It’s About Early Intervention

“It’s About Access”
State of Young Children—Community Town Hall
Santos Manuel Student Union
California State University, San Bernardino
January 6, 2017

Are we seeing more behavior problems today?

An estimated 20% of American children and adolescents between the ages of 5 to 18 have serious diagnosable emotional or behavioral health disorders resulting in substantial to extreme impairment.

(Committee on Health, 2004; Nemeroff et al., 2008)

Campbell (1995) estimated that approximately 10-15% of all typically developing preschool children have chronic mild to moderate levels of behavior problems.

- Preschool children are three times more likely to be “expelled” than children in grades K-12

(Gilliam, 2005)

Why?

Stressful and Traumatic Life Events

Positive

- Brief increases in heart rate
- Mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

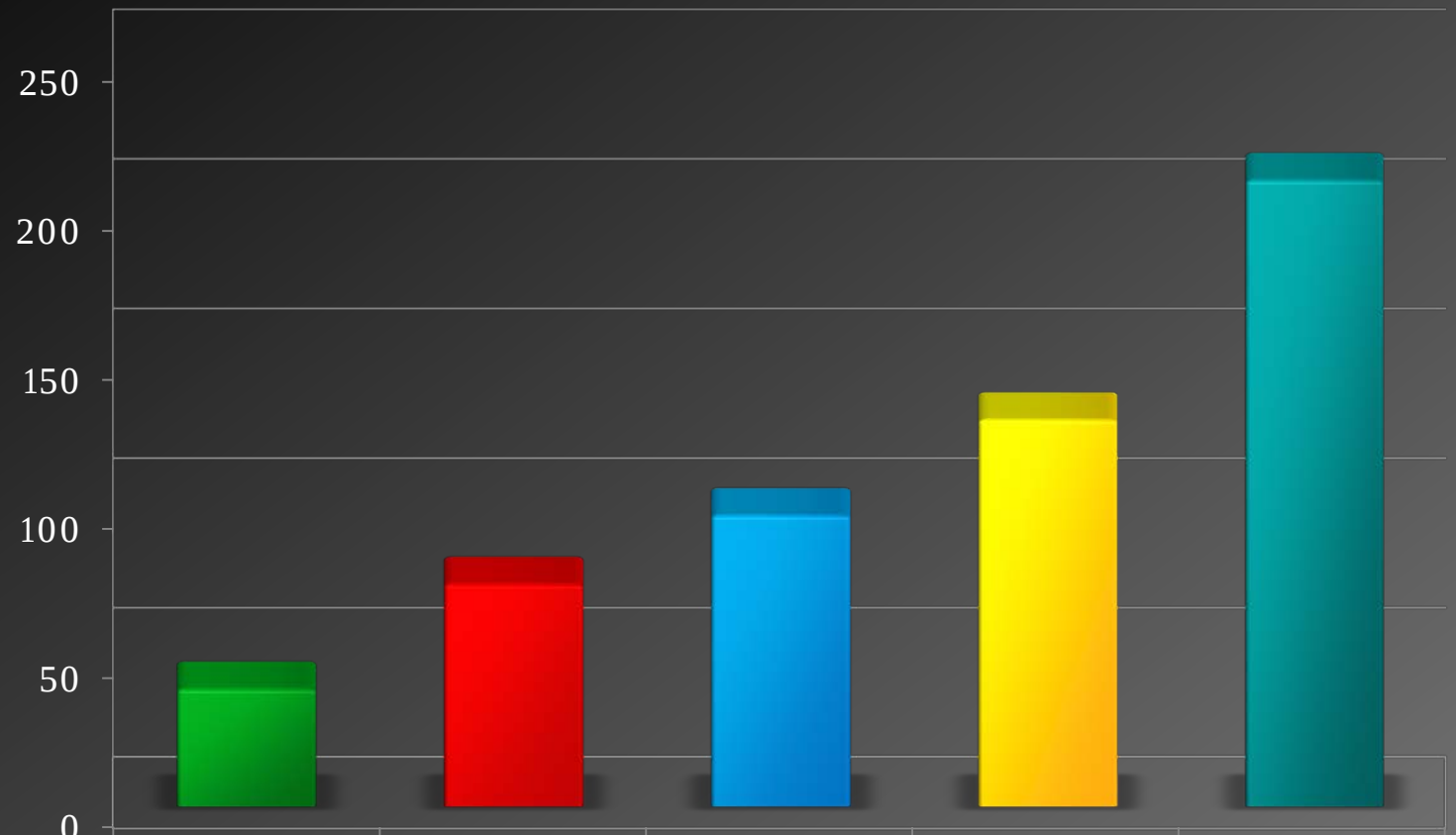
Tolerable

- Serious, temporary stress responses
- Buffered by supportive relationships

Toxic

- Prolonged activation of stress response systems
- In the absence of protective relationships
- Overwhelms the child's regulatory capacity

Sources of Toxic Stress in Young Children



	Substantiated Cases	Maltreatment	Substance Abuse	Maternal Depression	Partner Violence
Per Thousand	40	75	98	130	210

U.S. Children Ages 0-5: (Finkelhor et.al. ,2005; SAMHSA ,2002; O'Hara & Swain, 1996; McDonald et.al., 2006)

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- Large epidemiological study
- 26,o00 adults
- Matched childhood experiences with adult health
- Defined 10 categories, each valued at 1
- Does not score events, just categories

JAMA 2001; 386

Some Ace Questions

- Before the age of 18:
  - Did you live with someone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
  - Were your parents ever separated or divorced because of marital problems?
  - Did a parent in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down?
  - Did a parent or caregiver ever fail to provide for your basic needs, such as food, clothing, medical care, hygiene, or fail to protect you from known dangers?

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- Childhood Abuse
  - Psychological
  - Physical Abuse
  - Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
  - Emotional
  - Physical
- House Dysfunction
  - Alcoholism
  - Loss of a parent
  - Depression/mental illness
  - Domestic Violence
  - Family member imprisoned

Physiological Impact of Risk – ACE STUDY

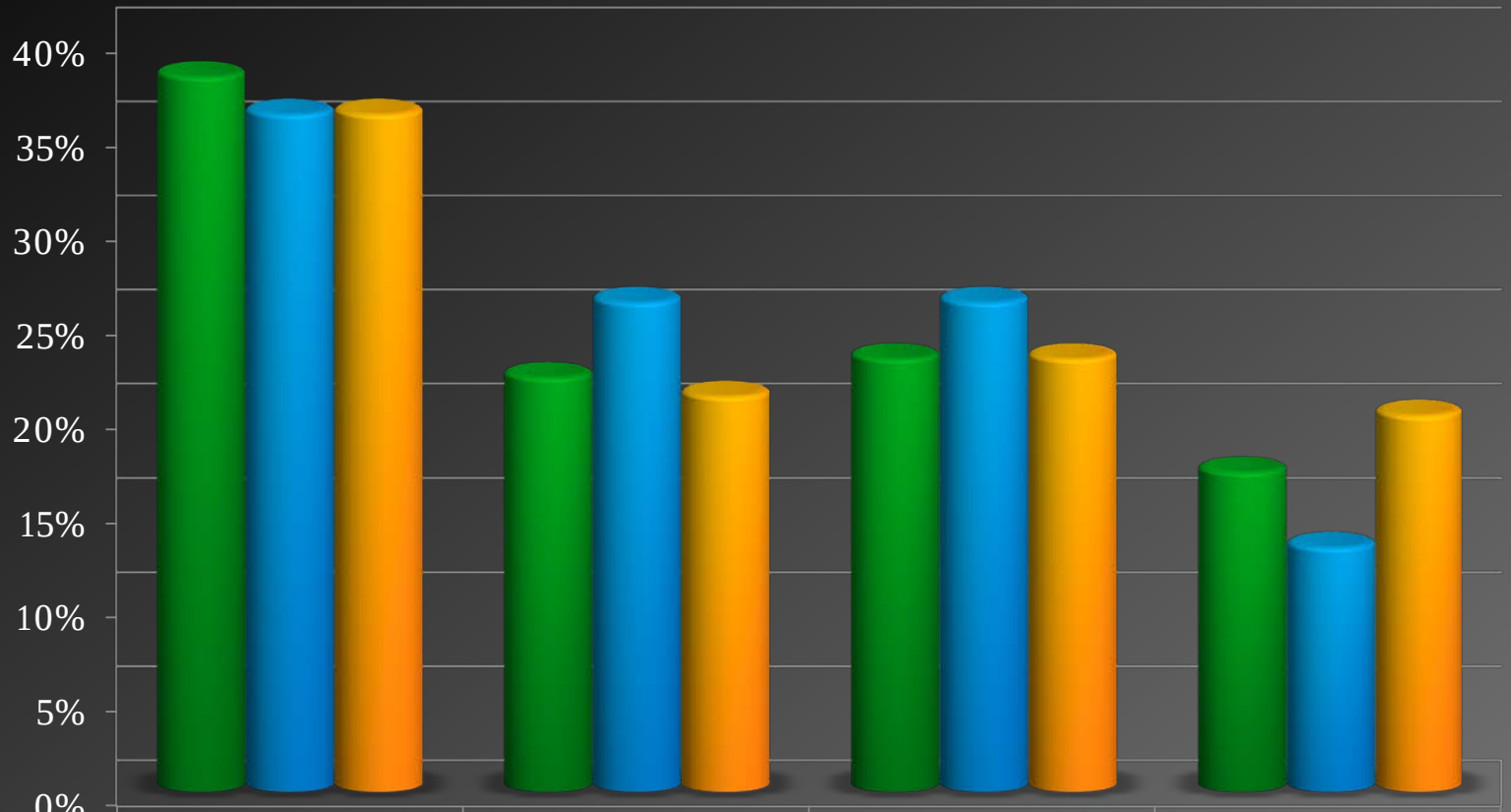
- Events leave a record
- The brain is altered by events
- The greater number of childhood traumatic exposures, the greater risk of early adult disease and death, from any cause.
- Many chronic diseases of adults are determined in childhood, not by disease but by the events of childhood.

ACE Results

- With a score of 4 or more
  - 513% increase in depression
  - 1,296% more likely to be removed from home
  - 1,220% increase in attempted suicide
  - 740% increase in alcoholism
  - 470% increase in illicit drug use
  - 320% increase in >50 sexual partners
  - 250% increase in STD

Adverse Childhood Events

State and National Relationship to Poverty



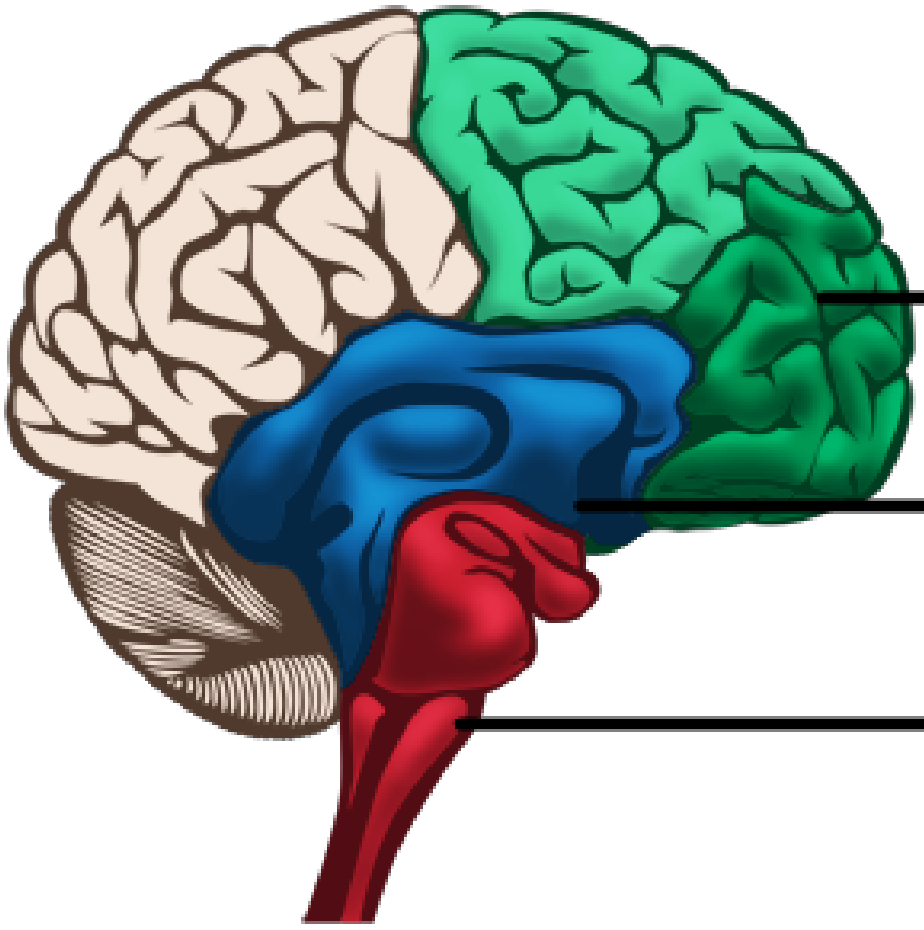
	0	1	2 to 3	>4
CA	38%	22%	23%	17%
National	36%	26%	26%	13%
<100% FPL	36%	21%	23%	20%

The Relationship Between Trauma and Behavior and Learning

Emotional States Dictate Behavior

Grumpy	• Easily frustrated • Curt with others
Grateful	• Generous • Thoughtful
Upset	• We behave, speak and discipline much like our parents
Goal	• To understand how this happens and how we can change it.

Becky Bailey, PhD



Executive State
Prefrontal Lobes
What can I learn from this?

Emotional State
Limbic System
Am I loved?

Survival State
Brain Stem
Am I safe?

Skill Sets of Mental States

State	Survival	Emotional	Executive
Trigger	Threat	World not going our way	Calm
Skills	Fight, flight, surrender	Autopilot: Words and tone match key childhood authority figures	Wise choices, attunement to others, focus, ideal state
Principles	Safety	Connection	Problem solving

Self-Regulation

- Cornerstone for a successful life.

- Goal:
  - Awareness of our own state.
  - Access the tools to manage our own thoughts, feelings and actions.

“As long as people are either hyperaroused or shut down, they cannot learn from experience.”

Van Der Kolk, B. (2014). The Body Keeps the Score, p.205

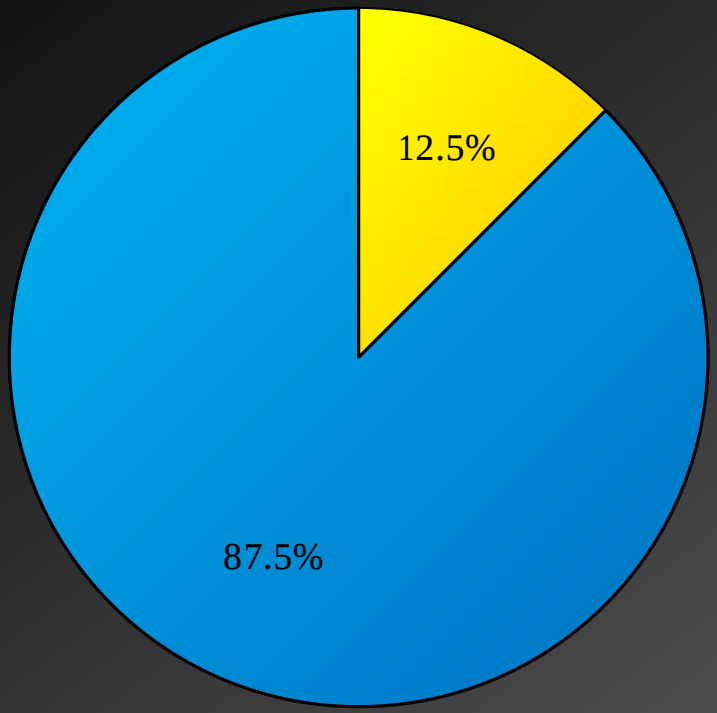
It begins early…

Early Intervention

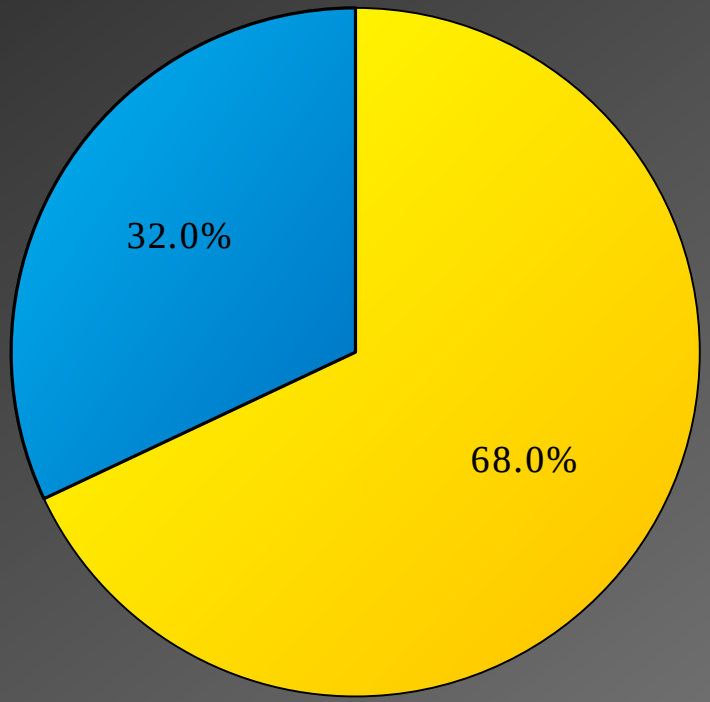
Children who participated in high quality, developmentally appropriate early intervention programs scored at the 76th percentile.

Securely Attached Babies Thrive When They Get to Preschool

Children Who Were Anxiously Attached at 12 Months



Children Who Were Securely Attached at 12 Months



Insecure Attachment

- Less time in interactions results in:
  - Less empathy
  - Less trust
  - Less opportunity to care and connect through gene activation.

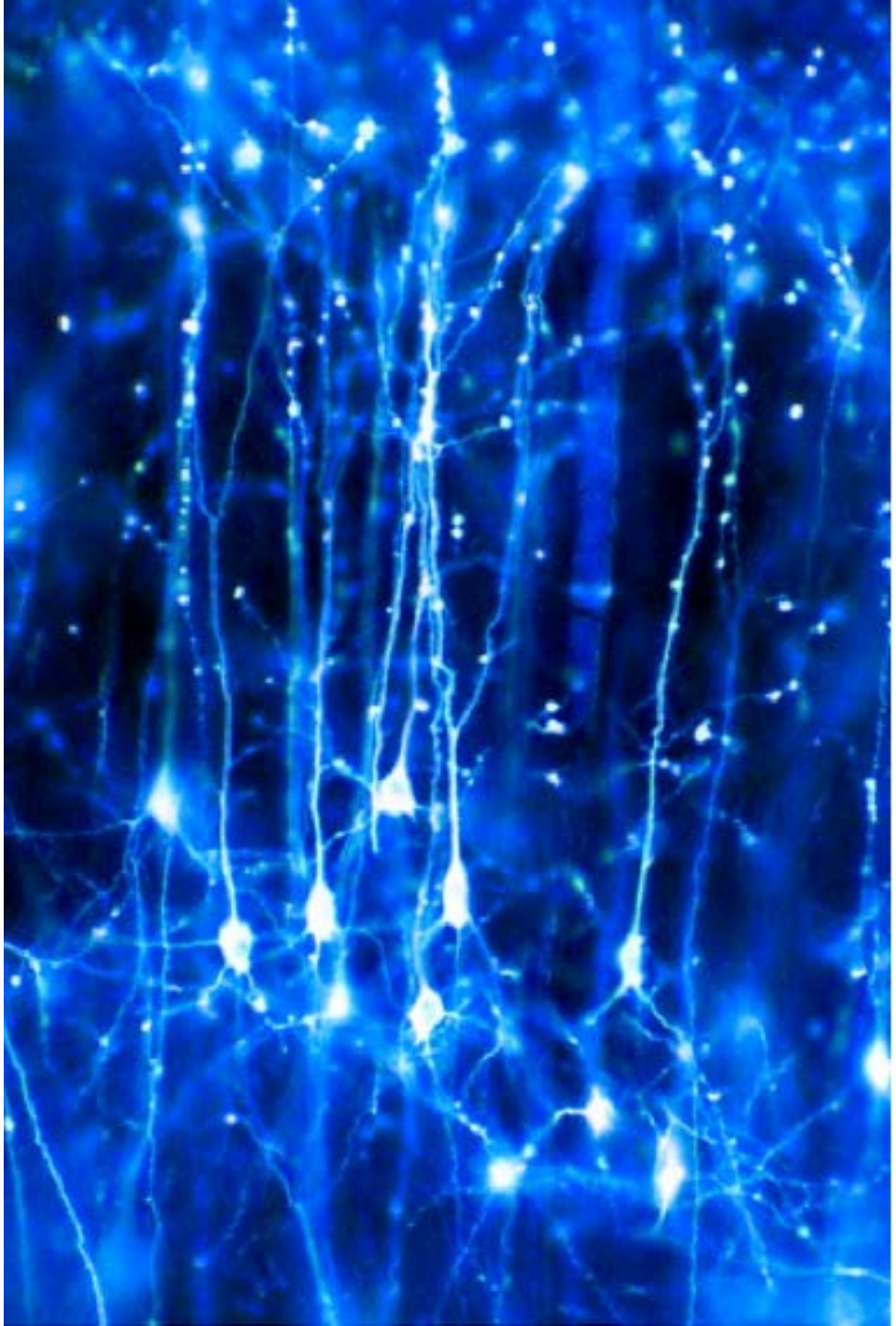
The Moralization of Attachment

- The absence of connectedness
  - "the same symptoms in children who'd been deprived of their mothers –
    - the superficial relationships,
    - the poverty of feeling for others,
    - the inaccessibility,
    - the lack of emotional response,
    - the often pointless deceitfulness and theft,
    - and the inability to concentrate in school"

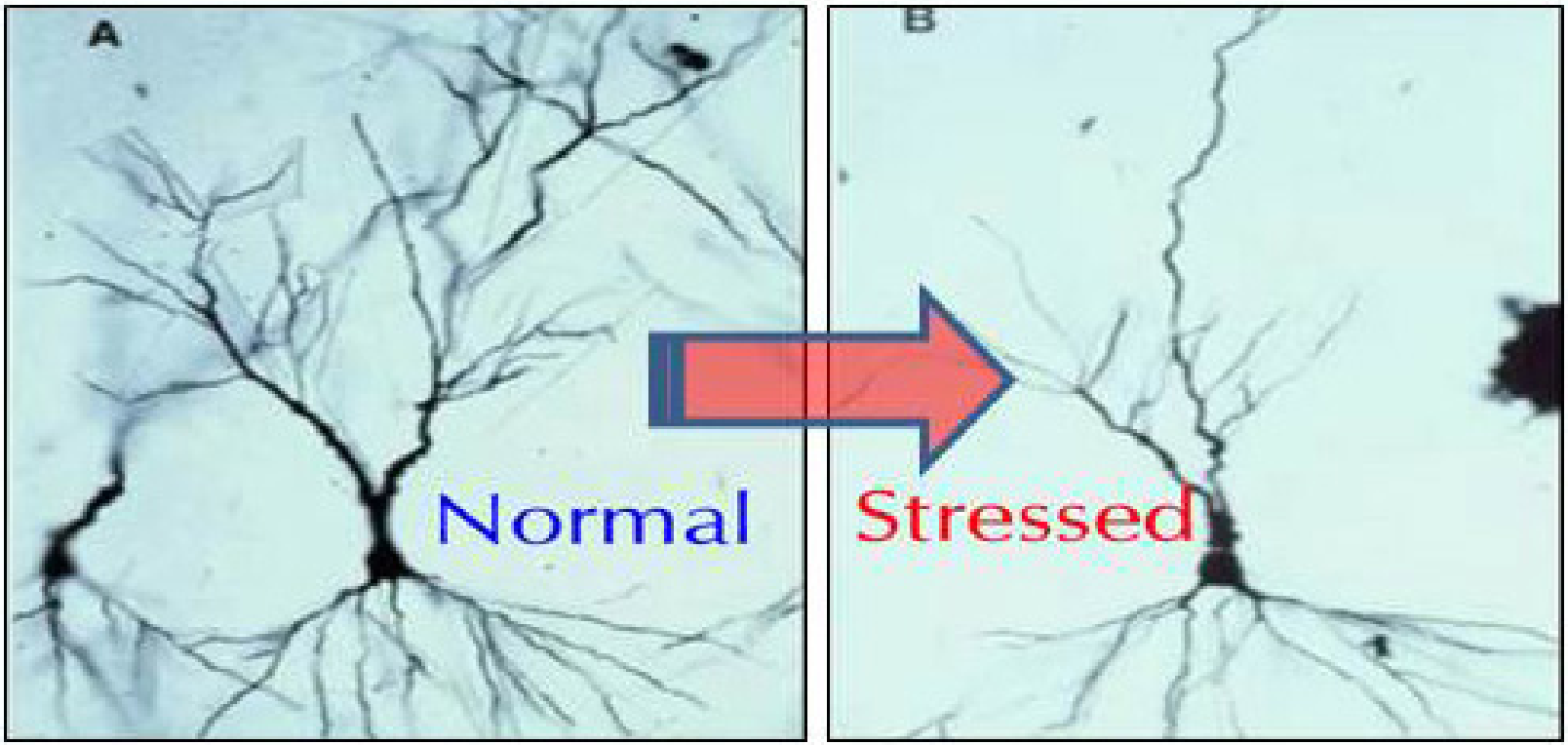
Karen, R., (2002). Investing in children and society: What we've learned from seven decades of attachment research. Commission on Children at Risk, Working Paper 7, New York: Institute for American Values: 8.

Neurons that
fire together,
wire together, and
survive together.

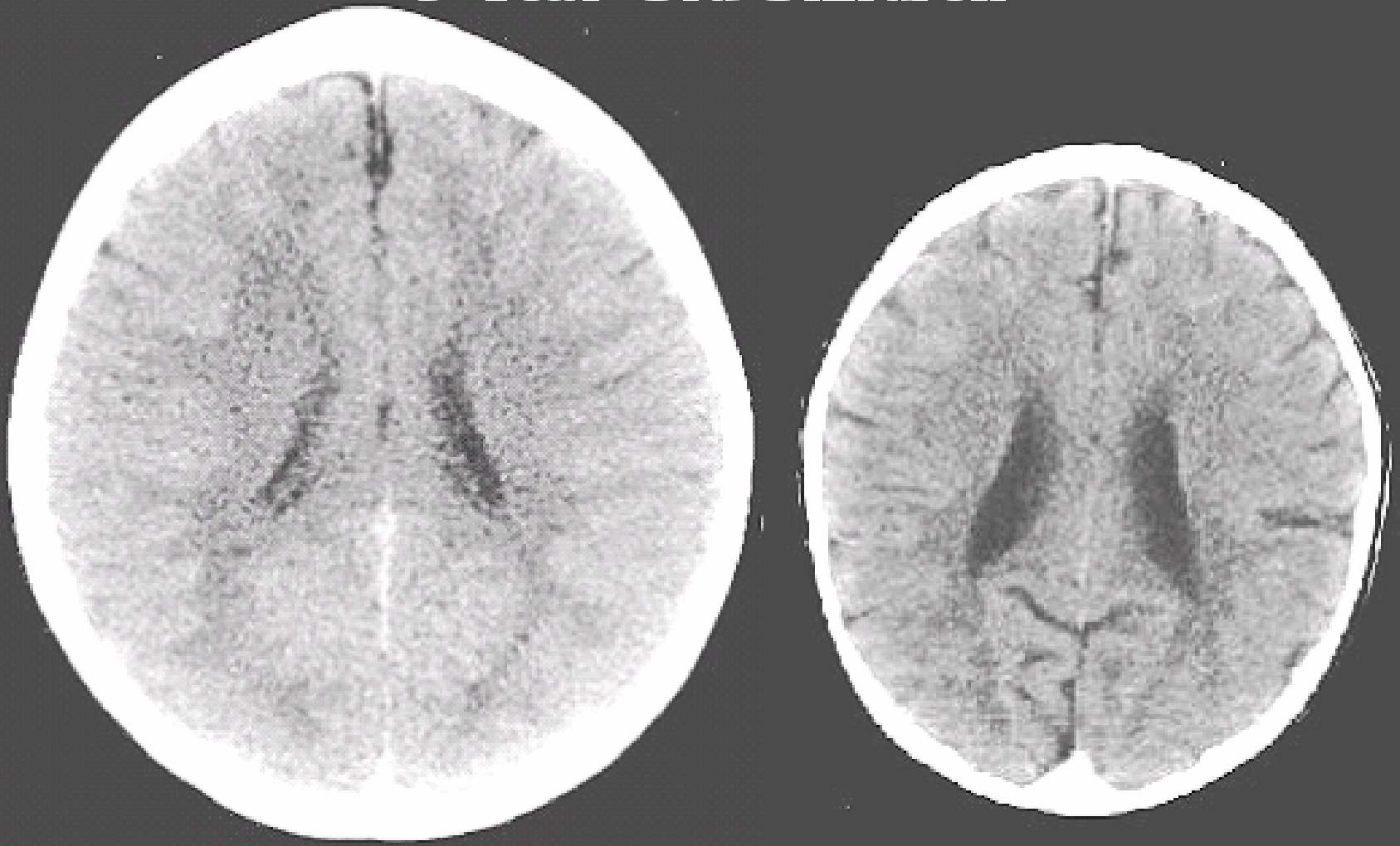
Alan Schore



Stress Shrinks Brain Networks



3-Year-Old Children



Normal

Extreme Neglect

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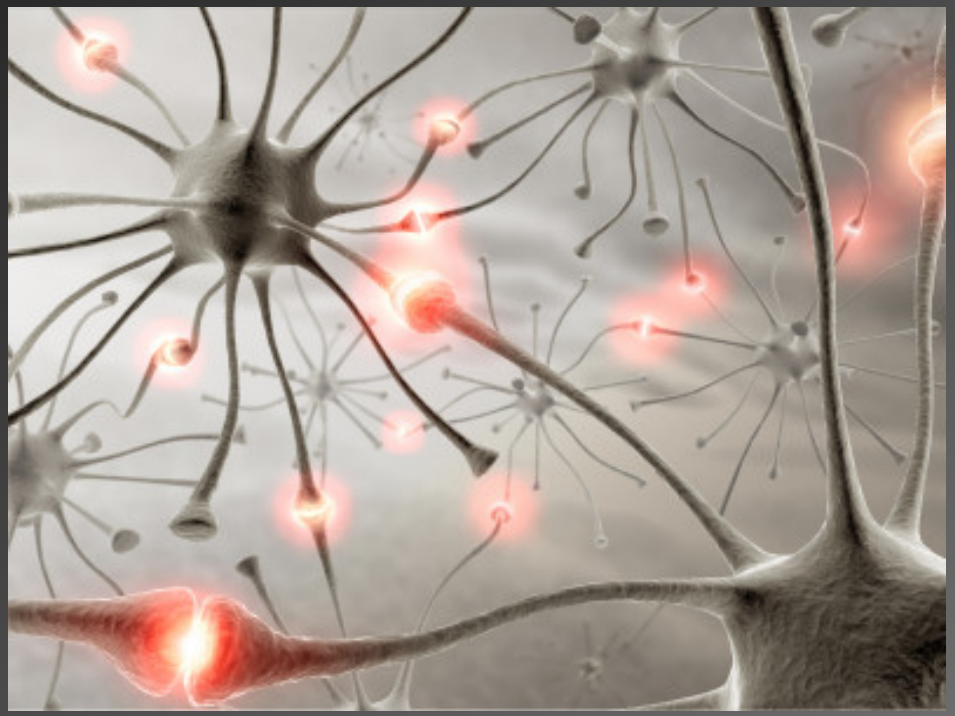
What can we do about it?

Neurobiology of Attachment

- Create neural connections between:
  - Dopamine (feel good)
  - Endorphins (pleasure)
  - Oxcytocin (human connection and bonding)



Positive Teacher-Child Relationship

Children in classrooms characterized by teachers who they believed truly cared for them scored at the 76th percentile.

Connections Provide Three Essential Ingredients for Success

Willingness to Learn

- We are brought to a place of willingness to learn through a sense of belonging.

Impulse Control

- Connection with others wires the brain for impulse control.
- Connection teaches self-regulation skills in context.

Attention

- Attention system engages with positive emotions.
- Fostered through an atmosphere of caring, encouragement, and meaningful contributions.

Connection = Cooperation

- The motivation to behave comes from being in a relationship.
- Connection wires the brain for impulse control and willingness.
- Connections on the outside build connections on the inside.

Developing Self-Regulation

- Self-regulation of:
  - Aggression, and
  - Anxiety
- Supported in the presence of caring adults.
- Move from correction to connection
- Move from compliance to alliance

To change the brain structure and develop new neurons, the matter of frequency, intensity, and the use of repetition is key.

(Perry, B., 2012)

“The human brain is talked into talking and loved into loving”

Hardwired to Connect

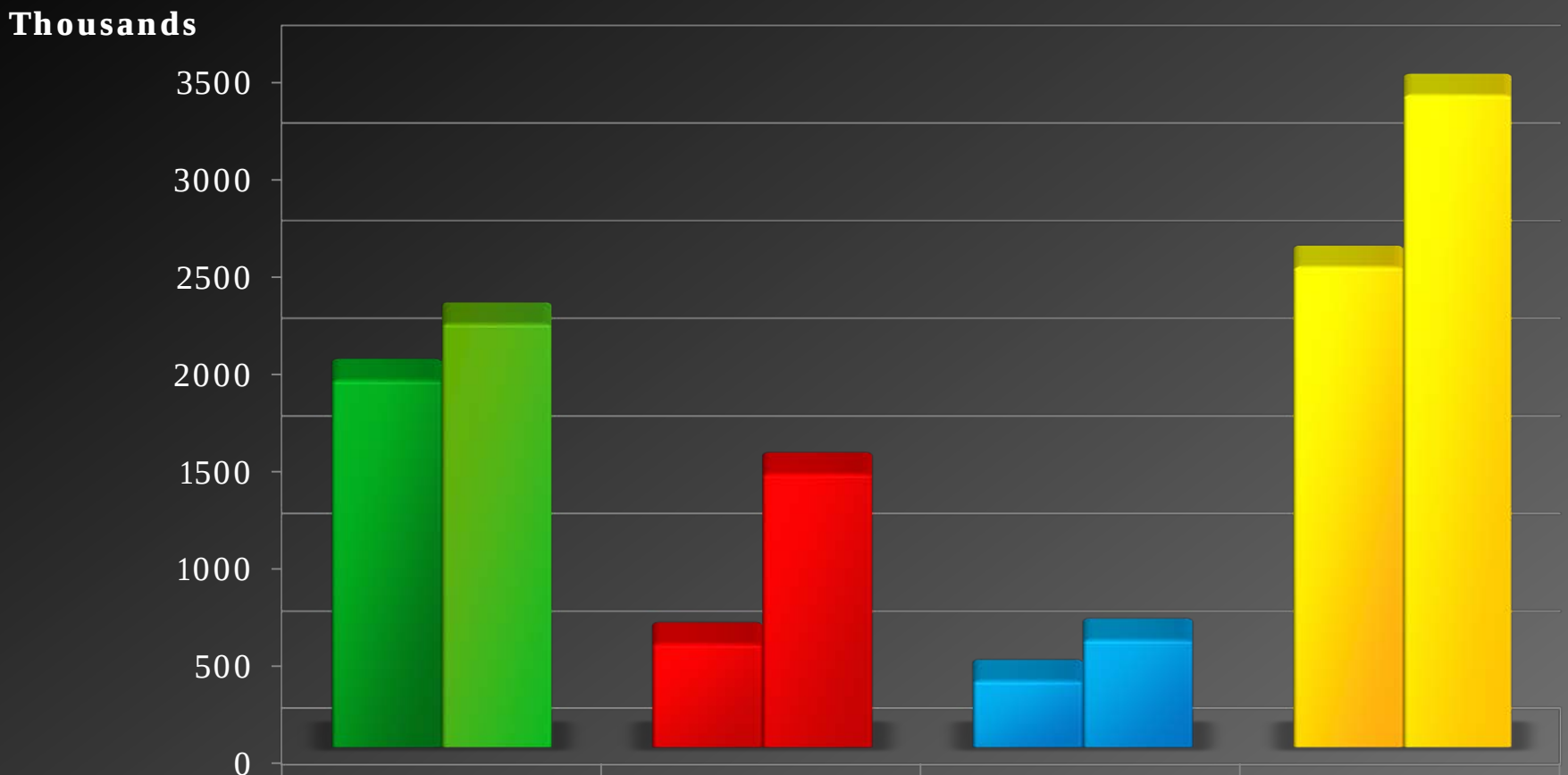
Trauma-Informed Early Intervention

Sense of Connection Creates a Biochemistry that Optimizes the Function of Our Brain

- Ingredients for Connection:
  - Eye Contact
  - Touch
  - Presence
  - Playful Situation

Is It Worth It?

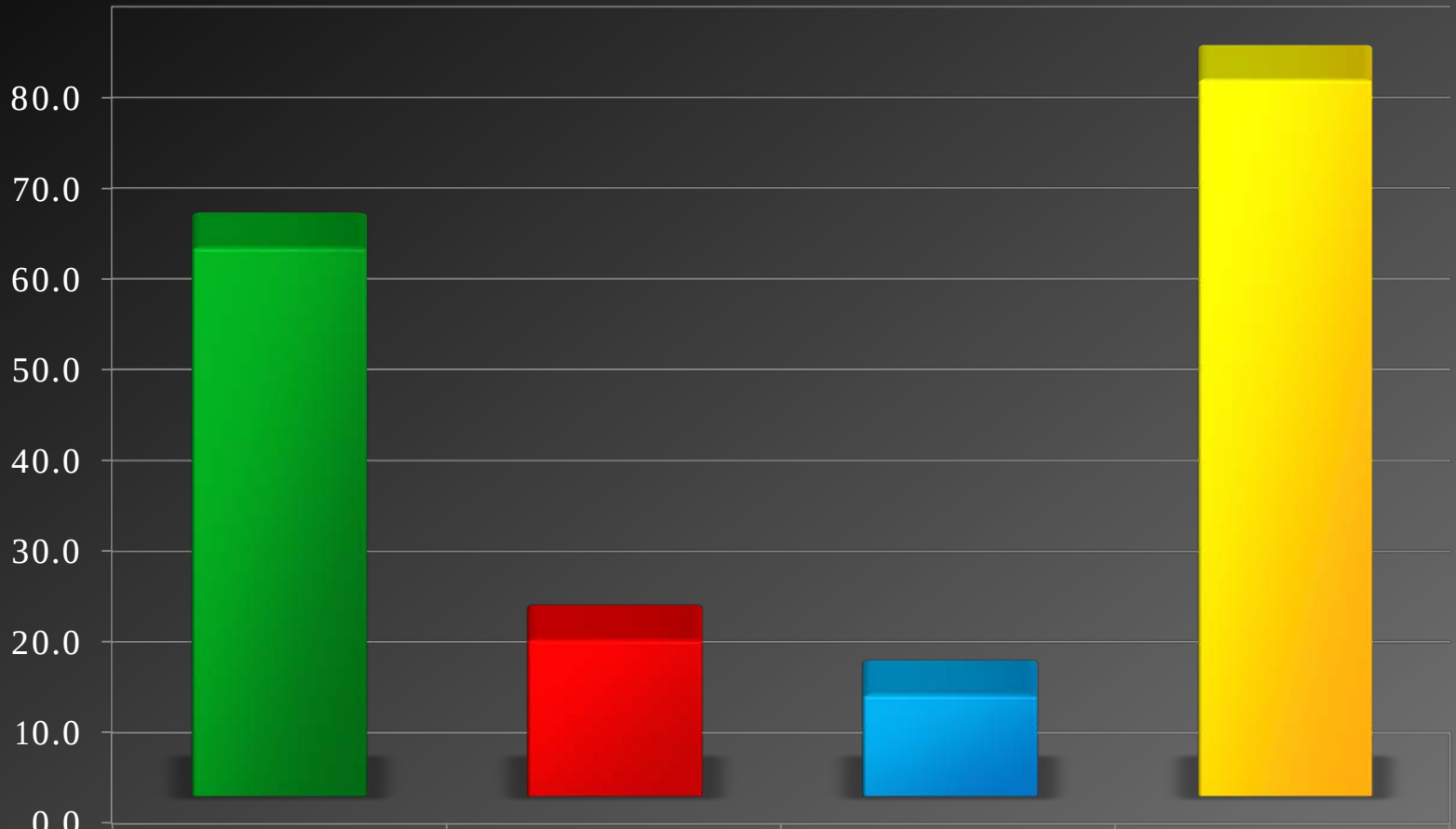
The Monetary Value of Saving High Risk Youth



	Criminal	Drug User	Drop Out	Combined
Low	1890	540	350	2470
High	2180	1410	560	3350

Cohen, M., (1998)

The Monetary Value of Saving High Risk Youth



	Criminal	Drug User	Drop Out	Combined
Per Dollar	60.5	17.3	11.2	79.0

Cohen, M., (1998)