

Seeing Individuals through a Trauma Lens



Getting from ACEs to Trauma-informed Justice

March 30, 2016

**Circuit Judge Lynn Tepper,
6th Judicial Circuit at Dade City, Pasco County Florida**

ltepper@jud6.org



Seeing Through a Trauma Lens:

**Presume a
Trauma History of
ALL who appear
*before you***



**JUVENILE, FAMILY &
DEPENDENCY COURTS**

*are in a
unique position to:*

ID parties with a trauma past

Learn the telltale **red flags**

Spot ACEs



JUVENILE, FAMILY & DEPENDENCY COURTS

are in a unique position to:



Change a parent and child's stars

End the generational cycle

Divert from delinquency, jail & prison

Create happy, productive, connected individuals

What Is Trauma?

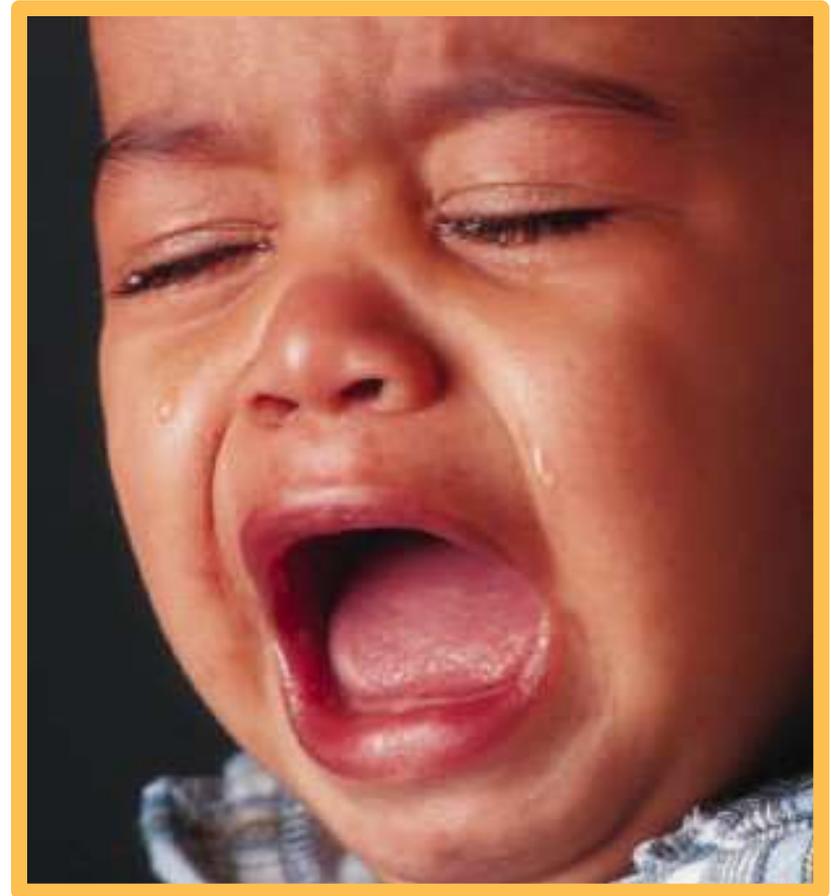
Trauma is any **intense event** that **threatens or causes harm** to a child's **emotional and/or physical well-being**.

When these events *overwhelm* a child's ability to *cope* with what they have experienced, it is called **child traumatic stress**.



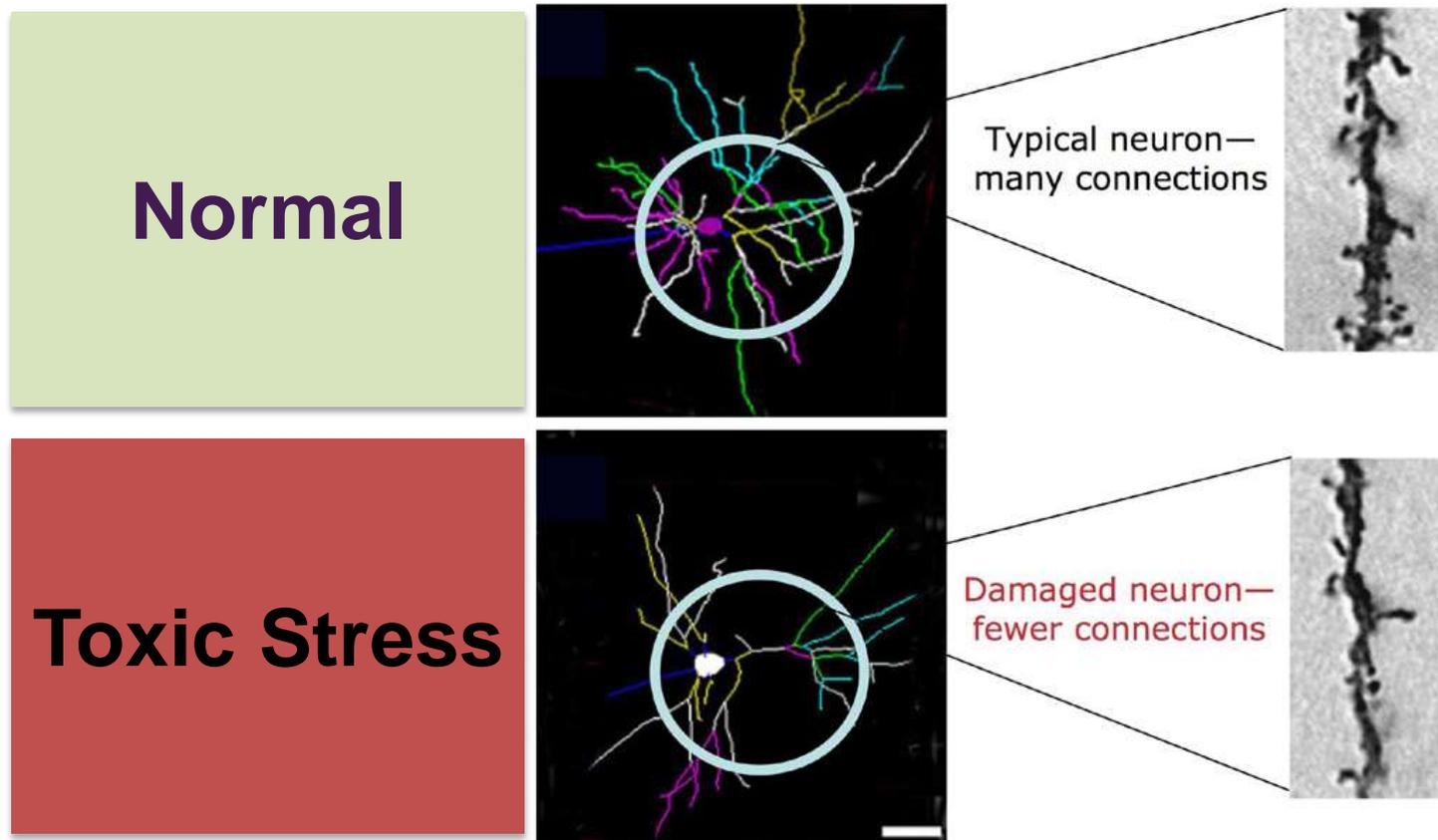
What Is Toxic Stress?

Toxic Stress
occurs when a child
experiences strong,
frequent, &/or
prolonged adversity
without adequate
adult support.



Source: Harvard Center on the Developing Child. Key Concepts: Toxic stress.
http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/key_concepts/toxic_stress_response/

Persistent Stress Changes Brain Architecture



Source: Radley, et al. (2004) and Bock et. Al. (2005). <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences:



Early exposure to severe adversity like **abuse, neglect or **violence** have the potential to carry lifelong mental and physical consequences.**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study: <http://www.cdc.gov/ace/index.htm>

Resiliency: protective & promotive factors

A number of [*these*]: *individually*, within a *family*, or within a *community*—may contribute to an abused or neglected **child's resilience**:

- * Positive attachment
- * Intelligence
- * Humor
- * Self-esteem
- * Emotion regulation
- * Independence

(Shaffer, 2012). <https://www.childwelfare.gov>

When I was little:

- *I believed that my mother loved me*
- *Neighbors or my friends' parents seemed to like me*
- *Teachers, coaches, youth leaders or ministers were there to help me*
- *My family cared about how I was doing in school*

Drs. Mark Rains & Kate McClinn, developed the Resilience Questionnaire [14 statements]

Untreated trauma and toxic stress in childhood...only Exacerbate Over Time



Childhood ACEs

- Developmental Delays
- Sleep terrors
- Aggression
- Expulsion from Care



Adolescent ACEs

- Delinquency
- Mental Health Issues
- Sexual Activity
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Violence



Adulthood ACEs

- Psychiatric Problems
- Battles Addictions
- Alcohol
- Crime

What is an ACE Score?

The ACE Score is a self-reported count of adverse experiences that occurred during the first 18 years of life including:

- 1. Physical Abuse**
- 2. Emotional Abuse**
- 3. Sexual Abuse (by person 5 years older)**
- 4. Domestic Violence (mother treated violently)**
- 5. Mental Illness or Mental Health Disorder**
- 6. Substance Use Disorder**
- 7. Incarceration (family member in prison)**
- 8. Parental Separation or Divorce**
- 9. Emotional Neglect**
- 10. Physical Neglect**

The image shows a printed questionnaire titled "Finding Your ACE Score". It contains 10 numbered questions about adverse childhood experiences. Each question has a "Yes" or "No" response line and a space to enter a score of 1 if "Yes". The questions are:

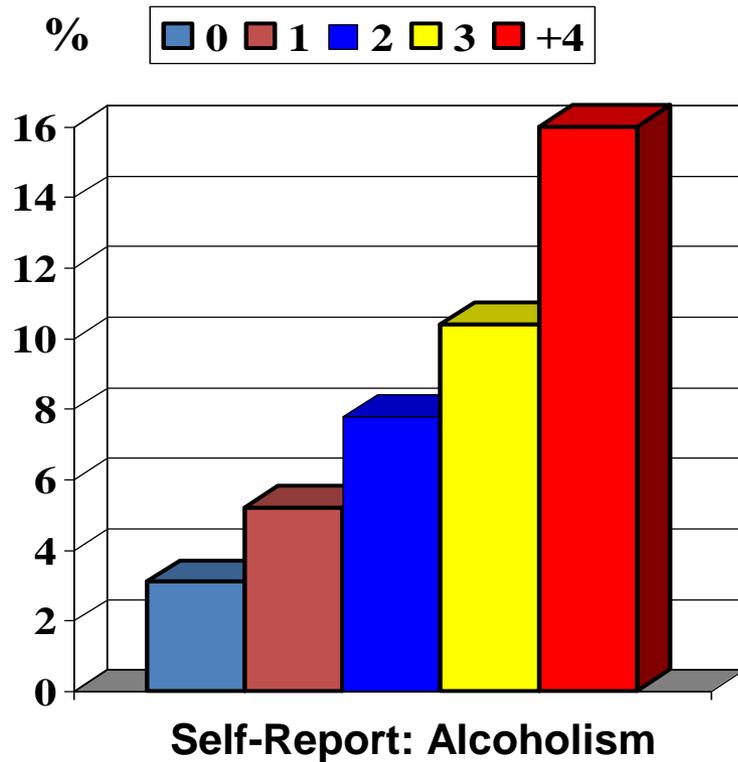
1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often smack, yell, or physically hurt you? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often push, grab, slip, or throw something at you? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever touch or fondle you or leave you touch their body in a sexual way? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
4. Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
5. Did you often or very often feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
7. Was your mother or stepmother often or very often sad, depressed, or had something thrown at her? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)
10. Did a household member go to prison? (Yes/No, if yes enter 1)

At the bottom, it says "Now add up your 'Yes' answers: _____ This is your ACE Score." and "©2008 NACPE".

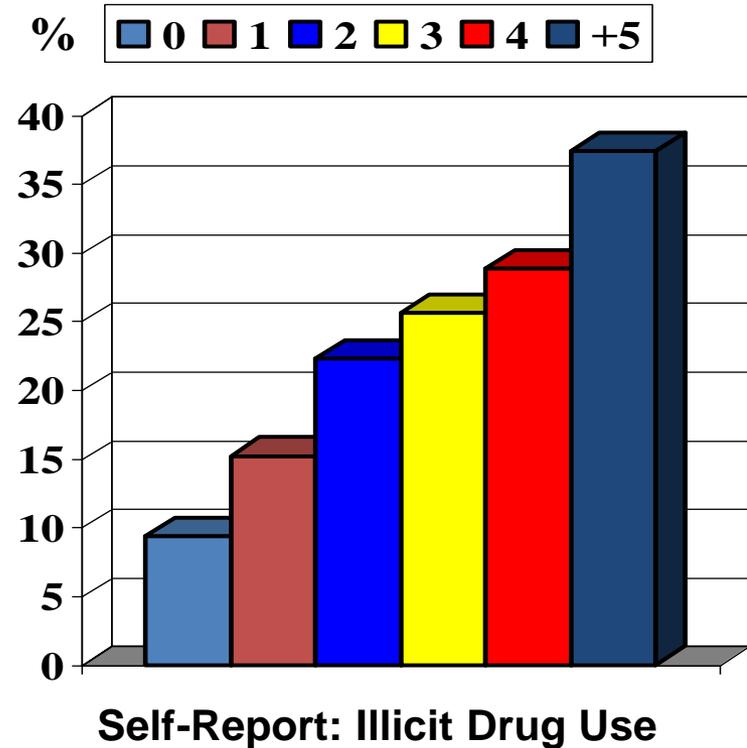
In the original 1998 ACE Study, the first seven categories (listed above) were included on the ACE questionnaire. Subsequent studies added three more categories.

To download the ACE questionnaire, visit: http://acestudy.org/ace_score

Adverse Childhood Events Predict Adult Substance Abuse



Dube et al, 2002



Dube et al, 2005

High ACE Scores Linked to Serious Mental Health Issues:

- **Depressive disorders**
- **Anxiety**
- **Hallucinations**
- **Panic reactions**
- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Memory disturbances**
- **Poor anger control**
- **Risk of perpetrating
or being a victim of
domestic violence**



Trauma & Stress Can Impair Learning

- **The prefrontal cortex, an essential part of the brain for self regulation, is most affected by early stress.**
- **As a result, children in stressful environments find it harder to concentrate, sit still, follow directions, or learn.**



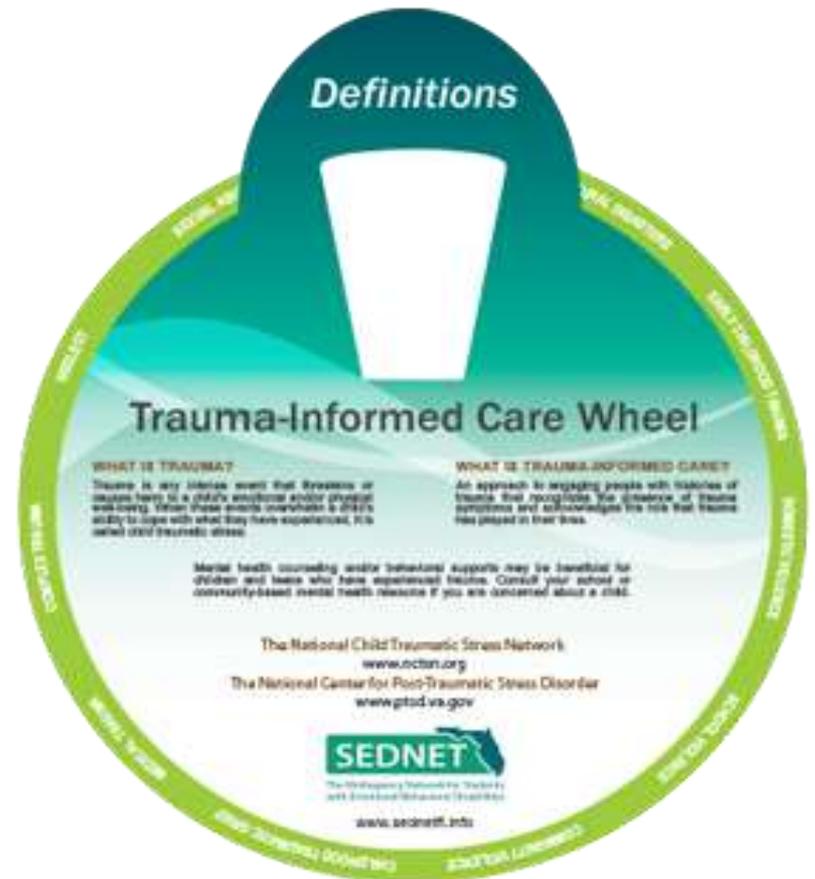


The Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities

creates and facilitates a network of key stakeholders committed to assisting in the provision of a quality system of care for students with or at-risk of emotional and/or behavioral challenges.

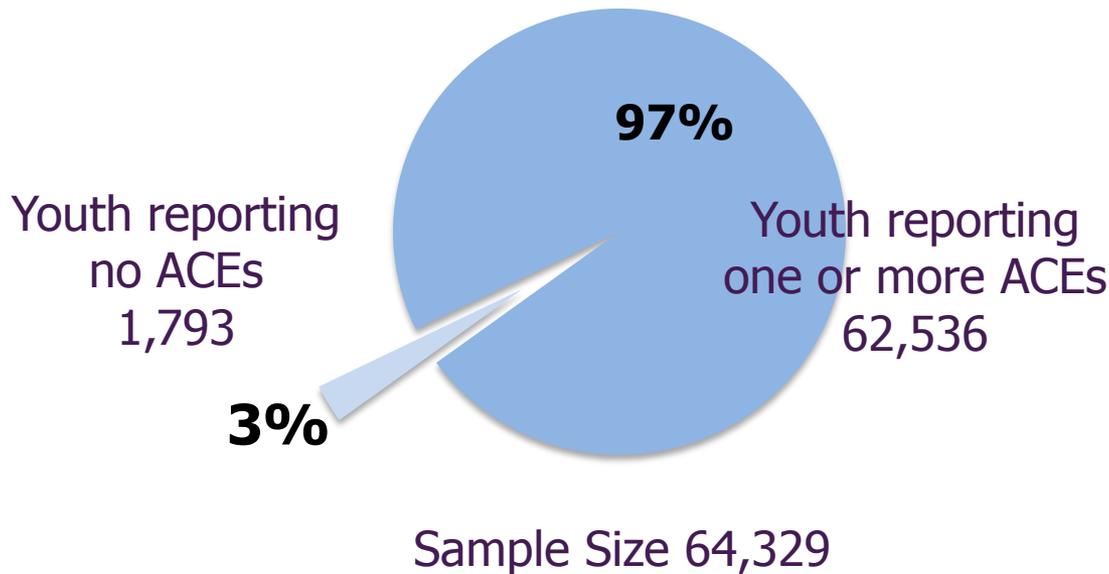
<http://www.sednetfl.info/Index.aspx>

This Website was developed by the Florida Center for Interactive Media through a special project funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.



Trauma Is Common in Juvenile Delinquency

Data shows very high ACES in Florida's DJJ



ACE Score	Florida's DJJ
0	2.8%
1	10%
2	16%
3	21%
4 +	50%

Source: Baglivio, M., Epps, N., Swartz, K., Huq, M. S., Sheer, A. & Hardt, N. (2014). The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) in the lives of juvenile offenders. *Journal of Juvenile Justice*, (3)2.

www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/pyramid.html



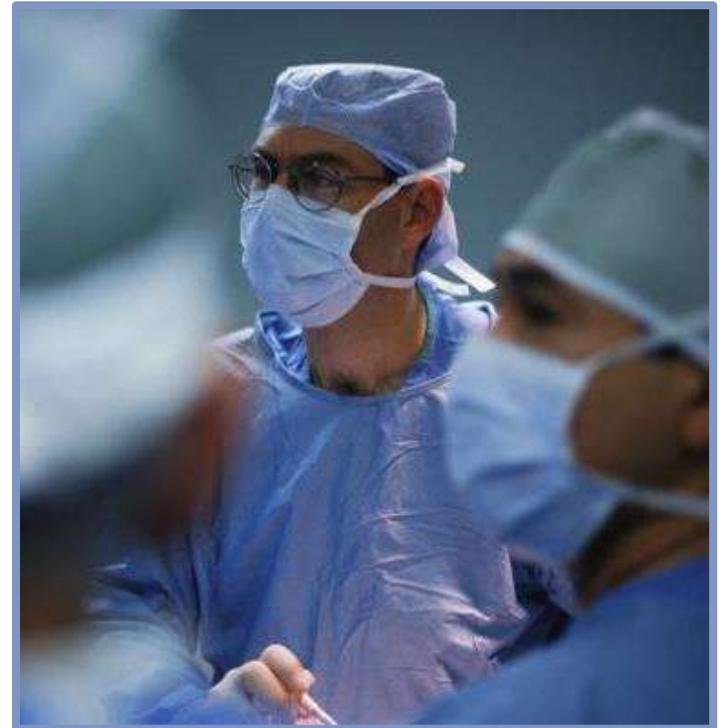
- [Factors Affecting the Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Physical Health Consequences](#)
- [Psychological Consequences](#)
- [Behavioral Consequences](#)
- [Societal Consequences](#)

*It is imperative for **communities** to provide a framework of **prevention strategies and services** before abuse and neglect occur and to be prepared to offer **remediation** and **treatment** when necessary.*

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long-term-consequences/>

ACEs Predict the 10 Leading Causes of Death & Disability

- 1. Heart disease**
- 2. Cancer**
- 3. Chronic lower respiratory diseases**
- 4. Stroke**
- 5. Unintentional injuries**
- 6. Alzheimer's disease**
- 7. Diabetes**
- 8. Kidney disease**
- 9. Influenza and pneumonia**
- 10. Suicide**



Source: Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245-258.

Trauma:

A Public Health Issue

Prevalence:

Trauma is common among adults and children in social service systems.

98%

of **female offenders** have **experienced trauma**, often interpersonal trauma and domestic violence



96%

of adolescent psychiatric inpatients have histories of **exposure to trauma**



93%

of **homeless mothers** have a **lifetime history of interpersonal trauma**



90%

of **juvenile justice-involved youth** have experienced trauma, often **multiple traumas from an early age**



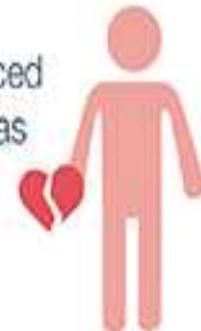
75%

of **adults in substance abuse treatment** report histories of trauma



70%

of **children in foster care** have experienced **multiple traumas**



RED FLAGS OF TRAUMA/ACEs

in Children & Parents Reading Between the Lines

CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASE:	Domestic Violence, physical punishment
LIVING CIRCUMSTANCE:	Hazardous conditions, No Utilities, On the streets, In a shed, With Friends or Relative, In their car
STATUS:	Runaway, jail, prison, mental health or substance abuse facility
REPORTED HOTLINE HISTORY:	A Parent's childhood or Sibling's history, Adopted? Permanent Guardianship/Relative Caregiver?, Sibling's locations (jail, dead, mental health issues)
INDICATED & UNFOUNDED REPORTS:	Give them weight: unfounded doesn't = untrue
TYPES OF CHARGES AND FREQUENCY:	Multi Batteries included on LEO or staff, Sex Offenses (a victim of child sex abuse?)
SCHOOL HISTORY:	Graduate from HS?, Suspensions & expulsions

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:	Victim or Offender
MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY:	Age, Multi Diagnosis: ADHD, PTSD, Bi-polar, Anxiety, Explosive Disorder, Hospitalizations
MULTI-SEXUAL PARTNERS:	Unknown Fathers? Children who were product of rape?
TATOOS:	Branding by a trafficker?
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND EMOTION:	Aggressive, Antsy, No eye contact, Hunched, Exhausted
PHYSICAL HEALTH:	Diabetes, Heart Disease, Cancer, Auto-Immune Diseases, Sores
DRUGS:	Marijuana use despite substance abuse counseling
MEN WITH SIGNIFICANT ATTACHMENT TO DOG:	A recent study shows <i>male</i> victims of sex abuse cope through a relationship with their dog

Communication



Communication

What hurts:

Distracting Listening.

Interactions that are:

- Humiliating
- Disrespectful
- Critical
- Judgmental

What helps:

Actively listen.

SHOW RESPECT:

- Interact with kindness
- Patience
- Reassurance
- Acceptance

Communication

What hurts:

Thinking and/or asking

"What's wrong with you?"

What helps:

Think and ask

"What has happened to you?"

*"Sometimes bad things happen
to children when they're younger.*

Those are crimes.

That should not have happened.

It's not your fault.

*There is nothing you could have done to stop what
happened to you or your brothers or sisters.*

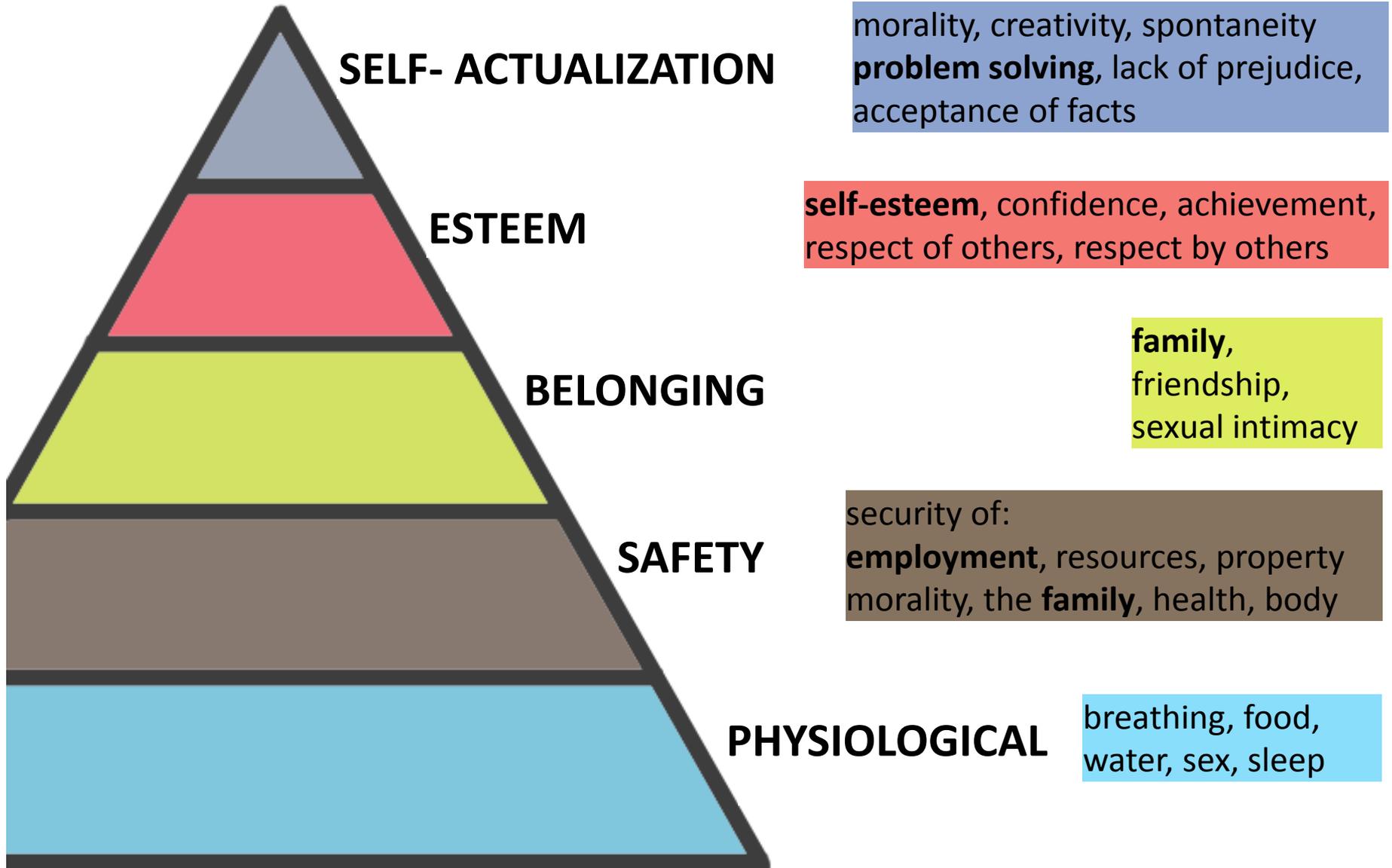
You deserve to be happy.

You can heal from bad things in the past.

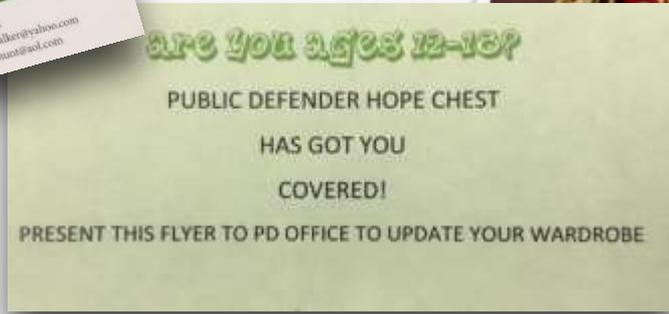
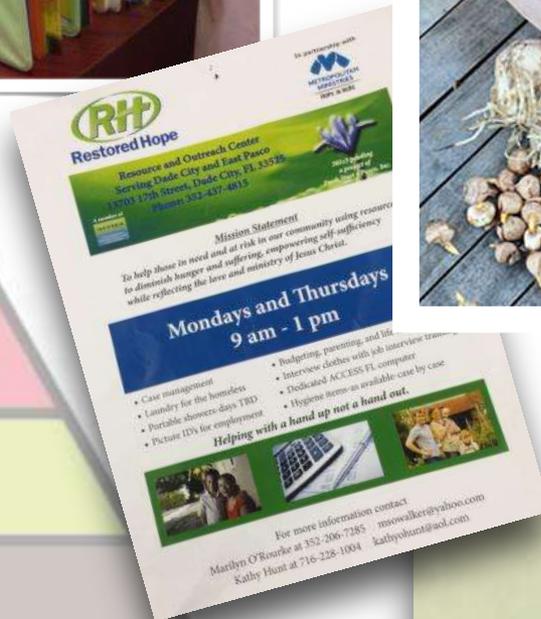
I can get you someone to talk to who could help.

Do you think that might help? "

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

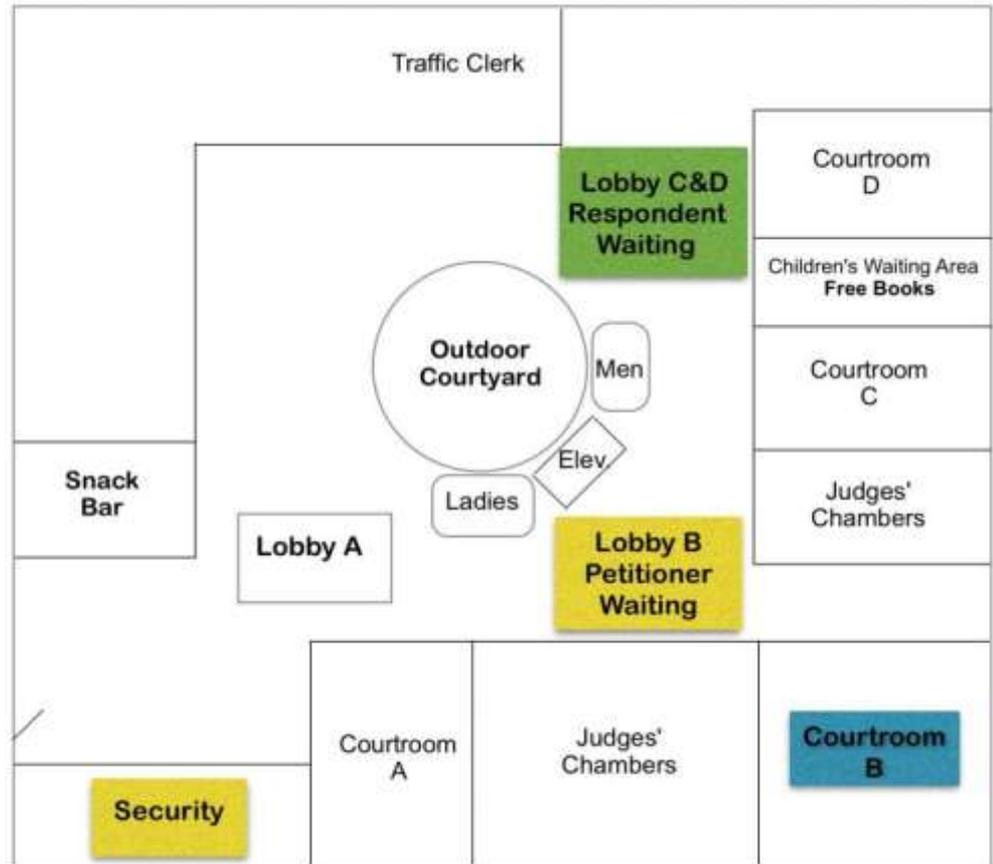
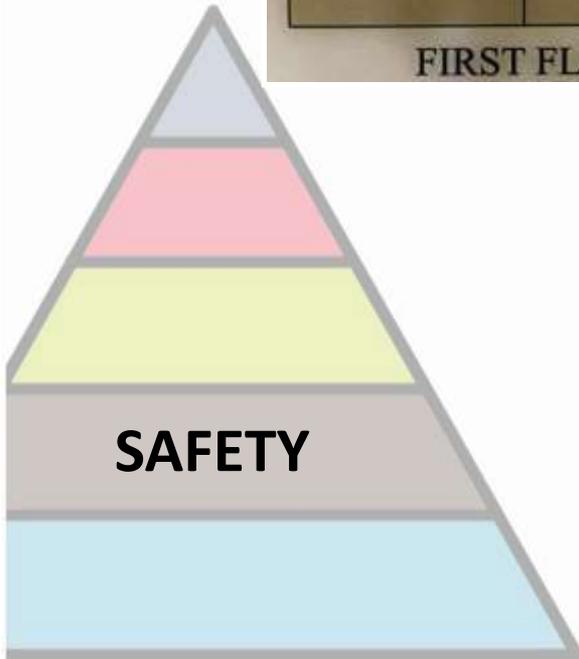
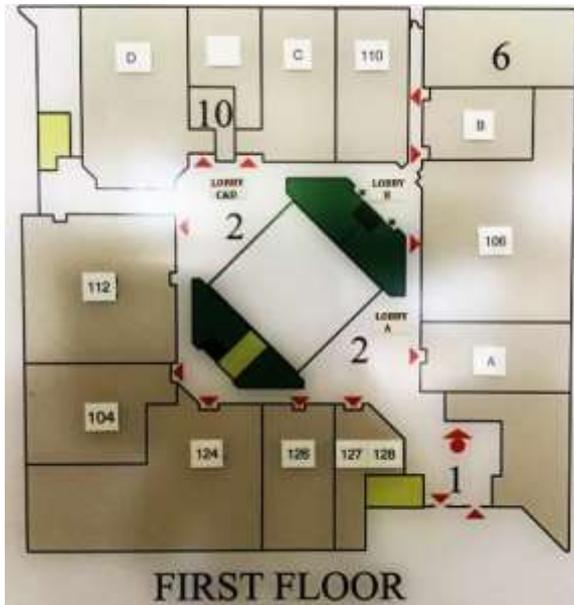


PHYSIOLOGICAL



PHYSIOLOGICAL

SAFETY



Court Environment

What hurts:

Congested, noisy waiting areas.



What helps:

Offer a calm and quiet place to wait.



Court Environment

What hurts:

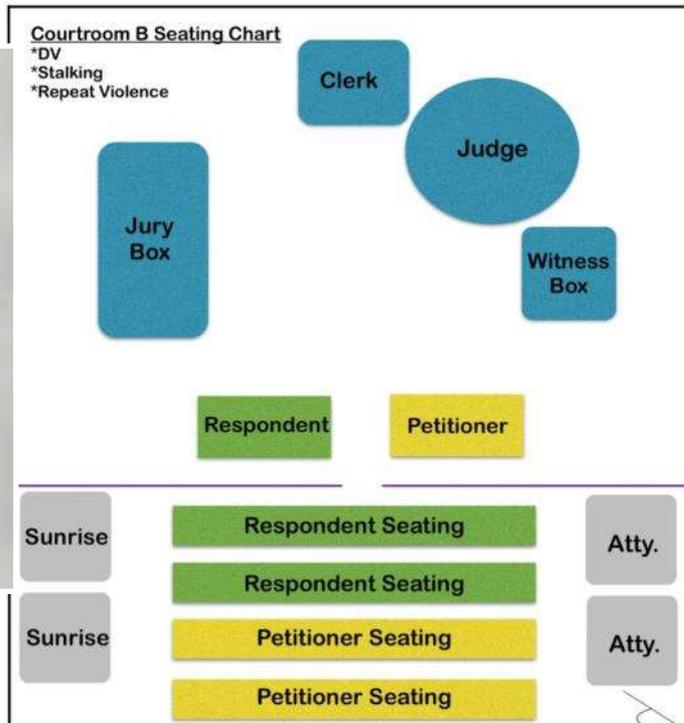
Confusing signage.

What helps:

Clear directions and simple courthouse rules.

Lobby
Waiting Area
A

Area de Espera
A



Court Environment

What hurts:

Congested,
noisy courtrooms.

Long wait periods.

What helps:

Minimize courtroom
noise, movement &
activity.

Time-specific docketing
to reduce anxiety and
agitation.

Court Environment

What hurts:

Not feeling
safe & secure.

Intimidating
Bailiffs or Transport
officers.

Asking about traumatic
events, memories &
feelings in open court.

What helps:

Adequate security in the
Courthouse &
Courtroom. Advocate for it!

Eliminate
nonverbal intimidation.

Use caution when
talking about
traumatic events.

BELONGING



free art classes!

Prodigy
Cultural Arts Program
"Transforming Young Lives"

enrolling now for youth ages 7-9

now offering: Visual Art
when: Tuesday & Thursday (4:30 – 6:00 pm)
where: Naomi Jones Park
38122 Martin Luther King Blvd, Dade City, FL
contact: Please contact Frances Ramos at 352-588-7425
or frances.ramos@saintleo.edu for more
information on this class and others!

www.saintleofreeartclasses.com

Classes are subject to change. Please call for updates.



BELONGING

ESTEEM



LiFT Academy

Seminole



Florida

This certifies that

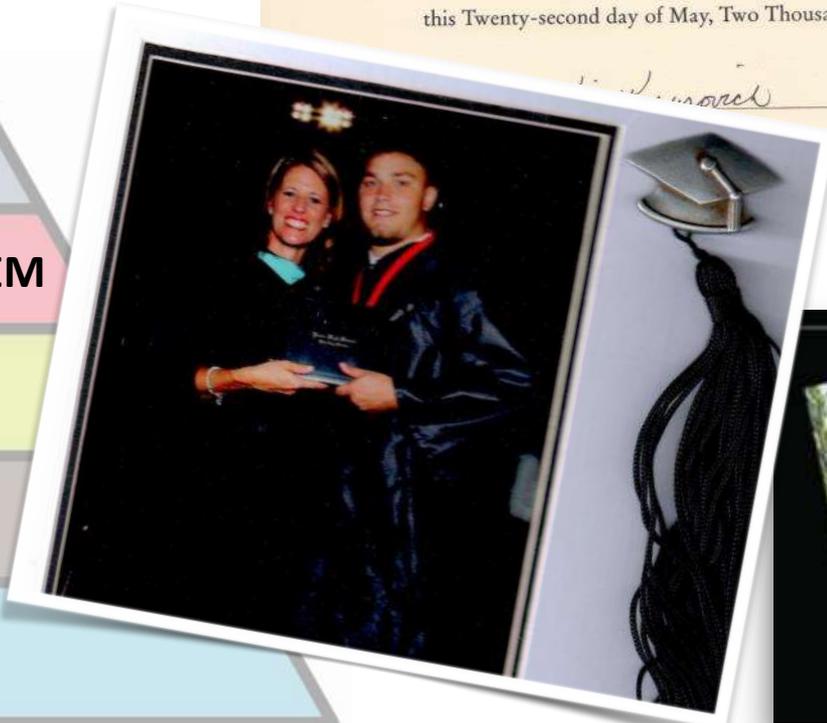
Alexander [redacted]

has completed the Course of Study prescribed for Graduation by the State of Florida and this Institution and is therefore awarded this

High School Diploma

this Twenty-second day of May, Two Thousand and Fifteen

[Handwritten signature]

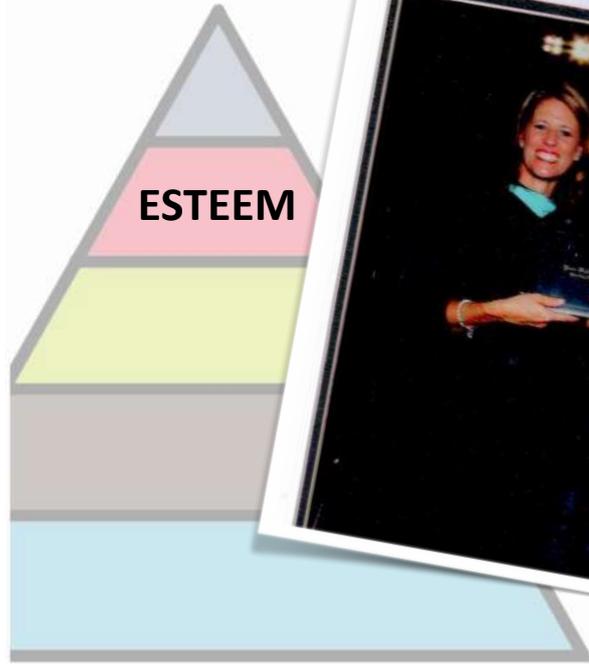


Please join us for the
Graduation
From LiFT Academy

Graduation Celebration

May 22nd 2015 at 9:30 a.m.
Oakhurst United Methodist Church
13400 Park Blvd.
Seminole, FL 32778

ESTEEM





SELF-ACTUALIZATION



Mrs. Tepper,

I know you have alot of cases, but my name is Tina V. I was in your court a little while back. I wanted to thank you so much for the job that you have, and the person you are. As much as I hated my life when I had to walk into your courtroom! Especially when you made the decision to take my 3 kids out of my care. But I can look back now and thank you sincerely from my heart. I know now that was the best thing for me and my kids. I needed that!!! I also thank you for giving me that push to work so hard for MYSELF (not my kids) cause I learned who I am! Which is allowing me to be a awesome mother now! Yes you allowed me to have full rights back to my children!!!! Thank You!!! They are my world!!! I want you to know that next Thursday I will be clean for 2 years...and it is a feeling i could never explain with ANY words. Me and my kids have our own house (thanks to my mom who I rent from), I got my driver's liscense back and a car. I continue to work full-time, I pay all my bills myself (which is still crazy to me), and amazingly my mother is my best friend now (cause if you remember she wasn't my favorite person), and most of all I love the person I am today!! I know I still have work to do but i am very happy! You are an awesome judge, you never once made me feel below you, you are a very understanding and caring woman. Again Thank you!!!

Love Always,
Tina V.





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RESOURCES

[Florida State University's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy](#)

[Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ACE Study Site](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Child Development Site](#)

[The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Aces Too High

CASA, The Judges' Page Newsletter, Trauma Edition

National Technical Assistance Center for Children's
Mental Health, Georgetown University Center for Child
and Human Development

Want to Know *Even More*?

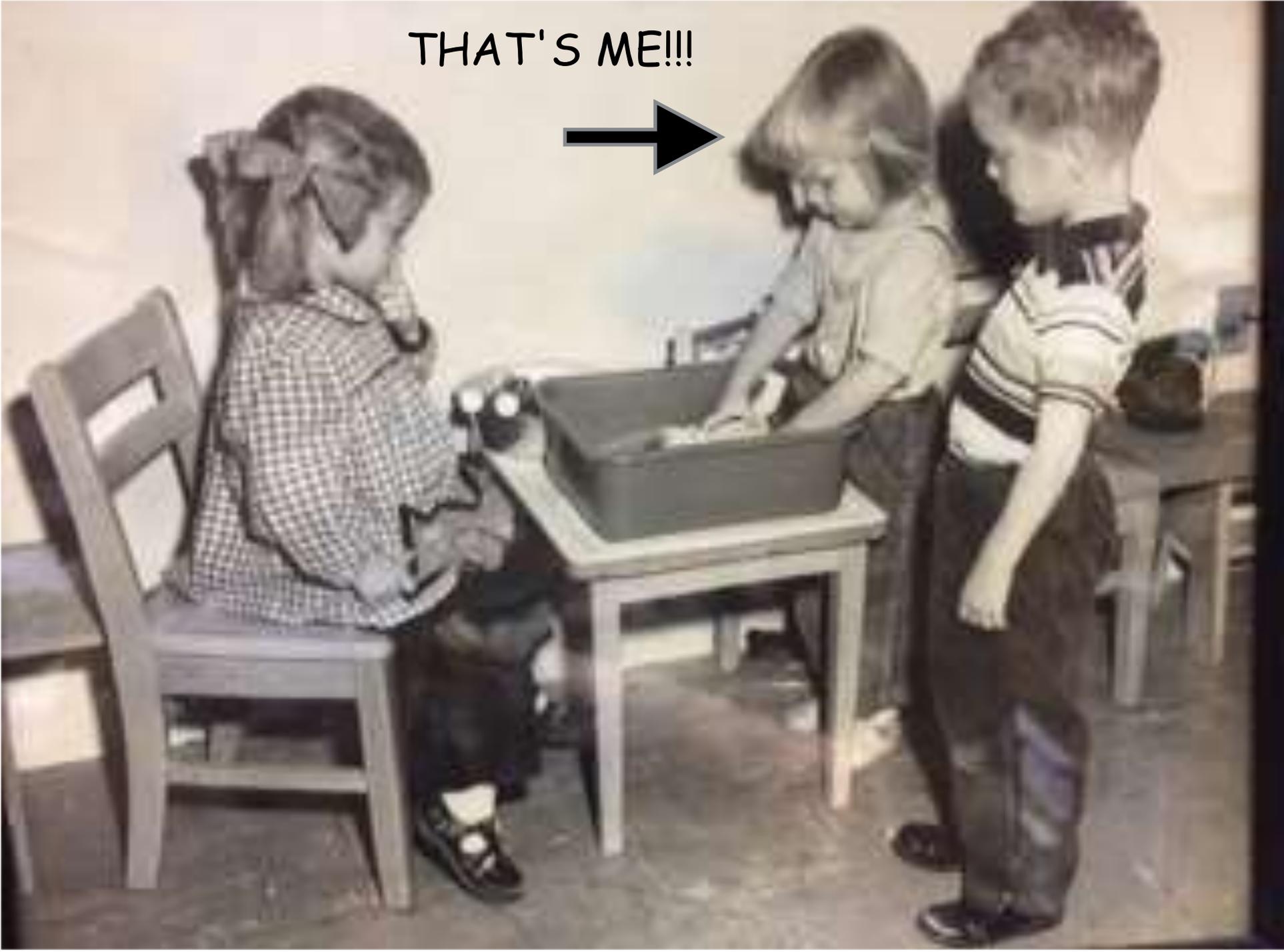
Tackling Toxic Stress," a multi-part series of journalistic articles planned and commissioned by the Harvard Center on the Developing Child. Topics include:

- **Pediatricians Take On Toxic Stress**
- **Listening to a Baby's Brain: Changing the Pediatric Checkup to Reduce Toxic Stress**
- **Innovating in Early Head Start: Can Reducing Toxic Stress Improve Outcomes for Young Children?**
- **Using Science to Drive New Approaches to Child Welfare**
- **Pushing Toward Breakthroughs: Using Innovative Practice to Address Toxic Stress**

Questions?

Honorable Lynn Tepper
Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida
Dade City, Pasco County
ltepper@jud6.org

THAT'S ME!!!



Special Thanks

