

ACEs stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences. ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood, including experiencing violence (including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse), experiencing neglect, and witnessing violence among caregivers.



Also included in ACEs are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with:

- Mental health problems
- Substance abuse problems
- Parental separation
- Parent in jail or prison

Adverse childhood experiences are common and add up

Those at greater risk for experiencing multiple ACEs:

- Women
- American Indian/Alaska Natives
- Blacks
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders
- Multiracial groups
- Other Racial/Ethnic minority groups

Adults who reported experiencing at least one type of ACE



Adults who reported experiencing at least two to three types of ACEs



Adults who reported experiencing four or more types of ACEs



What does it mean to grow up with gun violence?

Exposure to gun violence can create traumatic disturbances in a child's life and interfere with their long-term health & development. Gun violence exposure can include:

- Injury from a gun
- Witnessing gunfire
- Knowing someone who has been shot
- Being threatened by a gun
- Hearing gunshots
- Having friends or a sibling who carry a gun

How has the pandemic affected children and their health?

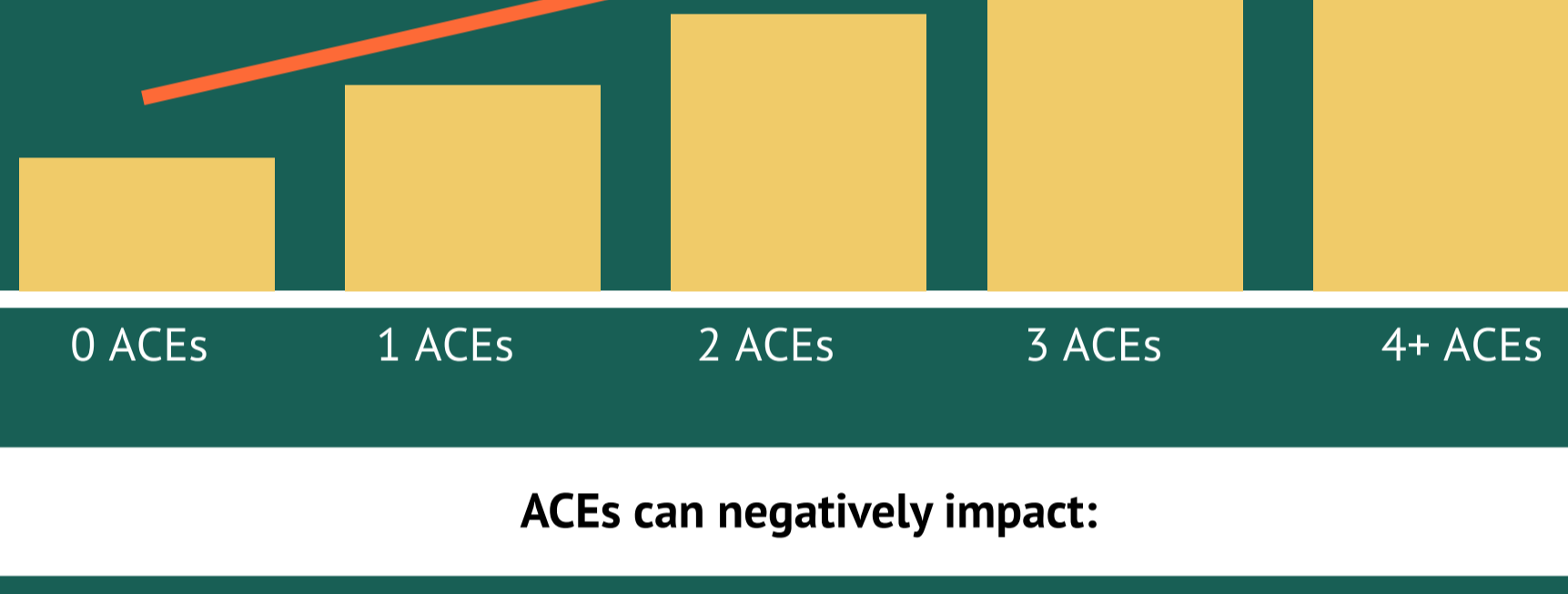
The COVID-19 pandemic closed schools and disrupted the lives of adolescents by creating or exacerbating:

- Economic hardships
- Food & nutrition insecurity
- housing insecurity
- Experiences of abuse

Female, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latino, Black, Multiracial, and LGBTQ students experienced higher prevalence of all these things compared to White students

Adverse childhood experiences are linked to many health problems

As the number of ACEs increases so does the likelihood of negative health outcomes



ACEs can negatively impact:

- Education
- Job opportunity
- Earning potential



ACEs can lead to **toxic stress**, which impacts health

Toxic stress explains how experiencing adversity in childhood can lead to poor lifelong health—excessive activation of the stress response system in children can damage multiple developing biological systems.

Studies have linked childhood adversity & toxic stress to increased health risks:

- Heart Disease
- Obesity
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- STDs

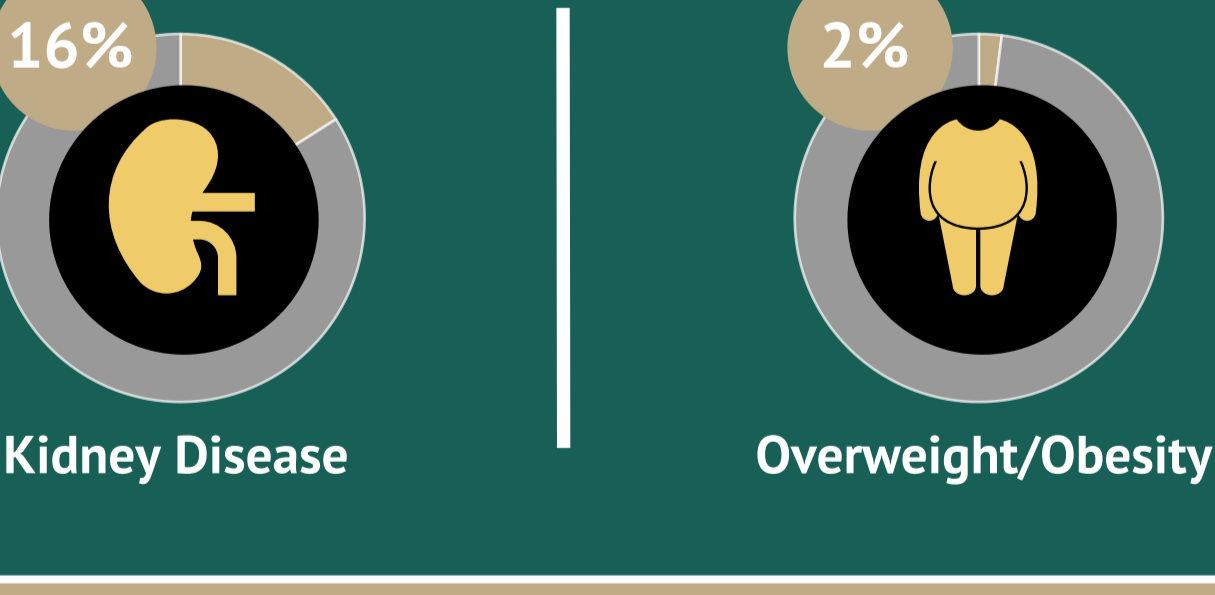
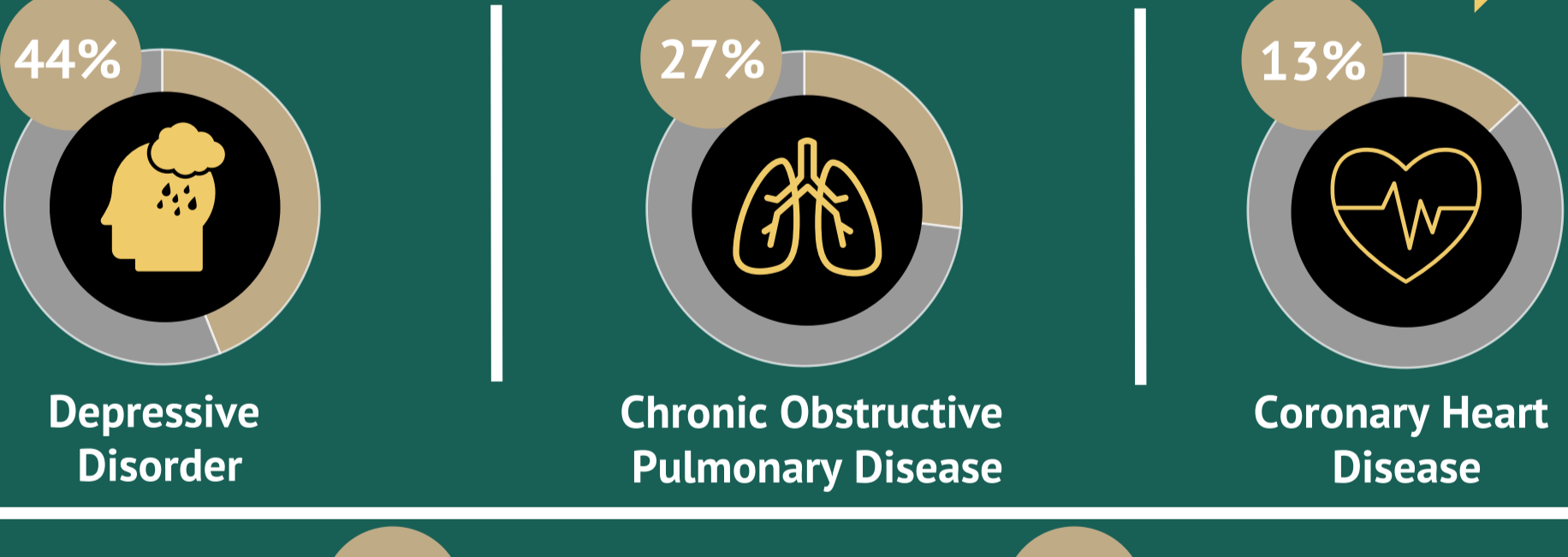
5 of the 10 leading causes of death are associated with ACEs

Adverse childhood experiences can lead to health risk behaviors

- Smoking
- Heavy drinking
- Substance misuse
- Risky sexual behavior
- Suicidal thoughts

How to prevent adverse childhood experiences

Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce the number of health conditions in adults by:



Preventing ACEs

- Strengthen economic supports to families**
 - Strengthening household financial security
 - Family-friendly work policies
- Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity**
 - Public education campaigns
 - Approaches to reduce corporal punishment
 - Men and boys as allies in prevention
- Ensure a strong start for children**
 - Early childhood home visitation
 - High-quality child care
 - Preschool enrichment with family engagement
- Teach skills**
 - Social-emotional learning
 - Safe dating and healthy relationship skills
 - Parenting and family relationship approaches
- Connect youth to caring adults and activities**
 - Mentoring programs
 - After-school programs
- Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms**
 - Enhanced primary care & victim-centered services
 - Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs
 - Treatment to prevent problem behavior & violence
 - Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders