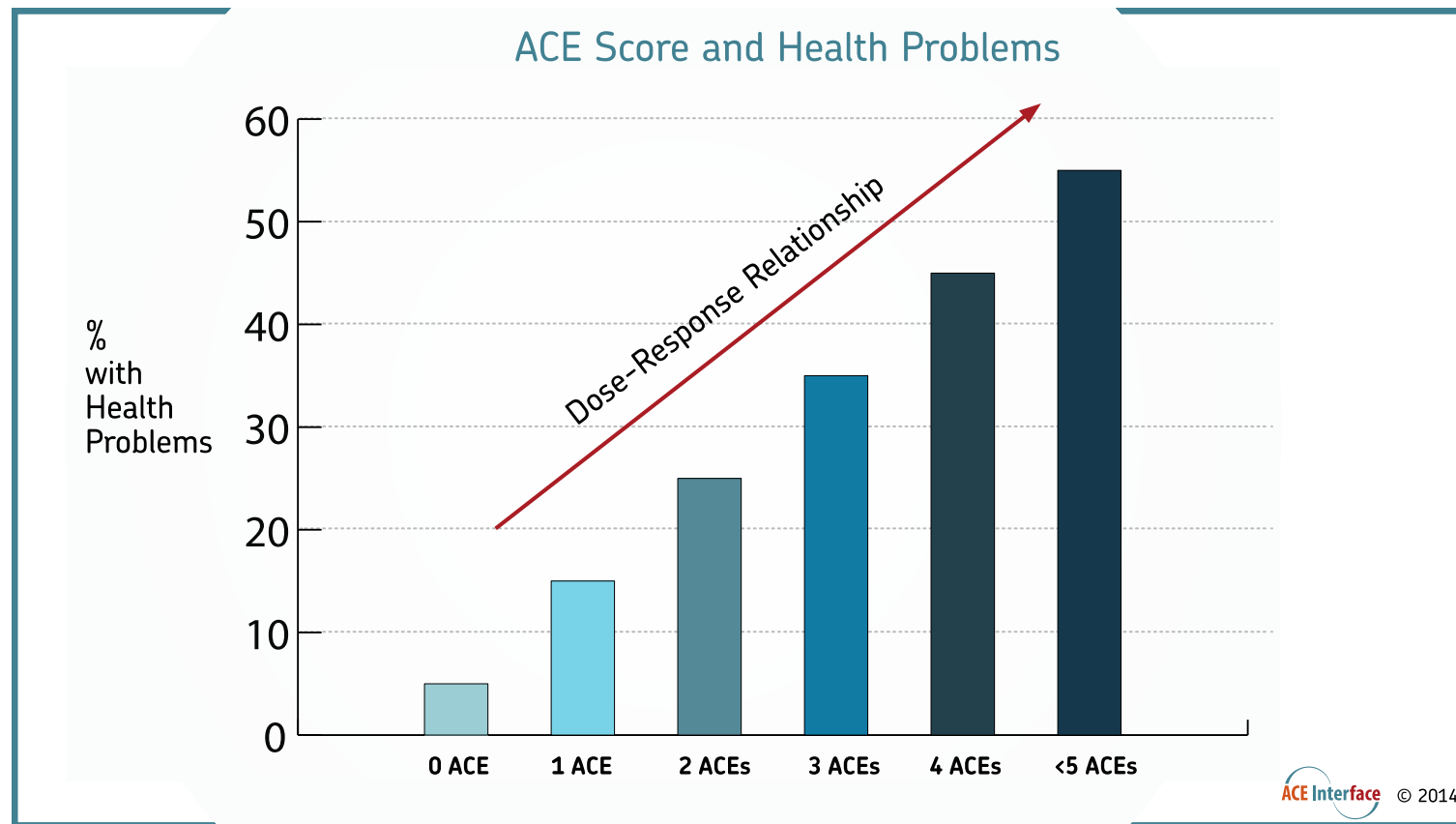


The Opposite of Addiction Isn't Sobriety, It's
Connection ~Johan Hari

Life is a WE thing



How we traditionally talk about ACEs

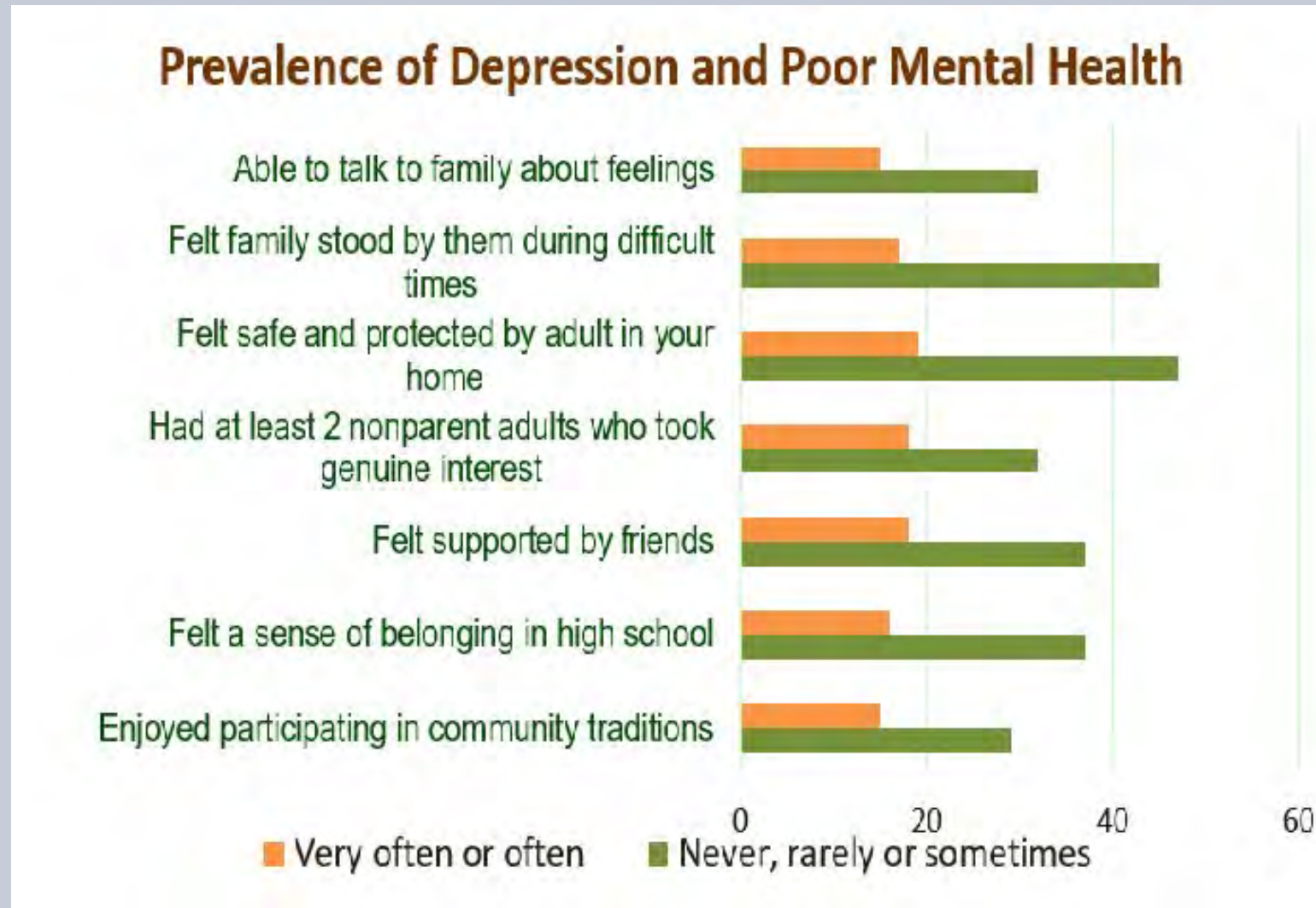


Recent NIH Study

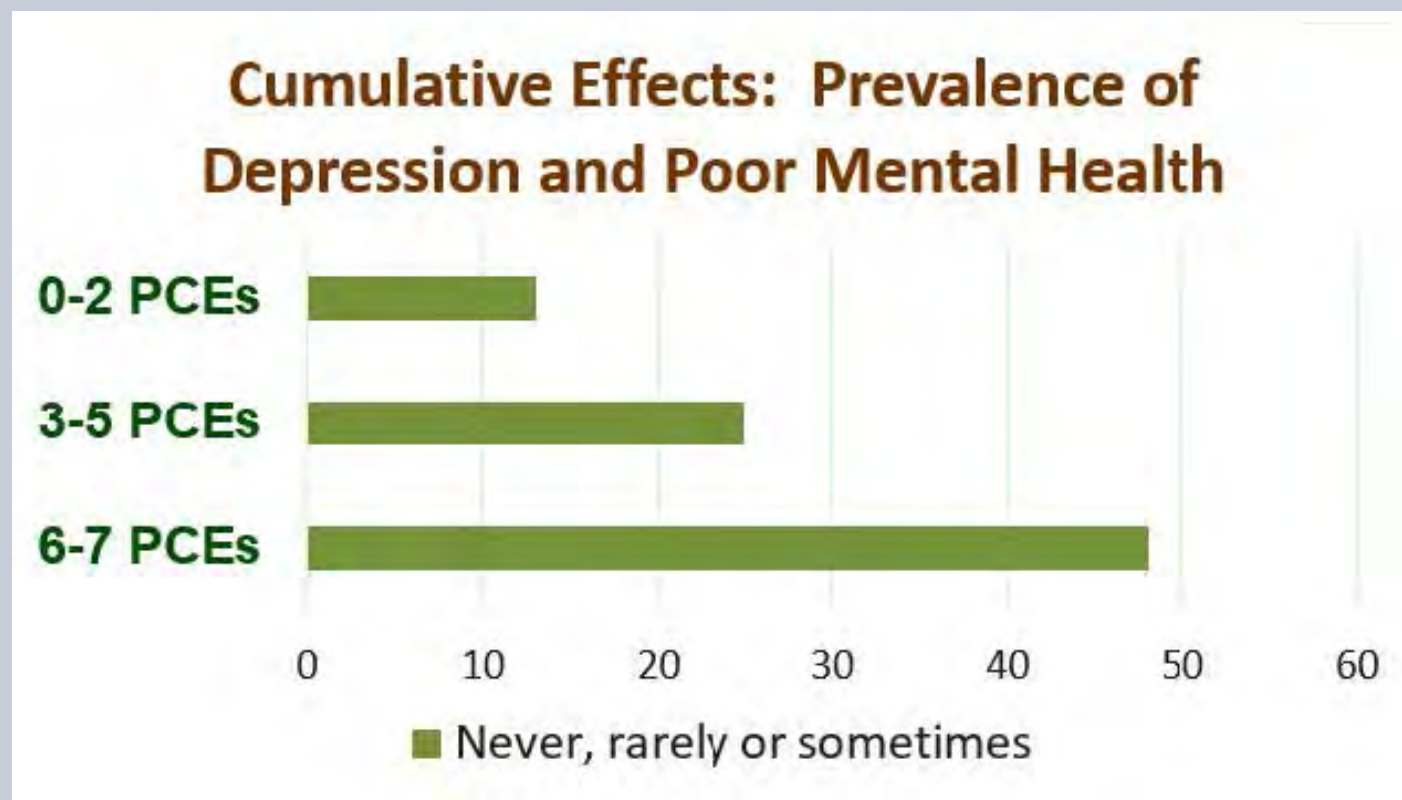
- 2 ACES – 27% higher risk of early death
- 3 ACES – 29% higher risk of early death
- 4 ACES – 45% higher risk of early death



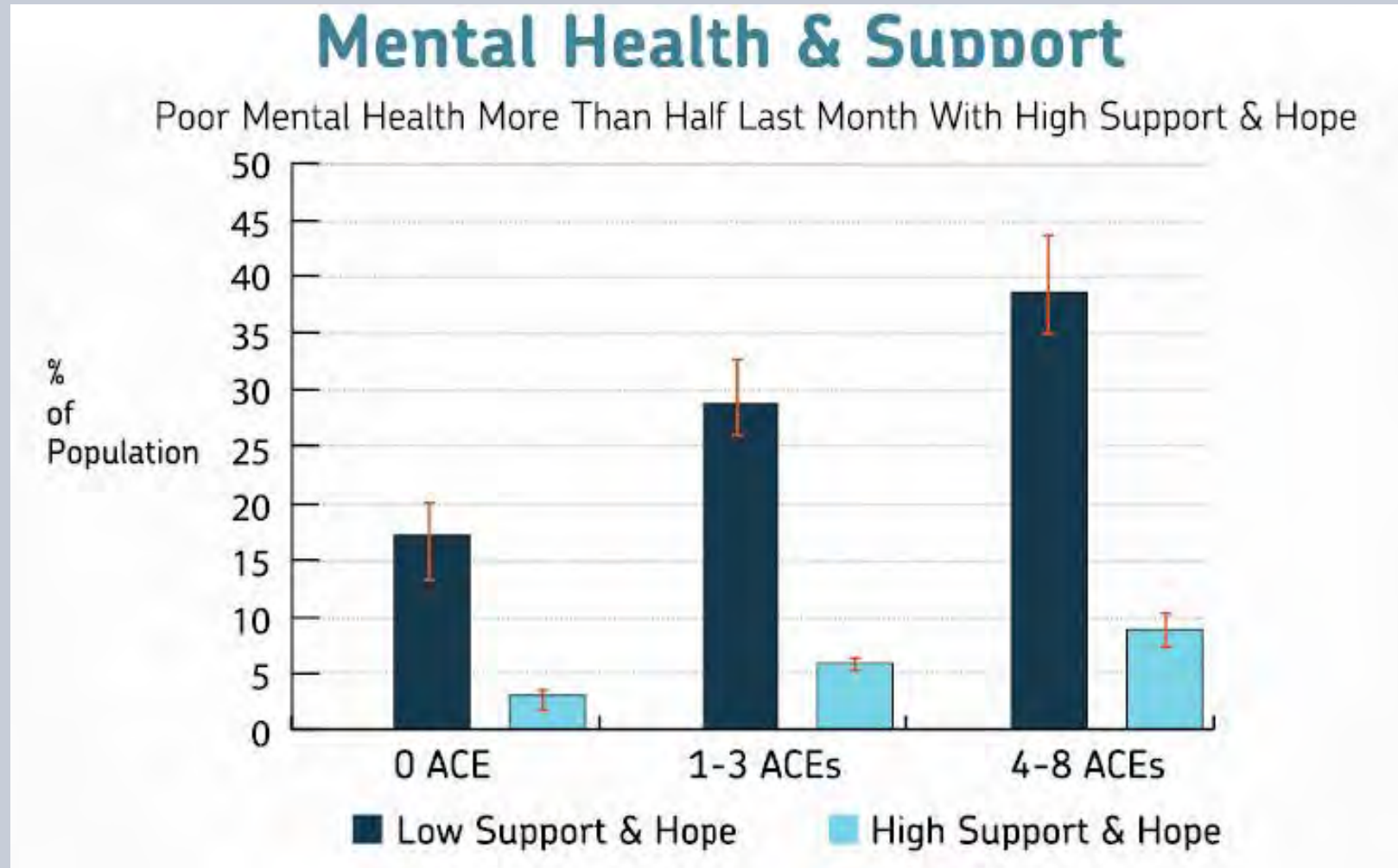
But what about positive childhood experiences (PCEs)?



Is the opposite of ACEs human connection?



If the opposite of ACEs is resilience, is resilience most readily found in human connection?





We come into the world looking for someone who is looking for us.

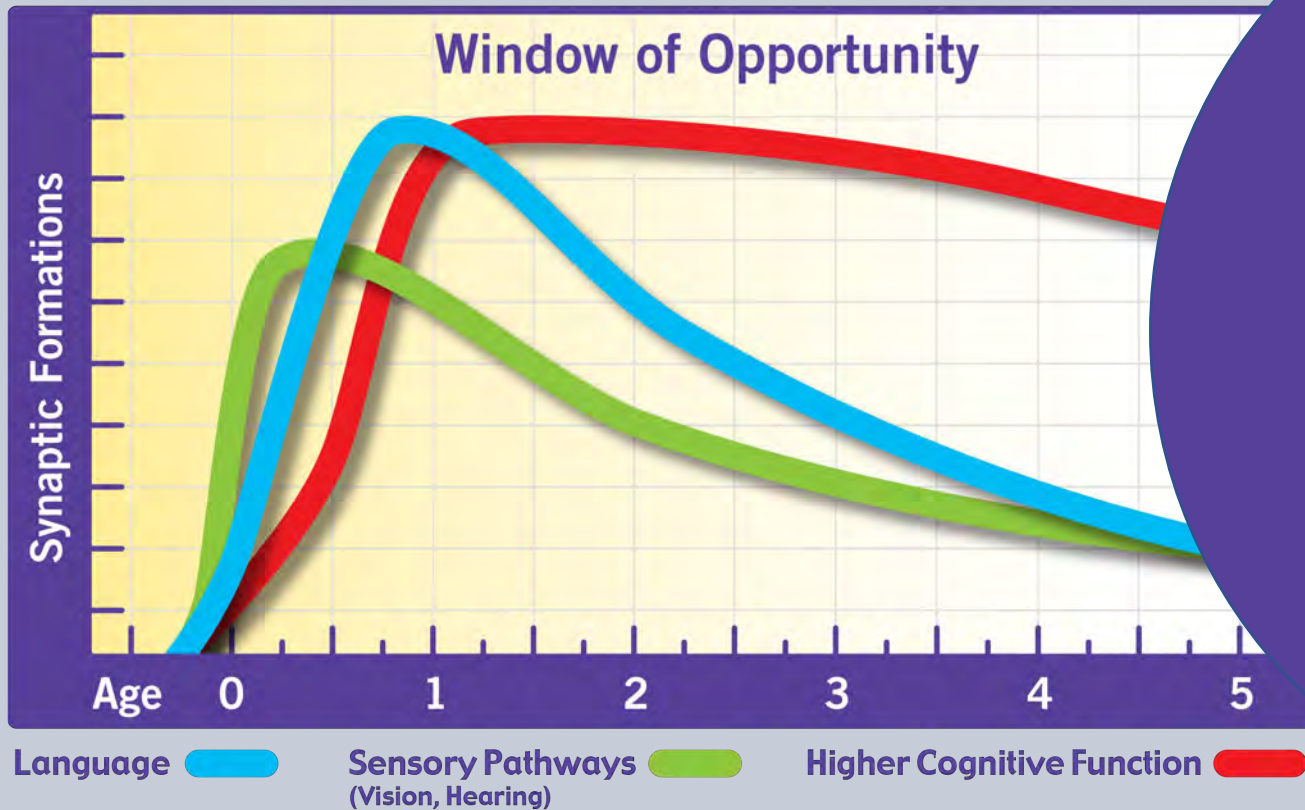
~Dr. Curt Thompson





Human Brain Development

Synapse Formation Dependent on Early Experiences



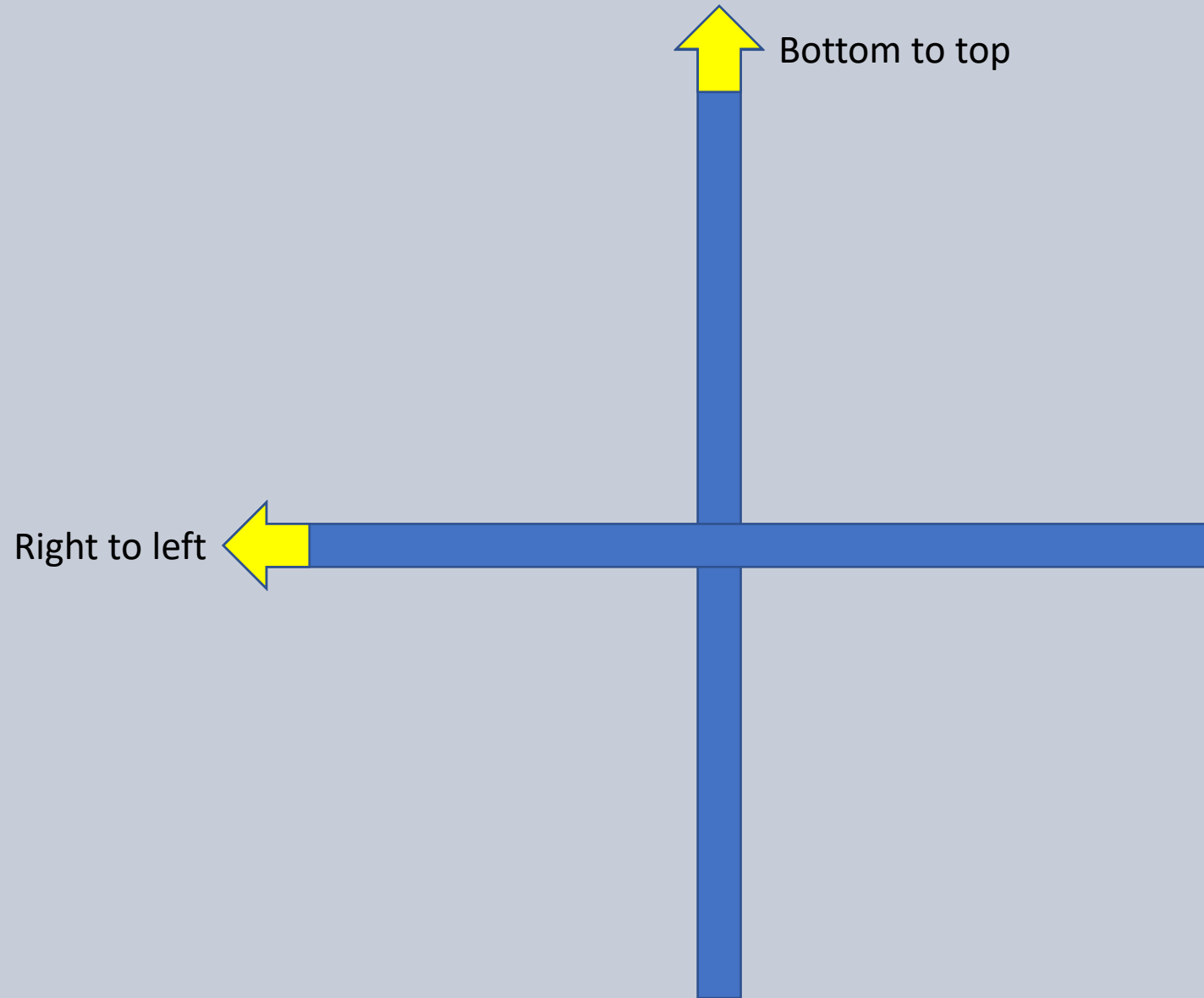
90% of brain growth happens in the first 5 years of life.

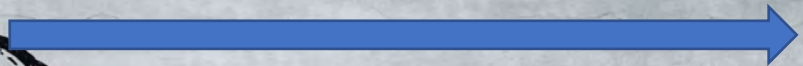


If 90% of brain growth happens in the first 5 years, it's really important to know **HOW** that growth is constructed, and the impact **WHERE** that construction occurs has on long term relational health.



HOW

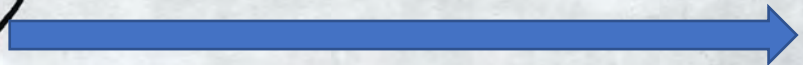




Prefrontal Lobe – What Can I Learn?



Limbic System – Am I Loved?



Brain Stem – Am I Safe?



LEFT

Right

Left

Smile: a pleased, kind, or amused facial expression, typically with the corners of the mouth turned up and the front teeth exposed:

Right



We see and feel a smile before we KNOW was a smile is.....

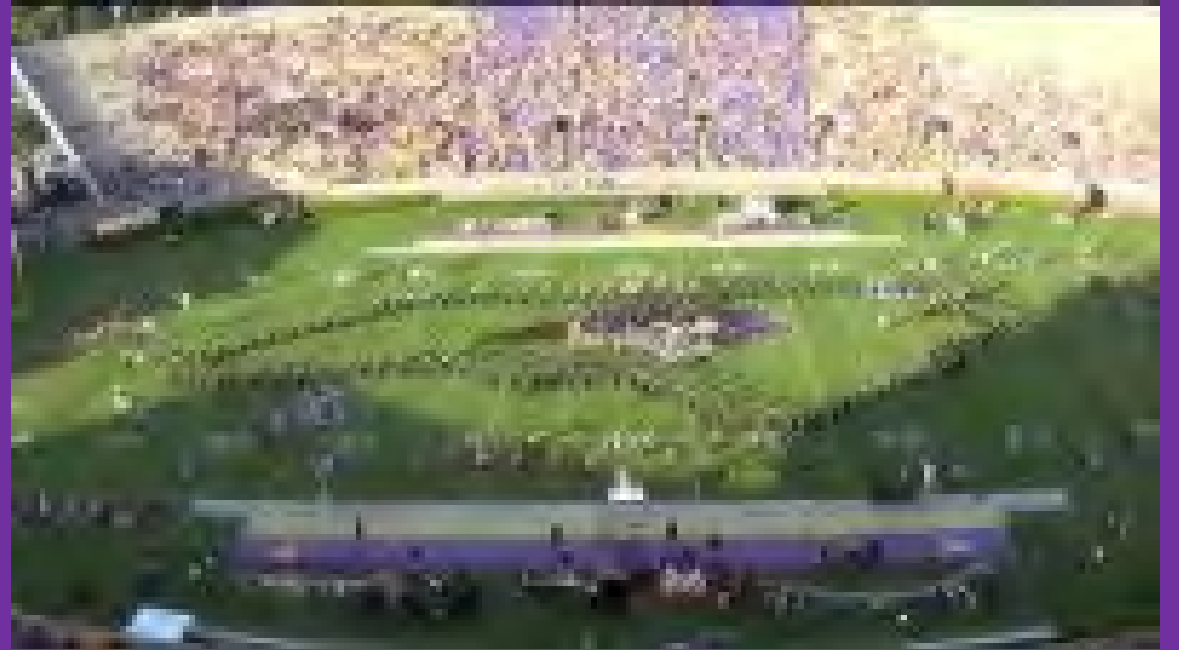
Why does our brain develop that way?

- In stages
- With specialized regions
- Over SUCH a long period of time – (brain fully developed in mid 20s)



Consider a marching band.....

An integrated
ECU marching
band



WHERE the band practices can have
a big impact on how the band
ultimately performs.

The brain
develops in
response to
experiences.
The world
those
experiences
take place in
matters.



**Especially
in the
early
years of
rapid
brain
growth.**

Friendly World



Relationships = connection, possibilities, hope

Volatile World

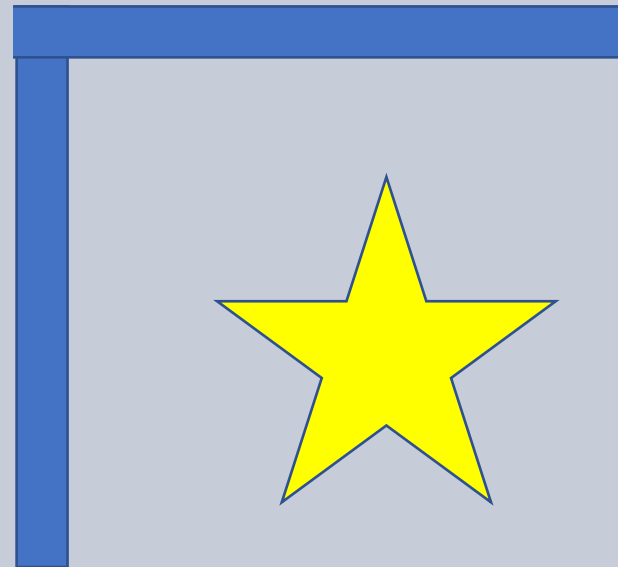


Relationships = fight, flight, freeze

Our brains are built to survive the world we grow up in, not to thrive in the world we'll go into.



TRAUMA IS NOT DEFINED BY AN EVENT,
IT'S DEFINED BY THE INTENSITY AND DURATION OF THE STRESS
WE ENDURE AS A RESULT OF THE EVENT.





DANGER ZONE

The brain is designed to handle about 20 minutes of fight –flight – freeze at a time. Anything above that and the risk increases for TOXIC STRESS....

What happens when our brains get stuck in the danger zone?

- **Toxic stress is hard on our internal systems – heart, lungs, immune system etc; physical health risks increase dramatically. (See original ACE study).**
- **We tell ourselves very rigid or chaotic stories about our lives.**
- **We adopt very rigid or chaotic relationship patterns with the people around us.**
- **It becomes very difficult to have the one thing in life we need most: a WE thing.**



The curse is the cure is the curse.....

If we can't have a relationship with some ONE
We WILL have a relationship with some THING.



“The opposite of
addiction is not
sobriety, it’s
connection.”
~Johan Hari
(Lost Connections)



“I’ve come to realize that social connection stands out as a largely unrecognized and underappreciated force for addressing many of the critical problems we’re dealing with, both as individuals and as a society.”
~Vivek Murthy (Together)

How do we reverse the curse?

The curse is the cure is the curse.....

