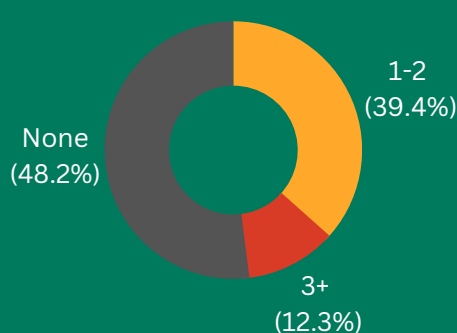# Positive Experiences help children thrive despite trauma and adversity

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are common among youth in Maryland. Fortunately, so are Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs), which can help lessen the negative effects of ACEs and reduce chances of exposure to ACEs.

What are ACEs?

ACEs are potentially traumatic events that happen during childhood such as abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual), neglect (physical and emotional), and household challenges (i.e., divorce, domestic violence).

Exposure to ACEs has been associated with negative outcomes in adulthood such as chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse.

Maryland Youth: Number of Childhood Trauma and Adverse Experiences

- None (48.2%)
- 1-2 (39.4%)
- 3+ (12.3%)

Positive Childhood Experiences

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) are experiences that can promote healthy development and resilience.

Youth that experience more ACEs are more likely to experience the negative effects of ACEs, but **PCEs can *lessen* the effects of ACEs.**

The following PCEs were shown to mitigate against the negative outcomes associated with ACEs:

1. Feeling able to talk to your family about feelings
2. Feeling your family stood by you during difficult times
3. Enjoying participation in community traditions
4. Feeling safe and protected by an adult in your home
5. Feeling a sense of belonging in school
6. Having at least 2 non-parent adults who took genuine interest in you
7. Feeling supported by your friends

How PCEs reduce the negative impact of ACEs

PCEs can help children...

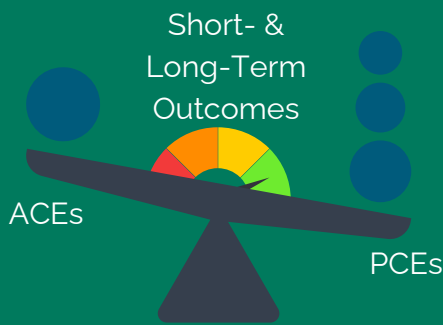form strong relationships

develop self-worth

feel a sense of belonging

build resilience

...and more!

Short- & Long-Term Outcomes

ACEs

PCEs

The more PCEs a child has, the more likely they are to have positive outcomes.

Among students with 3+ ACEs, having the following PCE decreased the rate at which they felt sad or hopeless compared to students without that PCE:

PCE: Able to talk to an adult about their feelings

↓ 24% felt less sad or hopeless

PCE: Participate in extracurricular activities

↓ 8% felt less sad or hopeless

PCE: Food security

↓ 15% felt less sad or hopeless

Healing-Centered Care

Healing-centered care offers a holistic approach to fostering well-being. It emphasizes that the causes of trauma are in the environment, not the individual, and focuses on restoration and building on peoples' strengths.

Building Healing Systems

Systems have a big influence on peoples' lives. Building Healing Systems is an initiative that helps systems recognize the impact of trauma and engage communities in using strengths and healing practices to support well-being.

Learn how to become a trauma-informed, healing-centered organization:

healingsystemsdata.org