The Web of Violence: Families, Vulnerability & Protection Across the Span of Childhood

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The Way Things Were…
and were and were and were

Cain & Abel in Titian's rendition

Rape of the Sabine Women, event 750BC depicted by Nicolas Poussin about 1635

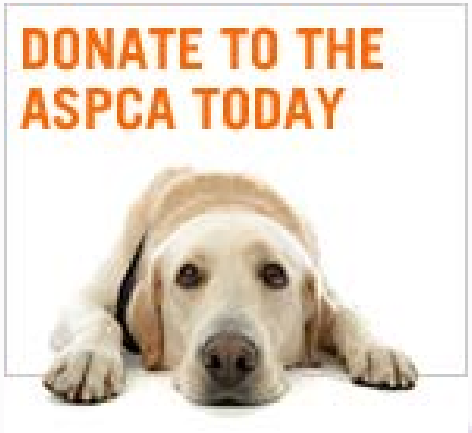
Pottery from the Moche culture in Peru, ca 600-1100 AD

Henry VIII, problematic partner

Centuries Go By…

- …and slowly violence and many adversities are seen less as an inherent part of existence, and more as health and social problems that can be addressed. In 1824, the first modern humane organization is founded….

- …to protect cats, dogs, and other animals!
- It is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, founded 1824 (www.rspca.org.uk)
- Followed in 1866 by U.S. version (www.aspca.org).



The Beginnings of a Social Movement

- Shortly afterwards, it occurred to some to organize the first Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children too.
- "It is not alone the lower animals that are subject to ill-treatment and cruelty." (The Northern Budget, Troy, N.Y., 1867, cited by NYSPCC, 2000)
- 1st society est. in New York, 1875

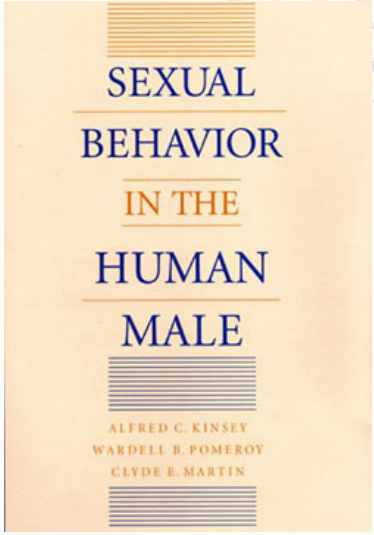
Mary Ellen, who, in 1873, became the first child to receive a child protection intervention.

The Modern Discovery of Family Violence

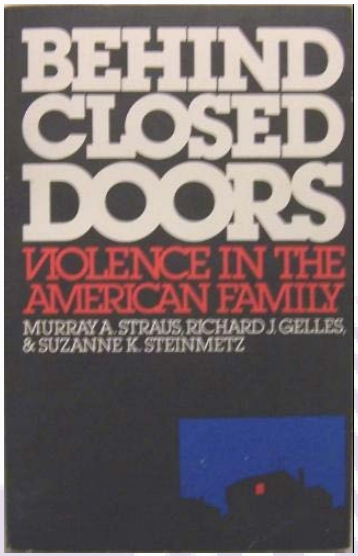
- Late 1800s, early 1900s: The invention of the "talking cure" & the discipline of psychology
- 1800s, early 1900s: 1st laws limiting or abolishing right to beat one's wife passed in England, France, some U.S. states.
- Post WWII—Psychotherapy goes mainstream.
- 1962—The medical establishment "discovers" child abuse as a cause of traumatic injury (Kempe, 1962).
- Early 1970s—1st refuges/shelters
- Late 20th century: Huge social movements emerged to address all kinds of psychological issues.
- Healthcare, schools, criminal justice, social services, policymakers—all major social institutions become involved.

A Surprising Amount of Disclosure

- Important innovations in social science research, such as the U.S. National Crime Survey and Kinsey's surveys on sexual behavior.
- Research established that people would disclose
  - Violent behavior
  - Intimate behavior
- Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz established that people would also disclose *violence by family members* to researchers.
- Mary Koss first presented on Hidden Rape in 1980.

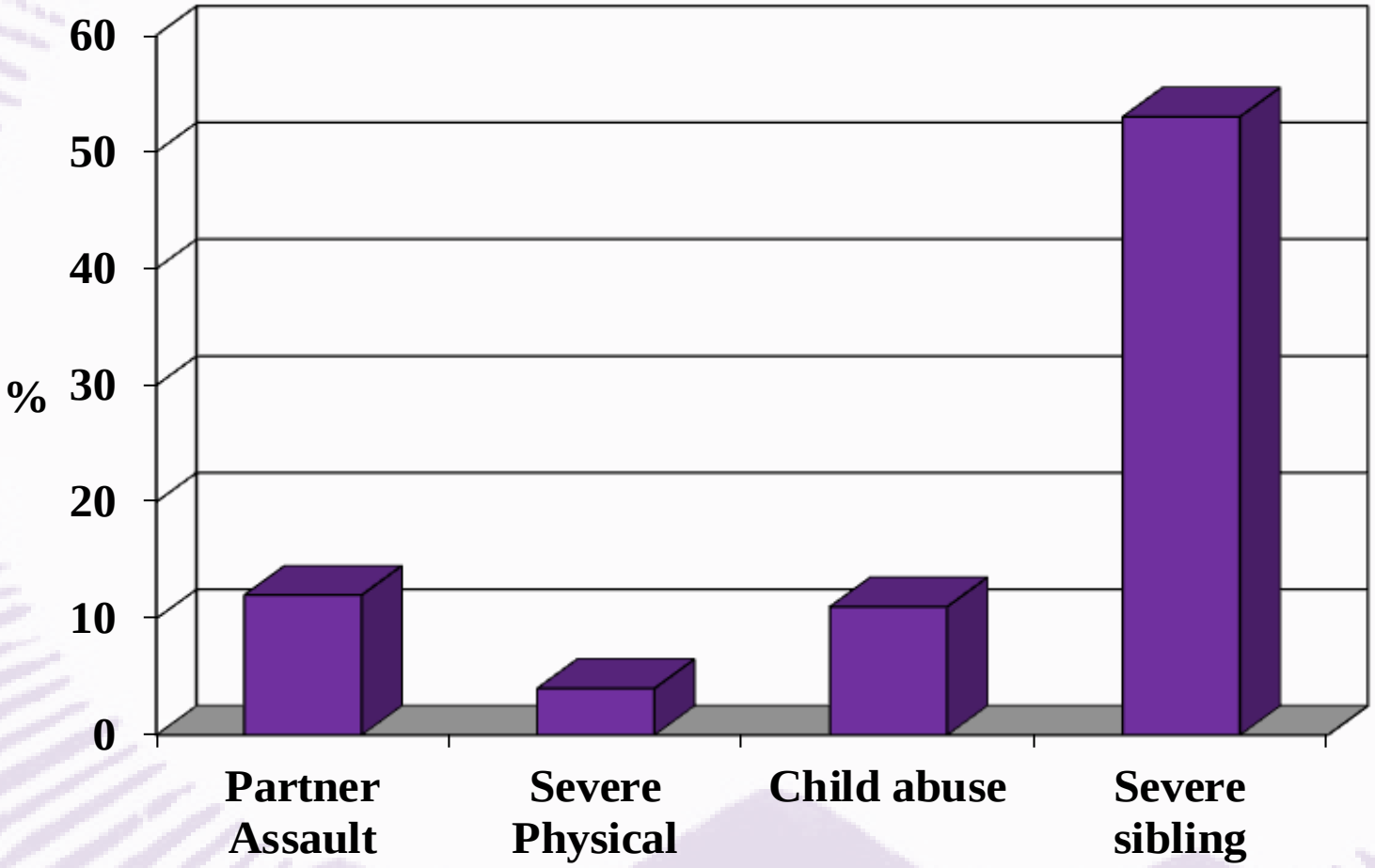


1948: An early scientific bestseller



The 1975 National Family Violence Survey

Rates: Yearly Incidence of Family Violence in the 1st National Family Violence Survey, 1975



From Straus & Gelles, 1990

Moving Beyond the Survey Technology of the 1970s

Key Findings from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV)

NatSCEV is the U.S.'s primary surveillance of youth victimization and the only nationally representative data available on crimes against children under age 12 that are not reported to authorities

National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV, Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2009)

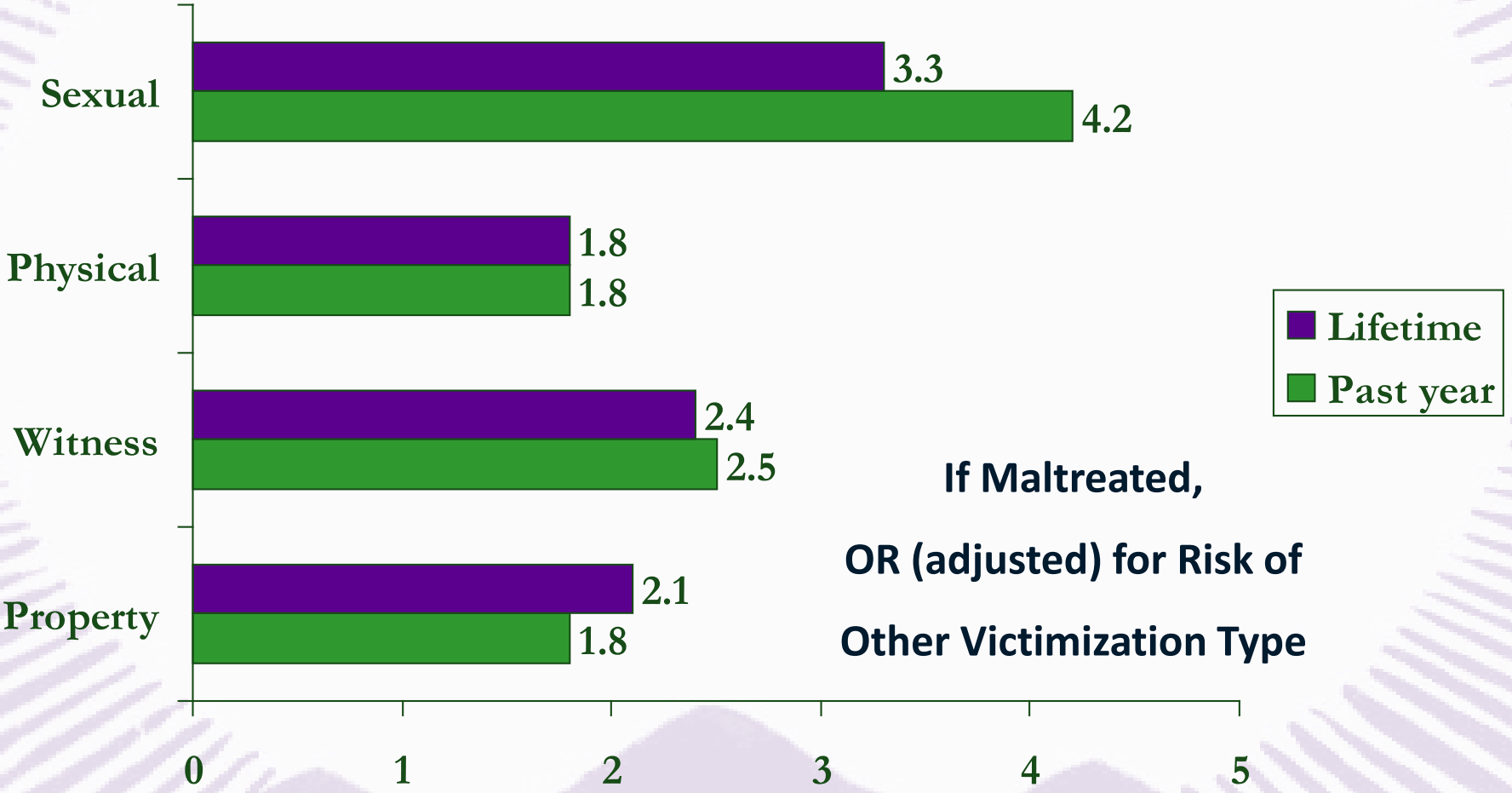
- ✓ Telephone survey conducted January 2008- May 2008
- ✓ National RDD sample of 4549 children age 1 month-17
  - ✓ 2454 caregivers of children age 0-9
  - ✓ 2095 youth age 10-17
- ✓ Respondents promised confidentiality and paid $20
- ✓ Interviews completed with 71% of eligible respondents contacted (63% with oversample of minority & low income households)
- ✓ More than 40 types of victimization assessed.
- ✓ Replicated in 2011 as part of ongoing U.S. surveillance in youth victimization, in field now with NatSCEV 3.

Children's Lives Aren't Organized by Research Disciplines or Institutional Mandates

Graphic prepared by Kelly Foster

Assessment, Prevention, & Intervention Tend to Focus On a Single Problem....

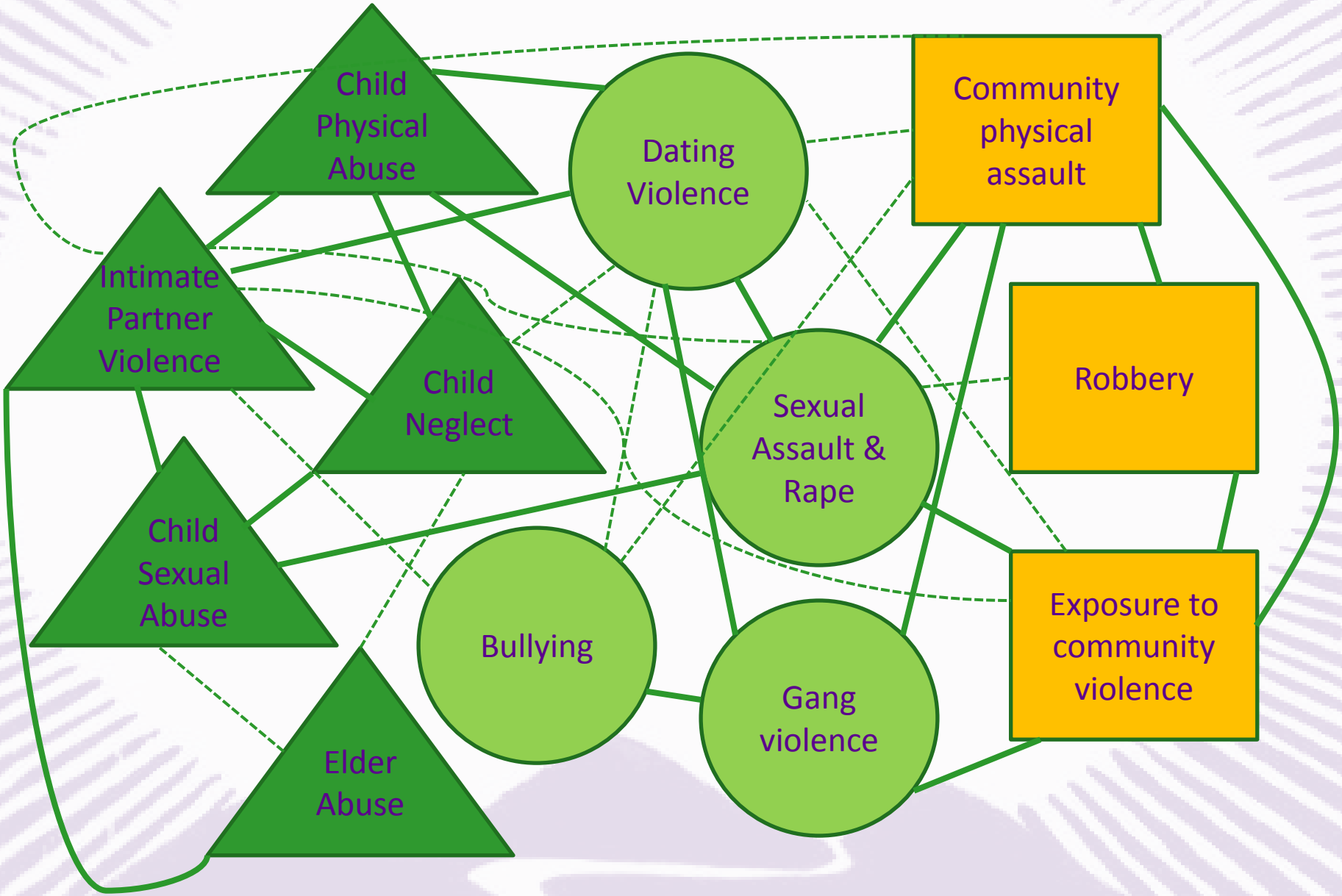
But many children are victimized in multiple ways…



Poly-victimization is experiencing multiple different *types* of victimization

- The abused child, the bullied child, the child exposed to family & community violence—often, these are NOT different children. It is the same child, mistreated in multiple settings by multiple perpetrators.

The Web of Violence



Interconnections in Representative Community Samples

Interconnection	Strength of association (OR)
Well-known, well-established connections	
Exposure to IPV & child physical abuse	5.0 (NatSCEV; Hamby et al 2010)
Exposure to IPV & teen dating victimization	3.8 (NatSCEV; Hamby et al 2010)
Physical IPV & Stalking by intimate partner	7.0 (CDC, Krebs et al, 2011)
Physical IPV & sexual violence by intimate partner	2.4 (CDC, Krebs et al, 2011)
Strong but under-recognized connections	
Exposure to IPV & neglect	6.2 (NatSCEV; Hamby et al 2010)
Exposure to IPV and sexual abuse by known adult	5.2 (NatSCEV; Hamby et al 2010)
Any physical assault & any sexual victimization	6.2 (NatSCEV, Finkelhor et al, 2009)
Any witnessed violence and any sexual victimization	4.5 (NatSCEV, Finkelhor et al, 2009)
Teen dating victimization and peer sexual harassment	5.3 (NatSCEV; Hamby et al 2012)
Weaker but still positive connections	
Exposure to IPV and peer relational aggression	1.7 (NatSCEV; Hamby et al 2010)
Any property crime and any sexual victimization	3.2 (NatSCEV, Finkelhor et al, 2009)

Children's families aren't defined by current adult romantic relationships

A Well-Known Decline in 2-parent Households…

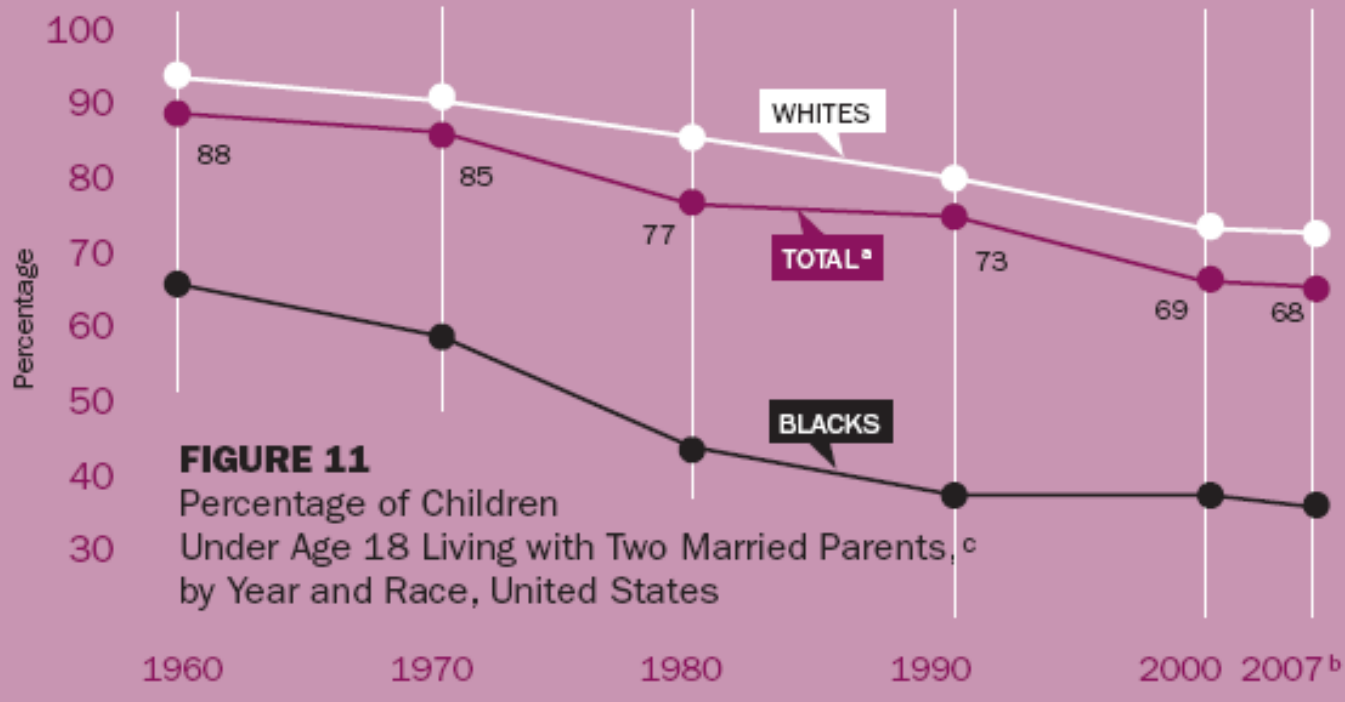


FIGURE 11
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living with Two Married Parents,[c] by Year and Race, United States

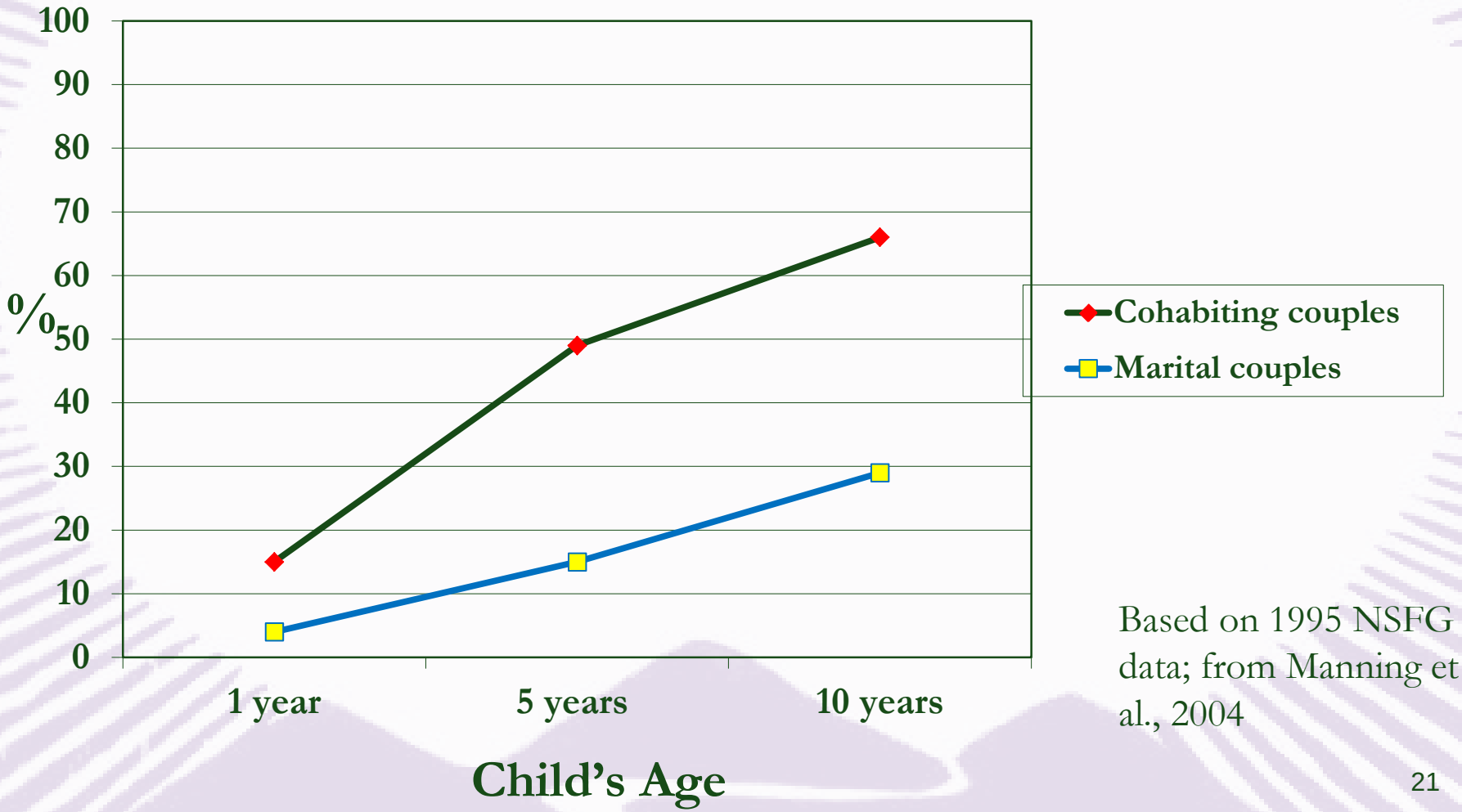
[a] Total includes Blacks, Whites and all other racial and ethnic groupings.

[b] In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau expanded its racial categories to permit respondents to identify themselves as belonging to more than one race. This means that racial data computations beginning in 2004 may not be strictly comparable to those of prior years.

[c] "Married Parents" may be step or natural parents of children in the household.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P20-537; *America's Families and Living Arrangements, March 2000;* and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2007).

..but even this can mask the large numbers of children experiencing the end of parental unions



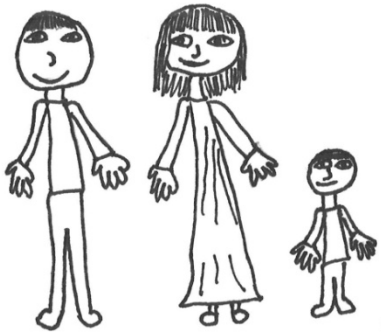
Based on 1995 NSFG data; from Manning et al., 2004

Children Are Exposed to Multiple Parental and Caregiver Relationships

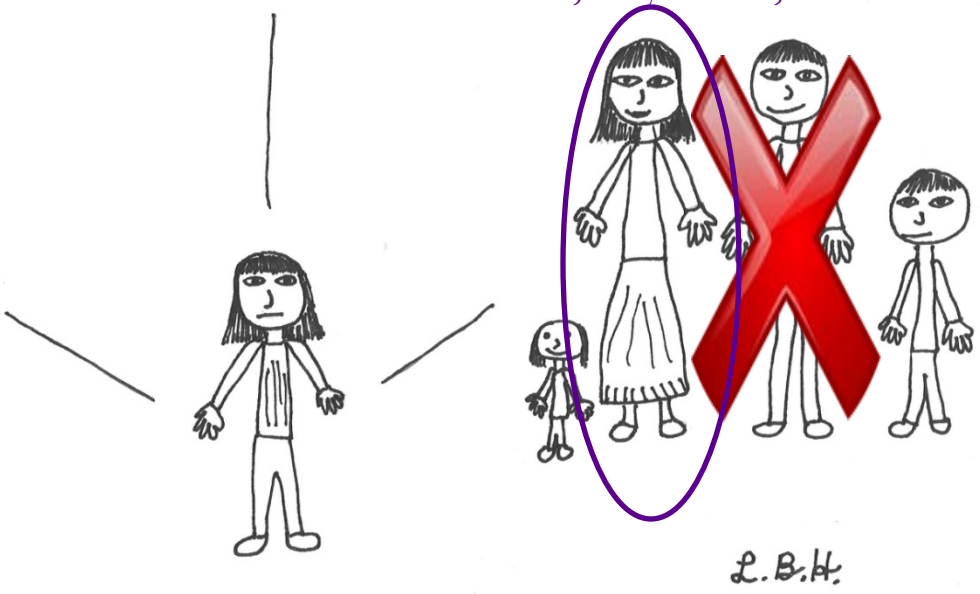
Others: Parents' ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, foster parents, in-home relatives, other caregivers

Grandparents or other in-home caregivers who supervise child 50+ hours/week while parent works

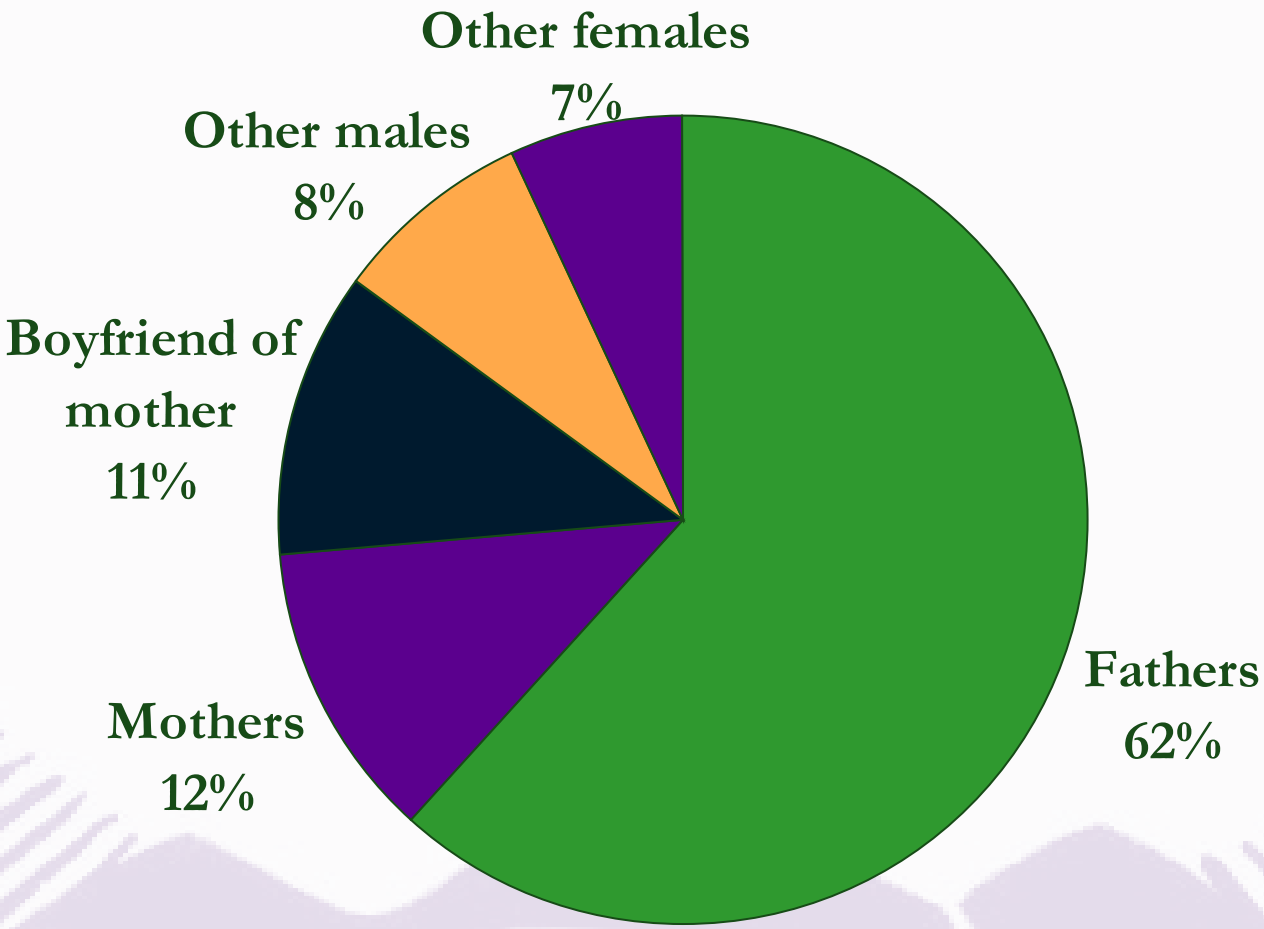
Dad, stepmother, half-sibling



Mom, boyfriend, half-siblings

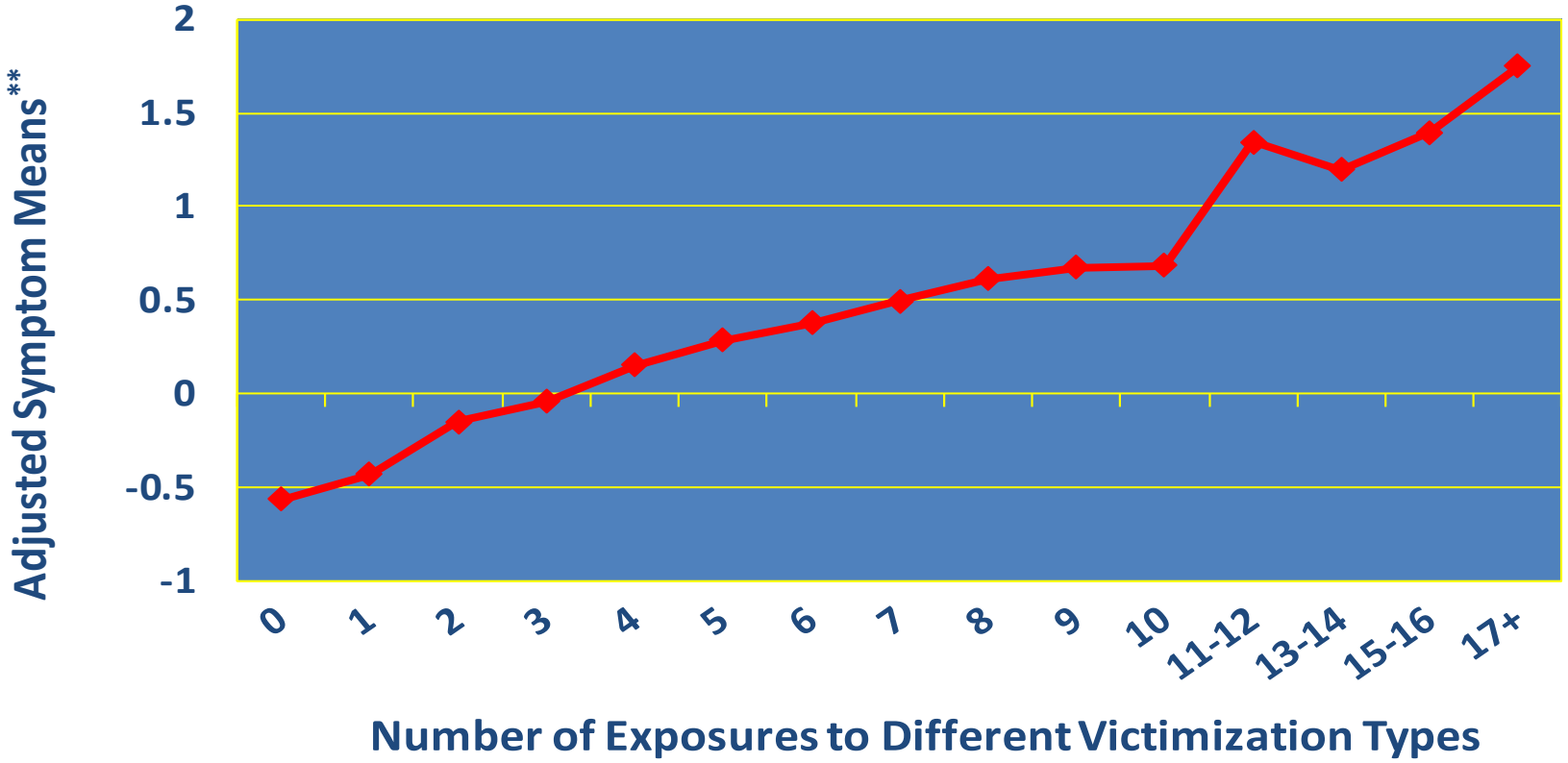


Many Parents, Intimate Partners, & Relatives Perpetrate Partner Violence in Front of Children



Current Trauma Symptoms Are More Tied to Variety and Number of Exposures than to Specific Victimization Types

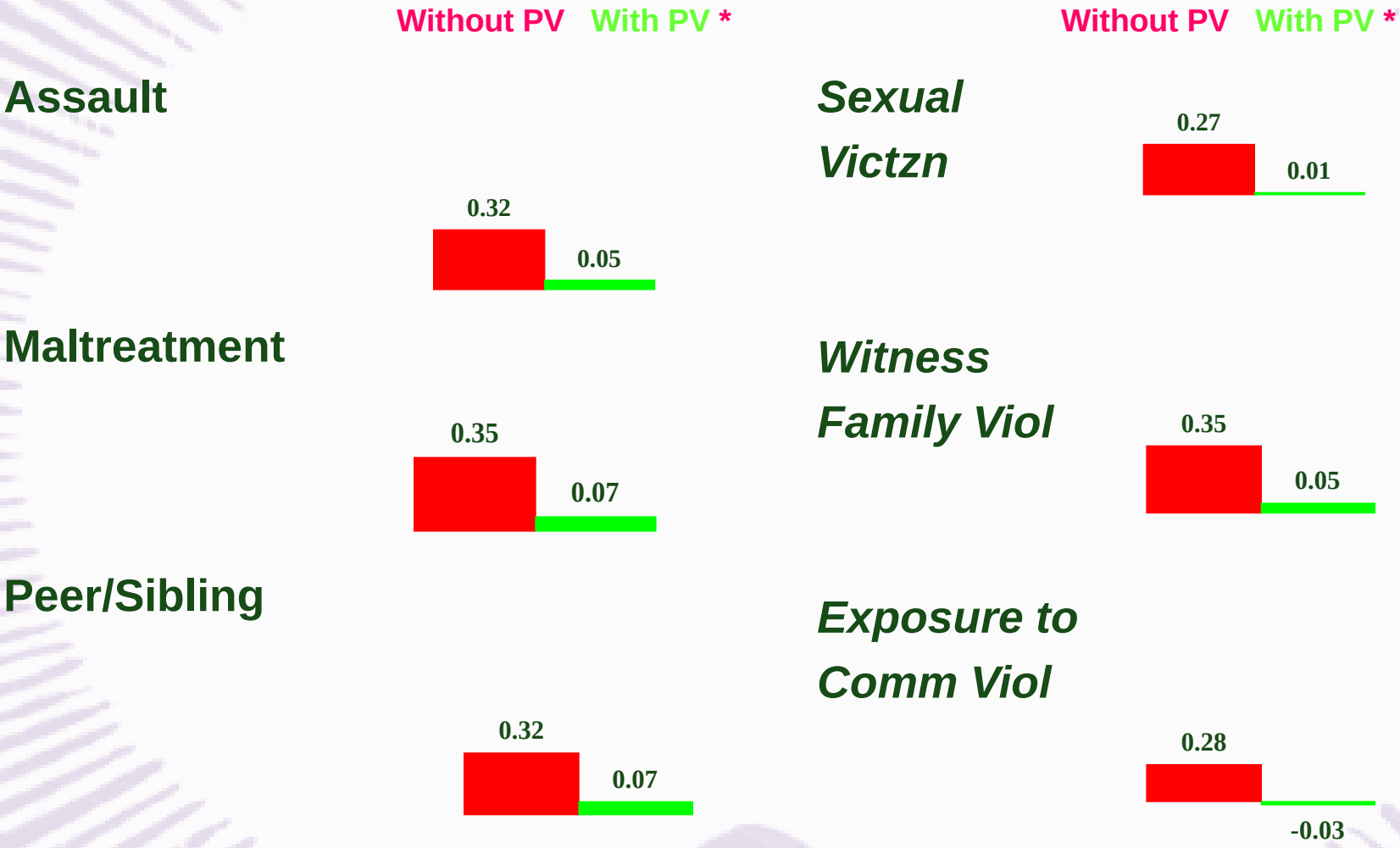
Trauma Symptom Levels by Total Number of Victimization Types*



* cases with 11+ victimizations aggregated due to smaller Ns.

** mean standardized symptoms scores at different numbers of victimization types, controlling for demographic variables

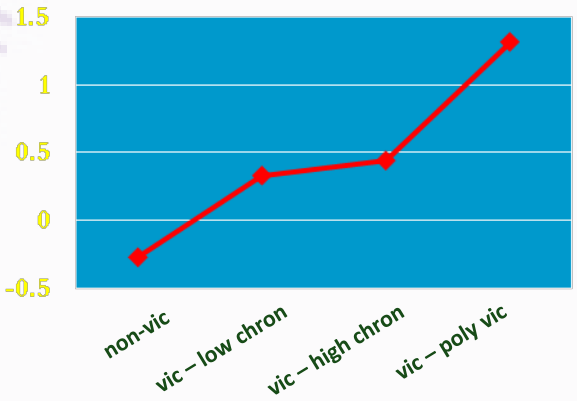
Poly-victimization (PV) Swamps Effects of Individual Victimizations on Trauma



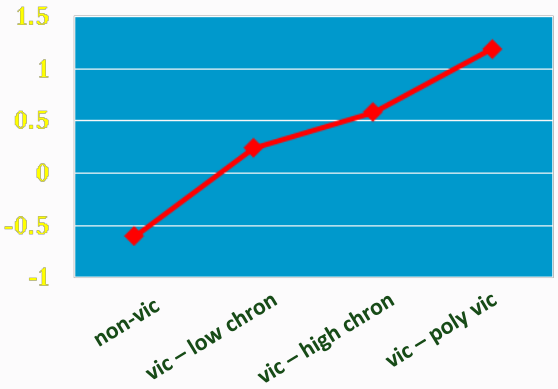
* Standardized regression coefficient, controlling for age, gender, race, ethnicity, SES, family structure.

Trauma Symptom Scores across Victim Groups

Property Victims

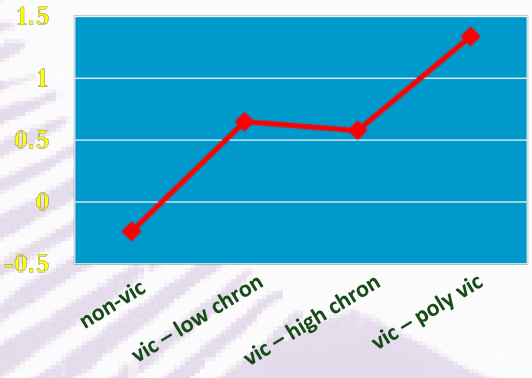


Maltreatment Victims

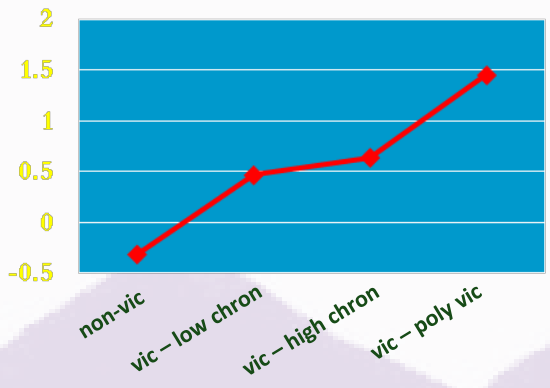


Peer-Sib Victims

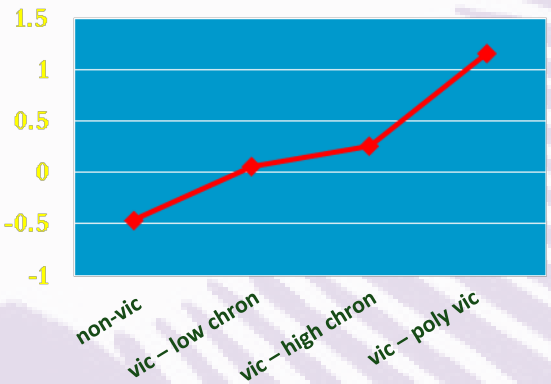
Sexual Victims



Witness Family Viol Victims



Witness Community Viol Victims



Reinventing the Web

ROLE: Involvement in Violence		
Victim	**Perpetrator**	**Both**
Mono-victim *Acute, Isolated, Single form exposed*	**Mono-perpetrator** *Criminal Specialists*	**Mono perpetrator-victim** *Bully-victim* *Mutual IPV*
Poly-victim ***Complex trauma*** ***High ACES score*** *Also: Multiple type victim, Multiple victim, Multiple crime-type victim, Multiple form exposed, cumulative trauma*	**Poly-perpetrator** *Criminal Generalists* *Violent polymorphism*	**Poly perpetrator-victim** *Delinquent-victim* ***Trauma-informed care model***
Repeat victim *Re-victimized, Chronic victim,* ***Complex trauma****, cumulative trauma*	**Repeat perpetrator** *Recidivist, Habitual offender, Reconviction, Revolving doors*	**Repeat perpetrator-victim** *Cycle of violence, Intergenerational transmission*

Adapted from *The Web of Violence*, Hamby & Grych, 2013

Understanding Mechanisms of Violence & Victimization

More Silos of Psychology

Family Studies

Developmental

Resilience

Psychology of Religion & Spirituality

Positive psychology

Community psychology

Etiological Process That Affect Most Forms of Violence

Person

- Cognitive Processes
  - Beliefs about aggression
  - Schemas
  - Automatic cognitions
- Affective Processes
- Self-Regulatory
- Personality
  - Impulsivity
  - Narcissism

Situation

- Environmental Conditions
  - Heat
  - Overcrowding
- Use of drugs/alcohol
- Social Integration
- Behavior of Others
  - Hostility
  - Rejection
- Family Context

Sometimes, causes are direct

- "Direct" usually means occurring at or near the same time and creating a change that increases one's risk of violence (as either victim or perpetrator).
  - Often situational or environmental
  - Heat, crowding, substance use/abuse
  - Can also be violence
- Unfortunately, we use "direct" in two ways—as a theoretical concept and to describe a statistical relationship.

HOWEVER, MOST MECHANISMS STUDIED IN PSYCHOLOGY ARE INDIRECT

Soldiers Before, During & After Afghanistan

Photos of British soldiers by Lalage Snow, 2013

Private Chris MacGregor, 24: "When squaddies come back they still have a lot of adrenaline and anger in them. I had to have anger management after Iraq...The first thing I did when I came back, apart from kissing and cuddling the misses and my bairn, was go for a massive walk with the dogs. I walked for miles and miles not caring where I stepped."

Something about your experiences

Lance Corporal Sean Tennant, 29: "It’s great being back but I’d say I’ve got a shorter fuse now. I ended up arguing with my partner but it's small things that can cause that. It’s a funny one. There are small things that can get on your nerves. It seems like people don’t have any purpose here."

Changes you

Private Jo Yavala, 28: "I had a funny feeling about this patrol. Heard the bang and heard on the radio ‘man down’ .. It was the first casualty I've seen. It was pretty awful. I saw the medic treating him, he had no leg. I went back to where it had exploded and then saw his boot floating in the water. Just an empty boot."

And you carry these changes

Private Becky Hitchcock, 23: "My civvie friends think I am brave but I don’t see it like that at all. It looks so bad on the news but its alright really. I was scared just before leaving the UK – I didn’t know what to expect. I haven’t been scared here but I know there will be times when I will be."

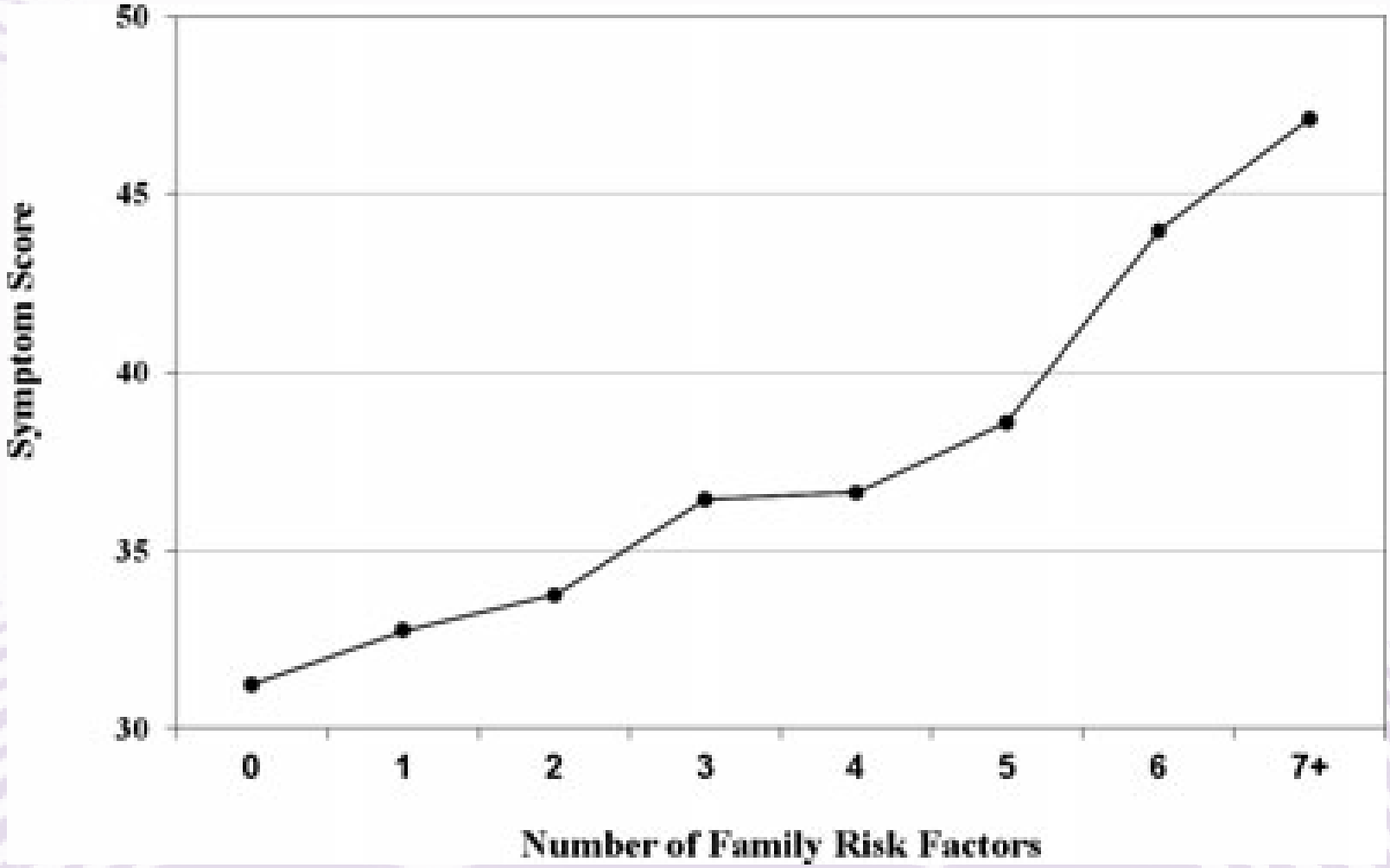
Into future interactions & relationships

Private Michael Swan, 20: "Being back is strange. You are away for so long and you think about how you lived so basically. It makes you appreciate things a lot more. Makes you appreciate life more. But find I get frustrated easily and lose my temper. My family say I'm a lot more aggressive I used to be a really placid guy, you know, really hard to upset but now it is quite easy."

Safe, Stable & Nurturing Relationships: CDC Essentials for Childhood

- Examine a number of aspects of parenting & family life in NatSCEV
- **Safety**: Corporal punishment, monitoring & supervision, exposure to inter-parental violence
- **Stability**: Inconsistent/hostile parenting, frequent moves, child lives in multiple households
- **Nurturing**: Warmth/involvement, parents diagnosed with psychiatric disorder, parental substance abuse

Cumulative Effects of Family Risk Factors



Key Findings of SSNR Investigation

- Strongest unique association with child distress: Inconsistent and hostile parenting.
- Parental psychiatric diagnosis and substance abuse had across the board bad effects—ended up associated with safety and stability as much as nurturance.
- Spent a lot of effort and precious “real estate” in our national surveillance assessing positive factors, but the “negative” factors were generally more tied to child’s mental health distress.

Still Too Much Focus on Problems, Not Strengths

People don't want to know how to simply avoid symptoms, they want to thrive

A Slow Shift to a More Positive Focus…….
But---Examples of risk factors

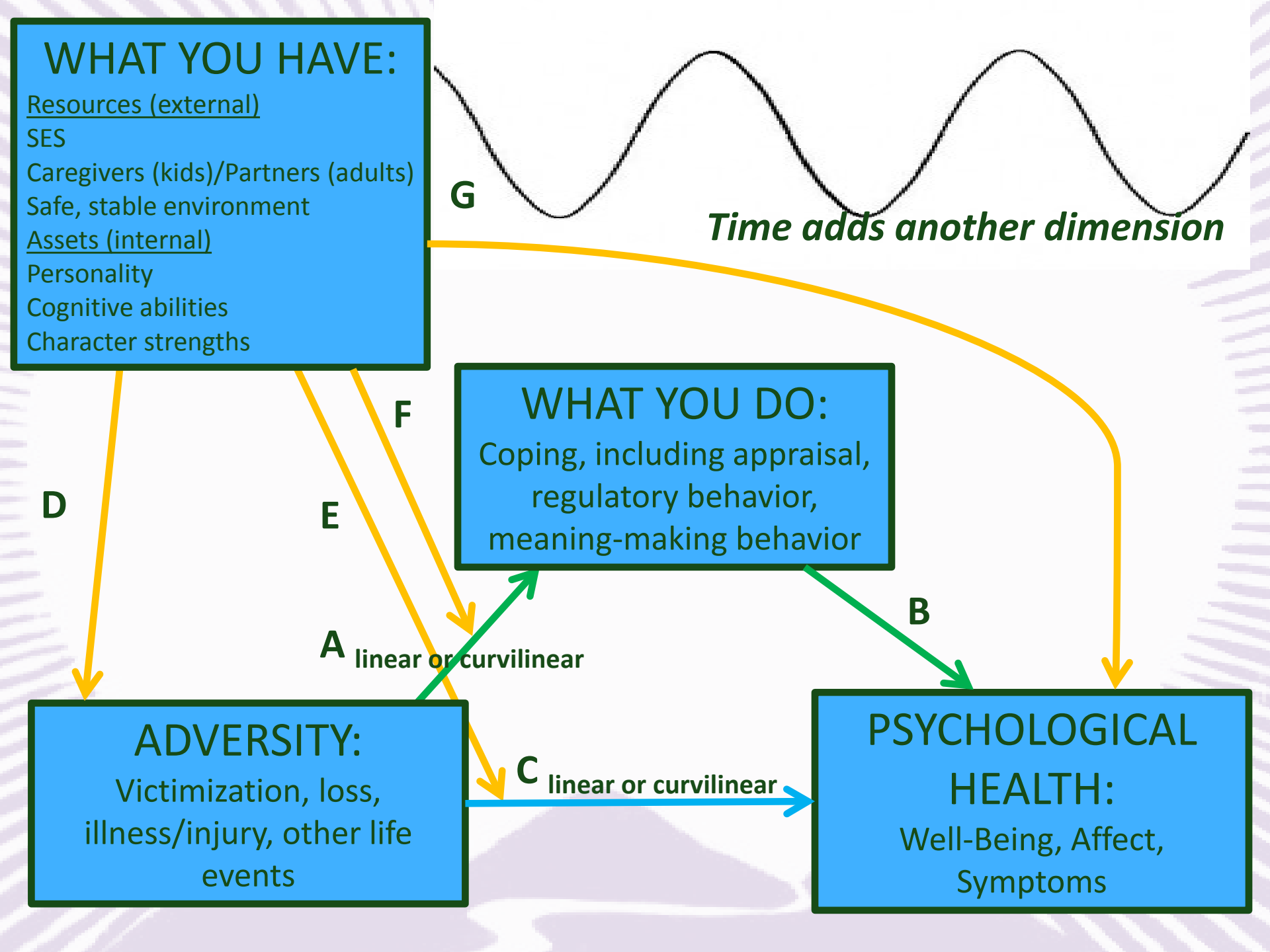
- Individual:
  - *Poor* self-regulation
  - *Low* intellectual functioning
- Family:
  - *Insecure* attachment
  - *Inconsistent* parenting
- Environmental
  - *Lower* SES
  - *Unsafe* neighborhood

Examples of protective factors

- Individual:
  - *Good* self-regulation
  - *High* intellectual functioning
- Relational:
  - *Secure* attachment
  - *Consistent* parenting
- Environmental
  - *Higher* SES
  - *Safe* neighborhood
- **Identifying "protective" factors that simply represent the flip side of "risk" factors does not advance understanding of the processes leading to adaptive outcomes**

New Approaches to Resilience

- A new model for resilience that focuses on 3 core sets of individual strengths:
  - Interpersonal,
  - Regulatory, and
  - Meaning making (inc spiritual)
- We believe these fit into a broader system of personal, family, and community resources to improve well-being (not just lack of symptoms).


WHAT YOU HAVE:
Resources (external)
SES
Caregivers (kids)/Partners (adults)
Safe, stable environment
Assets (internal)
Personality
Cognitive abilities
Character strengths
G
Time adds another dimension
WHAT YOU DO:
Coping, including appraisal, regulatory behavior, meaning-making behavior
D
E
F
A linear or curvilinear
B
ADVERSITY:
Victimization, loss, illness/injury, other life events
C linear or curvilinear
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH:
Well-Being, Affect, Symptoms

Promising Preliminary Results

- 3000 adolescents and adults in rural Appalachia
- What contributes over and above?
  - Optimism
  - Meaning making (keeping traditions, etc)
  - Generosity and generativity
  - Extended social capital
  - Regulation supported by interpersonal & meaning making
- Early challenges
  - Our efforts to measure the positive end of self-regulation have shown links to well-being but not adversity, but the deficit end still linked to violence

Coordinated Violence Prevention Model: Hypothetical Common and Specific Elements

Specific content for bullying & peer aggression:

Specific content should be offered in elementary school; bullying peaks in middle school

Coping with peer social hierarchies

Cyberbullying & how to be careful online

Specific content for gang & delinquency prevention:

Pressure to join gangs and affiliate with delinquent peers starts in middle school, offer before.

Dealing with pressure from delinquent peers

Community mobilization strategies

Core content for all violence types:

Many of these topics can be introduced as early as preschool & primary grades and revisited regularly

Currently common in most classroom prevention programs: [a]

Encourage disclosure (88%)

Identify warning signs (78%)

Teach healthy relationship skills (73%)

Teach conflict resolution techniques (71%)

Additional core content suggested by the research literature:

Role of bystanders in violence prevention

Coping with prior victimization

Promoting self-regulation

Other approaches that prevent multiple types of violence:

Family-centered and early childhood services

Increasing security/adult presence in violence "hotspots"

Specific content for dating violence:

Risks for dating violence is low in middle school, can offer this in middle school before dating begins in earnest

Rigid gender roles

Navigating intimacy

Specific content for sexual assault:

Some risk for sexual assault exists throughout childhood, but it rises dramatically in middle and high school years, especially extrafamilial abuse. Can be introduced in middle school.

Negotiating consent

Educating about safe sex, birth control

Model from Hamby, Banyard & Grych, 2014, rates from Finkelhor et al., 2014

Free resources:

Poly-victimization materials at the Crimes Against Children Research Center:

http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/jvq/index_new.html

Poly-victimization materials at the National Children's Advocacy Center website designed for practitioner audience

http://www.nationalcac.org/calio-library/polyvictimization.html

Narrative and strengths-based resources at http://lifepathsresearch.org

Strengths-based safety planning for domestic violence:

http://thevigor.org

Thank you!

Questions?