



Mental Health and Intersectionality: Gaps and Opportunities in Serving Youth

CMWS December 2021



Agenda / Call to Action

- RECOGNIZE: It's not a bootstrapping thing
- IMPACT: Common triggers, feelings
- REACT: How can you proactively support mental health needs of youth?
- Resources
- Q&A

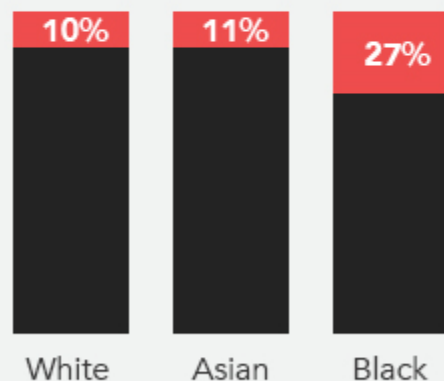


Gender and race disparities in startup funding

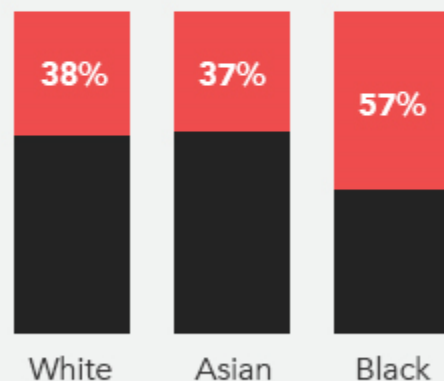
% of founders who bootstrapped their health care companies

■ venture-backed, angel-backed + other ■ bootstrapped

MALE FOUNDERS



FEMALE FOUNDERS



DATA: Rock Health 2020 diversity report (678 responses from healthcare startup founders)

theHUSTLE

“It’s a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself up by his own bootstraps.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Introductions

Which of these speak to you because of your experiences or those of the youth you serve?

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

@sylvriaduckworth

In a survey of African-Americans:

63% of the respondents viewed depression as a "personal weakness"

30% reported that they would deal with depression themselves

33% Only a third of the respondents reported that they would accept medication for depression if prescribed by a medical professional

Furthermore, another survey found out that

92% percent of depressed African-American males do not seek treatment

"I want to talk about my thoughts and feelings"



► **RECOGNIZE:** It's not a bootstrapping thing



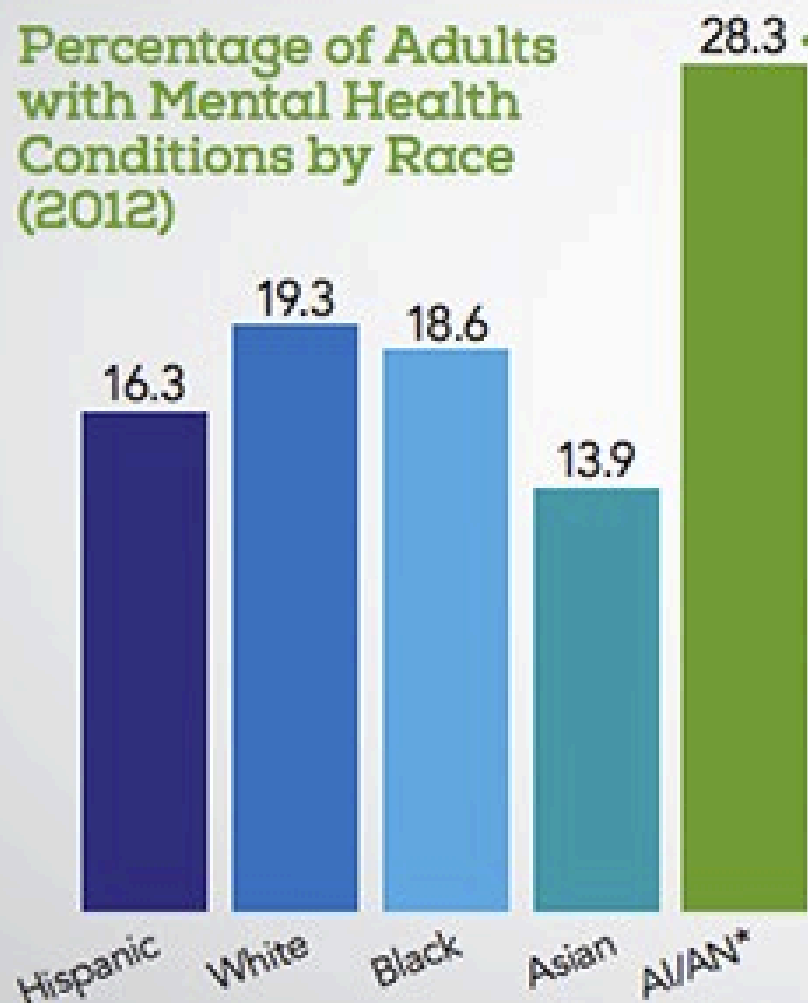
“All bad behavior is an unskilled expression of an unmet need” – Shola Richards

When people feel safe and accepted in being their authentic selves, they have more secure mental health.

Does Mental Health Affect My Community?

Mental health affects everyone regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

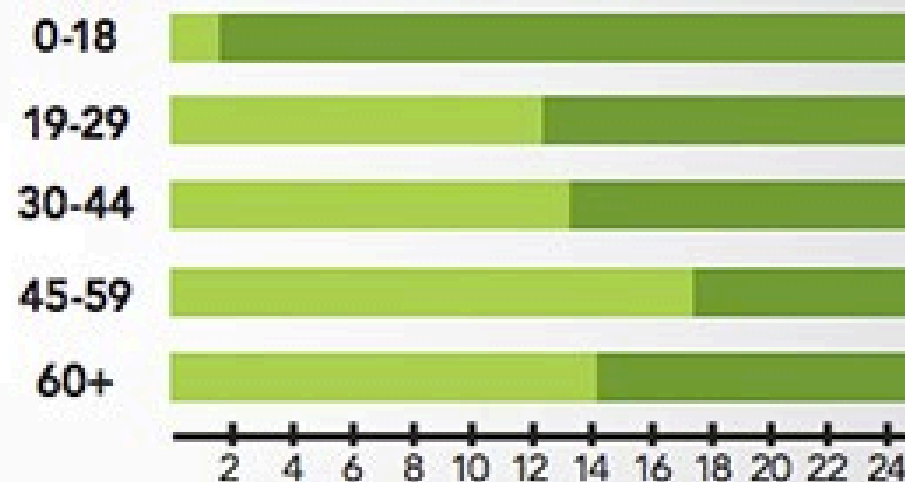
Percentage of Adults with Mental Health Conditions by Race (2012)



*American Indian/Alaska Native

At 28.3%, American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest rate of mental health conditions among all communities.

Rate of Suicides in the U.S. by Age per 100,000 People (2007)



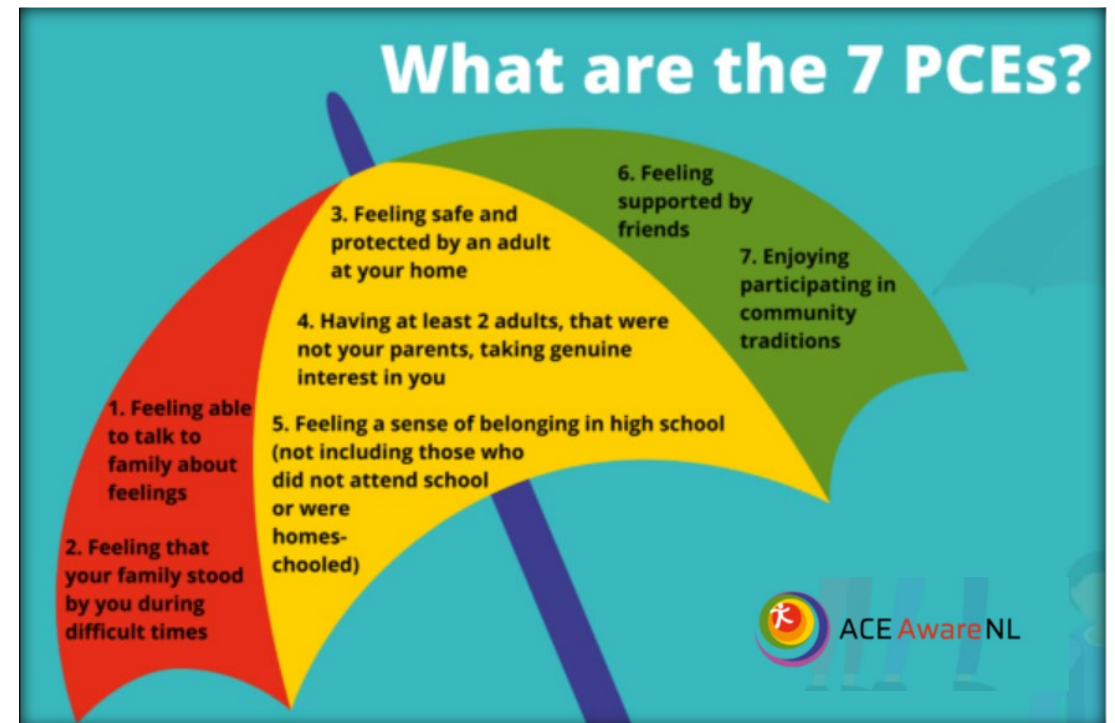
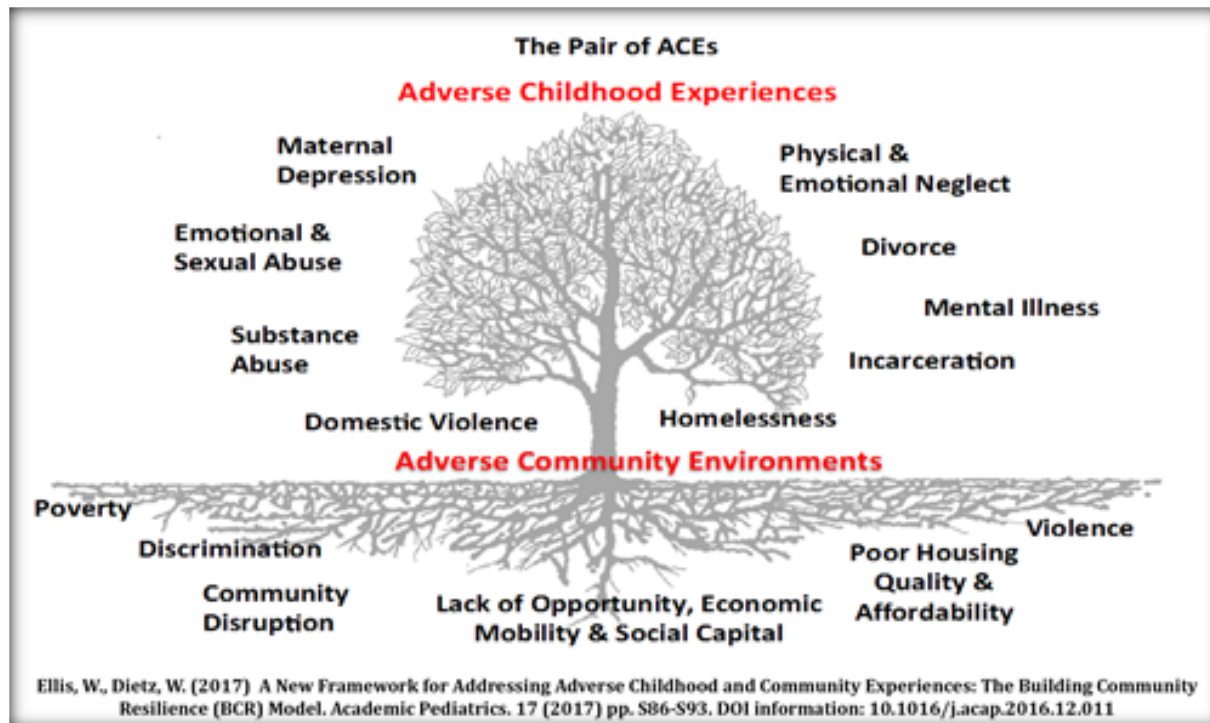
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.

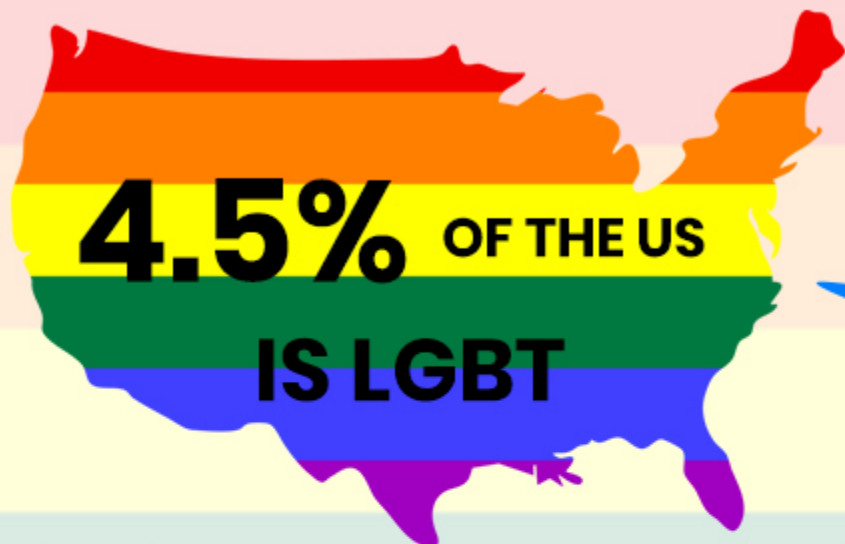
LGBTQ individuals are 2 or more times more likely as straight individuals to have a mental health condition.



► **RECOGNIZE:** It's not a bootstrapping thing

- All people struggle and have access to traumatic experiences
- Subpopulations who have been historically marginalized may find it more difficult to access positive childhood experiences
- Even people (ex. mentors, staff) who mean well may not create positive impact with their intentions (**intention \neq impact**)






(THAT'S NEARLY 15 MILLION PEOPLE)

**OF THEM, 1/3 EXPERIENCE A MENTAL ILLNESS
(60% MORE THAN HETEROSEXUALS)**


**AND ARE 2-3x MORE LIKELY TO HAVE LONG-TERM
PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

**REGULARLY FACING PREJUDICE,
HARASSMENT, & DISCRIMINATION**


**WHICH CAUSES SERIOUS ISSUES
WITHIN THE LGBTQ+ POPULATION...**



**TRANSGENDER
PEOPLE ATTEMPT
SUICIDE 9x MORE
THAN THE ENTIRE
US POPULATION,**



**LGBTQ+ ADULTS ARE
56% MORE LIKELY TO
DEVELOP AN
ALCOHOL USE
DISORDER,**



**AND ALMOST 3x
AS LIKELY TO
DEVELOP
ANOTHER
SUBSTANCE USE
DISORDER.**

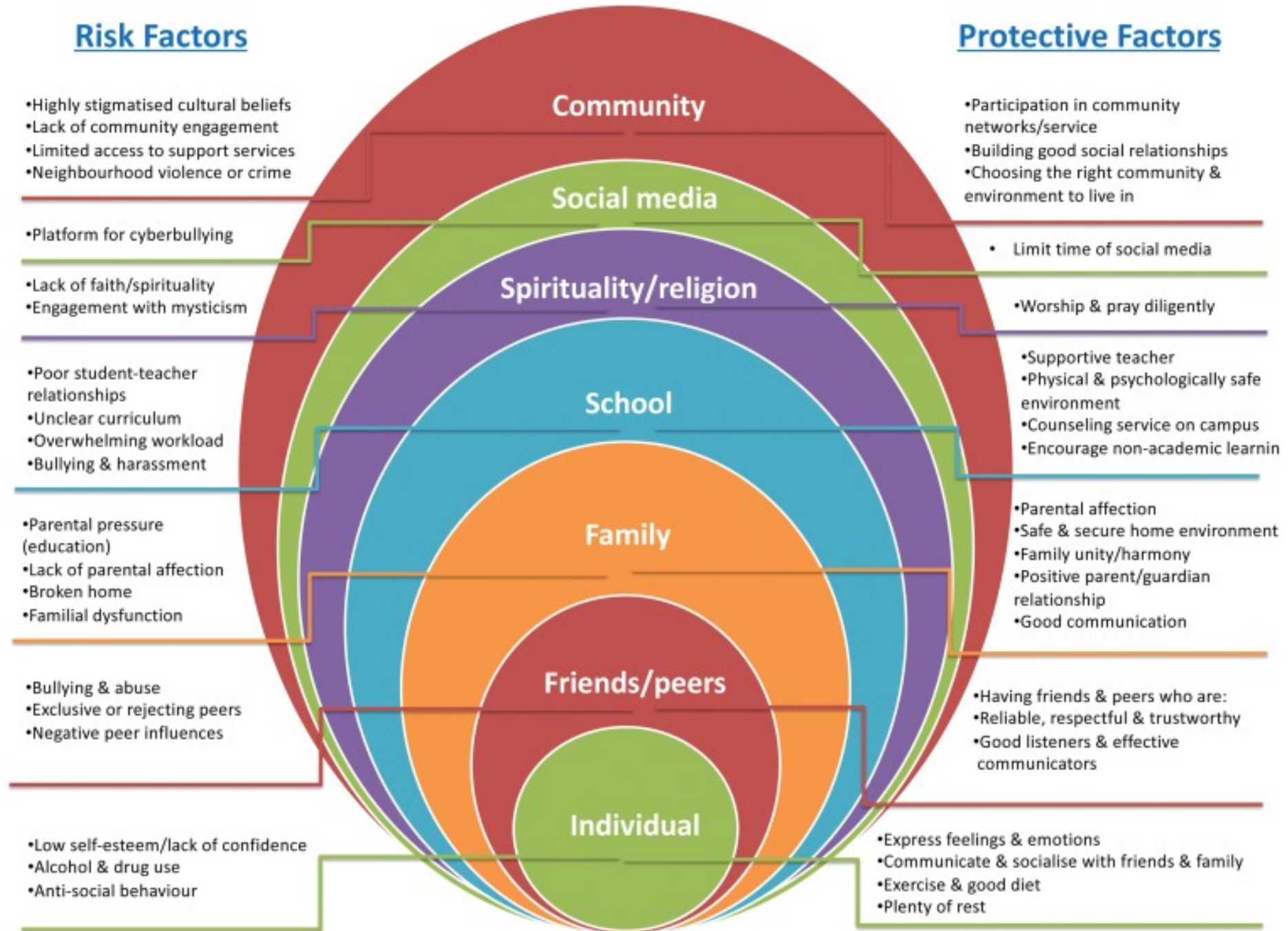


SOURCES:

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/234863/estimate-lgbt-population-rises.aspx>
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11606-014-2905-y>

<https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>
<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-SexualOrientation-2015/NSDUH-SexualOrientation-2015/NSDUH-SexualOrientation-2015.htm>

RECOGNIZE:
How might these factors be influenced by intersectional identities?



adults with autism

Adult life — with its bosses, coworkers, roommates and romantic partners — can be tough enough. Then add the hallmark social and executive-function challenges of autism spectrum disorder.



An estimated 5 percent of adults with autism have ever been married

Depression affects an estimated 26 percent of adults with autism
3 times the U.S. average



Many young adults with autism **don't receive any health care** for years after they stop seeing a pediatrician

An estimated one in four to one in five is **unemployed**

More than half of young adults with autism remain unemployed and unenrolled in higher education in the two years after high school

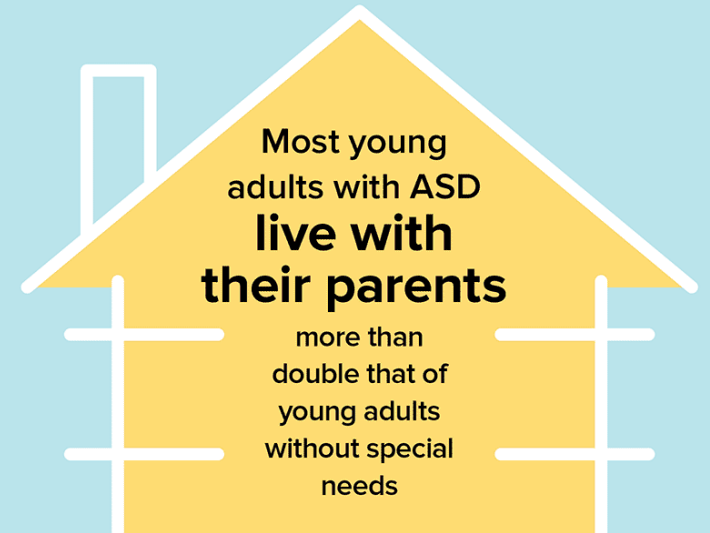


As many as **one-third** have epilepsy



Most young adults with ASD **live with their parents**

more than double that of young adults without special needs

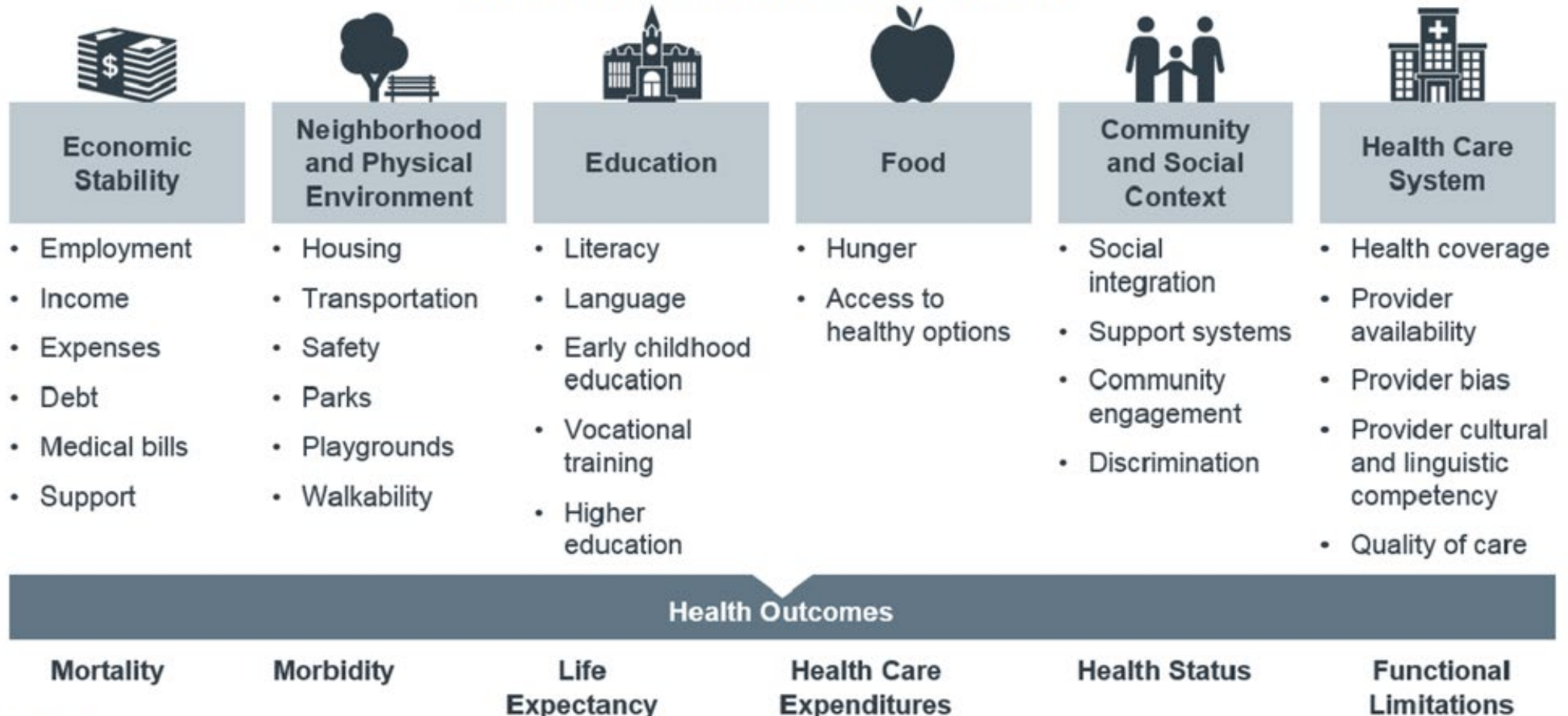


RECOGNIZE:

How might these factors be influenced by intersectional identities?



The social determinants of health



Aggression

Behavior is carried out with the immediate intention to cause harm to a person motivated to avoid the behavior.

- Intentional
- Hostile
- Verbal or non-verbal



Micro Aggression

Indirect, sometimes subtle, put down toward a person from a marginalized community, often disguised as a compliment.

- Brief
- Common
- Hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to target a person or group.





"I don't see color."



"She won't be able to travel for outings."

"No, where are you really from?"



"You don't look disabled."





You speak
English very
well

You
communicate
effectively.



I have lots of
black friends

I have a diverse
group of friends.

I don't see
color

I treat everyone
the same.

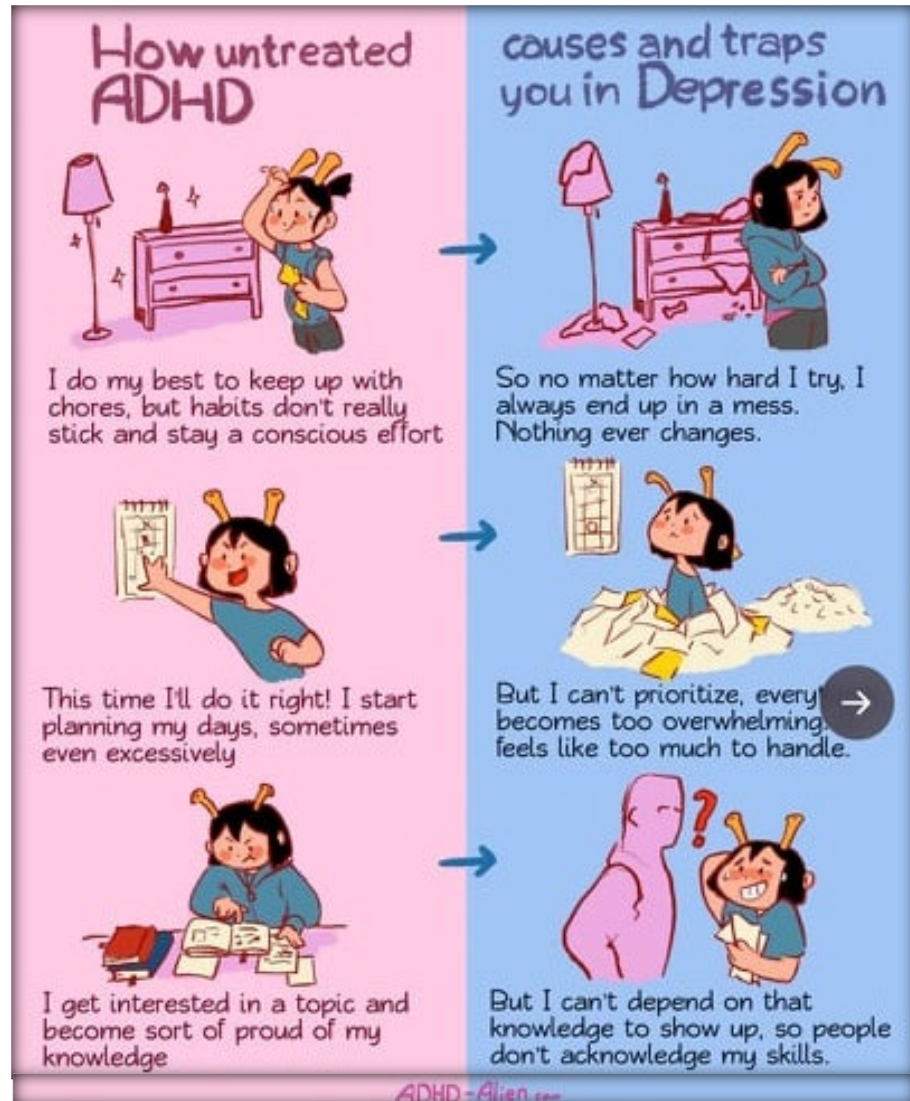


What do your
people think
about this?

I'm interested in
your
persepctive.



► **IMPACT:** Common triggers and feelings



Common triggers, feelings

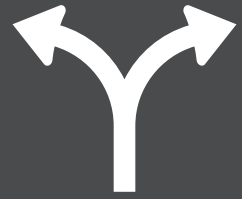
- Dysmorphia, Dysphoria
- Undeserving of love / enough
- "You're exaggerating" / "I don't see differences like that"
- Center of attention / anxiety / "othering"
- Microaggressions
- Availability of services / role models / media
- Here's everyone else like you that I know! / I'm just like you / Do you know all these other people?

► **IMPACT:** Common triggers and feelings

“I feel” statements (?)

- I feel comfortable in my own body.
- I feel worthy of love.
- I feel I belong most places I go.
- My mentors / counselors understand where I’m coming from.
- I feel like I can be anything I want to be
- I see examples of people like me in popular culture
- My country’s laws are set up to protect my rights / help me be successful





Ways people choose to react

Let it go.

Leaves feelings of why it happened, questioning their right to feel offended, reinforcing beliefs that they are not safe.



Respond immediately.

Risky and can be left feeling like they "lost control", did show their best self, labeled as overly sensitive.



Respond later.

Address it privately, explaining why it was offensive. Can be the cause of gaslighting. (deemed petty)



REACT: Proactively support mental health

What to do when you've committed a microaggression.

Resist the urge to react defensively.

Accepting criticism is hard! Especially when you're being criticized for something you were unaware of. Take a deep breath and...

Sincerely listen with an empathetic heart

Avoid saying anything similar to "I didn't mean it", or "I was just joking." Strive to understand their perspective. Keep in mind your intentions don't matter only the outcome matters.

Verbally acknowledge your impact

This can be as simple as saying (and meaning) "I have heard what you've said, I recognize it caused you pain, and in the future, I will be more thoughtful of what I say because of what you've shared with me."

Apologize and Ask questions

It's always a good idea to apologize when we've hurt someone, even when we may not be forgiven. If you have a relationship with the individual, you may want to ask question about their experiences with micro-aggressions.

EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

BY KATHIE SNOW; VISIT WWW.DISABILITYISNATURAL.COM TO SEE THE COMPLETE ARTICLE

Remember: a disability descriptor is simply a medical diagnosis.

People First Language respectfully puts the person before the disability.

A person with a disability is more *like* people without disabilities than different.

SAY:

People with disabilities.

He has a cognitive disability/diagnosis.

She has autism (or a diagnosis of...).

He has Down syndrome (or a diagnosis of...).

She has a learning disability (diagnosis).

He has a physical disability (diagnosis).

She's of short stature/she's a little person.

He has a mental health condition/diagnosis.

She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.

He receives special ed services.

INSTEAD OF:

The handicapped or disabled.

He's mentally retarded.

She's autistic.

He's Down's; a mongoloid.

She's learning disabled.

He's a quadriplegic/is crippled.

She's a dwarf/midget.

He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.

She's confined to/is wheelchair bound.

He's in special ed.





DON'T

- Assume
- Ask / googlify
- Tokenize
- Talk down
- Take away power
- Overcompensate
- Be defensive
- Minimize
- Use their story to promote yours

DO

- Get to know people. Find out their stories
 - What do you need / don't you need?
 - Be willing to share what your preferences are / teach young people to be confident in sharing that
 - Just because you get to know people doesn't mean you have to like them.
- Be patient and create the space that people want to come into
- Understand that language matters
- Person-first
- Recognize other intersectional identities
- Take a request for help seriously
- Speak openly and accept your imperfections; acknowledge you're going to screw up
 - How do you respond when you screw up? How do we work through it?
 - Recognize that it takes courage for someone to call you out; see it as an opportunity to grow with them

Unconscious Bias

Guess what... if you have a brain you have bias.

- Accept that we all have unconscious bias
- Make considered decisions
- Monitor your own behavior
- Widen your social circle
- Set ground rules
- Avoid making assumptions or relying on gut instinct.
- Speak out
- Apologize



Be a Champion

Speak Up

When you see a microaggression unfolding speak up and intervene professionally.

- What makes you say that?
- Why do you think she/he's the right person to do <some lower level or administrative task>?"
- We don't do that here.
- I don't get it. Can you explain the joke to me?
- Wow, that was awkward.





RESOURCES



- [Rosenberg self-esteem scale](#)
- [Harvard Implicit Association Test](#)
- MENTOR: NMRC Resources on [LGBTQ+ Youth](#), [Youth of Color](#), [Immigrant and Refugee Youth](#), [Youth with Disabilities](#), and more
- MENTOR: Past CMWS webinars on mentoring [young men of color](#), [youth with disabilities](#), [rural youth](#), those involved with the [juvenile court system](#), and [more](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): [People with Disabilities](#), [Double Discrimination](#), how [COVID](#) is impacting Latinx mental health, [How School-Based mental health providers can help Latinx Students](#), [Family Rejection and Transgender Suicide attempts](#), and more
- Youtube: [The biology of toxic stress](#), [Coca Cola's "Remove Labels"](#), [Understanding microaggressions](#)



Mental Health and Intersectionality: Thank You

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