

# WHAT IS IN YOUR TOOL BOX?

Presenters:

Michelle Patton Swisher, LCSW

Lisa Dolan, LCSW

Spotsylvania County Public Schools, Virginia

# Spotsylvania County

- ▶ Total population 135,100 (January 2018)
- ▶ Median Household Income \$81,065
- ▶ 69% White, 17% Black, 9% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 2% Other
- ▶ 7.6% Poverty
- ▶ 34% of VA children are considered low income



# Spotsylvania County Public Schools

- ▶ 23,814 students
- ▶ 11% Special Ed, 13% Gifted Ed
- ▶ 1,100 English for Speakers of Other Language Students
- ▶ 38% Enrolled in the Free & Reduced Lunch Program
- ▶ 58% White, 18% Black, 15% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 7% Other

A lot of really great things  
happen by accident



# Planning when you have no plan

- ▶ Building your “ToolBox”
  - ▶ Who you are working with
  - ▶ Strengths of employees/co-workers/partners
  - ▶ Strengths of system
  - ▶ Ecological model - each area of the system directly impacts all other areas of the system
- ▶ What works already?
- ▶ What are you missing?

# Communication and Collaboration

## 10 Cultural Elements typically Present when Collaboration works

- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Sharing
- ▶ Goals
- ▶ Innovation
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Collaborative Chaos
- ▶ Constructive Confrontation
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Community
- ▶ Value

# Family Centered

- ▶ Meet the family where they are most comfortable
- ▶ Meet the student at their school
  - ▶ Private area is best
- ▶ Discuss needs/wants and plans/goals
- ▶ Remove immediate barriers
  - ▶ Transportation,
  - ▶ Food sources
  - ▶ School Supplies



# Brene Brown Video

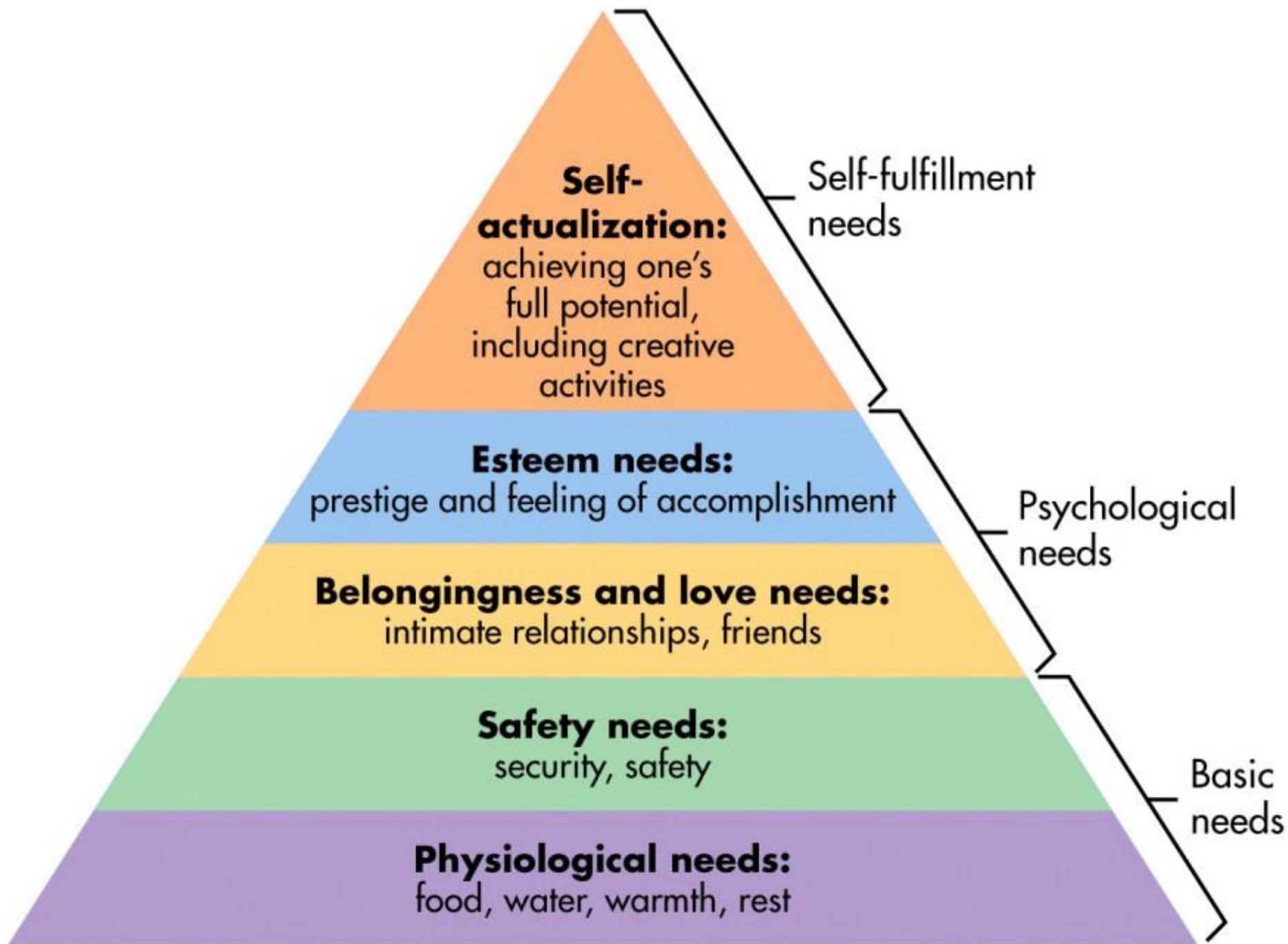
RSA  
SHORT





# Support Plan

- ▶ Discuss immediate needs and use community resources
- ▶ Discuss with family needs & goals
  - ▶ Work from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- ▶ Set goals
  - ▶ Short term
  - ▶ Long term
- ▶ Discuss Community Resources for longer term needs and goals



# What is an ACE?

## ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

## NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

## HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently

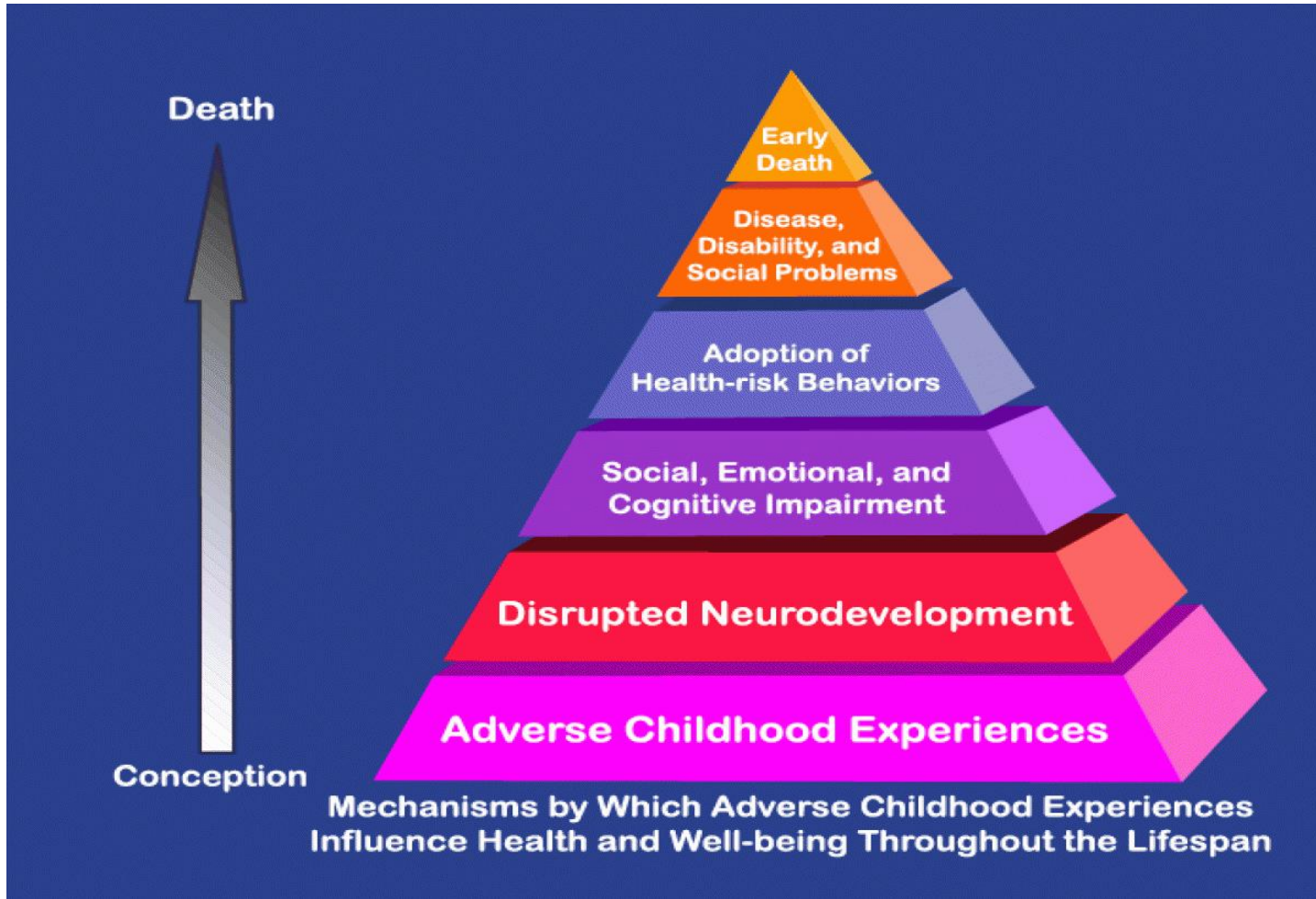


Substance Abuse



Divorce

# ACE Influences



# Poverty as an environmental trauma

- ▶ The impact of chronic poverty is not limited to economic disparity, rather it is exacerbated by pervasive trauma.
- ▶ Prolonged financial insecurity triggers a host of life-conditioning experiences that erode the protective capacity of the family.
- ▶ Parent effectiveness is undermined:
  - ▶ Being overly stressed, lacking resources to meet daily demands, inadequate housing, unpredictable food supply, transportation issues, crime and lack of physical safety, etc.
- ▶ This creates a pattern of trauma-organized behavior that impairs family functioning and alters children's neurological development

# Poverty is Trauma, Here's Why:

## ▶ Situational poverty

- ▶ generally caused by a sudden crisis or loss and is often temporary. Events causing situational poverty include environmental disasters, divorce, or severe health problems.

## ▶ Generational poverty

- ▶ occurs in families where at least two generations have been born into poverty. Families living in this type of poverty are not equipped with the tools to move out of their situations.

## ▶ Absolute poverty

- ▶ involves a scarcity of such necessities as shelter, running water, and food. Families who live in absolute poverty tend to focus on day-to-day survival.

▶ **Relative poverty**

- ▶ refers to the economic status of a family whose income is insufficient to meet its society's average standard of living.

▶ **Urban poverty**

- ▶ occurs in metropolitan areas with populations of at least 50,000 people. The urban poor deal with a complex aggregate of chronic and acute stressors (including crowding, violence, and noise) and are dependent on often-inadequate large-city services.

▶ **Rural poverty**

- ▶ occurs in nonmetropolitan areas with populations below 50,000. In rural areas, there are more single-guardian households, and families often have less access to services, support for disabilities, and quality education opportunities.



# Trauma, Trauma, Trauma...

- ▶ Poverty keeps promoting the cycle of trauma because of the lack of access to resources.
- ▶ 3 ways to respond to trauma
  - ▶ **Fight**
  - ▶ **Flight**
  - ▶ **Freeze**
- ▶ People do not just “get over it”
- ▶ Best predictor is Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s)

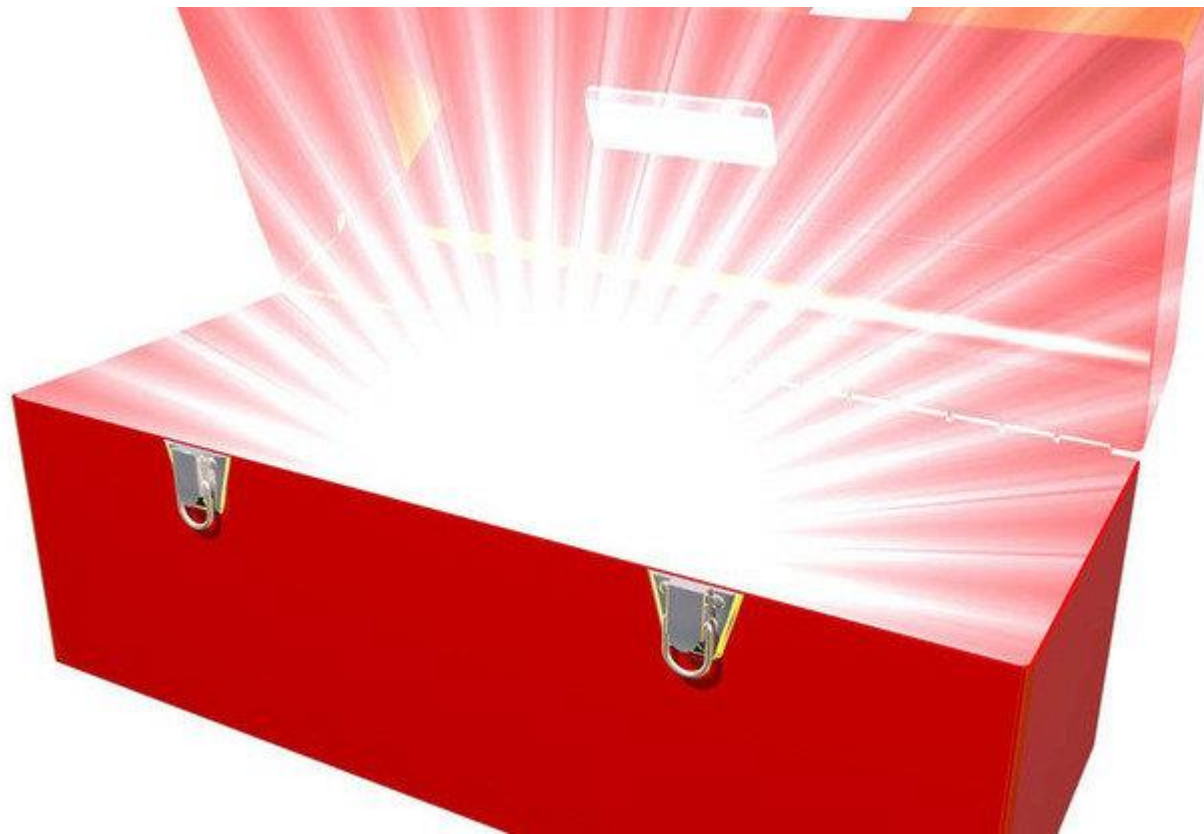
# A World of Triggers

- ▶ Early parental neglect or harsh treatment
  - ▶ behavioral problems in school
  - ▶ Difficulty with peers
  - ▶ lack of empathy for the distress of others
  - ▶ chronic arousal
  - ▶ they are then unpopular and provoke further rejection and punishment
- ▶ Recovery
  - ▶ Finding a way to become calm and focused
  - ▶ Learning to maintain calm in response to images, thoughts, sounds or physical sensations that trigger
  - ▶ Finding a way to be fully alive in the present and engaged with the people around you
  - ▶ Not having to keep secrets from yourself

# Invite Your Community To Participate

- ▶ Collaboration with Tools
  - ▶ Beneficial Relationships
  - ▶ Raise Awareness
- ▶ Events

# Time to Build Your Own ToolBox



# Create a Resource Notebook

- ▶ Track Contacts
- ▶ Maintain Positive Feedback and Relationships
  - ▶ Thank you Notes
  - ▶ Reach out to Community Partners ongoing to assist you and your needs

# Program Successes

- Events
- Relationships
- Personal and professional growth

# IDEAS and Find What Works

Hygiene Closets		Partnerships With Food Banks
Dressing Day Events		Community Wide Events and Training



# Ideas and Goals

- If you could accomplish one thing in a year what would it be?
- What needs to be done in six months to make it happen?
- Three months?
- One month?
- One Week?
- Tomorrow?

