

Current Issues Facing Native Children in the Southwest Region

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What we know about American Indian children in the Southwest

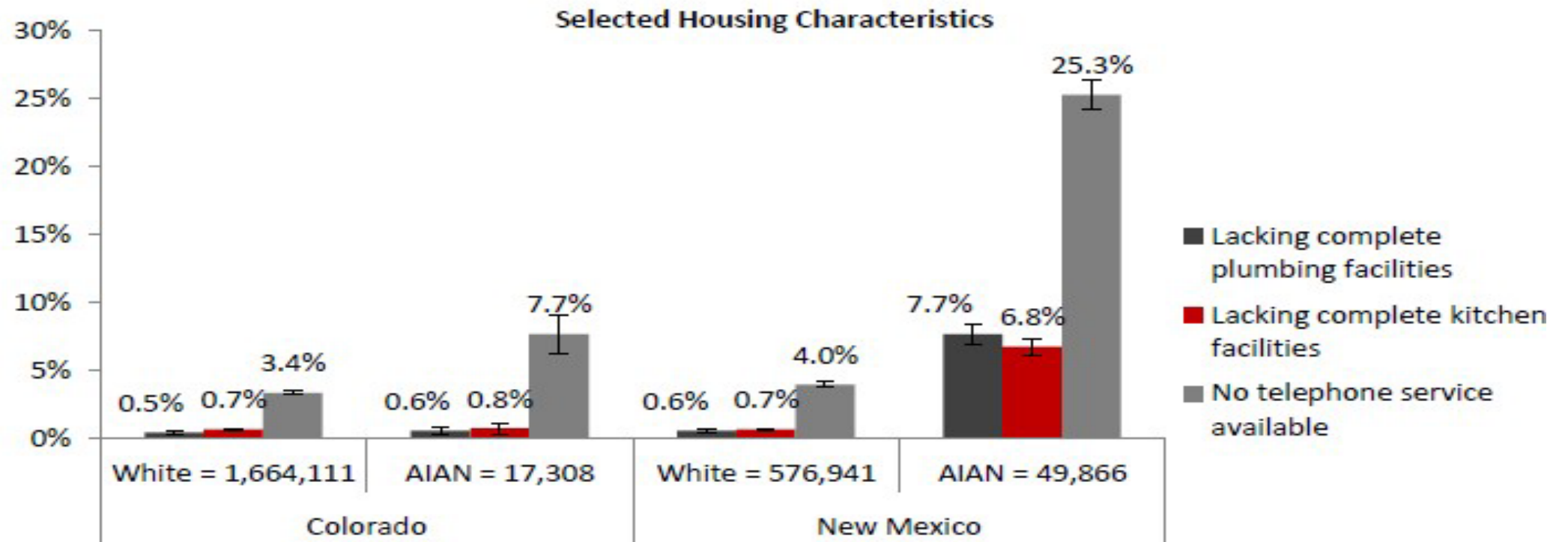
- In Arizona, 43.9% of AI children live in poverty with a median family income of \$33,300 in comparison to a median income of \$62,300 for the state
- In New Mexico, 41.1% of AI children live in poverty with a median family income of \$31,500 in comparison to a median income of \$52,100 for the state
- In Colorado, 24.1% of American Indian children live in poverty with a median family income of \$45,400 in comparison to a median income of \$82,900 for the state
- In Utah, 35.3% of American Indian children live in poverty with a median family income of \$50,000 in comparison to a median income of \$78,600 for the state
- Nationally 33% of all American Indian children live in poverty

School Statistics

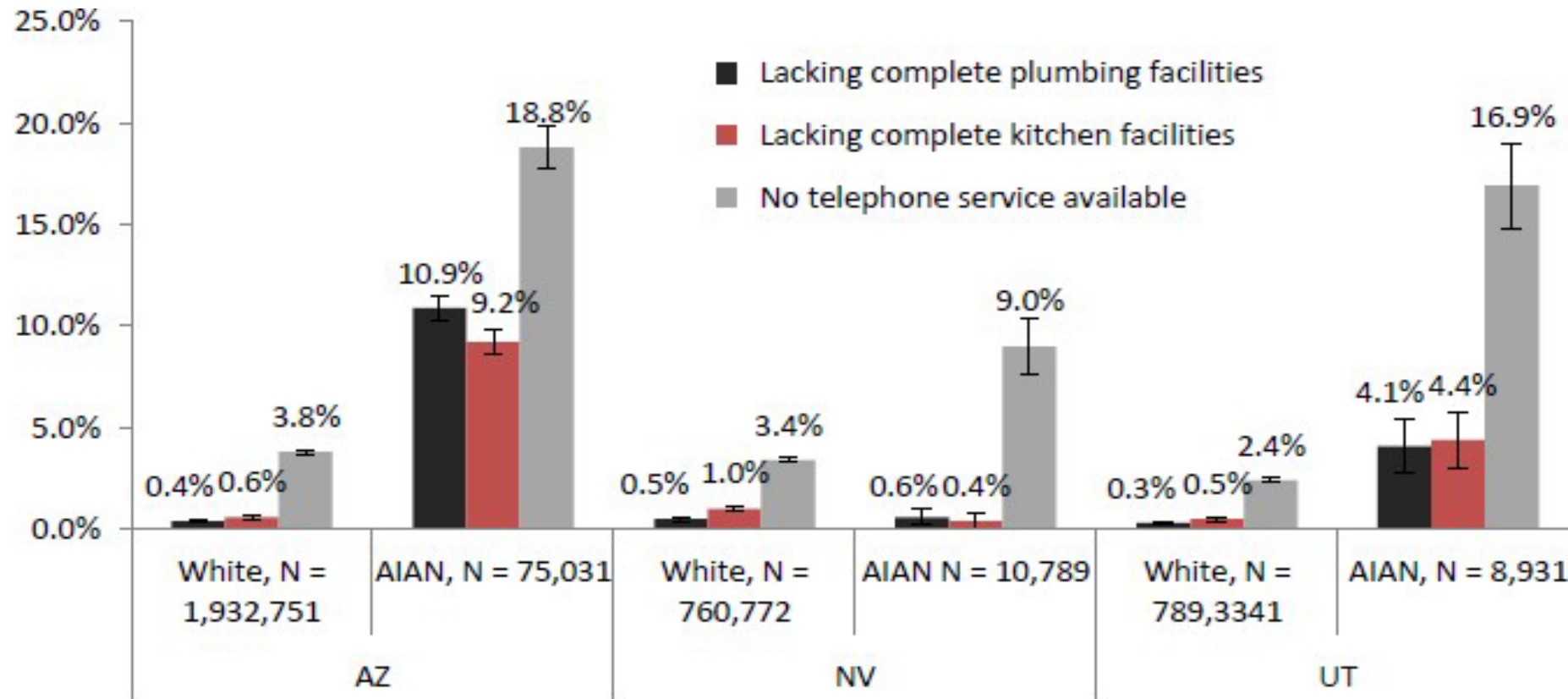
	% on time graduate rates AI/All children	%receiving at least one Suspension AI/All children	% AI 4 th graders not proficient in reading	%AI 8 th graders not proficient in math
Arizona	67/78	8.5/5.1	72%	71%
Colorado	64/79	6.8/4.4	60%	62%
New Mexico	61/71	6.0/6.2	75%	80%
Utah	74/86	5.2/1.7	59%	61%

Housing Characteristics in Colorado and NM

Housing Characteristics



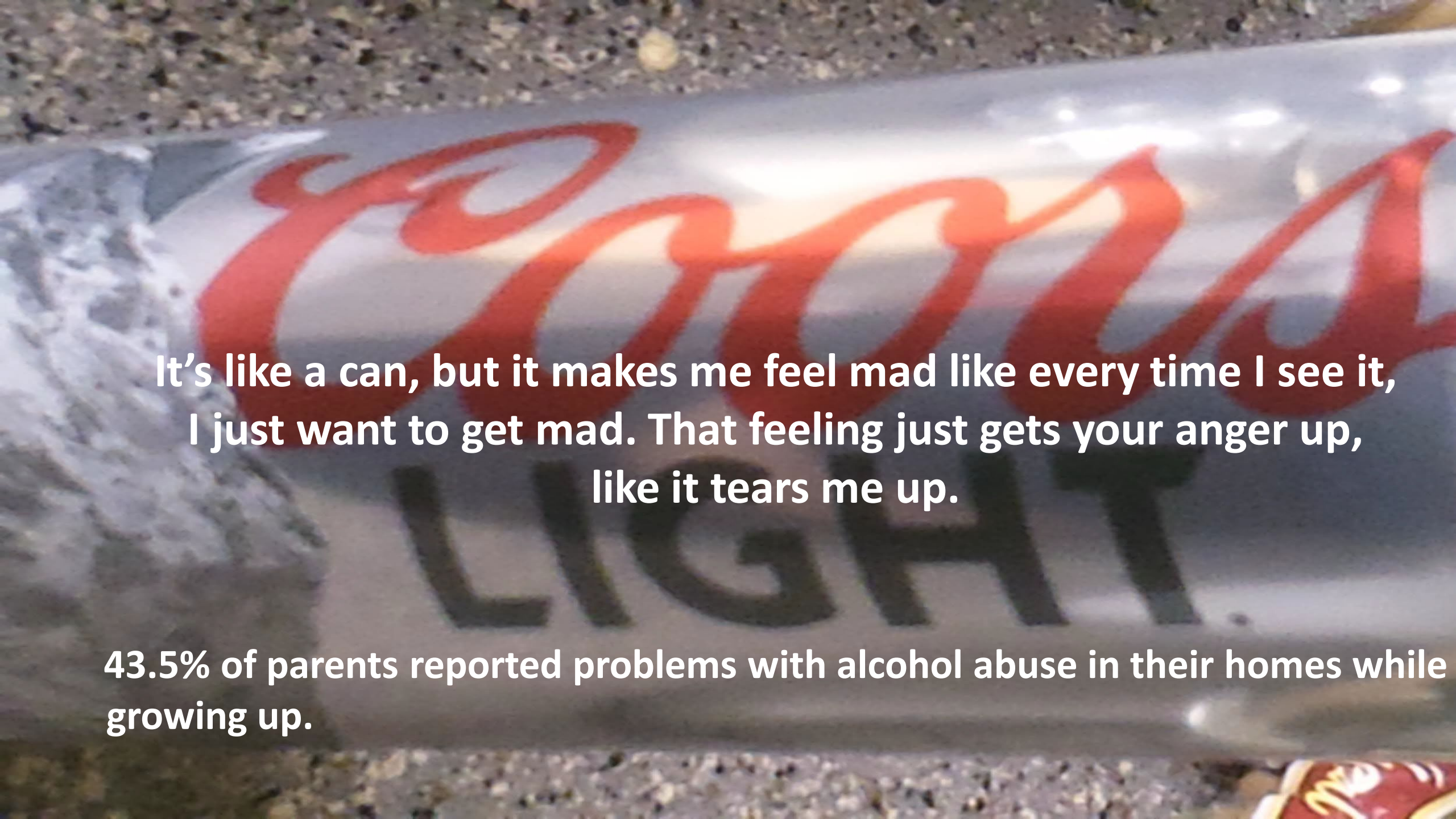
Housing Characteristics in AZ, NV, & UT



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2006-2010 American Community Survey. Table DP04

My Study of a Community Sample of Urban American Indian Youth in Arizona

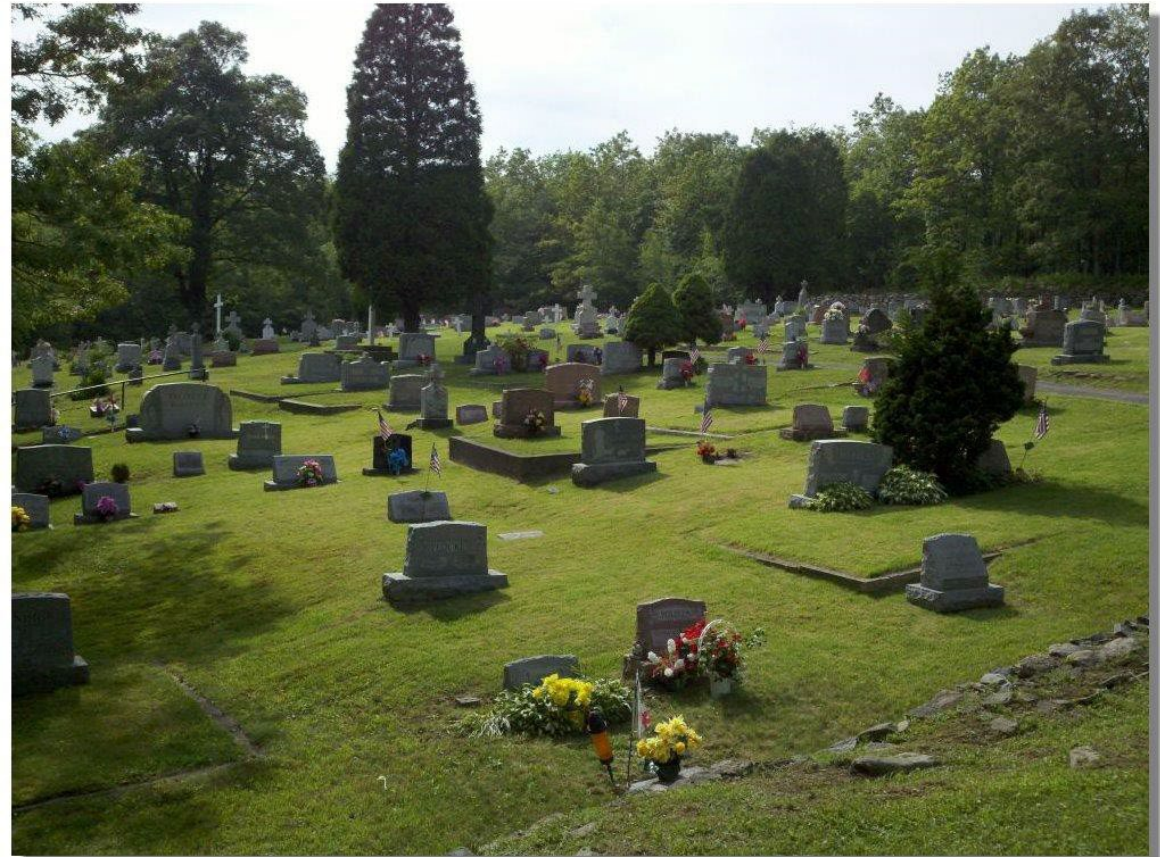
- Urban American Indian Youth
- N = 178
- Ages 7 to 15 years old
- 98 girls and 80 boys
- Participants listed membership in 15 tribes
- 123 hair samples to measure toxic stress
- Qualitative data is a nested sample of 17 youth
 - Photo elicitation task with follow up interviews
 - Take pictures of the people, places, things that challenge and support you

A close-up photograph of a crushed aluminum can lying on a dark, textured surface. The can is crumpled and flattened. In the center of the can, the word "LIGHT" is printed in large, black, sans-serif capital letters. Above the word, there is a red, stylized graphic element that resembles a flame or a wave. The lighting is bright, creating a strong reflection on the top surface of the can.

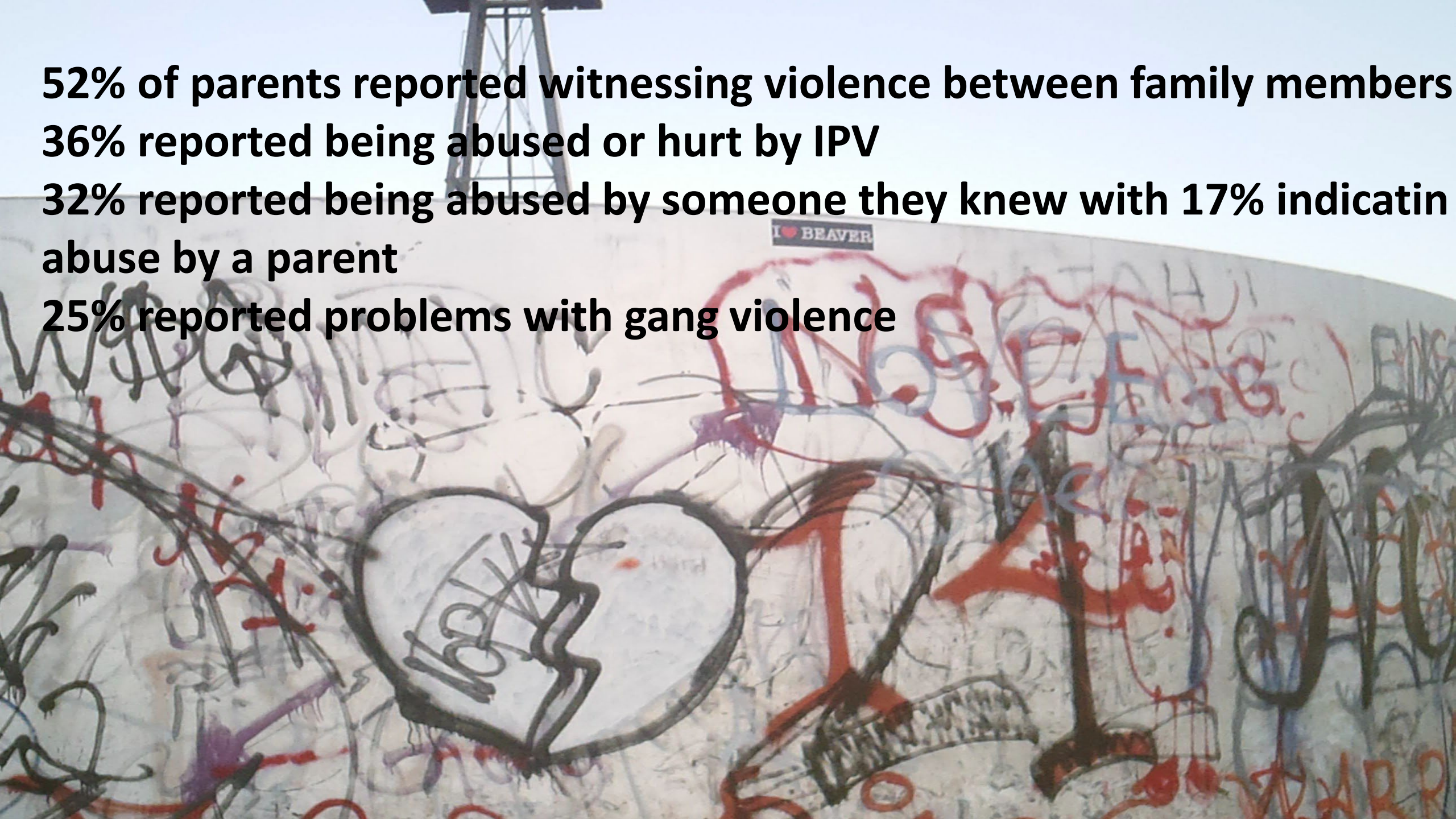
**It's like a can, but it makes me feel mad like every time I see it,
I just want to get mad. That feeling just gets your anger up,
like it tears me up.**

**43.5% of parents reported problems with alcohol abuse in their homes while
growing up.**

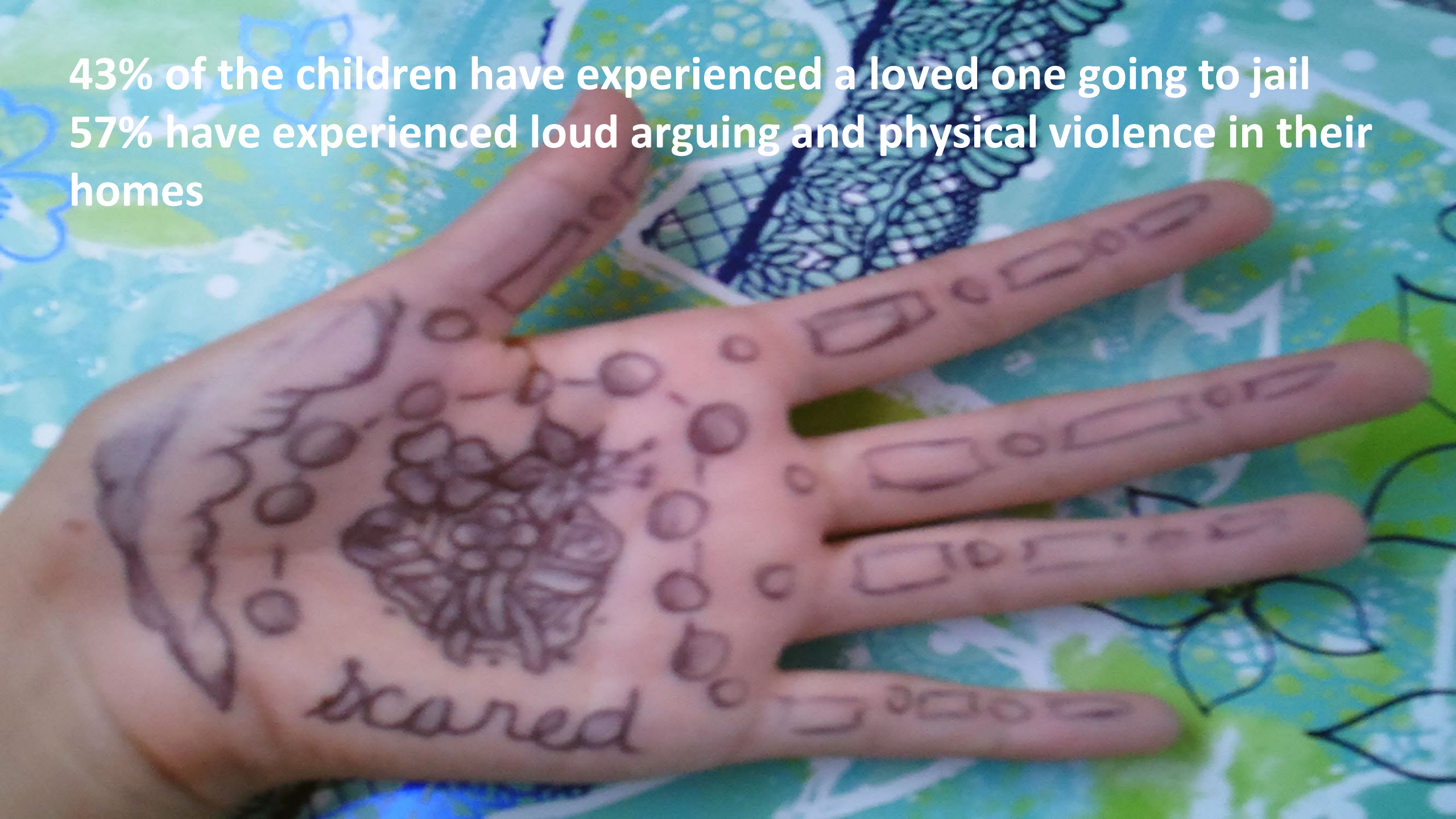
67% of children have had a loved one die
23% of parents reported a loved one attempted
suicide and 14% reported losing a loved one to
suicide



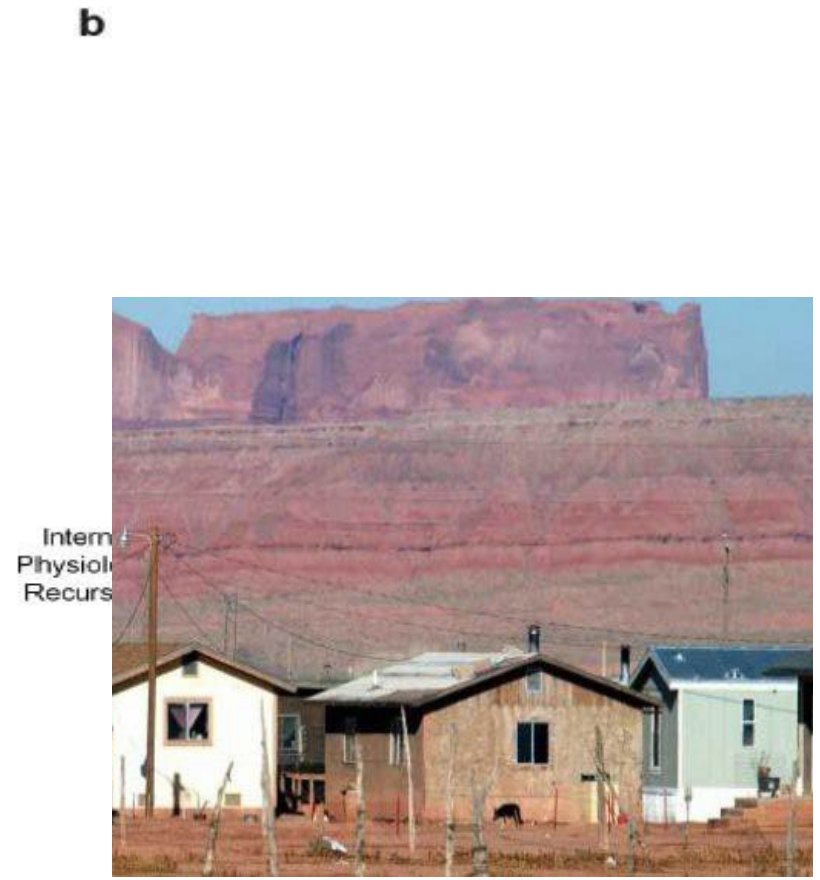
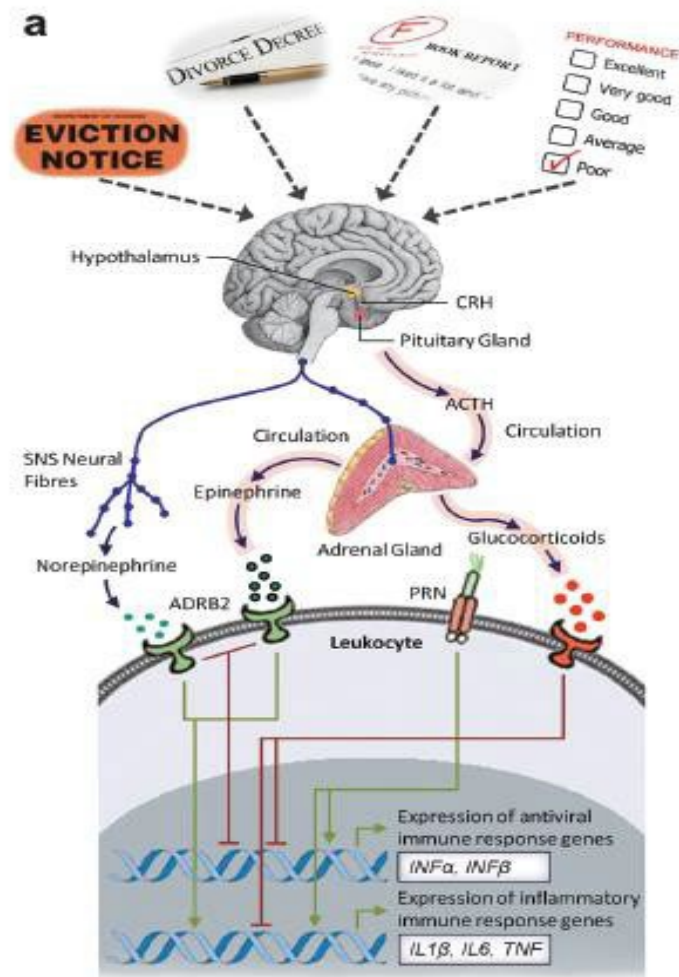
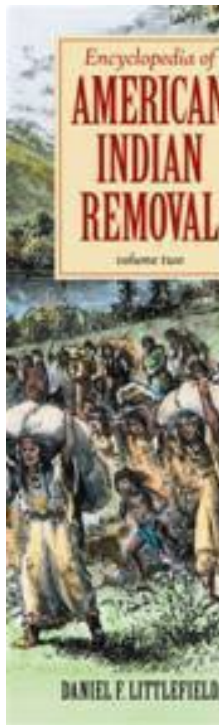
52% of parents reported witnessing violence between family members
36% reported being abused or hurt by IPV
32% reported being abused by someone they knew with 17% indicating
abuse by a parent
25% reported problems with gang violence



43% of the children have experienced a loved one going to jail
57% have experienced loud arguing and physical violence in their homes

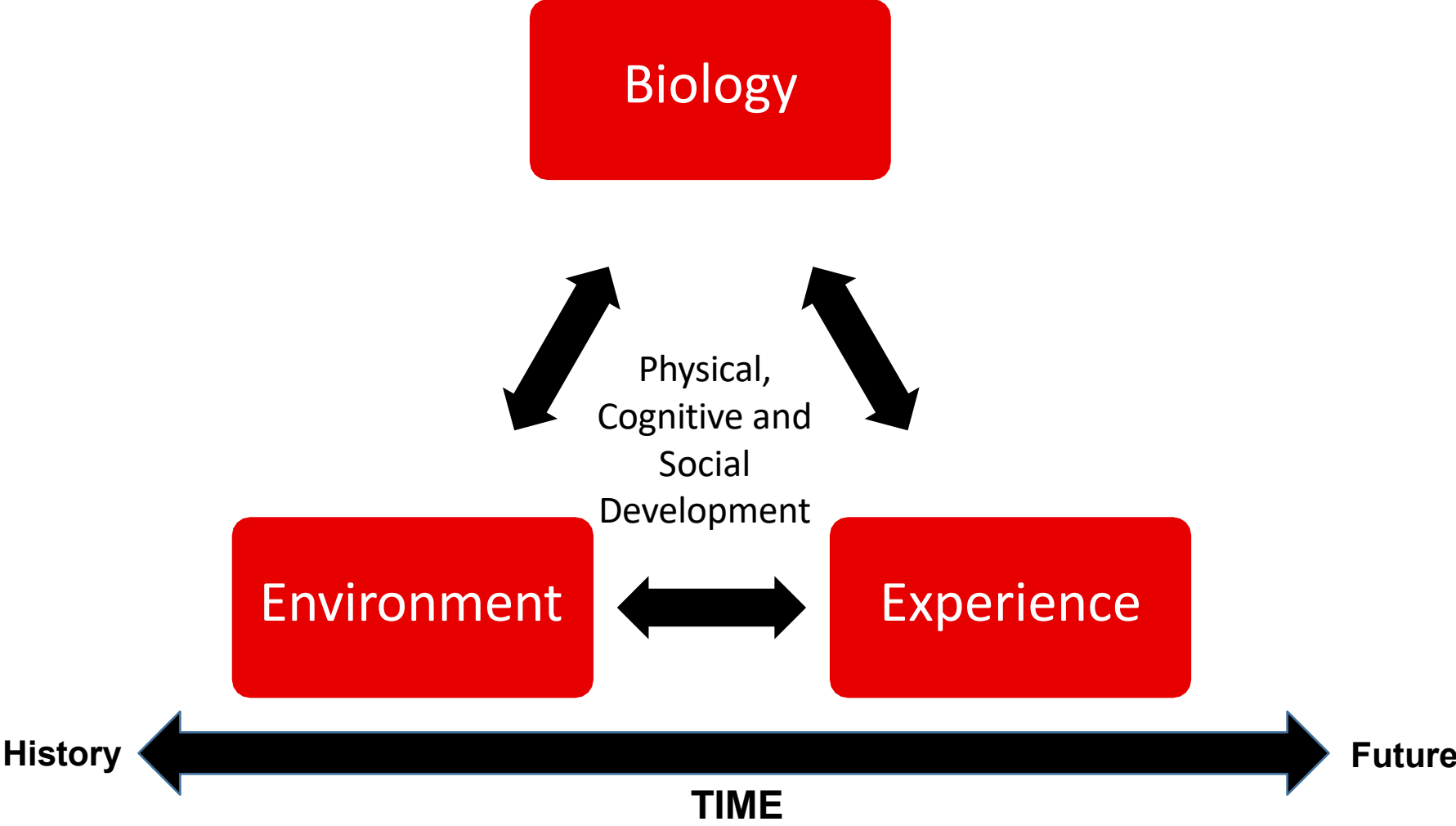


Thinking theoretically about how the past continues to influence the present



Slavich & Cole, 2013

A Common Developmental Model



Statistics on AI/AN youth and what we know about biology, trauma, and history

Statistic	Trauma Research
28% of AI with children on reservations experience food insecurity in comparison to 16% in U.S. as a whole (Bauer et al., 2012).	Trauma play sa major role in the pathogenesis of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression. Research on nutrition has shown that folic acid and vitamin B12 deficiencies during the fetal and early postnatal periods of life are key risk factors (Peedacayil, 2012).
One study found that young fathers reported high rates of lifetime substance abuse and alcohol abuse (Neault et al., 2012)	Drug addiction leads to modifications of the brain's reward system which in turn serves to regulate drug addiction (Feng & Nestler, 2013) Drug induced changes may be transferred to offspring and influence their susceptibility to drug abuse (Vassoler et al., 2013)

Statistics on AI/AN youth and what we know about biology, trauma, and history

Statistic	Trauma Research
<p>AIAN experience violent victimization at significantly higher rates than all other racial groups in the U.S. (DOJ, 2012)</p> <p>AIAN women experience 2 to 3 times more violent victimization than women of any other race (DOJ, 2012)</p>	<p>Stressful experiences prenatally and early in life lead to long-term remodeling of the stress response system with the load accumulated over a lifetime contributing to a predisposition for disease and psychiatric disorders (Murgatroyd et al., 2009; Franklin et al., 2010; McCrory, De Brito, & Viding, 2010) and may contribute to a cascade of events involved in the development of drug addiction (Kumar et al., 2005; Robison & Nestler, 2011)</p>

Statistics on AI/AN youth and what we know about biology, trauma, and history

Statistic	Trauma Research
<p>AIAN experience high rates of abuse (Child Maltreatment, 2010)</p>	<p>Child maltreatment has been linked to changes in the brain in human suicide victims (Mc Gowan et al., 2009)</p>
<p>79.8% of AI girls have been sexually abused (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1999)</p>	<p>Child sexual abuse and physical abuse increase the odds of suicide attempts and completion substantially In fact, the odds are 12 times higher for child sexual abuse with this increased risk linked to changes in the prefrontal and frontal cortex (Labonte & Turecki, 2012).</p>
<p>Suicide rates are alarmingly high in adolescents and highest in males 20 to 24 years of age (CDC, 2009).</p>	

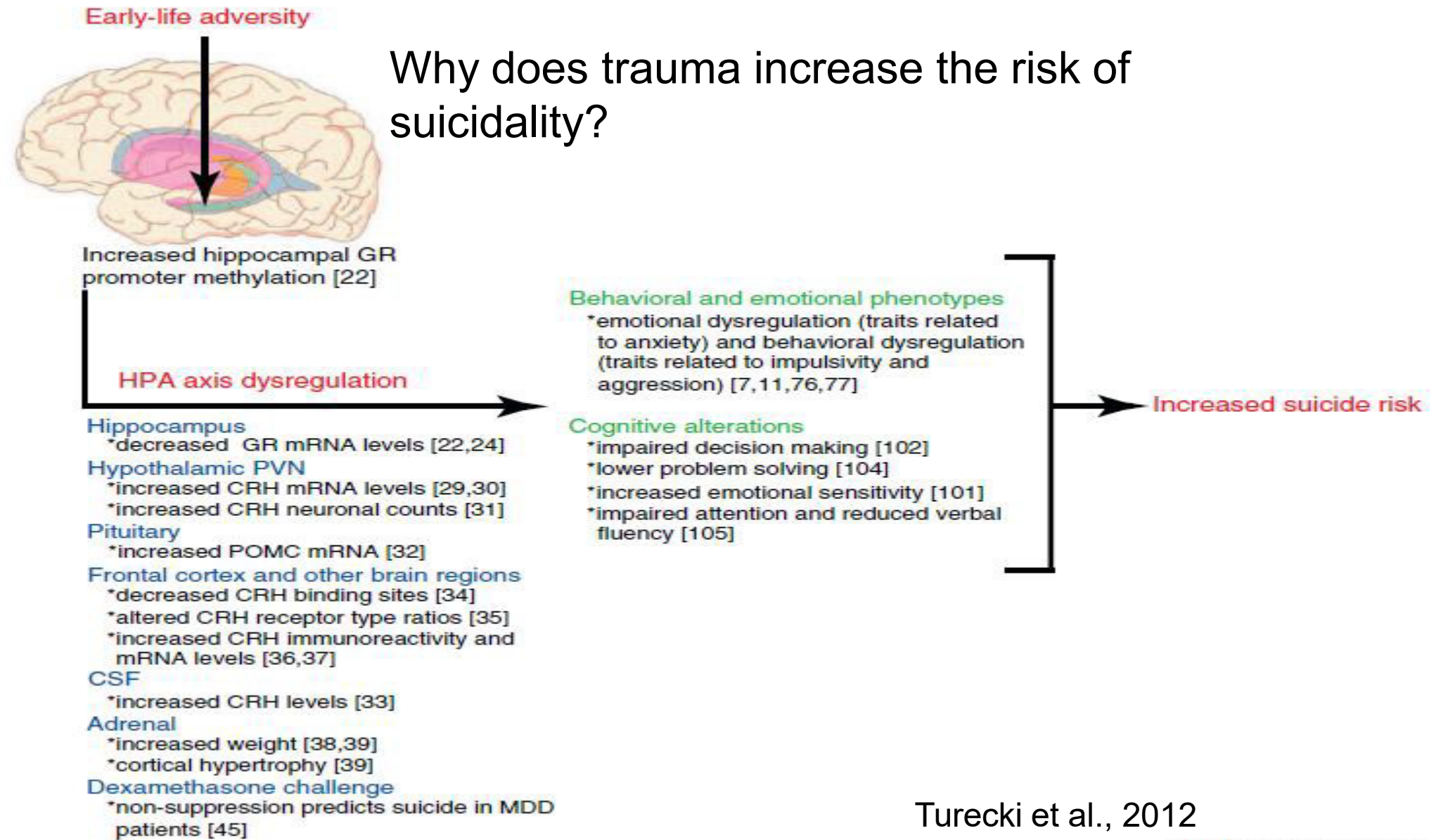
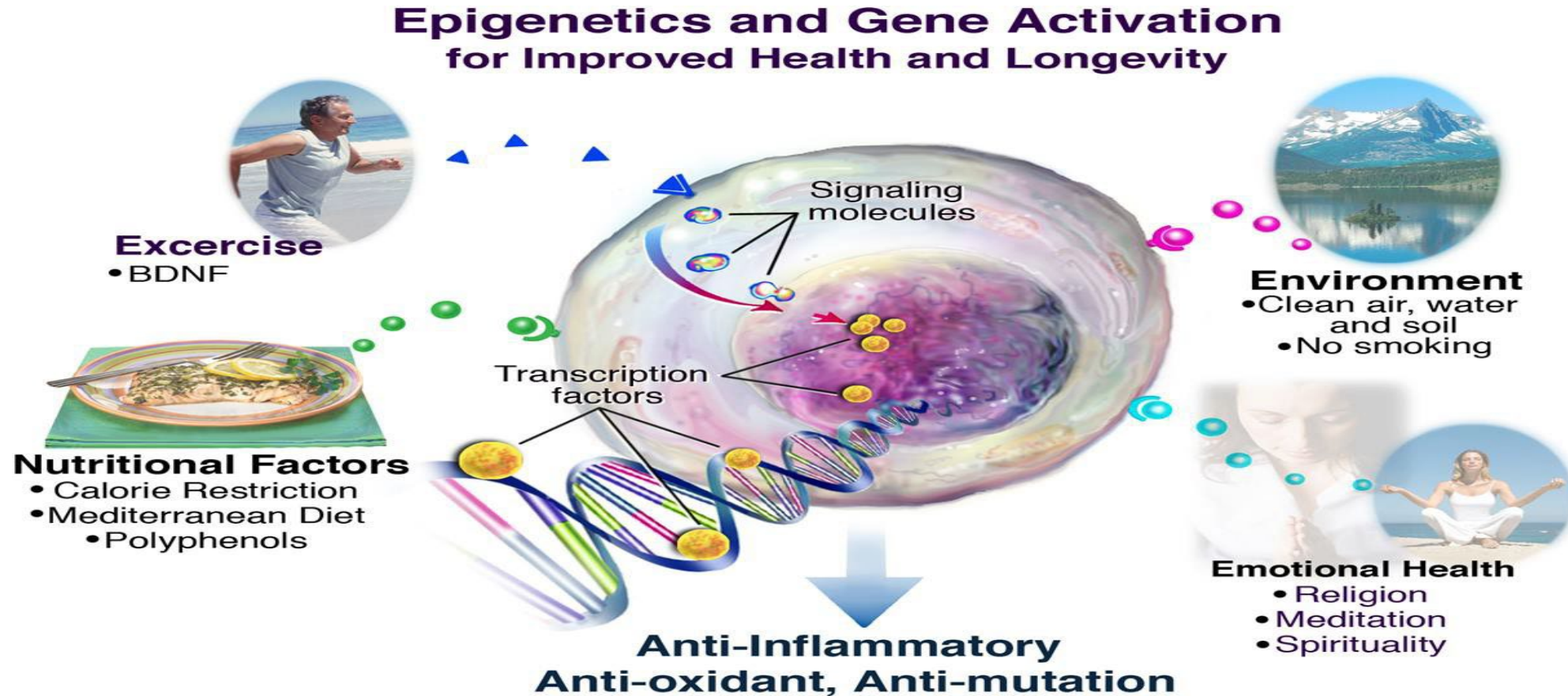


Figure 3. Model explaining increased risk for suicide in individuals exposed to early-life adversity. Exposure to early-life adversity increases promoter methylation of glucocorticoid receptor (GR) in the hippocampus, leading to hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) dysregulation and development of emotional, behavioral and cognitive phenotypes, which in turn increase risk for suicide. Under each panel, studies supporting these associations are listed.

We don't have to accept these outcomes!



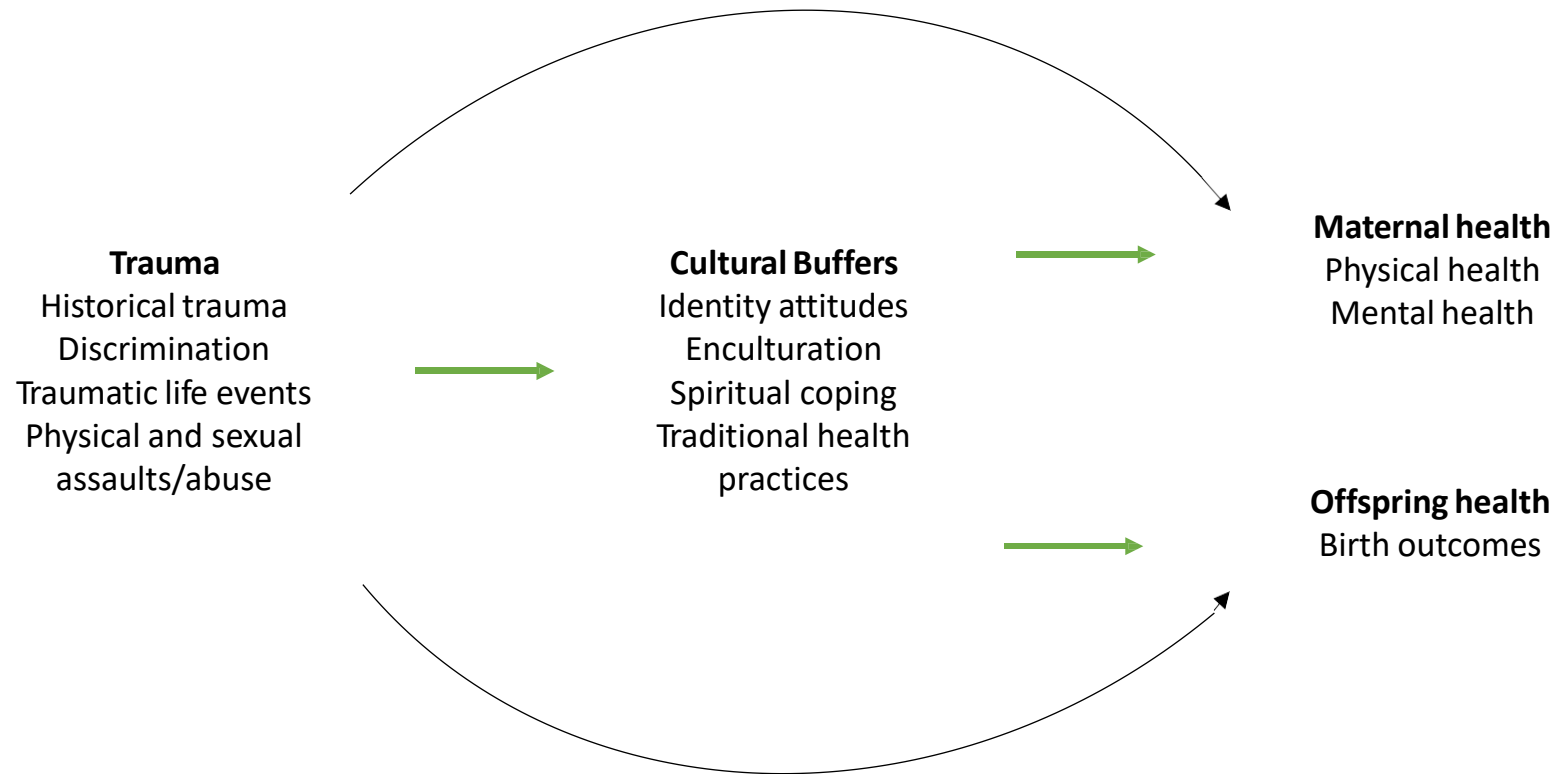
Copyright 2009 Joseph Maroon,
M.D.

Culture is the missing variable

- Traditional spirituality, traditional practices and cultural identity are protective factors
 - Traditional spirituality and practices were associated with alcohol cessation (Torres-Stone et al., 2006) and were negatively related to depressive symptoms (Whitbeck et al., 2002) and suicidal behaviors (Garrouette et al., 2003) in adults
 - All 3 associated with increased self-esteem, academic success, and prosocial behaviors among adolescents (LaFromboise et al., 2006; Pu et al., 2012; Reinhardt, Evenstad, & Faircloth, 2012)
 - Cultural traditional activities, identification with American Indian culture and use of tribal languages have been shown to be protective, reducing suicide attempts and substance abuse (Henson, Sabo, Trujillo & Teufel-Shone, 2017).
 - Loving relationships and family support buffer toxic stress.



Indigenist model of trauma, coping and health outcomes



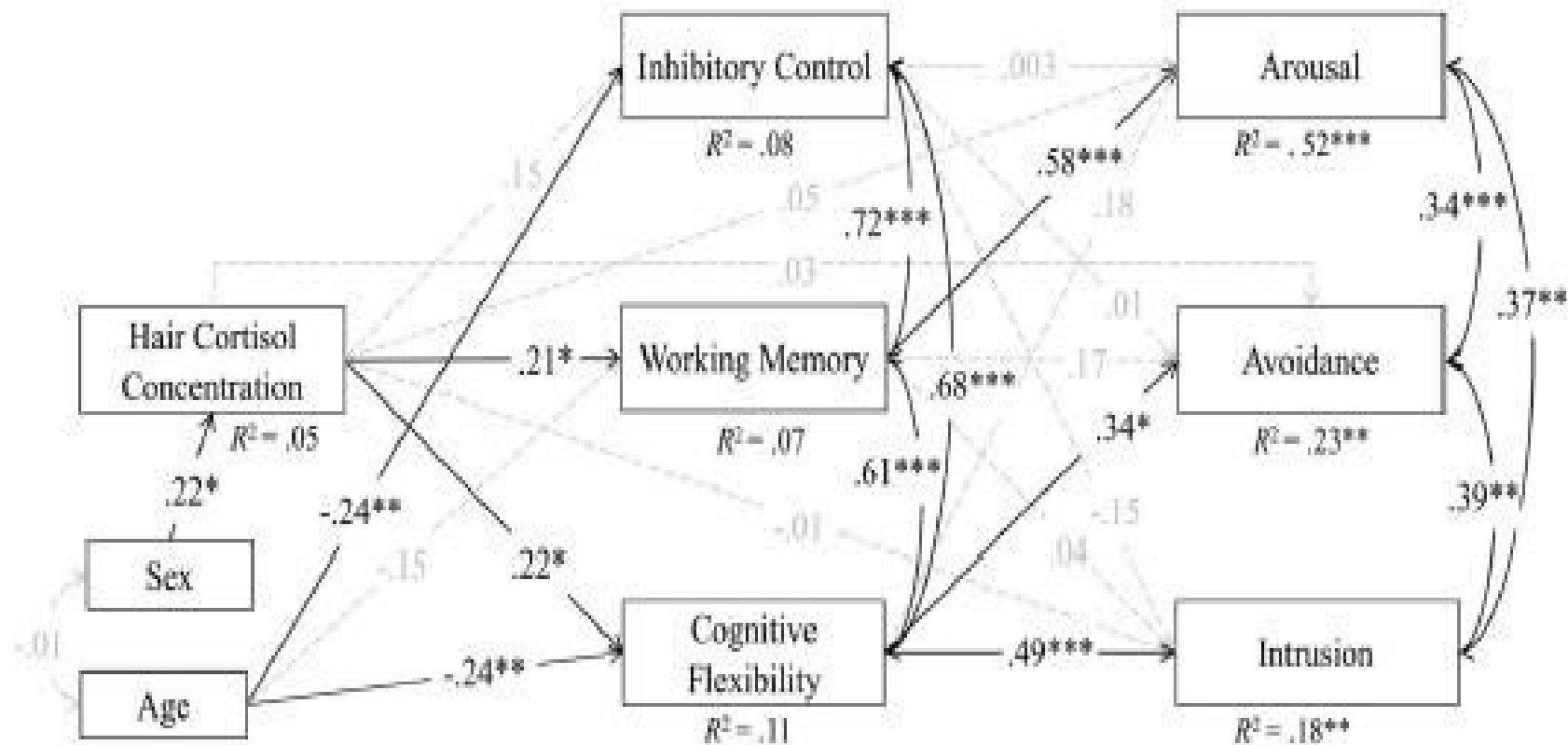
Modified from Walters and Simoni (2002)

Chronic stress predicts post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms via executive function deficits among urban American Indian children

Indirect Effects of Hair Cortisol Concentration on PTSD Symptoms of Arousal, Avoidance, and Intrusion through Deficits in Inhibitory Control,

Working Memory, and Cognitive Flexibility

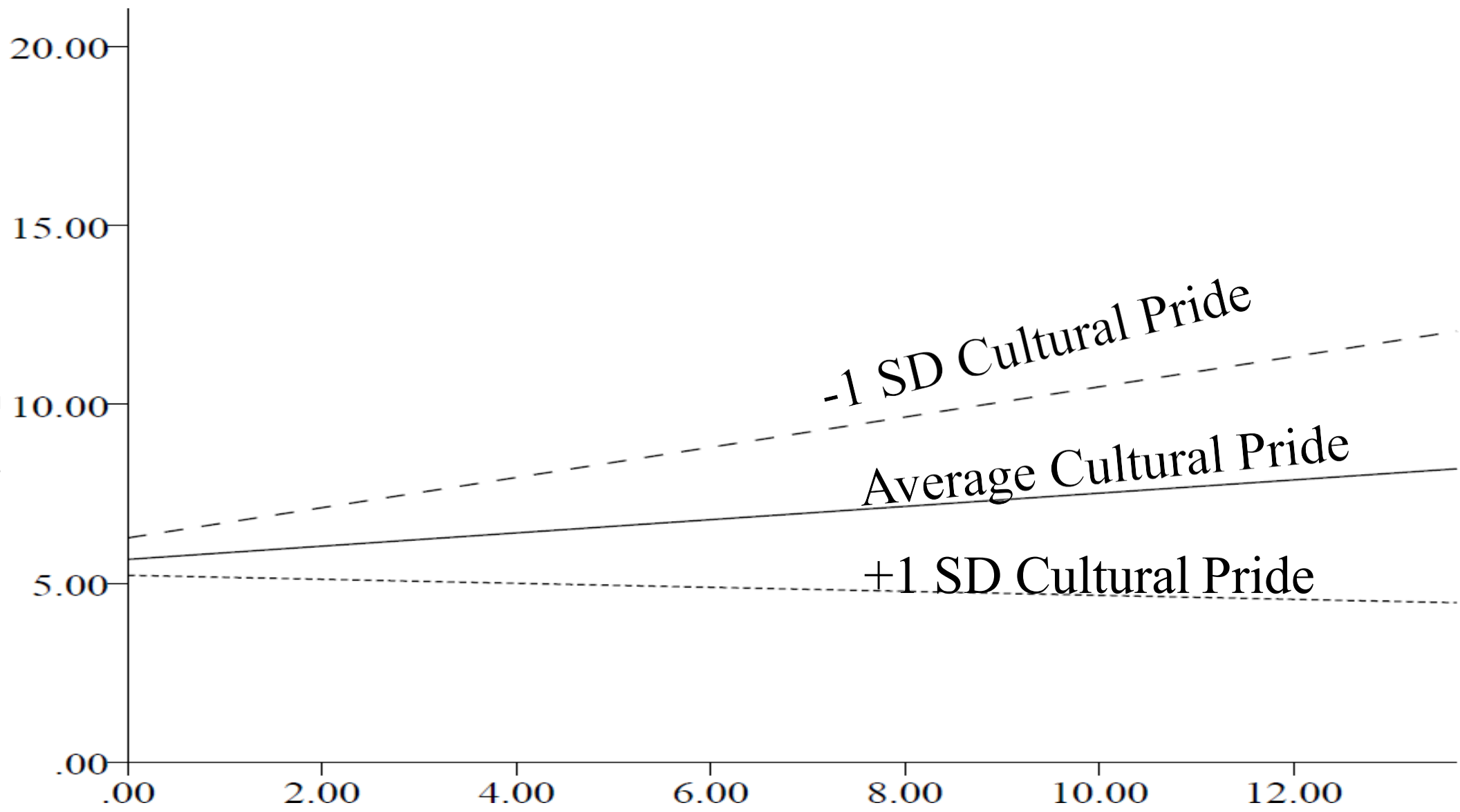
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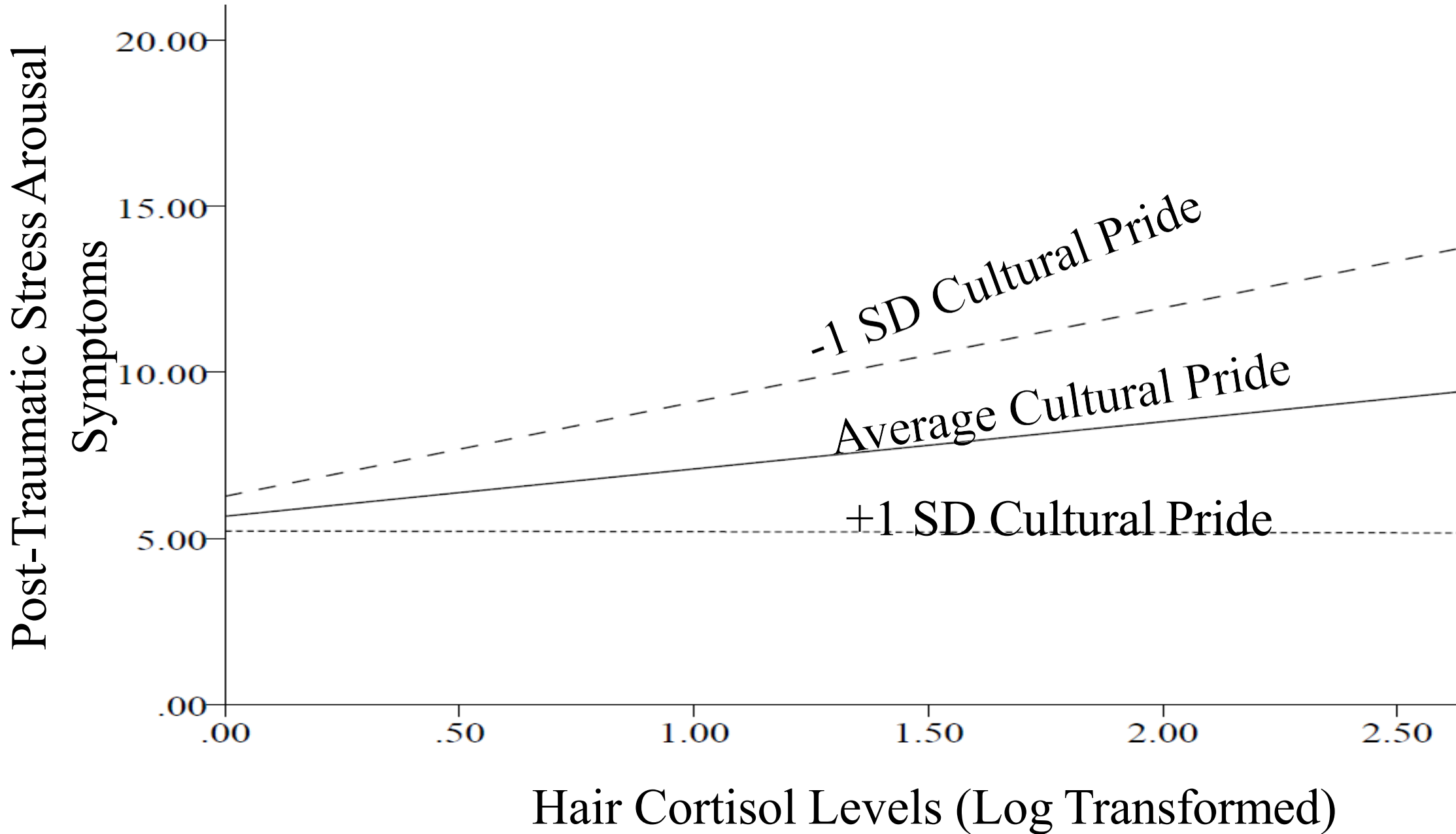
Current Paper Suggests Cultural
Knowledge can Buffer Children
from Chronic Stress

Post-Traumatic Stress Arousal

Symptoms



Childhood Stressful Life Events



Youth Voices

The Importance of Culture

My grandma and my grandpa (teach me about culture). They are both (Nation). They went to the boarding school when they were little kids. They told us that it was like teaching you the ways of how outside really looks like. They both teach my family and I to make sure to keep the generation alive of (Nation). They pass it down. They teach us some words, take us outside, tell us that we're not always going to be city girls. We're always gonna have a second part of our lives. They keep the generation up.

The tribe is about—I think it's about my culture, who I am, and be myself but...

you can miss whatever you liked in the past or something but my grandma tells me something about our culture and I really like our culture too because it makes me feel strong in my culture.

- Do you think being (tribe) influences who you are as a person?
- C: yeah
- I: How?
- C: Like I can . . . every time when I go to a powwow it like just looks amazing - what we used to be.
- I: We still are.
- C: Yeah, we still are.

Some of my drawings.

Art or drawing make me feel better when I'm challenged because it helps me get my mind off of whatever I'm feeling challenged about and I'll feel better because I'll look at my art and think that it's a good piece.





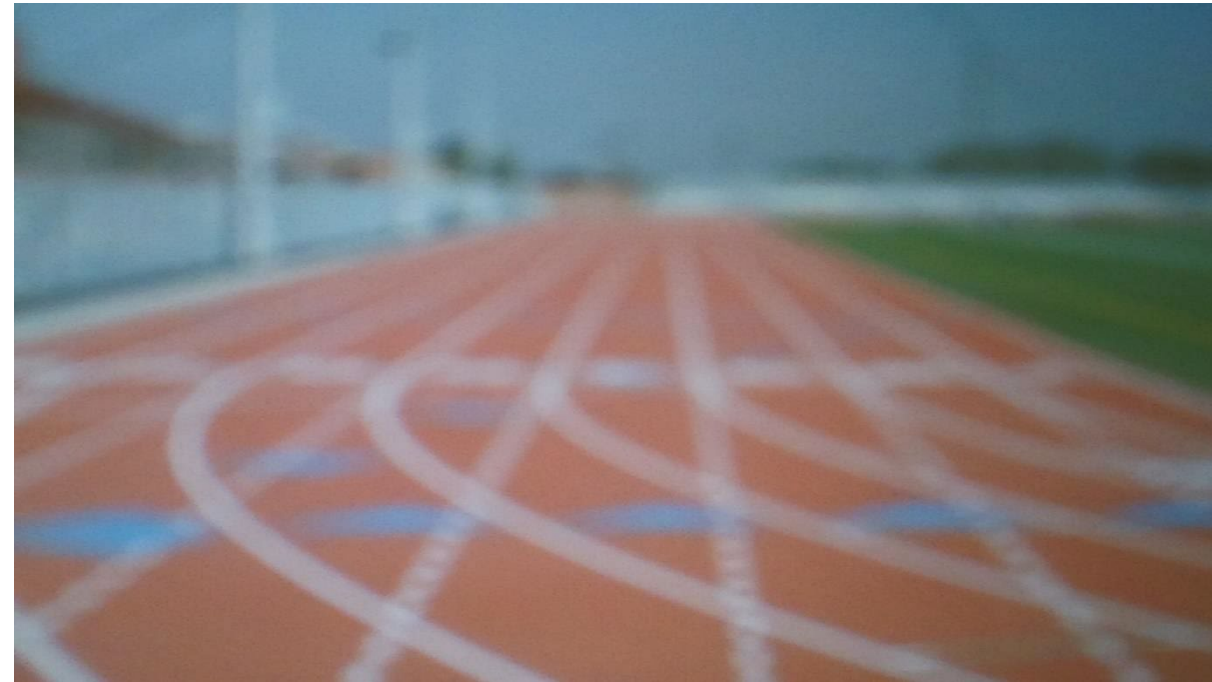
Drawing helps when I feel frustrated or really mad like I can just draw my feelings in what I draw.





Running is cultural.
Running has always been a part of us.
We always run and we always find our ways
and we all have our own beliefs.

You just run for like everything. You just run for... I guess it kind of reminds me of when you start that's when negativity comes but when you start pushing yourself you're getting more positive thoughts, you're getting like flashbacks of how people have positive thoughts on you and you just keep running. It's like you're on a shore but you started to walk on water and you can't see the shore but when you turn back. You see how far you've gotten and how you got strong and how you could manage it. You can see that you can do the impossible.



This picture shows my (grandmother's) hogan and it makes me feel strong because it is home to me and its where I go to think and relax most of the time.





This picture shows a sign from family culture night. This makes me feel strong because I can be with my family and eat food.

Well when I'm feeling challenged, I want to put my mind on something. I want to have good thoughts so I will start moving or start knitting and putting my good thoughts into there and forgetting about the old ones. I remind myself that this is the person who I am. This is my life. They have no idea who I am. They have no right to tell me what to say or what to do.



I: Every six months you have a blessing?

C: Yeah.

I: When you're at school and you're feeling challenged, does it just help you to know that you have those prayers?

C: Yeah because the blessings are for me to do well in school and all.



To raise healthy children. . .

We have to return to original instruction, focus on relational restoration, and engage in narrative embodied transformation (Walters et al. 2020)

Thank You

All the schools, children and families who participated in my research

My research team

Spencer Foundation Ford Foundation

William T. Grant Foundation

Native Children's Research Exchange Scholars – NIDA

The University of Utah

Arizona State University

