

An Integral Perspective on Helping Homeless People

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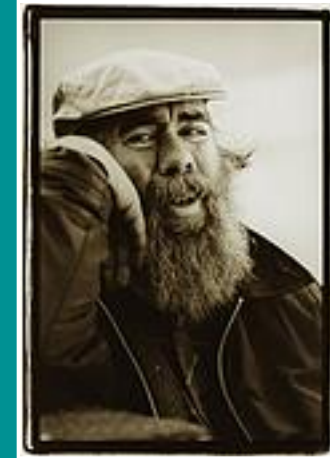
The Committee on the Shelterless (COTS)

- Integrally-informed homeless services organization
 - Leadership, culture, comprehensive programming
 - www.cots-homeless.org
- Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS)
 - At Home Within Program
 - www.noetic.org
- University at Albany, The State University of New York
 - Research Project: The Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences Among Homeless People

How do we become
homeless?

COTS' Mission

COTS offers help and hope to homeless persons in Sonoma County by providing safe shelter and housing, helping people develop steady incomes and helping them get back under a roof of their own.

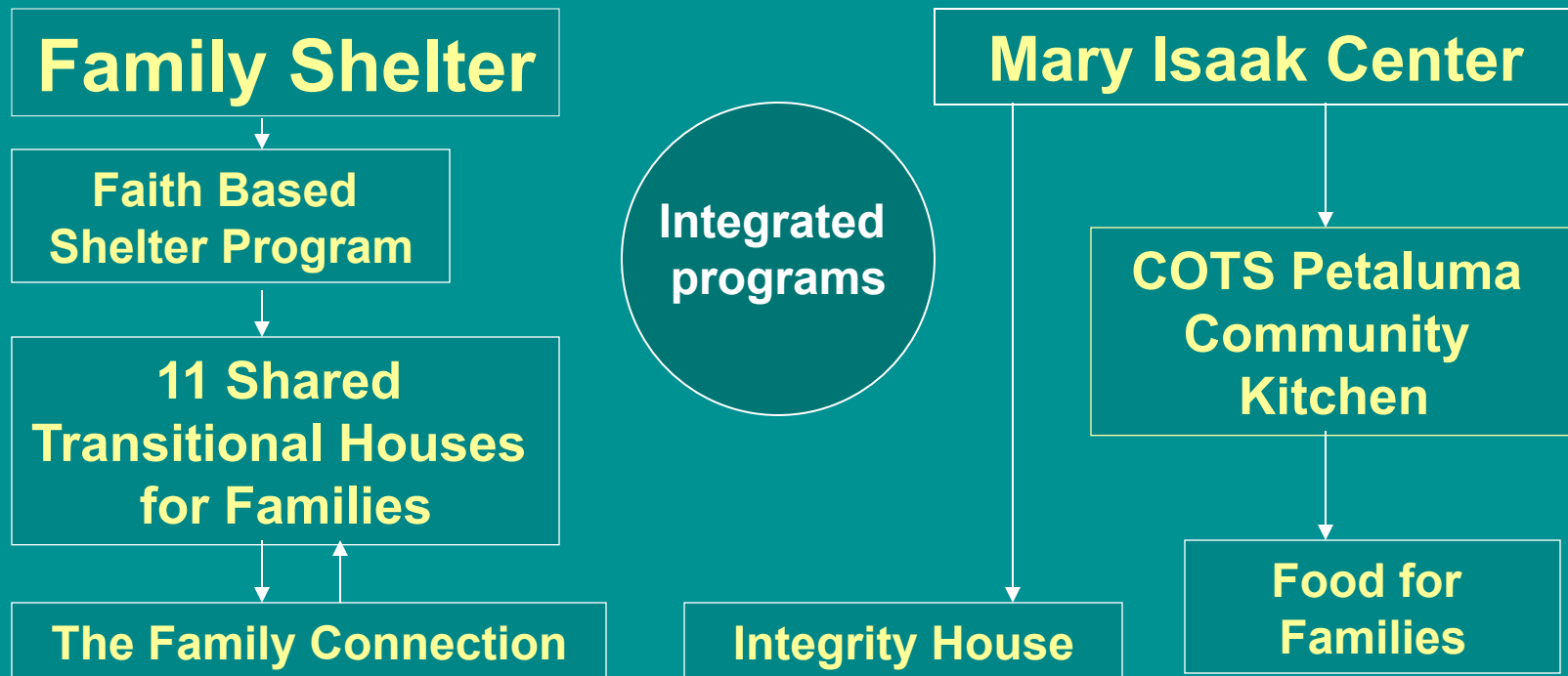


We help homeless families become stable and break the cycle of homelessness by teaching homeless parents to make their children's needs a high priority and to provide a safe, loving, and secure home for their children.



Agency Overview

- COTS serves 180 families each year in the shelter
- 41 families each year in Shared Transitional Housing
- 500 individuals at the Mary Isaak Center, 50 adults in Transitional Housing
- COTS provides 100,000 bednights a year, 100,000 meals, and delivers 500,000 lbs of food to the community



Integral Organizational Development

- Leadership: integral consciousness supported by AQAL
- Thought System
- How does Integral theory help and not help?
 - What does it offer and what is missing?

Integral Causes of Homelessness

Interior Individual:

- Overwhelming emotions
- Derailed psychological development
- Cognitive deficits
- Poor self-esteem

Exterior Individual:

- Substance abuse
- Disruptive behaviors
- Inability to hold a job

INDIVIDUAL

I IT

WE ITS

COLLECTIVE

INTERIOR SUBJECTIVE

Interior Collective:

- Lack of supports
- Inter-subjective stories of failure
- Victim blaming in larger culture

Exterior Collective:

- Lack of jobs
- Lack of affordable housing
- Inadequate access to insurance or treatment
- Poverty, social violence
- Natural disasters

EXTERIOR OBJECTIVE

Impact of trauma and neglect



- People who are homeless are almost universally traumatized in some way (ACEs and adult experiences)
- Trauma and neglect during childhood often result in risky behaviors later in life
- We recognize that these behaviors are actually solutions to prior problems – yesterday's solutions often cause problems today
- We meet people where they are and help them leverage strengths and resiliency

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

The largest study of its kind ever done to examine the health and social effects of adverse childhood experiences over the lifespan



- Experiences while growing up that deeply impact a young person and profoundly affect emotional and physical health later in life.



Categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Abuse, by Category

	Category	Prevalence (%)
• Psychological (by parents)		11%
• Physical (by parents)		11%
• Sexual (anyone)		22%

Household Dysfunction, by Category

• Substance Abuse in family		26%
• Mental Illness in family		19%
• Domestic Violence		13%
• Imprisoned Household Member		3%
• Loss of parent		23%

Adverse Childhood Experiences Score

Number of categories of childhood experiences are summed

ACE Score

Prevalence

0	48%
1	25%
2	13%
3	7%
4	7%



- More than *half have at least one ACE*
- Slightly more than one quarter have experienced 2 – 4 ACE categories

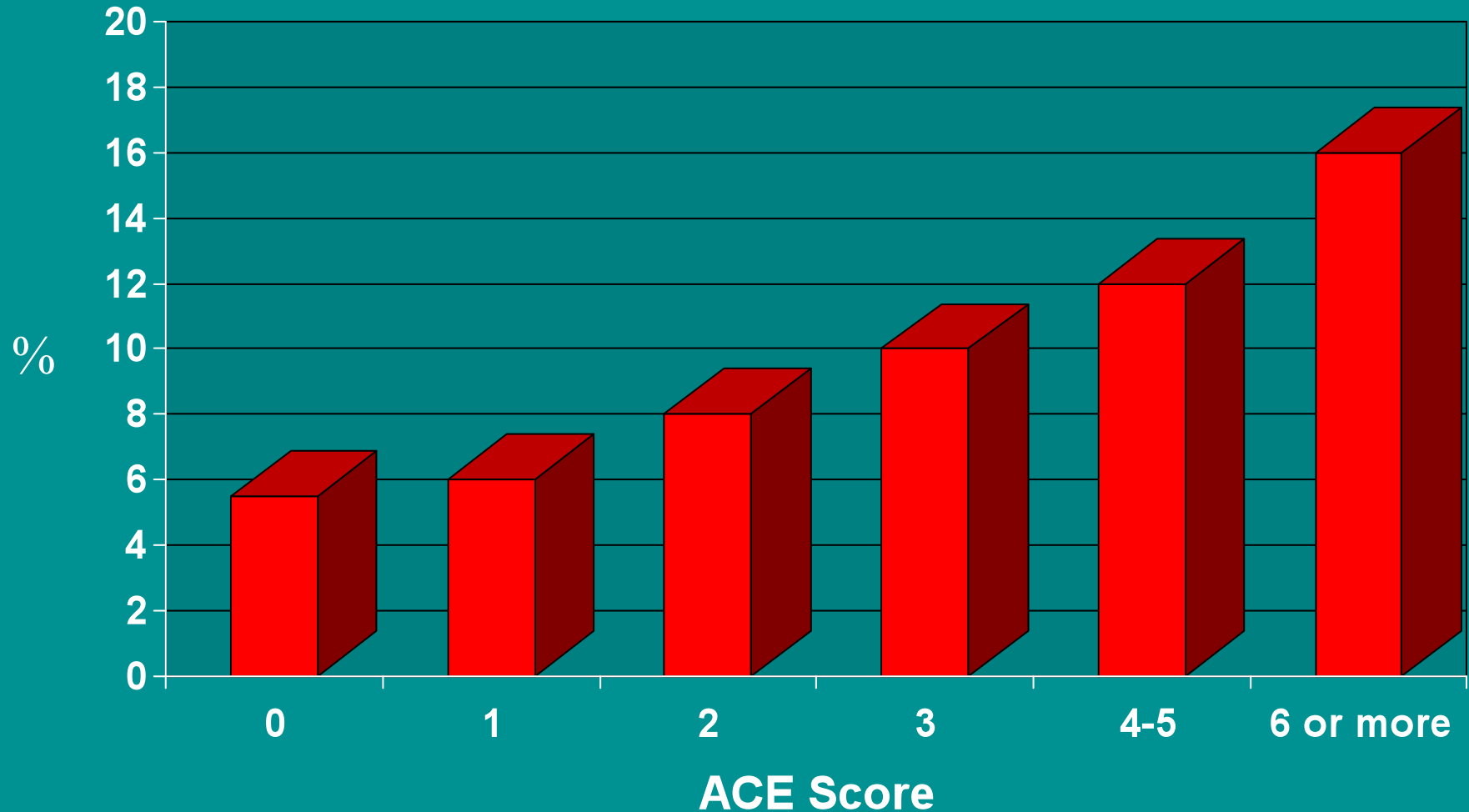
The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

Summary of Findings:

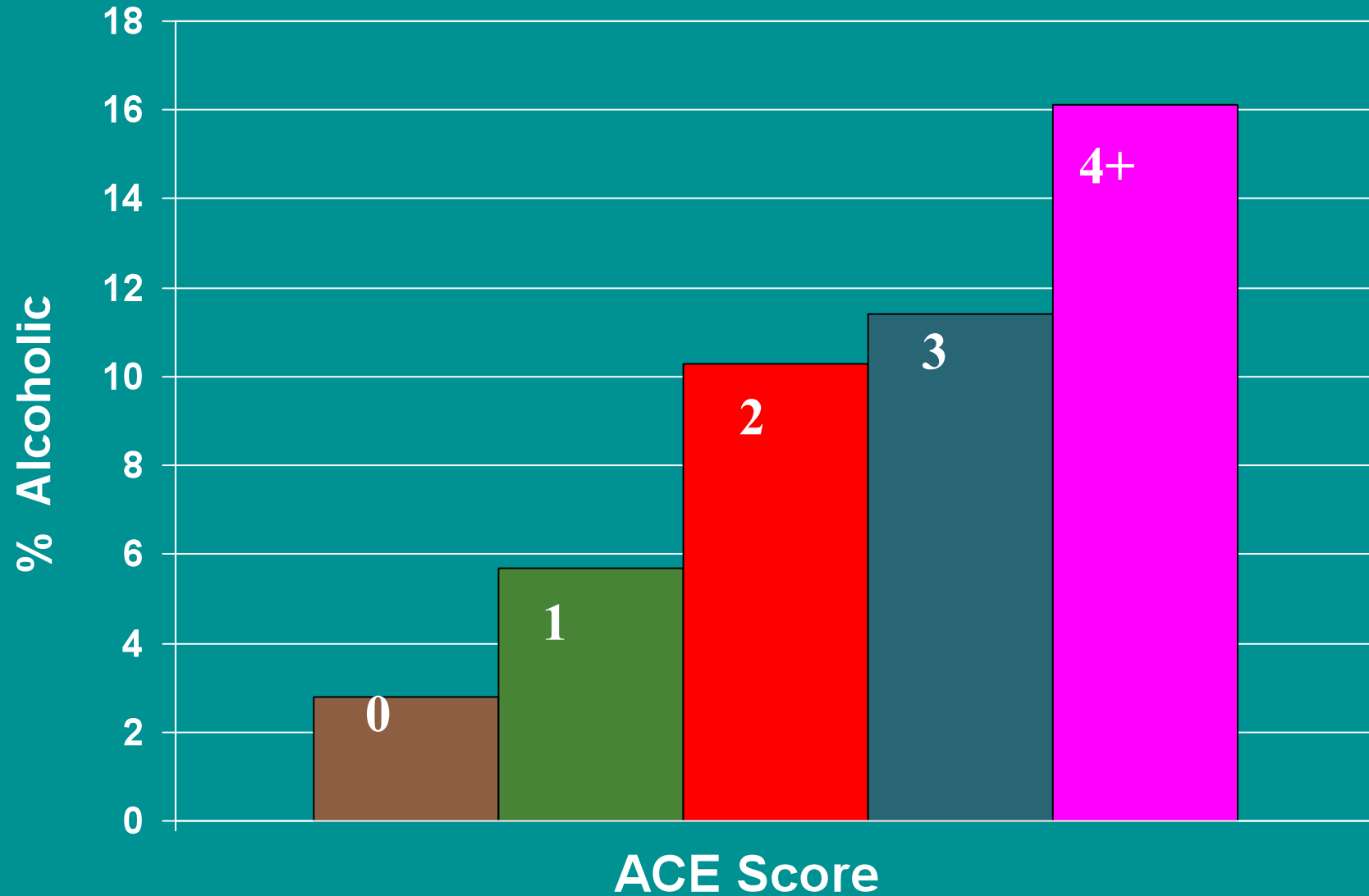
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are very common
- ACEs are strong predictors of adult health risks and disease
- ACEs are implicated in *the 10 leading causes of death in the U.S.!*
- “I was actually stunned and I wept over what I saw.” ACEs researcher Rob Anda, M.D.
- **Virtually every study shows that ACEs are strong predictors of homelessness (Burt, 2001)**



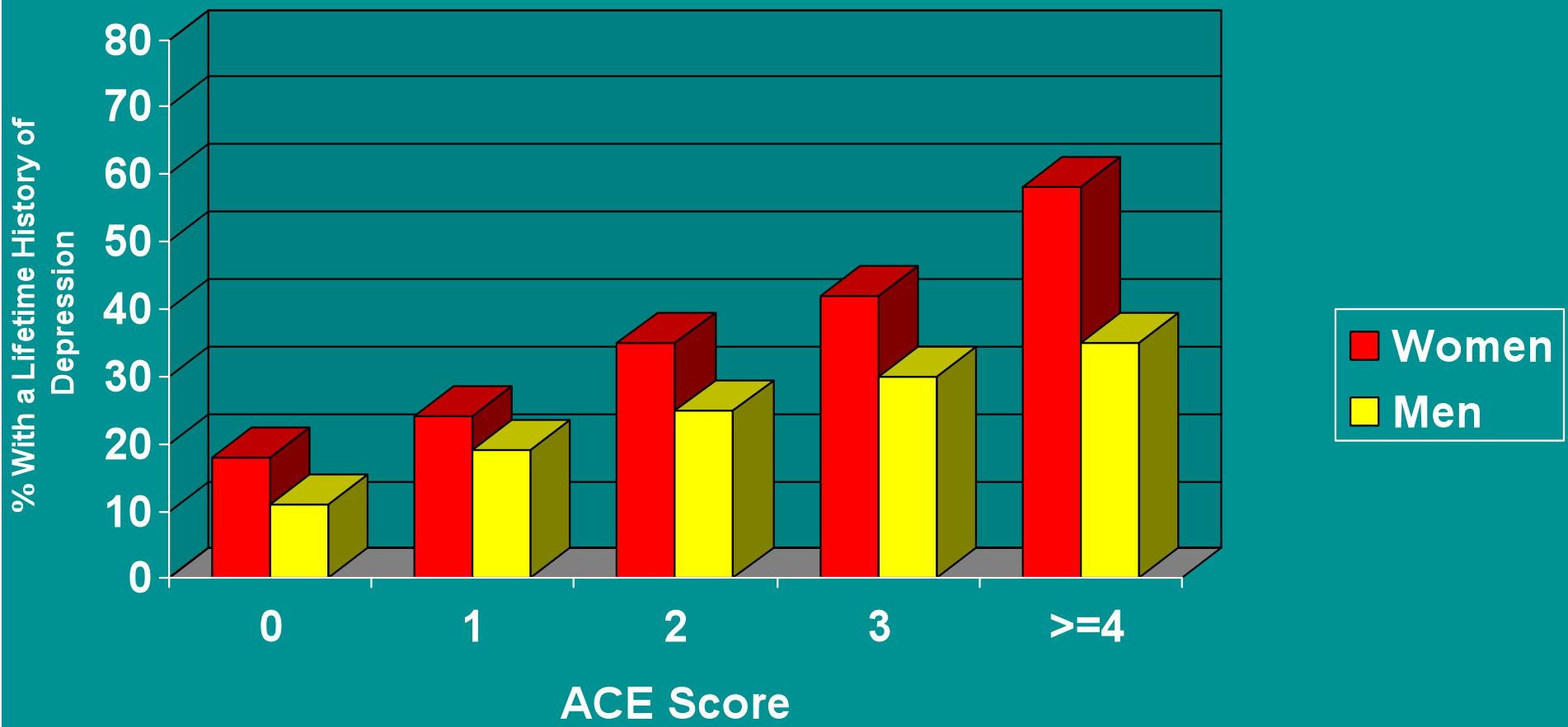
Adverse Childhood Experiences vs. Current Smoking



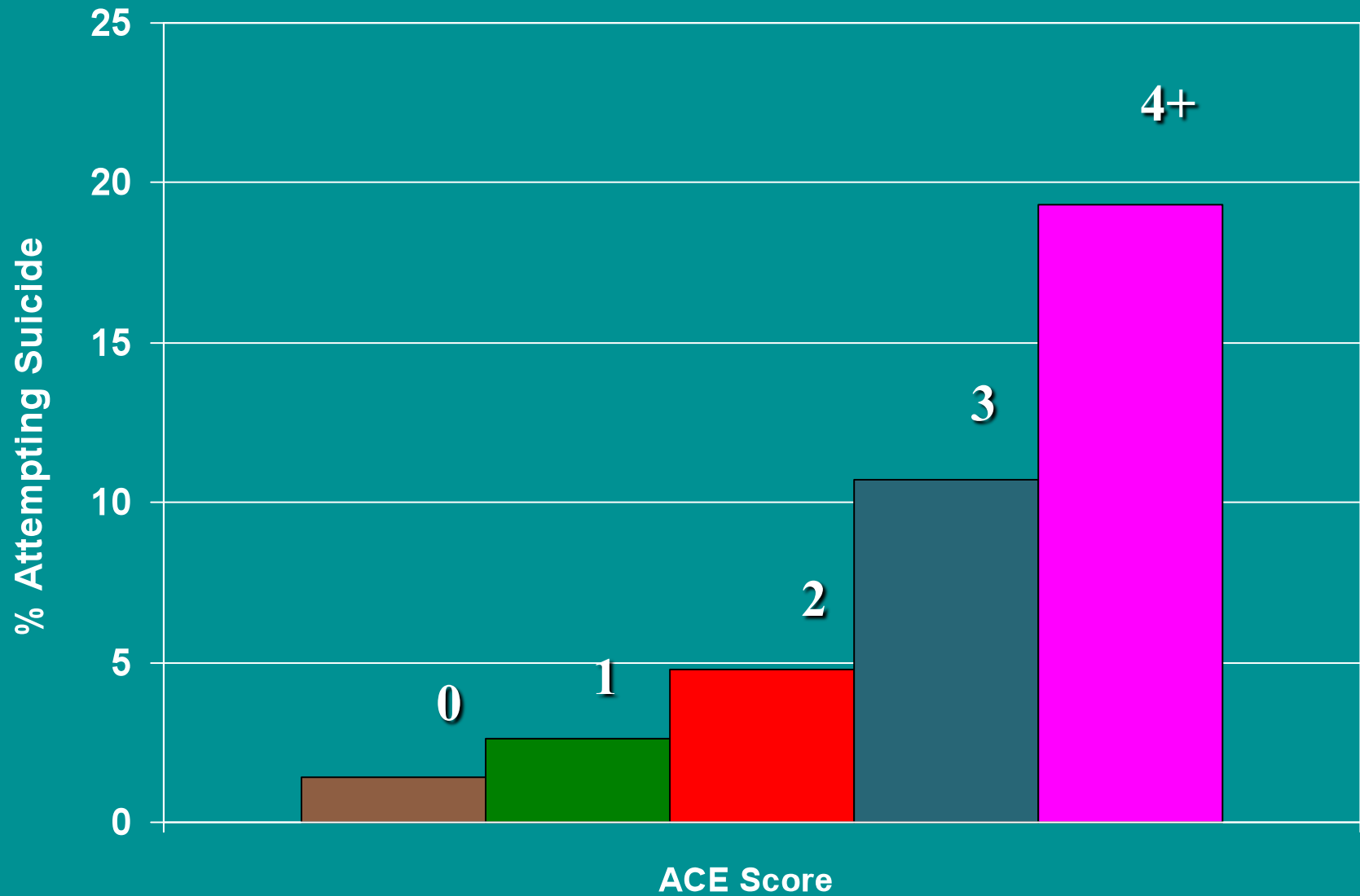
Childhood Experiences vs. Adult Alcoholism



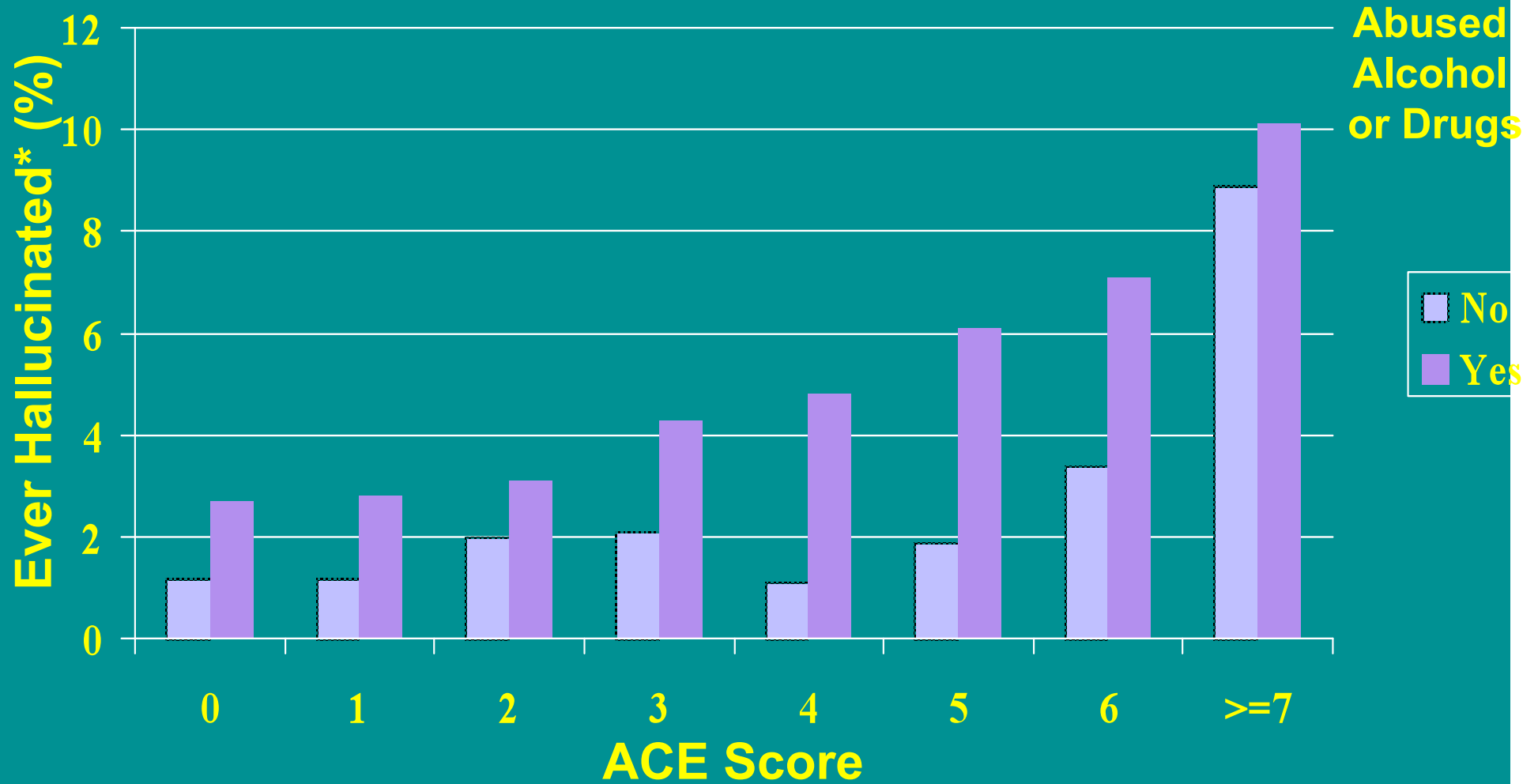
Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression



Childhood Experiences Underlie Suicide

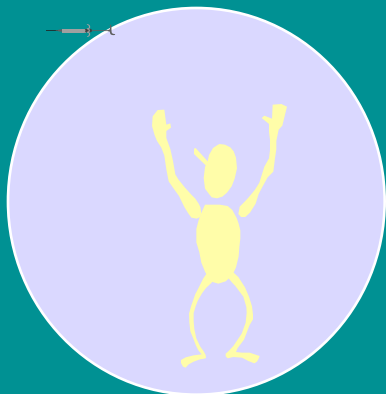
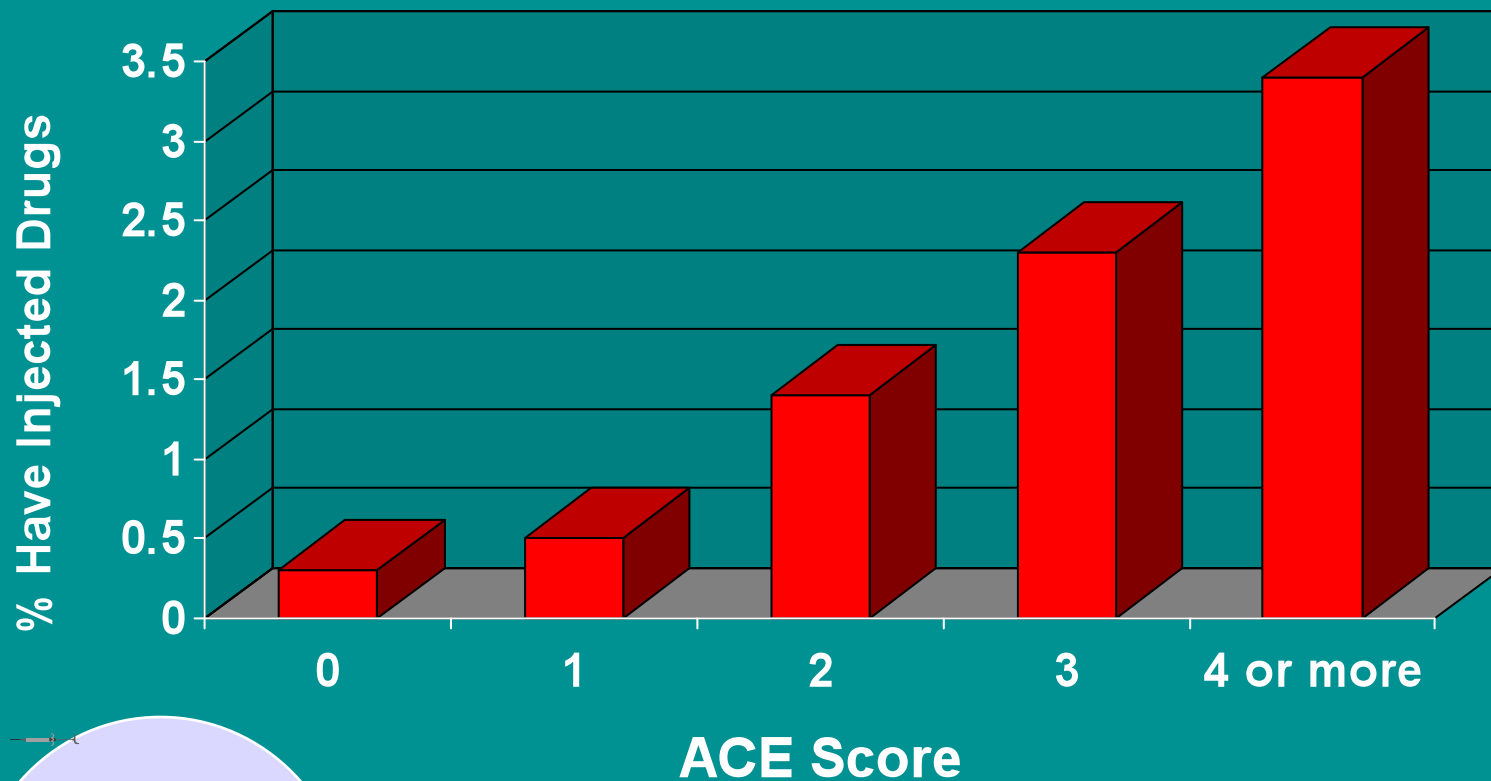


ACE Score and Hallucinations



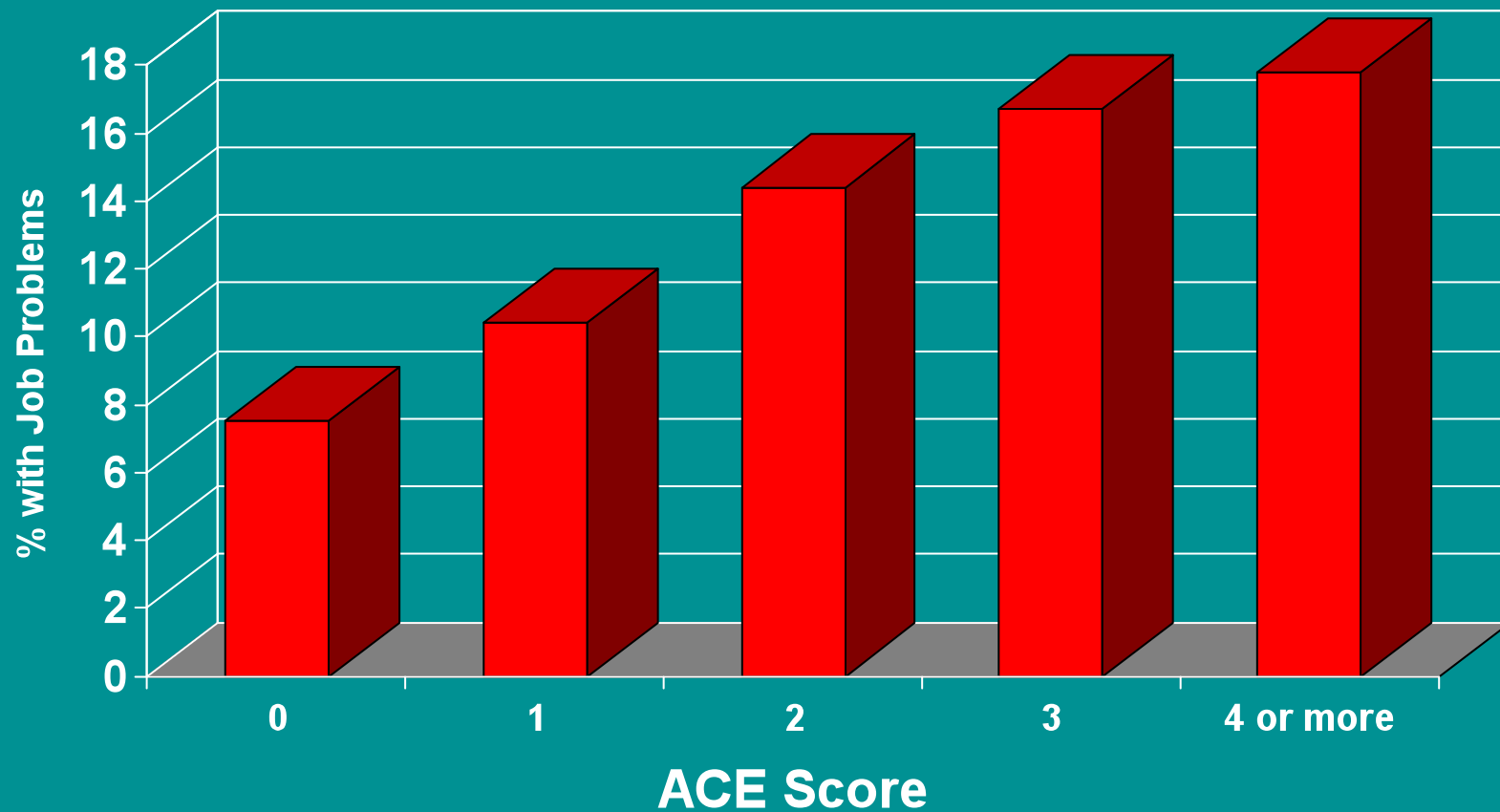
*Adjusted for age, sex, race, and education.

ACE Score vs. Intravenous Drug Use



N = 8,022 **p < 0.001**

ACE Score vs. Serious Job Problems



A connection with homelessness

- Mental illness and substance abuse problems are more common among homeless people
- ACEs connection to substance abuse and mental illness
- Even non-homeless people with either substance abuse problems or mental illness are less likely to hold a job

University at Albany – ACEs and Homeless People

- Expands upon the ACE studies
- Integral social service perspective
- Homeless population
- Decrease cultural victim blaming



An Integral Approach
to Helping Homeless People

The human beings we are helping



- We use a broad view of human nature, from Integral Theory, in developing our programs
- People are not just the sum of their problems
- Human beings are body/mind/spirit
- We express in self, culture and the natural world

Conventional responses to homelessness

Interior Individual:

- Faith-based programs that emphasize character

Exterior Individual:

- Case management services to re-direct behavior
- Food and shelter

INDIVIDUAL

I IT

WE ITS

COLLECTIVE

INTERIOR SUBJECTIVE

Interior Collective:

- Lack of emphasis on therapeutic community

Exterior Collective:

- Social policies
- “End homelessness within 10 years”
- Housing First

EXTERIOR OBJECTIVE

Integral Response

Supporting the “I” space

Help people to develop a more positive **Explicatory Narrative**

- **Intention and plans** supported by case management and professional level counseling, using motivational interviewing
- **Coping skills** for anger, stress and grief
- **Meditation**
- **Yoga Nidra / Chi Gung** (At Home Within offered with IONS)
- **Recovery** from psychological component of addictions
 - **Relapse prevention**
 - **Life skills:**
 - Rent Right, Work Right
 - Kids First
 - Money Smart
 - Tax preparation

INTERIOR SUBJECTIVE

INDIVIDUAL

I
IT
WE
ITS

Integral Programming

Supporting the “IT” space

- Meet **basic needs** (Maslow’s Hierarchy)
- Work with the body in support of **healing** through on-site clinics
 - Medical
 - Dental
 - Trauma (Somatic Experiencing; volunteers)
 - Acupuncture (volunteers)
- **AA/NA** recovery from physical aspects of addiction

EXTERIOR OBJECTIVE

I
IT
WE ITS

INDIVIDUAL

Integral Programming

Supporting the “WE” space

I IT
ITS

WE

INTERIOR SUBJECTIVE

- Therapeutic and learning communities
- Culture of recovery and transformation
- Connection with faith communities
- Peer support groups
- Mentoring from senior program participants
- Working in groups, classes and workshops on common goals
- Reconnection with community through community service

COLLECTIVE

Integral Programming

Supporting the “ITS” space

I | IT

WE

ITS

- Policies and procedures in support of program culture
 - Rules of Decorum
 - Intake procedure and requirements
 - Drug / alcohol testing
- Shelter Management System in support of site, participant and data management
- Case management wiki supports service delivery and collaboration among service providers

EXTERIOR OBJECTIVE

COLLECTIVE

HEARTS trump ACEs

- **H**ealthy
- **E**nvironments
- **A**nd
- **R**elationships
- **T**hat
- **S**upport



Promotes individuals' strength and resiliency, preventing and intervening with ACEs – happens mostly in the LL and LR quadrants

At Home Within

- An aspect of Integral programming under the IRP umbrella
- Doing things differently
- Addressing a gap in traditional approaches to helping homeless people



If you leave here with nothing else

- Know that homeless people can be helped
- Know that Integral can be successfully applied in the service of people whose lives have been devastated

Questions?

