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**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

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# Things to Remember



**Underlying  
question =**

**“What  
happened to  
you?”**

**Symptoms =**

**Adaptations  
to traumatic  
events**

**Healing  
happens**

**In  
relationships**

# The Power of Empathy



# What is Trauma?

***Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.***

# The Three E's in Trauma

## Events

*Events/circumstances*  
cause trauma.

## Experience

An individual's *experience*  
of the event determines  
whether it is traumatic.

## Effects

*Effects* of trauma include  
adverse physical, social,  
emotional, or spiritual  
consequences.

# Potential Traumatic Events

## Abuse

- *Emotional*
- *Sexual*
- *Physical*
- *Domestic violence*
- *Witnessing violence*
- *Bullying*
- *Cyberbullying*
- *Institutional*

## Loss

- *Death*
- *Abandonment*
- *Neglect*
- *Separation*
- *Natural disaster*
- *Accidents*
- *Terrorism*
- *War*

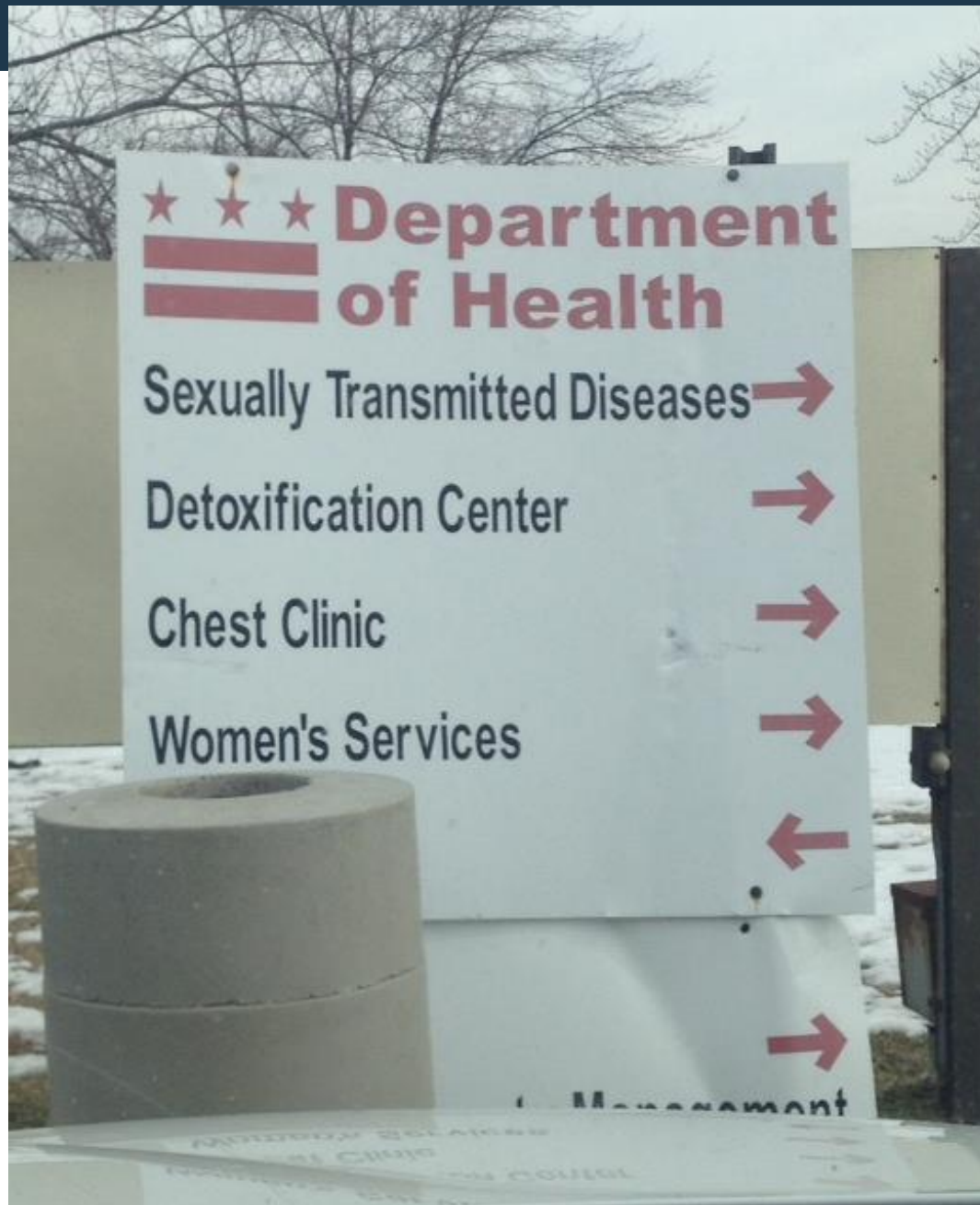
## Chronic Stressors

- *Poverty*
- *Racism*
- *Invasive medical procedure*
- *Community trauma*
- *Historical trauma*
- *Family member with substance use disorder*

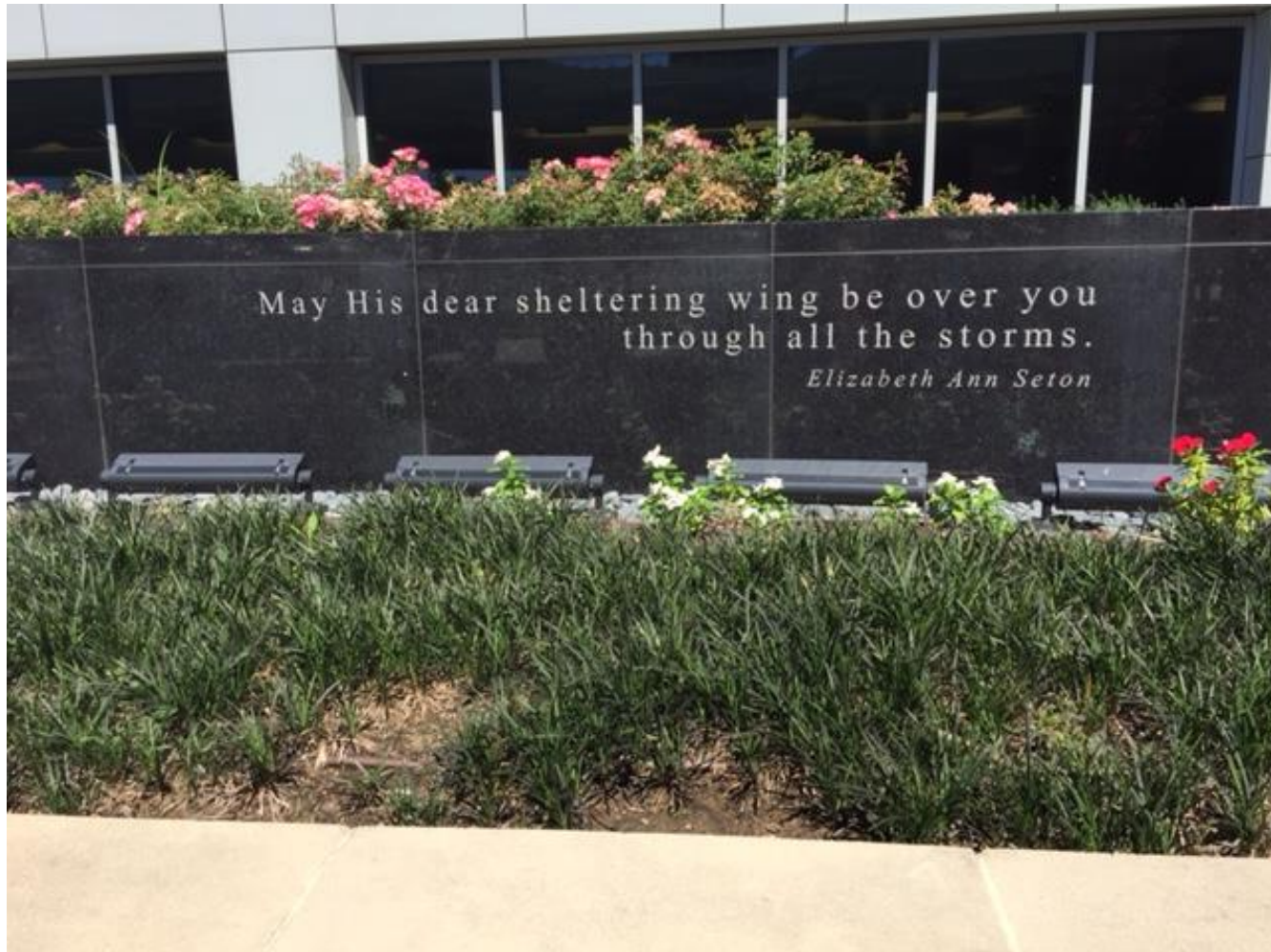














# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Affect Adult Health

**ACEs have serious health consequences for adults:**

- **Adoption of health risk behaviors as coping mechanisms** (e.g., eating disorders, smoking, substance abuse, self-harm, sexual promiscuity)
- **Severe medical conditions** (e.g., heart disease, pulmonary disease, liver disease, STDs, gynecologic cancer)
- **Early death**



# ACE Questions:

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? **Or** Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? **Or Ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? **Or** Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
4. Did you **often or very often** feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? **Or** Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

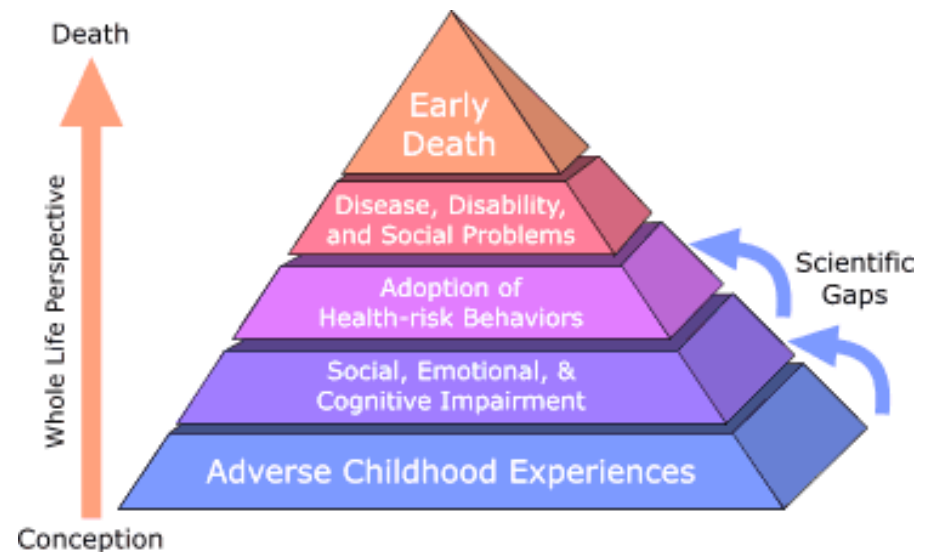
# ACE Questions: Con't

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? **Or** Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?
7. Was your mother or stepmother: **Often or very often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? **Or Sometimes, often, or very often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? **Or Ever** repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
10. Did a household member go to prison?

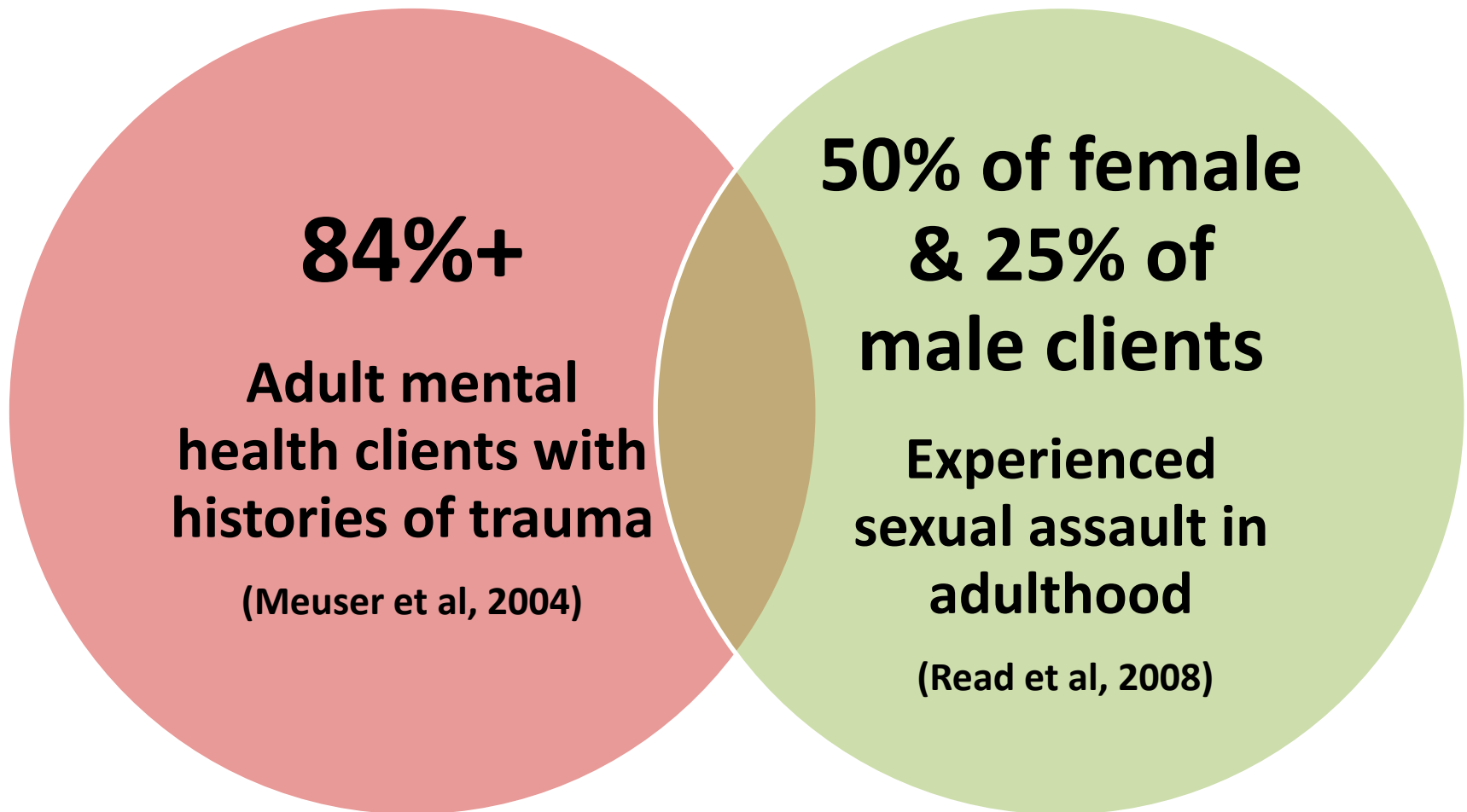
# The ACE Study

“Male child with an ACE score of 6 has a 4600% increase in likelihood of later becoming an IV drug user when compared to a male child with an ACE score of 0. Might heroin be used for the relief of profound anguish dating back to childhood experiences? Might it be the best coping device that an individual can find?”

(Felitti et al, 1998)



# Trauma in Adults: Mental Health



# Trauma in Adults: Substance Abuse

**Up to 65% of all clients in  
substance abuse treatment  
report childhood abuse**

(SAMHSA, 2013)

**Up to 75% of women in  
substance abuse treatment  
report trauma histories**

(SAMHSA, 2009)



# Trauma in Adults: Substance Abuse, cont.

Over 92% of homeless mothers have severe trauma histories. They have twice the rate of drug and alcohol dependence as those without

(SAMHSA 2011)

Almost 1/3 of all veterans seeking treatment for a substance use disorder have PTSD

(National Center for PTSD)













**I've learned that people will forget what  
you said, people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you  
made them feel.**

~ Maya Angelou

# Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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