

# How Trauma Impacts the Academic Success of Traditional First Year Undergraduate College Students

Dr. Francine E. Packard Ph.D. LPCCC-S, LICDC-CS

Sheila Donnadio MPA, MEd., LPC

Phyllis Valla MEd.



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

- ▶ Adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) are stressful or traumatic events experienced during childhood (Murphy, et. al., 2014; Villegas, Rosenthal, O'Brien, & Pecora, 2011). Felitti (2010) found that adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) had a negative impact on a person's health.
- ▶ The initial Adverse Childhood Experiences Study was the result of observations made in the mid-1980s in an obesity program that had a high dropout rate (Felitti, 2010, Chapter 8).
- ▶ The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recognized the importance of these clinical observations and helped design a large, epidemiologically sound study that provided definitive proof of the ACE's findings (Felitti, 2010, Chapter 8).



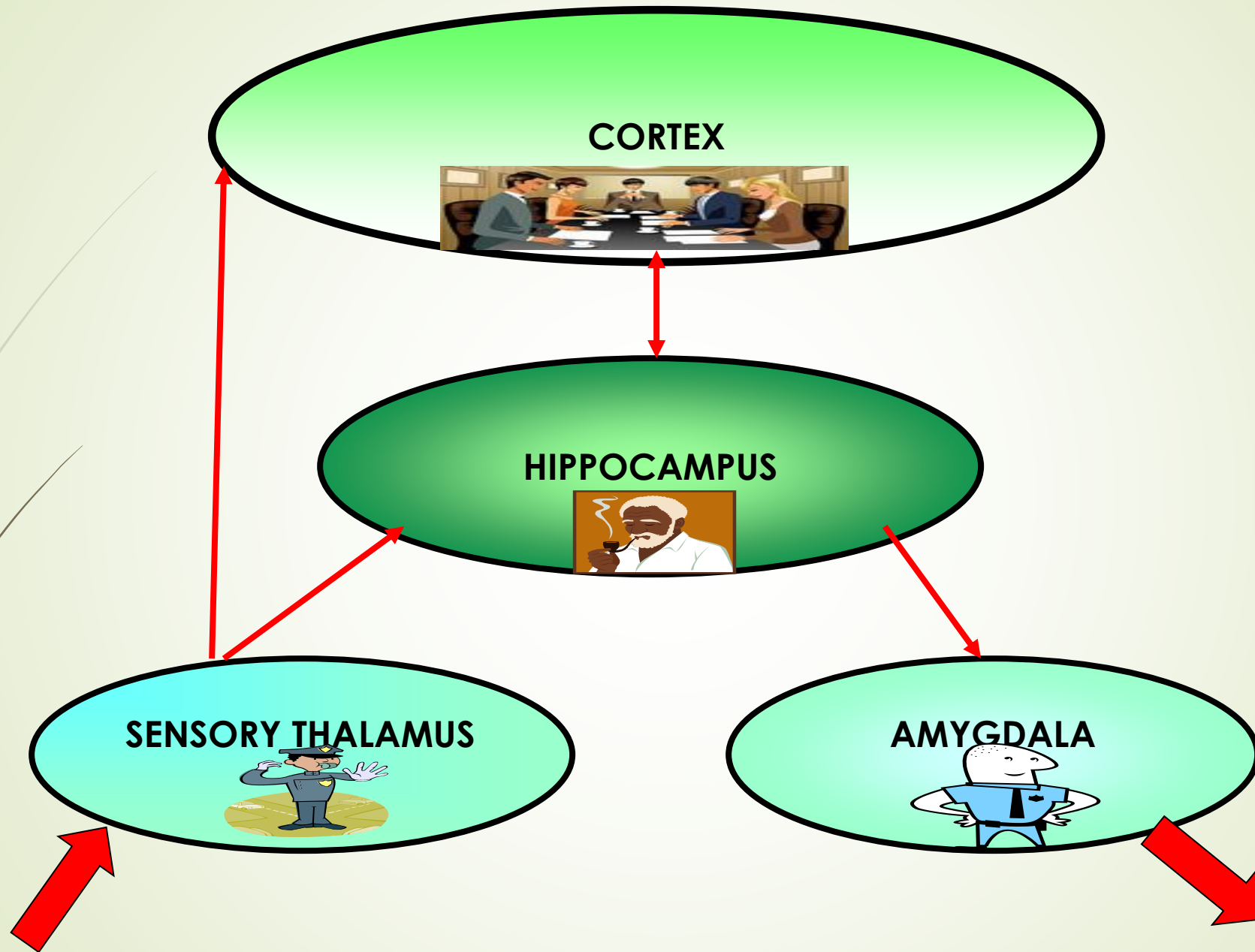
# ACE'S Include

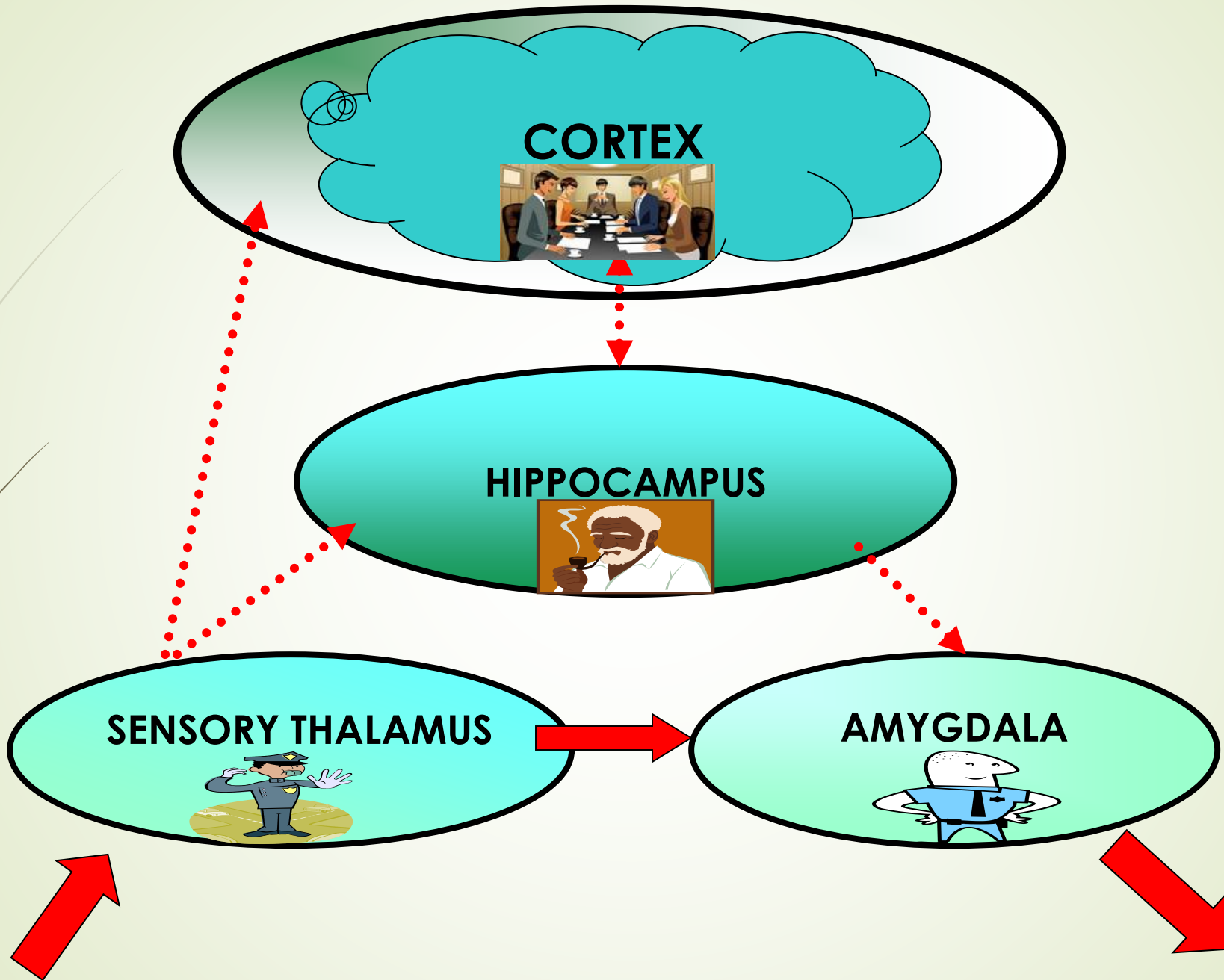
- ▶ Physical abuse
  - ▶ Sexual abuse
  - ▶ Emotional abuse
  - ▶ Physical neglect
  - ▶ Emotional neglect
  - ▶ Intimate partner violence
  - ▶ Mother treated violently
  - ▶ Substance misuse within household
  - ▶ Household mental illness
  - ▶ Parental separation or divorce
  - ▶ Incarcerated household member
- 



# Trauma

- ▶ Acute vs. Chronic
- ▶ **On the life continuum**
- ▶ Everyone processes trauma differently.
- ▶ Big T's and Little T's.
- ▶ Traumatized children make for traumatized adults.
- ▶ Adults have an increased risk of:
  - ▶ Suicide attempts
  - ▶ Antidepressant use
  - ▶ Abusing alcohol and drugs
  - ▶ Experiencing hallucinations
  - ▶ Impairment in memory
  - ▶ Increased number of sexual partners
  - ▶ COPD
  - ▶ Heart disease









# ACE'S

- ▶ Adverse Childhood Experiences determine the likelihood of the ten most common causes of death in the United States.
- ▶ With an ACE Score of 0, the majority of adults have few, if any, risk factors.
- ▶ However, with an ACE Score of 4 or more, the majority of adults have multiple risk factors.



# Historical Research

- ▶ Historical research on college drop-out rate and the success for first-year traditional undergraduate college students:
  - ▶ Financial aid (Chen & Hossler, 2017)
  - ▶ Stress and a student's ability to manage money (Sages, Britt, & Cumbie, 2013)
  - ▶ Use of marijuana on academic success (Surken, Reboussin, Egan, Sutfin, Wagoner, Spangler, & Wolfson, 2016); and
  - ▶ Student health concerns (Hussain, Guppy, Robertson, & Temple, 2013).

Within the past 17 years, little effort has been placed on examining the impact adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) can potentially have on the success rate of first-year traditional undergraduate college students (Duncan, 2000).

This presentation will highlight the findings identified in a research project that was funded by a \$1,000 ACCA research grant awarded in 2017-2018.





# Defining GRIT: Angela Duckworth

- ▶ GRIT = Sustained Application of Effort
- ▶ TALENT vs. EFFORT
  - ▶ Talent x Effort = Skill
  - ▶ Skill x Effort = Achievement

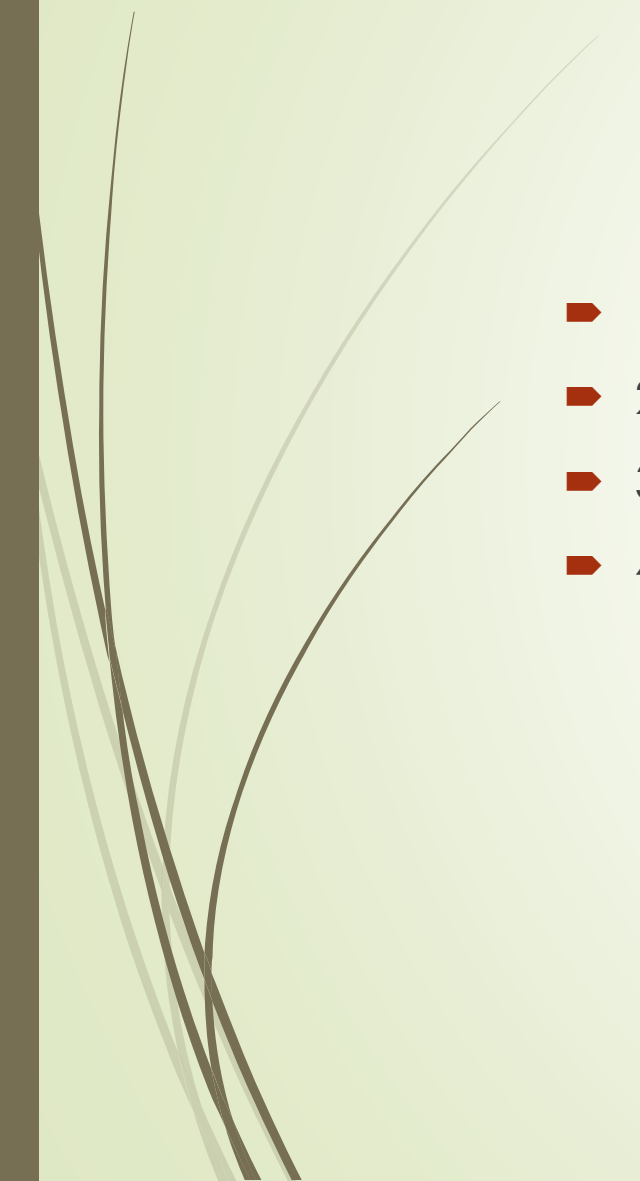
Talent Counts X1

But

Effort Counts X2



# GRIT: Angela Duckworth

- ▶ 1. Interest and Fascination.
  - ▶ 2. Strive for Daily Improvement.
  - ▶ 3. Striving for Purpose, long term.
  - ▶ 4. Growth Mindset: One's ability is not fixed.
- 



# Research

- ▶ It was hypothesized that the more ACE'S a student has experienced, the more likely it is that the student will struggle to engage in areas that define GRIT and support the academic success of first-year traditional undergraduate college students (University of California, 2016).
- ▶ 2,700 First Year Traditional Undergraduate Students (YSU)
- ▶ Confidential Survey
  - ▶ ACE's
  - ▶ Questions based on themed areas of Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey (University of California, 2016) used to measure GRIT.
- ▶ N=168
- ▶ M = 23.21%
- ▶ F = 75%
- ▶ Gender Non-conforming = 1.19%
- ▶ Other = .60%



# Research Respondents

- ▶ White/Caucasian = 77.38%
- ▶ Black/African-American = 5.9555
- ▶ American Indian/Alaska Native = .60%
- ▶ East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese) = .60%
- ▶ Filipino = .60%
- ▶ Southeast Asian (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Sri Lankan) = 5.36%
- ▶ Other Asian = .60%
- ▶ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 0%



# Research Respondents Enrollment Status:

- ▶ Full-time undergraduate = 96.39%
- ▶ Part-time undergraduate = 3.61%




# Data Analysis

- ▶ Data was analyzed using SPSS software
- ▶ (Simple Linear Regression).
- ▶ Independent Variable: ACE's 10 point questionnaire.
- ▶ Dependent Variables: Areas that support GRIT based on questions from themed areas of Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey (University of California, 2016).
  - ▶ Concerns about your ability to continue your college education: 7.6% increase.
  - ▶ Struggles to set and achieve long-term goals: 5.6% increase.
  - ▶ Struggles to overcome obstacles: 2.2% increase.
  - ▶ Concerns about improving academic ability: 5.7% increase.
  - ▶ Concerns about the ability to manage time effectively: 4.7% increase.
  - ▶ Concerns about staying focused on a task: 9.7% increase.



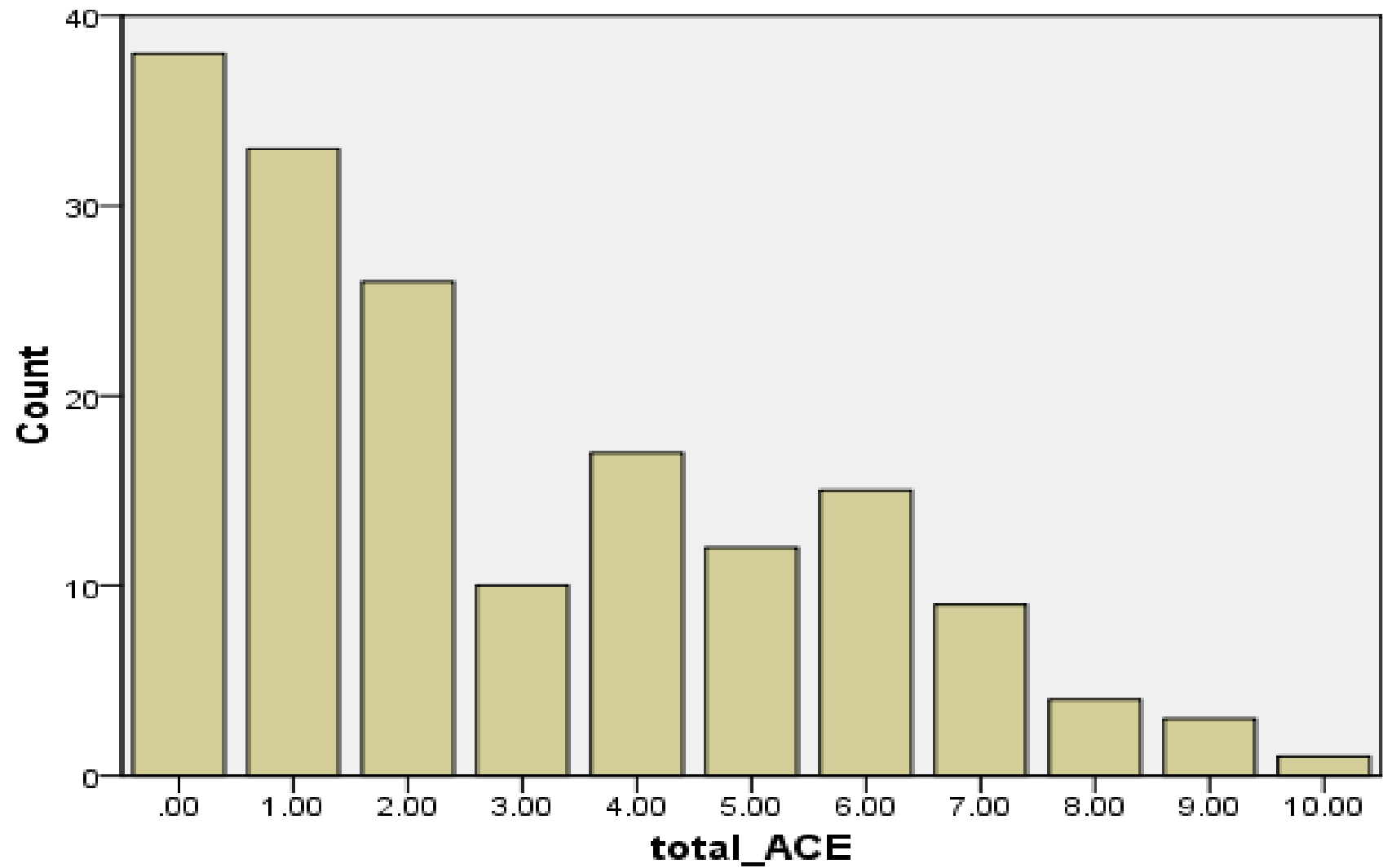


# ACE'S Reported



▶ Verbal Abuse	28.57%
▶ Physical abuse	13.77%
▶ Sexual abuse	7.14%
▶ Feeling Unloved	43.45%
▶ Lack of family support	33.93%
▶ Lack of resources	10.71%
▶ Parent/caregiver divorce	40.72%
▶ Abuse female caregiver	6.55%
▶ Drugs in home	28.14%
▶ Family member with MH	52.98%
▶ Family member in jail or prison	13.10%

# ACE'S



# Statistics

total\_ACE

N	Valid	168
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7679

# ACE'S

- Frequency
- 10.1% of respondents reported having four (4) or more ACE'S.

		<b>total_ACE</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	38	22.6	22.6	22.6
	1.00	33	19.6	19.6	42.3
	2.00	26	15.5	15.5	57.7
	3.00	10	6.0	6.0	63.7
	4.00	17	10.1	10.1	73.8
	5.00	12	7.1	7.1	81.0
	6.00	15	8.9	8.9	89.9
	7.00	9	5.4	5.4	95.2
	8.00	4	2.4	2.4	97.6
	9.00	3	1.8	1.8	99.4
	10.00	1	.6	.6	100.0
Total		168	100.0	100.0	



# Discussion

- ▶ How do we sustain our efforts to help this population become successful?