Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels

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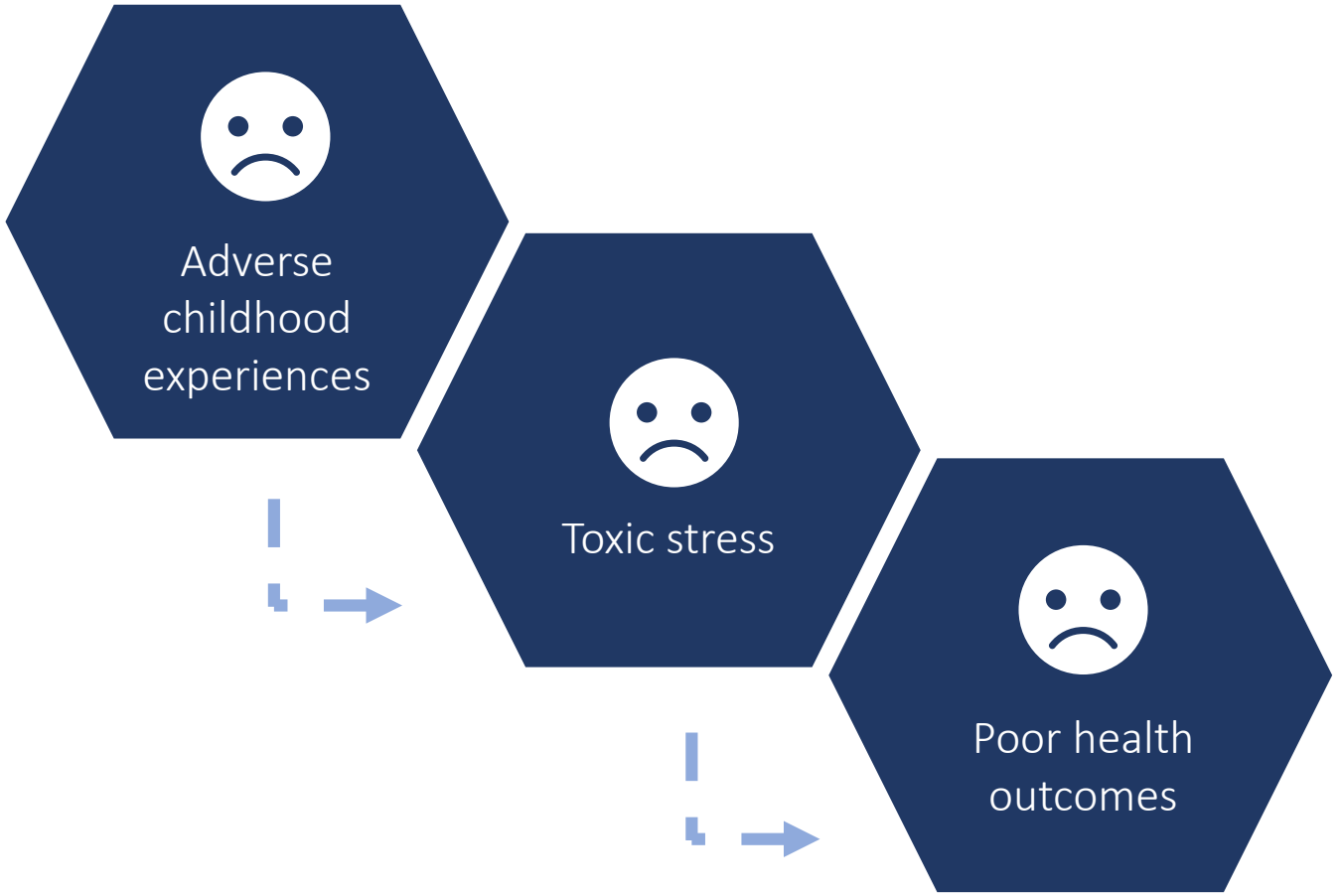


ACEs are only part of the picture

- Many people with 4+ ACEs are OK
- Other experiences affect the brain
- Do positive experiences affect outcomes?

7 Positive Experience items were added to WI survey*

Thinking back on your childhood, how often:

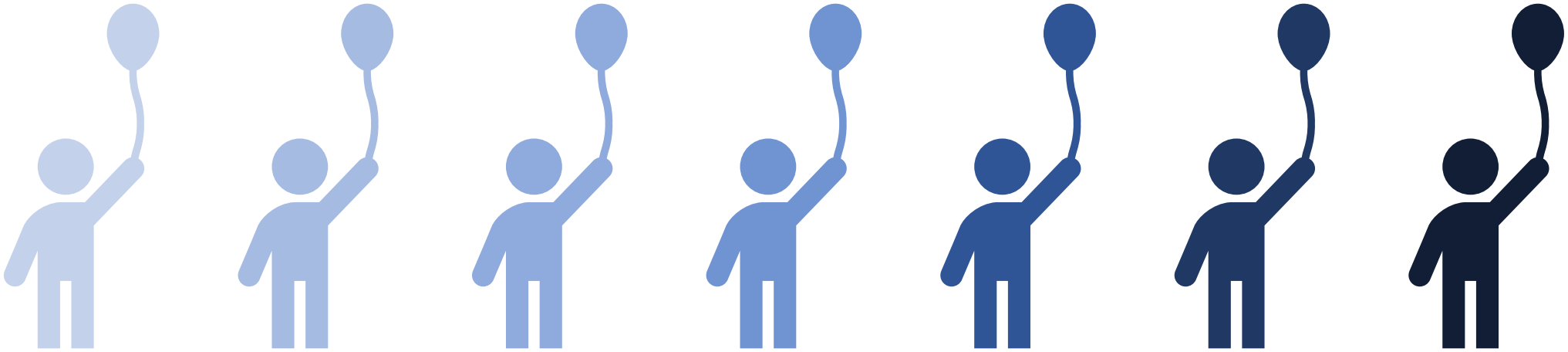
- Able to talk to their family about feelings
- Feel their family stood by them during difficult times
- Enjoy participating in community traditions
- Feel a sense of belonging in high school
- Feel supported by friends
- Have at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them
- Feel safe and protected by an adult in their home

*Administered with 2015 CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Survey and CDC ACEs module

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) Protect Adult Mental Health

72% less adult depression or poor mental health

48% v. 12.6%, OR 0.28; 95% CI 0.21-0.39



0-2 PCEs

versus

6-7 PCEs

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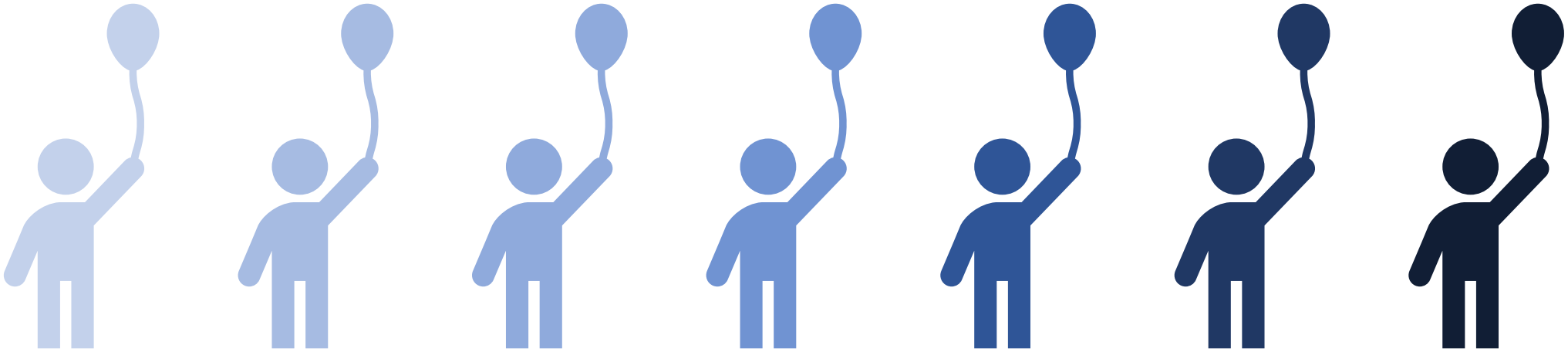
Positive Childhood Experiences Protect Adult Mental Health

50% less adult depression or poor mental health

25% v. 13%, OR 0.50; 95% CI 0.36-0.69



3-5 PCEs versus **6-7 PCEs**

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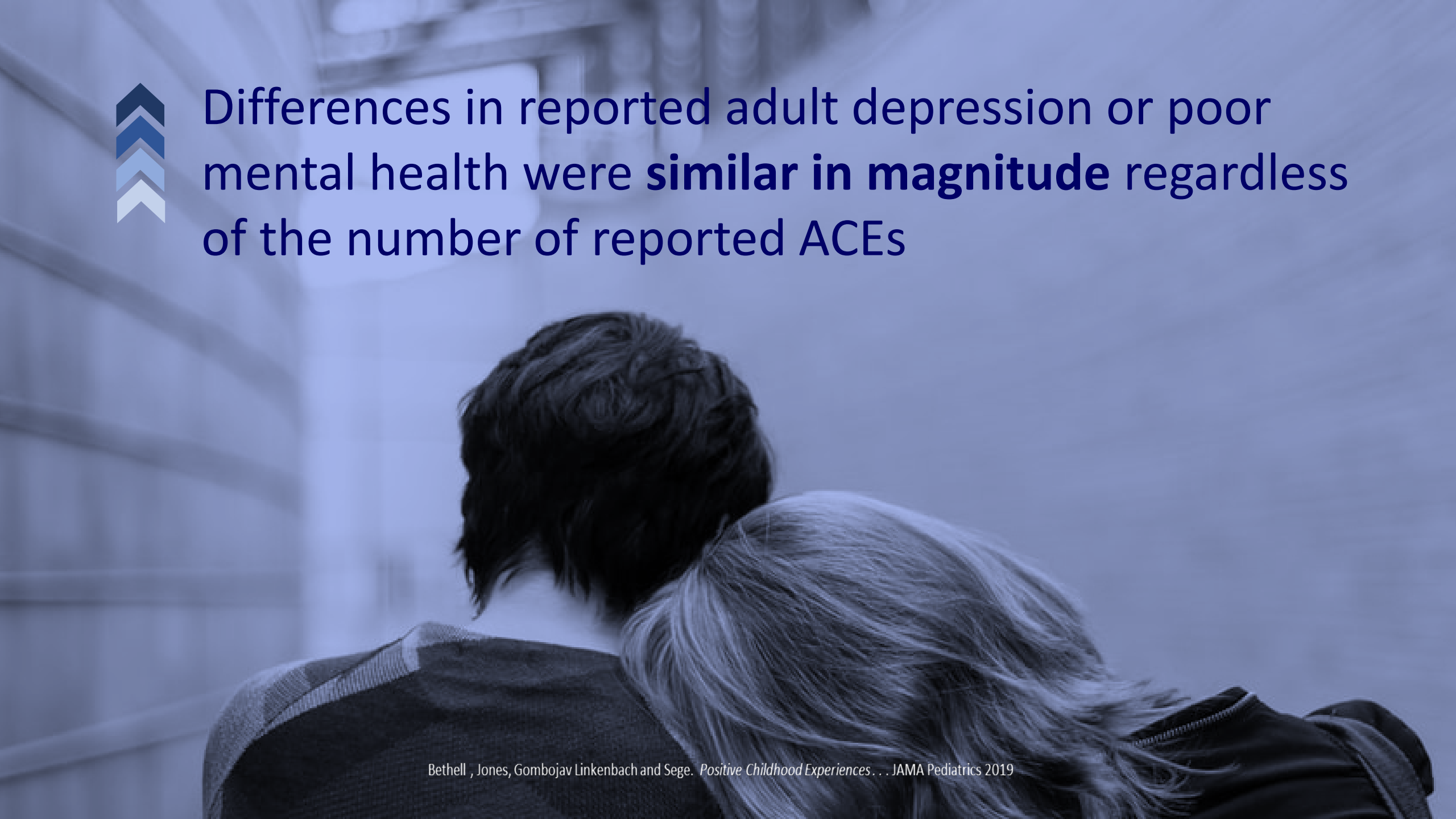
Differences in reported adult depression or poor mental health were **similar in magnitude** regardless of the number of reported ACEs



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Adults reporting more PCEs were more likely to report ***always*** receiving social and emotional support

aOR 3.53; 95% CI 2.60-4.80

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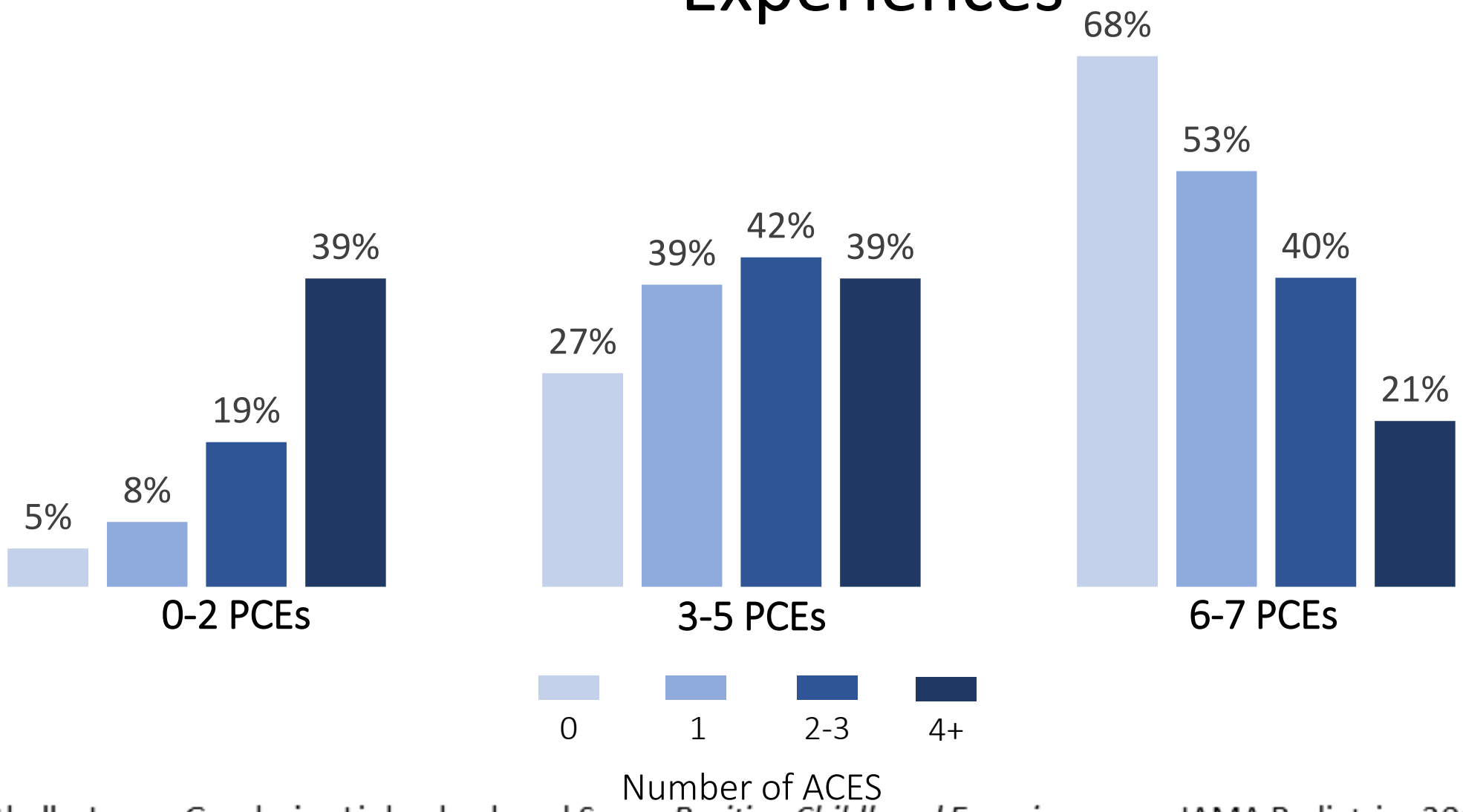
How do PCEs and ACEs interact?

- Can people have both positive and adverse childhood experiences?
- Can PCEs mitigate the effects of ACEs?

Recall of *both* Positive *and* Adverse Childhood Experiences



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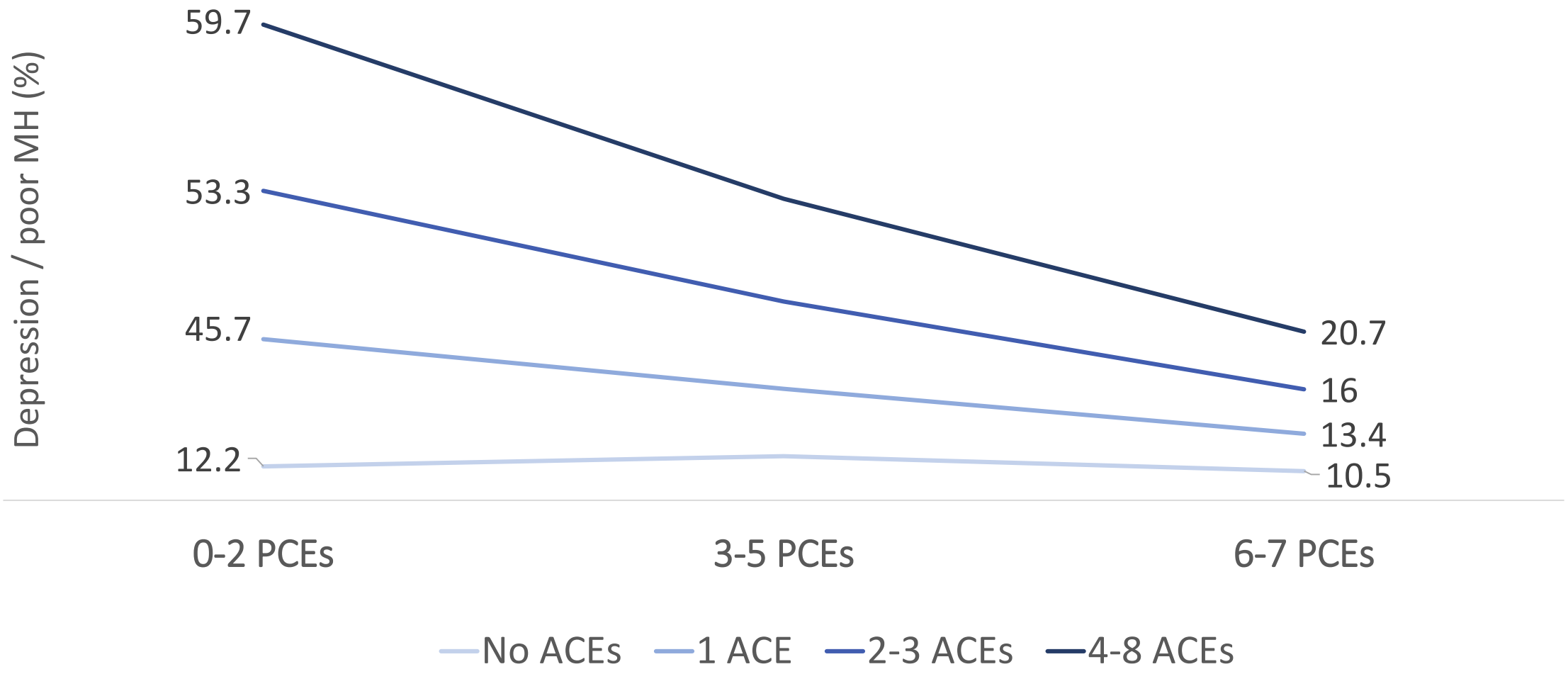
Positive Childhood Experiences Mitigate ACEs Effects



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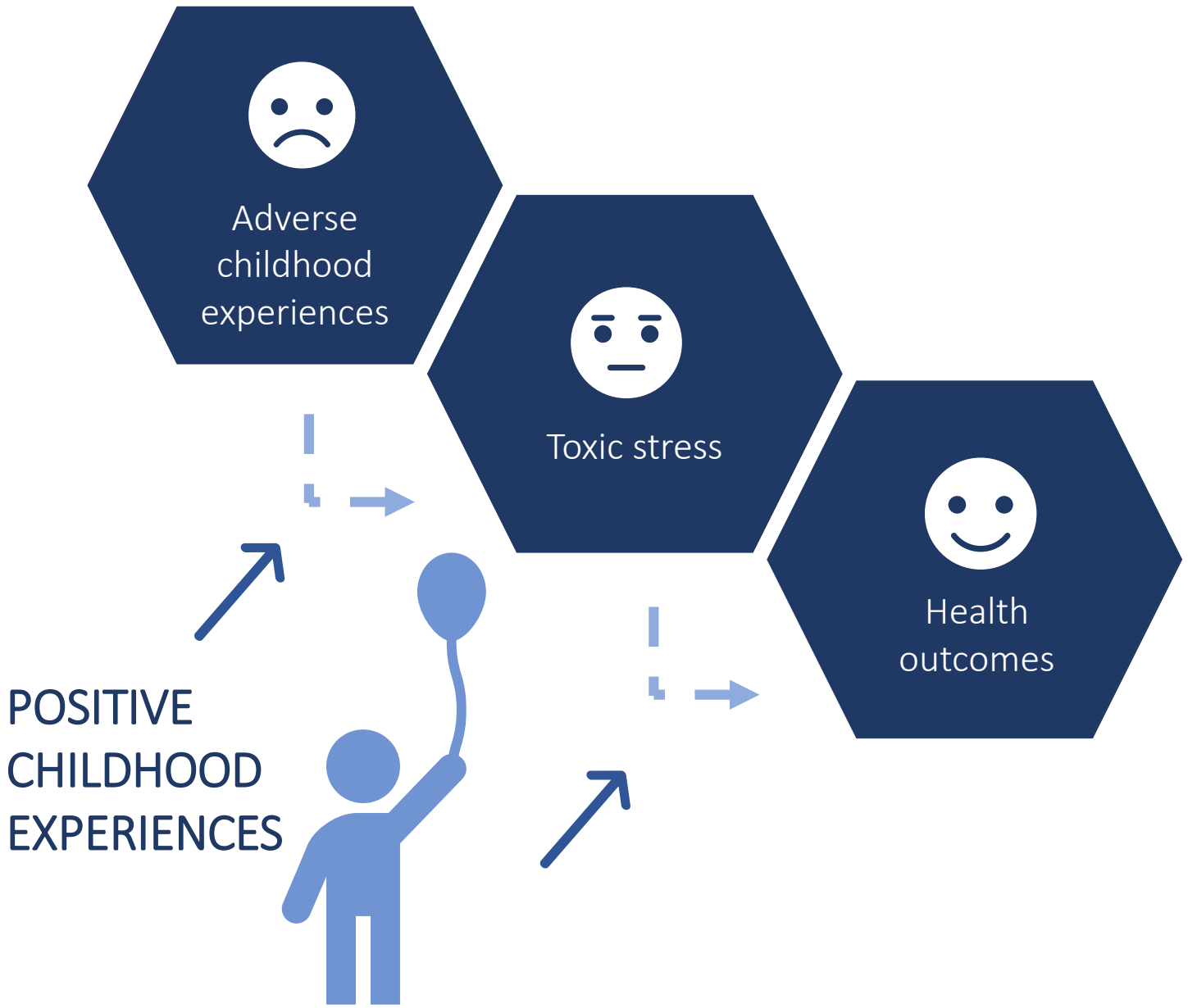

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Summary: PCEs protect adult mental health

- Positive childhood experience mitigate the effects of ACEs and prevent toxic stress
- Positive childhood experiences promote healing and recovery