

2019

# Teachers perspectives on student behavior and ACEs

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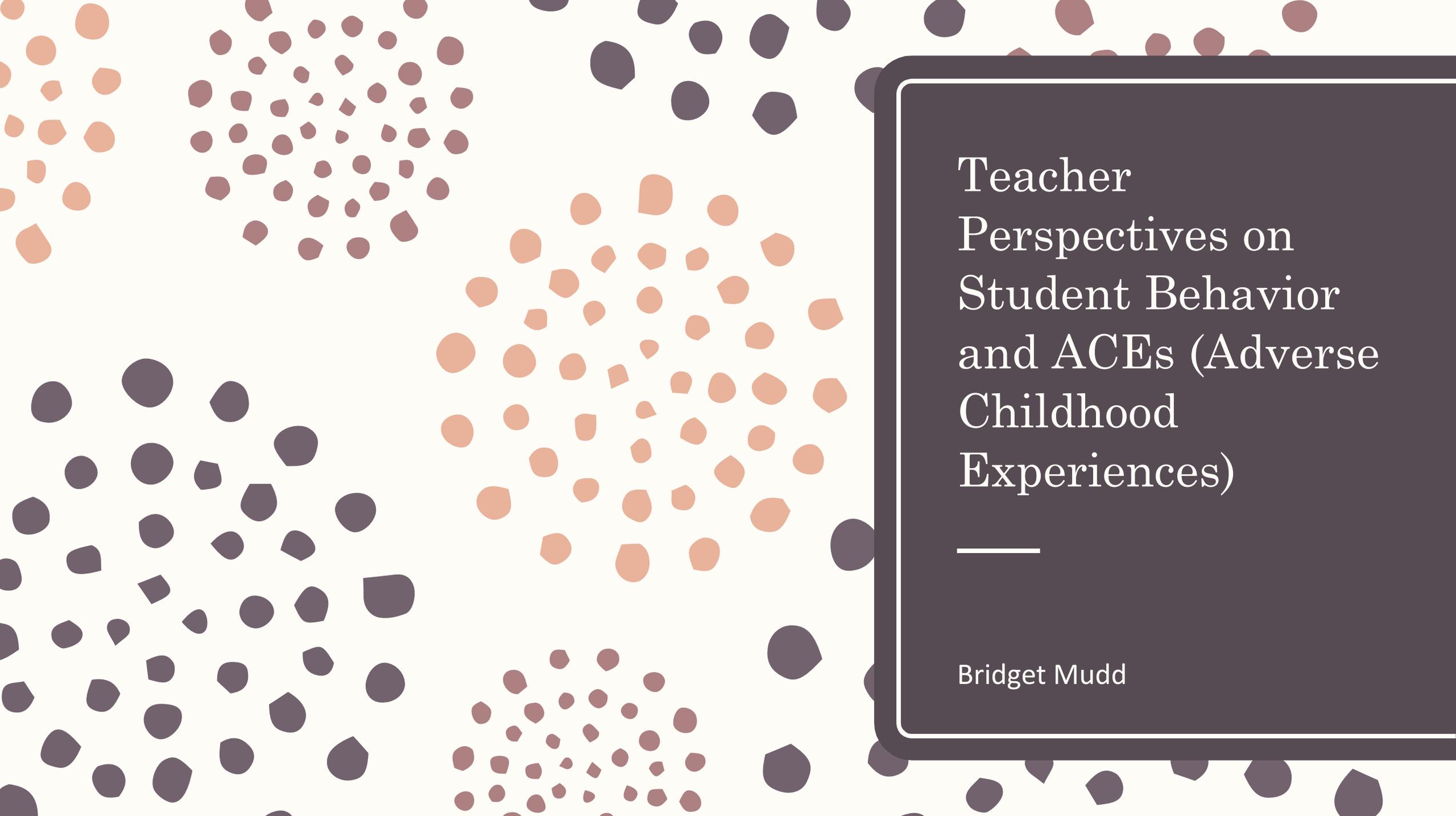
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Teacher  
Perspectives on  
Student Behavior  
and ACEs (Adverse  
Childhood  
Experiences)

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Bridget Mudd

# Relevant Terms

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- **Psychological Trauma-** “Traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat” (Van der Kolk, 1989, para 8)
- **Trauma Response-** “A variety of reactions are often reported and/or observed after trauma. Most survivors exhibit immediate reactions, yet these typically resolve without severe long-term consequences. ... These reactions are often normal responses to trauma but can still be distressing to experience” ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), n.d.)
- **ACEs-Adverse Childhood Experiences**
  - Common ACEs include: food and housing insecurity, Divorce, parental mental illness or substance abuse, physical, sexual or emotional abuse, death of a parent
  - Not every ACE leads to a trauma response

# Context (Literature Review)

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Emergence of Trauma Theory	The ACEs Study	Trauma Informed Care/Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1300 BCE to 1997ish</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1998 to present</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2001 to present</li></ul>

# Emergence of Trauma Theory

## AKA Trauma Makes People Uncomfortable

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### Ridiculously Ancient History

- ❖ Ancient Sumerian Medical Texts 1300-609 BCE
- ❖ Herodotus and Thucydides (Ancient Greek Historians) 440-404 BCE
- ❖ Sophocles, Greek Tragedies (Freud is a fan) 441 BCE
- ❖ Immediately following every single war, then promptly set aside

### 1970 to 1995

- ❖ **The Vietnam War and the Women's Movement**
- ❖ **Notable Names: Bessel van der Kolk and Sandra Bloom**
- ❖ **Clinicians and researchers begin to comprehend how many people are impacted by childhood trauma**

# The ACEs Study

## AKA People require a mountain of evidence to accept prevalence of trauma

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### First Wave

- Dr. Felitti stumbles on high rate of incident during an obesity clinic
- Teams up with Dr. Robert Anda and others for 17,000+ study through Kaiser Permanente
- 40% of sample experienced 2 or more ACEs
- 12.5% of experienced 4 or more
- 20% of sample experienced childhood sexual abuse
- 4 or more ACEs linked to increased risk for heart attack, stroke, STIs, and **early death**

### Later studies under the ACEs Umbrella Link ACEs and

- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Cancer
- Suicide
- Incarceration
- Intimate partner violence
- Adult sexual victimization
- ADHD diagnosis
- Lower academic achievement
- Higher risk for Dropping out of school
- More premature death



It's Time For.....

# Rainbow Butterfly Unicorn Kitten

Rainbow Butterfly Unicorn Kitten is here to help when you spend a year and a half studying the insane prevalence of childhood trauma and ways our education system fails to address the needs of students who are affected by it.



# Trauma-Informed Practices

AKA Actually, trauma still makes people uncomfortable

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## Roger Fallot and Maxine Harris

- Universal screening for trauma in mental health treatment facilities and programs
- Training all staff, not just clinicians
- Review existing for anything that might harm trauma survivors

## Many Other Researchers Suggest Other Systems Should be Trauma-Informed

- The Juvenile Justice System
- Foster Care
- Hospitals
- Prisons
- Schools

# The Gap

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No one asked teachers what they thought.  
Okay, 2 people did. Once in 1993 and again in  
2010

# My Research

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- ~~What do teachers think about trauma informed practices in elementary schools?~~
- ❖ Do teachers know how common ACEs are?
- ❖ Do teachers perceive those rates of prevalence in their classrooms?
- ❖ Do teachers see a connection between student behavior and ACEs?

# Methods:

41 teachers at 3 school sites in 3 counties.

Survey + Qualitative Interviews

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Affluent Public Elementary	Urban Public Elementary	Private Urban Elementary
15 teachers completed the survey	17 teachers completed the survey	8 teachers completed the survey
3 teachers interviewed	3 teachers interviewed	1 teacher interviewed

# Findings

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- Teachers internalize concepts pushed by administration
- Teachers rarely underestimated national rates of prevalence of ACEs
- Teachers estimates of ACEs reflected the national rates for some ACEs
- Teachers at all three schools estimated Zero of their students have experienced sexual abuse despite it being one of the most common ACEs

# Teachers internalize trainings their administration emphasizes (multiple sessions)

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## Affluent Public Elementary

- Teachers often referred to Zones of Regulation and related terms both generally and as solutions to challenging behavior
- Teachers did NOT refer to Academic Rigor

## Urban Public Elementary

- Teachers similarly enthusiastically referred to Academic Rigor
- Teachers did NOT refer to Zones of Regulation

## Affluent Public Elementary

## Urban Public Elementary

Teacher's # of ACEs	Estimate of trauma impacted students	Teacher's # of ACEs	Estimate of trauma impacted students
0 ACEs	10%	0 ACEs	50%
1-2 ACEs	15-20%	1-2 ACEs	80%
2-4 ACEs	30%	Childhood History of Severe Trauma	90%

“How many kids in your classroom *might* be impacted by trauma?”

Teacher ACEs directly correlated perfectly with estimates of children in class who may be impacted by trauma

# Number of times teachers used the word 'trauma'

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	<b>Affluent Public Elementary</b>	<b>Urban Public Elementary</b>	<b>Private Urban Elementary</b>
interviews	21	65	3
surveys	1 (15 surveys, 7%)	9 (17 surveys 53%)	1 (8 surveys, 12.5%)

\*\*Students at Urban Public Elementary are far more likely to have higher ACEs exposure, statistically speaking.

ACE	National Rate of Prevalence	Affluent Public Elementary	Private Urban Elementary	Urban Public Elementary
Repeated Food and Housing Insecurity	25% of children in the U.S.	67% correct	87% correct	65% correct
Parental Divorce or Separation	23% of children in the U.S.	33% correct	38% correct	17% correct
Drug or alcohol Abuse in the Home	9% of children in the U.S.	40% correct The rest guessed higher	25% correct The rest guessed higher	12% correct The rest guessed higher
Have lived with someone with severe mental health issues Suicidal or severe depression	8% of children in the U.S.	40% correct	25% correct	41% correct
Seen or heard a parent slapped, hit, punched, or kicked in the home	6% of children in the U.S.	40% correct The rest guessed higher	50% correct The rest guessed higher	24% correct The rest guessed higher
Sexual Abuse	20% Of Girls 5% of boys, in the U.S.	27% correct The rest guessed lower	13% correct The rest guessed lower	53% correct The rest guessed lower
Parent or guardian incarcerated	8% of children in the U.S.	67% correct	75% correct	35% correct (majority guessed higher)
Witness violence in neighborhood	4% of children in the U.S.	0 correct All teachers guessed higher	0 correct All teachers guessed higher	0 correct All teachers guessed higher

ACE	National rate of Prevalence	Affluent Public Elementary	Private Urban Elementary	Urban Public Elementary
Repeated Food and Housing Insecurity	25% of children in the U.S.	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (67% majority estimated)	<b>0 children</b> (50% majority estimated)	<b>More than 30%</b> more than 7 children (31% majority estimated)
Parental Divorce or Separation	23% of children in the U.S.	<b>15%</b> 3-5 children (67% majority estimated)	<b>15%</b> 3-5 children (63% estimated)	<b>15%</b> 3-5 children or around (44% estimated)
Drug or alcohol Abuse in the Home	9% of children in the U.S.	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (67% majority estimated)	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (75% estimated)	<b>15%-30+%</b> 3-5 children higher (63% estimated)
Have lived with someone with severe mental health issues Suicidal or severe depression	8% of children in the U.S.	<b>15%</b> 3-5 children (87% majority estimated)	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (50% estimated)	38% estimated 1-2 or 5%
Seen or heard a parent slapped, hit, punched, or kicked in the home	6% of children in the U.S.	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (53% majority estimated) (26% estimated 3-5 or 15%)	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (75% majority estimated) (26% estimated 3-5 or 15%) 25% estimated 0	<b>15%</b> 3-5 children (44% majority estimated) (38% estimated higher)
Sexual Abuse	20% Of Girls 5% of boys, in the U.S.	<b>0 children</b> (53% estimated)	<b>0 children</b> (63% estimated)	<b>0 children/5%</b> (44%/44% estimated)
Parent or guardian incarcerated	8% of children in the U.S.	<b>0 children</b> (60% estimated)	<b>0 children</b> (100% estimated)	32% estimated 1-2 or <b>5%</b> 32% estimated 3-5 or <b>15%</b>
Witness violence in neighborhood	4% of children in the U.S.	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (67% majority estimated)	<b>5%</b> 1-2 children (75% estimated)	62% estimated more than 7 higher than 30%



Teacup Pig  
Eats an Ice  
Cream Cone at  
a Tiny Picnic  
Table!

You're doing a great  
job. We're almost  
done!



# Implications

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- Engaging, multiple-session teacher trainings work.
- If we provide teachers with trauma informed training, they will become trauma-informed teachers.
- Universally applied trauma informed practices that benefit ALL students
- Trauma-informed teaching has elements in common with programs and philosophies many districts already utilize such as mindfulness, GLAD, Zones of Regulation, Responsive Classroom

# References

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- ” (Van der Kolk, 1989, para 8)
- [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), n.d.)
- Van derKold, 2014
- Bloom, 1997
- [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)



# Resilience and Protective Factors

Human brains have amazing neuroplasticity. Studies show that resilience is the anecdote for ACEs. Children with protective factors are half as likely to experience some of the

