

The background of the slide features silhouettes of a man and a woman looking at each other from behind vertical prison bars. The scene is set against a blue sky with a yellow gradient on the left and right sides.

Not their Crime but Still Their Sentence:

Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents

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National Crisis



- U.S. incarcerates more people than any other country
- Almost **25% of the world's total prison population** are in the U.S.
- Between 1991 – 2007, incarceration of mothers increased **122%** and incarceration of fathers increased **76%**
- More **African-Americans are now under criminal supervision** than there were slaves in the 1850's
- State and local **spending on prison/jails has increased at 3x** rate of funding for public education

What do you think?

- **How many children in the U.S. have ever lived with a parent/guardian who became incarcerated?**
 - A. 1 million
 - B. 2 million
 - C. 4 million
 - D. 6 million
 - E. more than 8 million

1 in 28

One in 28 children in the U.S. has an incarcerated parent on any given day. That's 2.7 million children, nationwide.

What do you think?

- **What % of people of color (Blacks and Hispanics) are incarcerated in the U.S.?**
 - A. 20 – 30%
 - B. 30 – 40%
 - C. 40 – 50%
 - D. 50 – 60%
 - E. 60 – 70%

What is the Impact?

- **Financial**

- Annual average of **\$36,299** to house 1 person in federal prison in U.S. (Bureau of Prisons, 2018)
- 2 in 3 families have **difficulty meeting basic financial needs** as a result of incarceration
- **1 in 3 families in debt** due to high costs of visits and phone calls

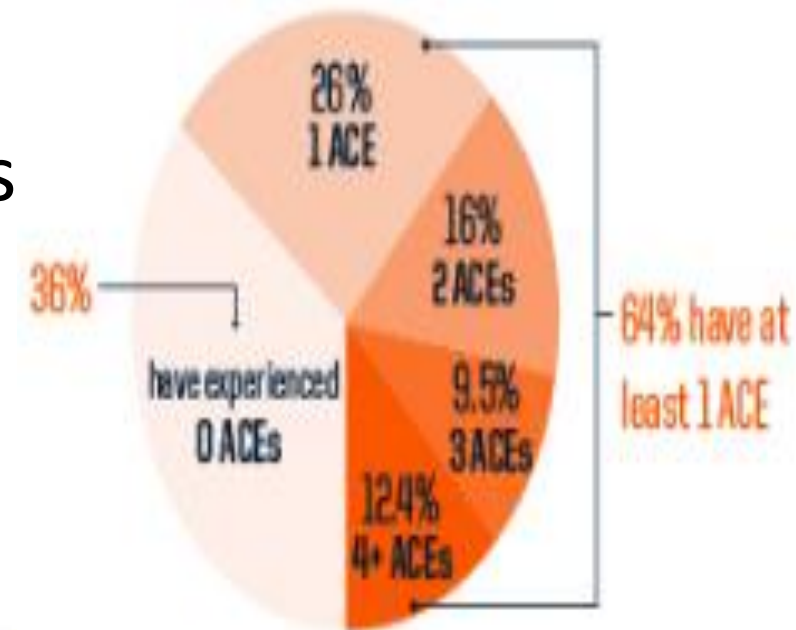


What is the Impact?



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- Collaboration between Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente
- Examined negative health and behavior outcomes in adulthood and exposure to ACEs
- 64% reported exposure to one or more ACEs
- 95% likelihood that additional types of childhood trauma accompany 1 ACE
- Incarceration of a family member is an ACE



10 ACE's

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse

Possible Risk Outcomes:

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

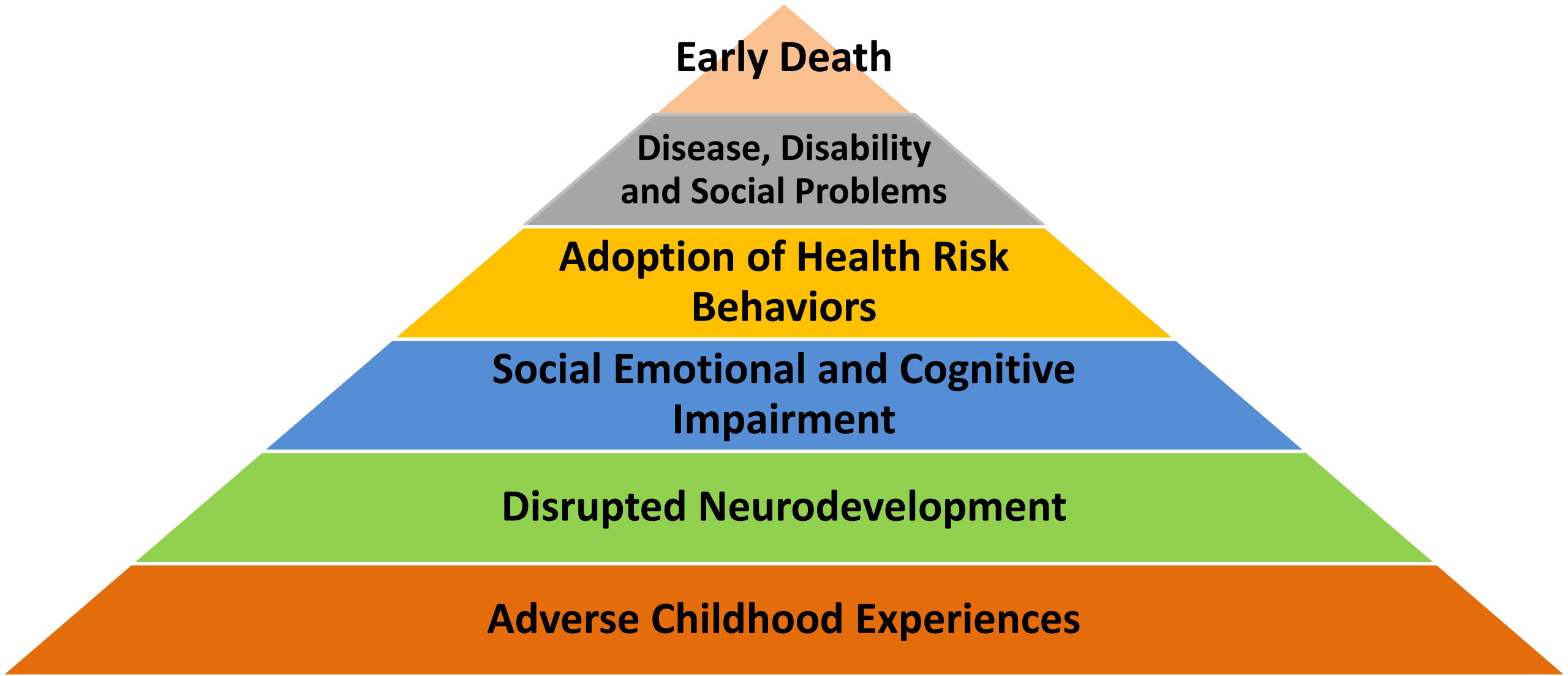


COPD



Broken bones

How ACEs influence health and well-being





A Traumatic Experience

- **Trauma**: experience an intense event that threatens or causes harm to the child's emotional/physical well-being
(National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2003)
- Psychological and physiological reactions commonly occur after a trauma

- Parental incarceration: an “**enduring trauma**” which is comprised of ongoing and repeated stressors (Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagan, & Kennon, 1999)

Parental incarceration is traumatic due to:

- Ambiguous Loss
- Disrupted Attachment
- Disenfranchised Grief

(Ardetti, 2012)

COMMON EMOTIONS & REACTIONS

Echoes of Incarceration

Common Emotions & Reactions

- Fear/Anxiety
- Worry
- Sadness
- Isolation
- Anger
- Guilt
- Confusion about incarceration
- Family Role confusion
- Resentment
- Stigma and Shame

Stigma and Shame

- Teasing/taunts/rejection by peers and adults
- Unintended and intended isolation
- Implicit bias toward COIP
- All losses of parents are not viewed/treated equally
- Tendency to avoid discussion of incarceration OR discuss it without sensitivity
- Shame emanates from the responses of others

Outcome Research

- Increases in
 - Aggressive behavior
 - Decreased school readiness
 - Increased health problems
 - Grade retention
 - Cognitive delays
 - School discipline problems
- Witness Arrest
 - Insecure parental attachment
 - Delinquent behavior
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Teenage Pregnancy
 - Poor self-esteem

LOW SES

Trauma

Witness Arrest

Community

Parent

Violence

Substance Abuse

Domestic

Violence

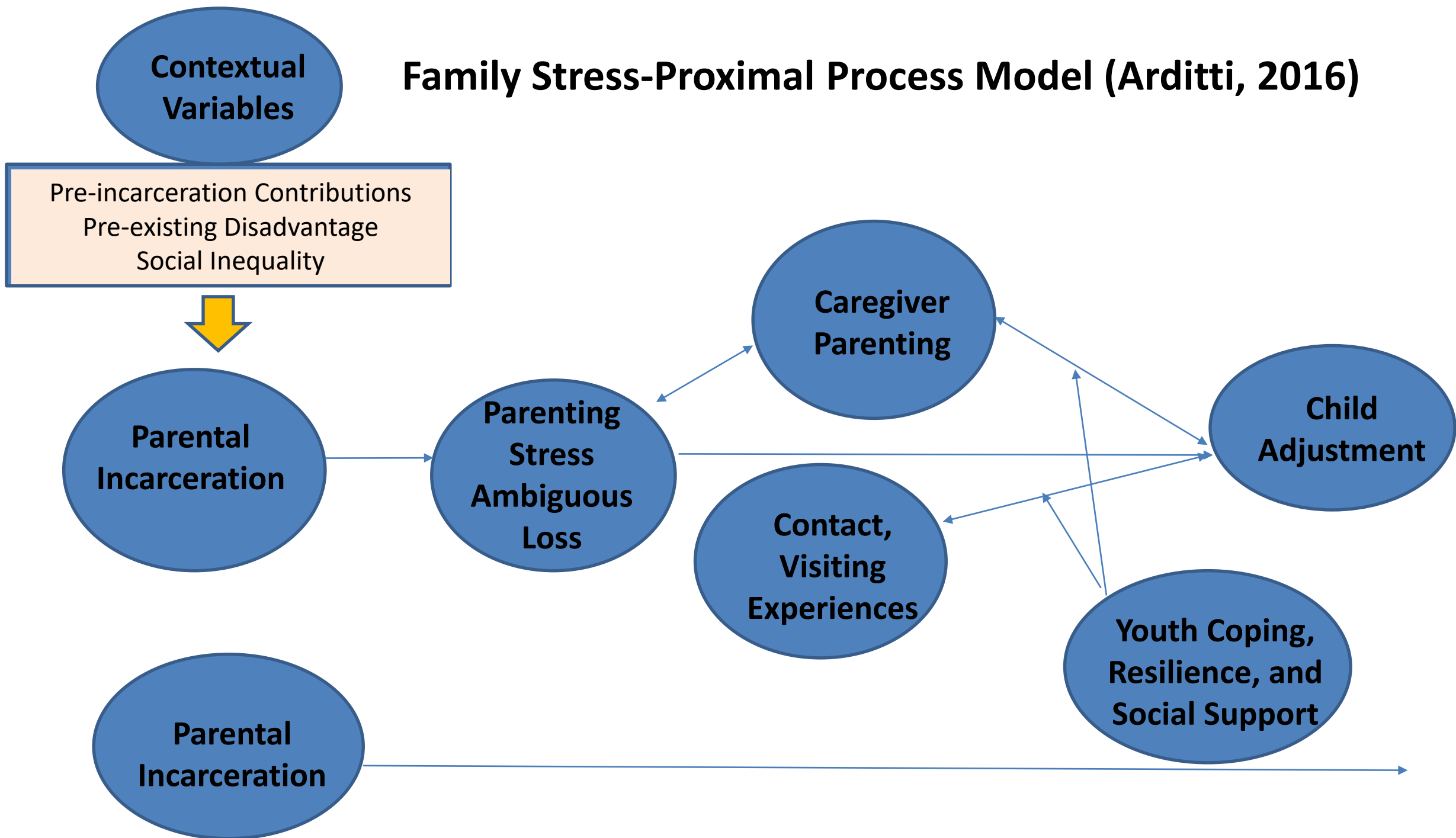
Shame & Stigma



“Risk factors are not
predictive factors due to
protective factors.” -

Surgeon General David Satcher

Family Stress-Proximal Process Model (Arditti, 2016)



What impacts outcomes?

- ***Degree of disruption***
 - Relationship with parent prior to incarceration
 - Duration of the incarceration
 - Exposure to arrest
 - Impact on family finances
 - Change in residence
 - Family stress
 - Family and peer response to incarceration

What impacts outcomes?

- ***Availability of Support***

- Quality and type of contact with incarcerated parent
- Relationship with caregiver
- Quality of family functioning
- Caregiver response to incarceration
- Social support from peers and adults

What impacts outcomes?

- ***Child and Caregiver functioning***
 - Temperament
 - Coping style
 - Pre-existing conditions
 - Prior trauma & loss
 - Mental health
 - Caregiver parenting style

What impacts positive outcomes?

- Culture, traditions, and family values
- Positive relationships with extended family
- Cooperative co-parenting
- Easy temperament in the child
- Intelligence
- Sense of humor
- High self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Empathy toward peers
- Emotional regulation
- School connectedness

Humanizing Language

- **Instead of:** ~~ex-cons, criminals, inmates, convicts, offenders, felons~~
- **Say:** returning citizen, incarcerated people, formerly incarcerated person
- Incarcerated Parents are People
- Children of Promise
- #PeopleFirst



Promising Interventions

- Education programs for incarcerated parents
- Parent-child visitation programs
- Video visitation
- Prison nurseries
- Mentoring programs
- Re-entry programs
- Caregiver support

(Gordon, Hunter, & Campbell, 2018)

Supporting Students

- Educate staff about impact of parental incarceration
- Educate staff about impact of trauma on behavior
- Provide opportunities for youth to express their feelings
- Teach children how to respond to stress
- Use strength based approaches



Supporting Students

- Monitor bullying
- Remain cognizant of stigmatizing language and actions at school
- Don't be judgmental
- Increase students' school connectedness and help them develop a positive social network
- Decrease their isolation and let them know they are not alone

Supporting Students

- Identify how you can support the caregivers (including the incarcerated parent)
- Recognize the multiple stress points within the criminal justice system
- Maintain high expectations but remain flexible
- Be an advocate for your students
- Include relevant books in the library/classroom

Supporting Students

www.youth.gov/COIP

From the youth - What Providers Should Know:

- We often grow up too soon taking on responsibilities
- We love our parents, even though they have made mistakes
- We are misjudged by many and negatively judged because of our parent(s)
- We are sometimes told we will turn out like our parents and are constantly fighting against that judgement
- We have different experiences than other youth whose parent is absent for another reason like divorce
- We don't have control over the situation, which is difficult

Supporting Students

www.youth.gov/COIP

From the youth – Changes we would like to see:

- Increased opportunities to visit
- Better communication between corrections and schools
 - Participation in parent-teacher conferences
 - Consider excused absences for visitation
- Better understanding about the impact of mandatory reporting rules

A Day I'll Never Forget



Student Perspectives

What do you think children of incarcerated parents need the most?

- “Support”
- “Money”
- “Love”
- “Someone to talk to”

Student Perspectives

*What do you think life is like for someone living in jail?
What would be most difficult? What do they need the most?*

- “It’s hard for them to be away from their family.”
- “They feel sad.”
- “They need a lawyer.”
- “They miss out on things.”

Student Perspectives

What did you like most about the book?

- “Javon found a way to handle his problems and made a worry jar.”
- “It helped me feel how hard it is to have a family member in jail.”
- “It helped me understand how to express my feelings and it helped me understand how to love a person in jail.”
- “I liked the part when they went to visit the boy’s father.”
- “It helped me get over the fact that my father went to jail.”

School Staff/Clinician Perspectives

- “The book was extremely useful.”
- “All of the students enjoyed the book and wanted their own copy to share with family members.”
- “The book is a good reflection of what I’ve heard children say who have an incarcerated parent.”
- “The family member of a student with an incarcerated parent said the book was ‘incredible’ and something that all families should know about.”
- “My client wanted to take my copy of the book home so he could read it again.”

**LOVE LETTERS: INCARCERATED MOTHERS AND
THEIR CHILDREN**

Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents

I HAVE THE RIGHT:

1. To be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. To be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. To be considered when decisions are made about my parent.
4. To be well cared for in my parents absence.

From: San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership @SFCIPP

Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents

I HAVE THE RIGHT:

5. To speak with, see, and touch my parent.
6. To support, as I face my parent's incarceration.
7. Not to be judged, blamed, or labeled.
8. To a lifelong relationship with my parent.

#SeeUsSupportUs

See Us,
Support Us



I TOOK THE PLEDGE
to SEE and SUPPORT children
of incarcerated parents at:

▶▶▶ www.osborneny.org/susu

#SeeUsSupportUs

Resources

Children of Incarcerated Parents. Children of Incarcerated Parents Federal Website. <http://www.youth.gov/coip>

Stronger Together. Volumes 1-3: <http://www.osborneny.org/>

Sesame Street- Little Children Big Challenges: Incarceration
<http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration>

Behavioral Health Toolkit for Providers:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/dbhr/youthtxttoolkit.pdf>

National Organizations

- [National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated](#)
- [San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership](#)
- [National Institute of Corrections: Children of Incarcerated Parents](#)
- [The Osborne Association](#)

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