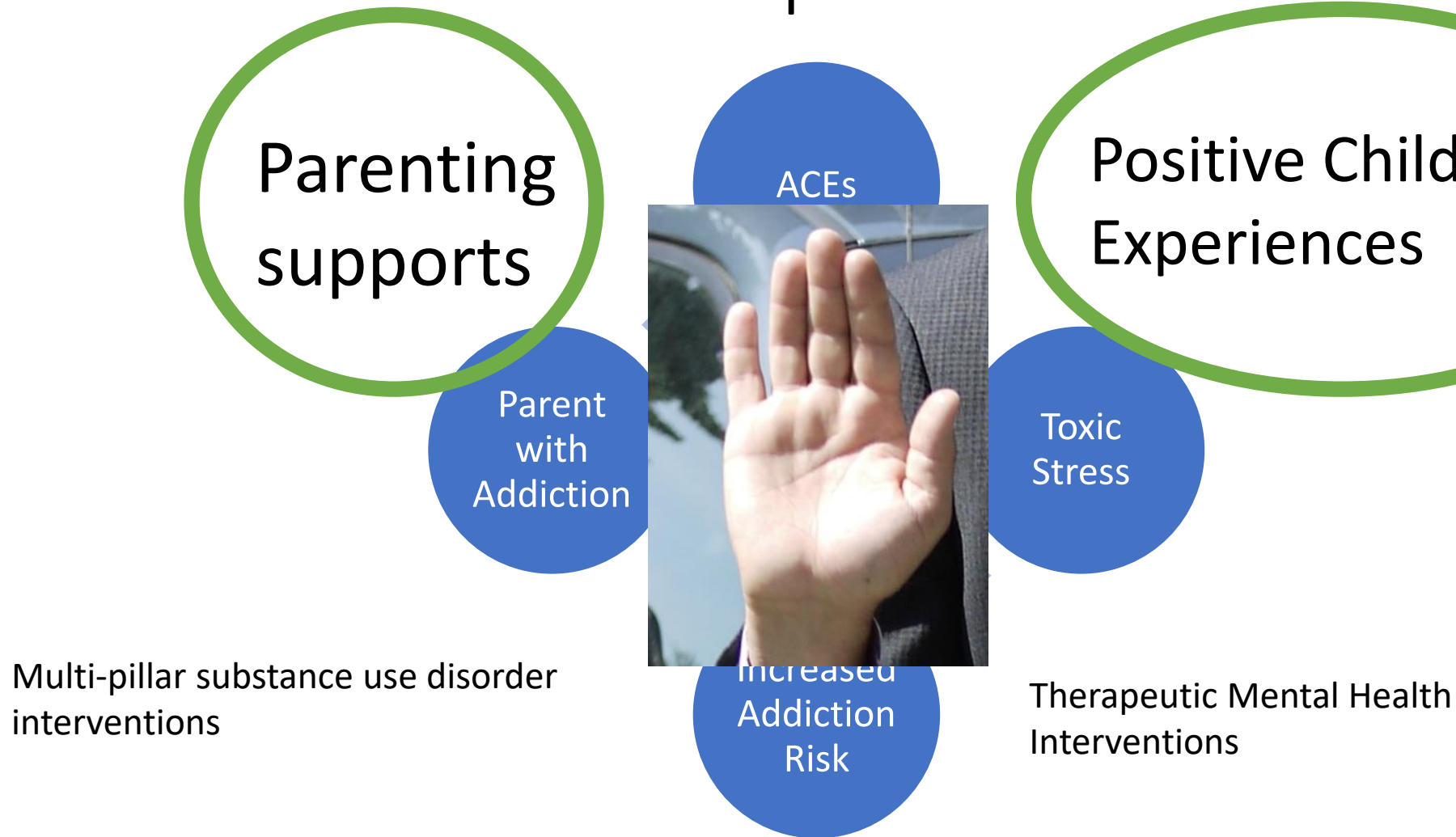
When Science Meets Compassion

“The question is not why the addiction, but why the pain.”

Gabor Maté

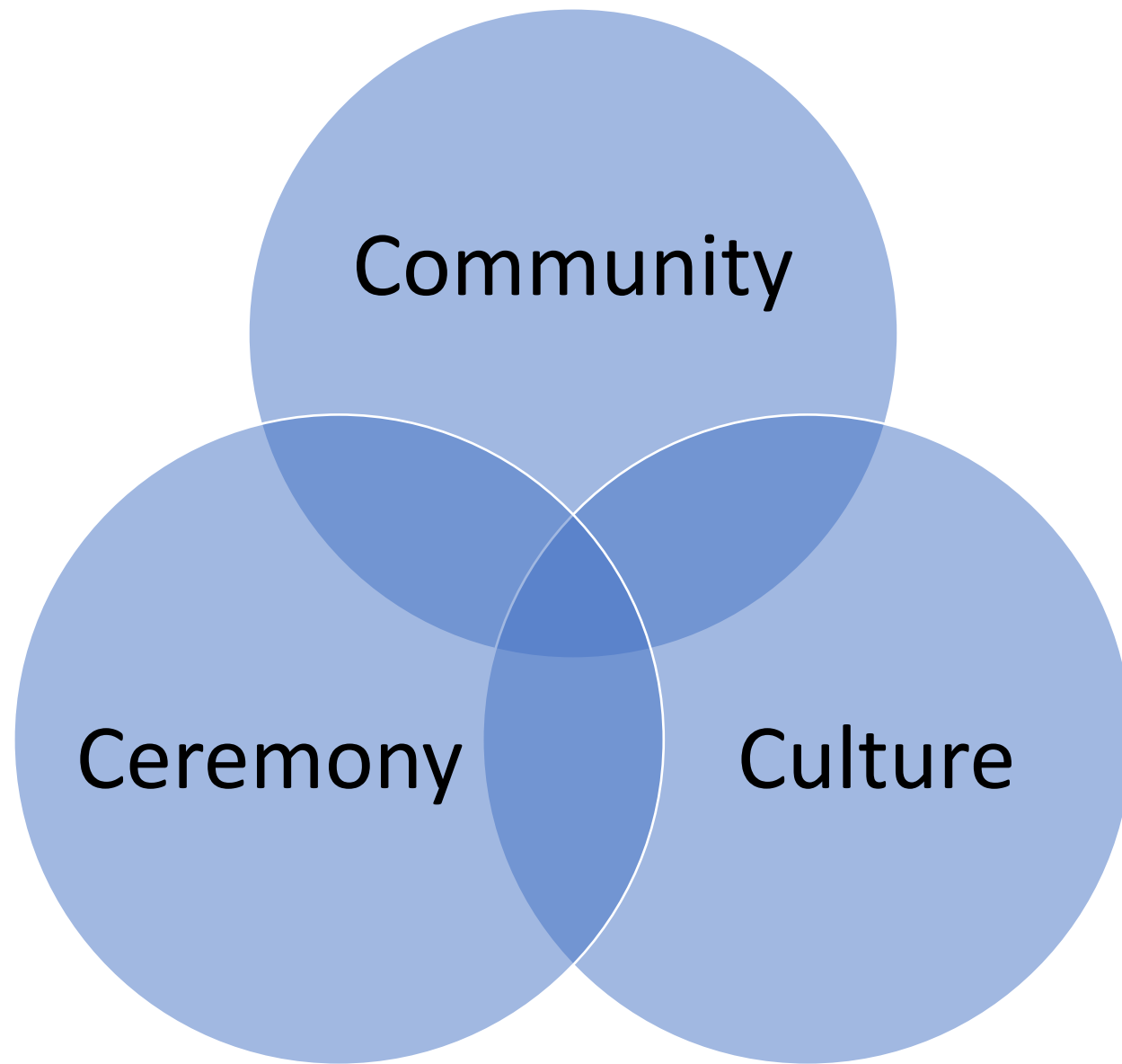
<https://drgabormate.com>

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Addiction



Being indigenous is a protective factor –
racism is the risk factor

Teaching received from Dr. Danièle Behn-Smith, Eh Cho Dene and Métis physician



Community

Ceremony

Culture

Shame Resilience

- Connection
- Courage
- Compassion

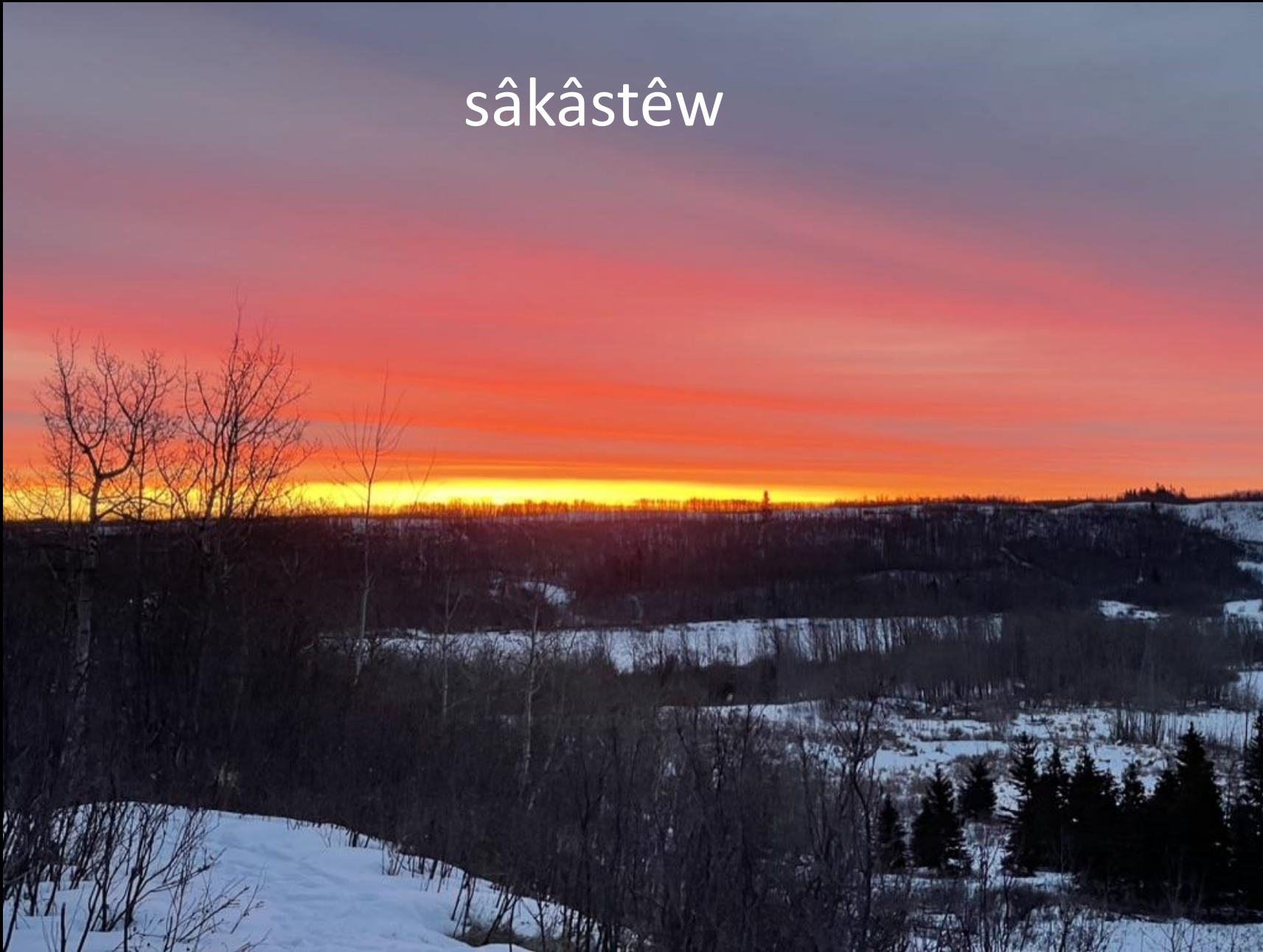
- Brené Brown - I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn't): Making the journey from "What will people think?" to "I am enough"

Compassion: A cup or a well?



Kristin Neff, "Self-Compassion"

sâkâstêw



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