- This is very relevant to Close the Gap efforts. Without addressing the lower levels of the pyramid, there maybe cyclic improvements as we have noted, but there will not be ongoing change. Our priority should be our children's safety. Children who are disengaged, isolated and/or feeling unloved are at increased risk of self-harm and suicide. If they are excluded by the Community from positive activities and interactions, "named and shamed" and excluded from Community life (shopping, sport etc.), we are increasing the risk. This is not to say there should not be consequences – but these need to be carefully considered with reference to what research tells us about what is effective and what increases risk. We also need to be doing our part to build the Community we want – rather than "fix" kids.

- The risk of chronic diseases increases with number of of different types of Adverse Childhood Experience a person has been subject to. In this context, the particular social problem we are looking at is juvenile crime. If we want to prevent juvenile crime and other social issues in the longer term, we need to look at how we heal trauma including intergenerational trauma, improve social cohesion and prevent ACE's. In the short term, we need to understand and be compassionate to families and children who are struggling.

- This relates to substance use and addictions (petrol sniffing, tobacco, alcohol, other drugs etc.), early and/or unhealthy sexual activity, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, lack of sleep, and risk taking behaviours etc.

- Social, emotional and cognitive skills are associated with specific areas of the brain. If their development was disrupted by childhood experiences, these skills will be impaired. This will impact on how they get along with others, achievement at school, impulse control, learning from mistakes etc. This can add to or lead to social disconnection and poor choices.

- There are critical periods for the development of each area of the brain and ideal growth requires exposure to specific types of experiences. Adverse experiences or trauma can disrupt development as the brain prioritises survival[3,4].

- Adverse Childhood Experiences include experiencing abuse or neglect, witnessing violence in the home or community, having a family member attempt or die by suicide, substance misuse or mental health problems within the household, and instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail[2]. The more ACE's – the higher risk for adverse outcomes.

- This relates to how things are locally – rates of social and economic exclusion; rates of Community and family violence etc.; how kids are valued and nurtured within Community; level of community cohesion.

- The high rates of poor physical health, mental health problems, addiction, incarceration, domestic violence, self harm and suicide in Indigenous communities are directly linked to experiences of trauma[1]. Note also that other populations/families can have trauma that is transferred from generation to generation.

Read from Bottom Up

Death

A Framework to Understand Juvenile Crime
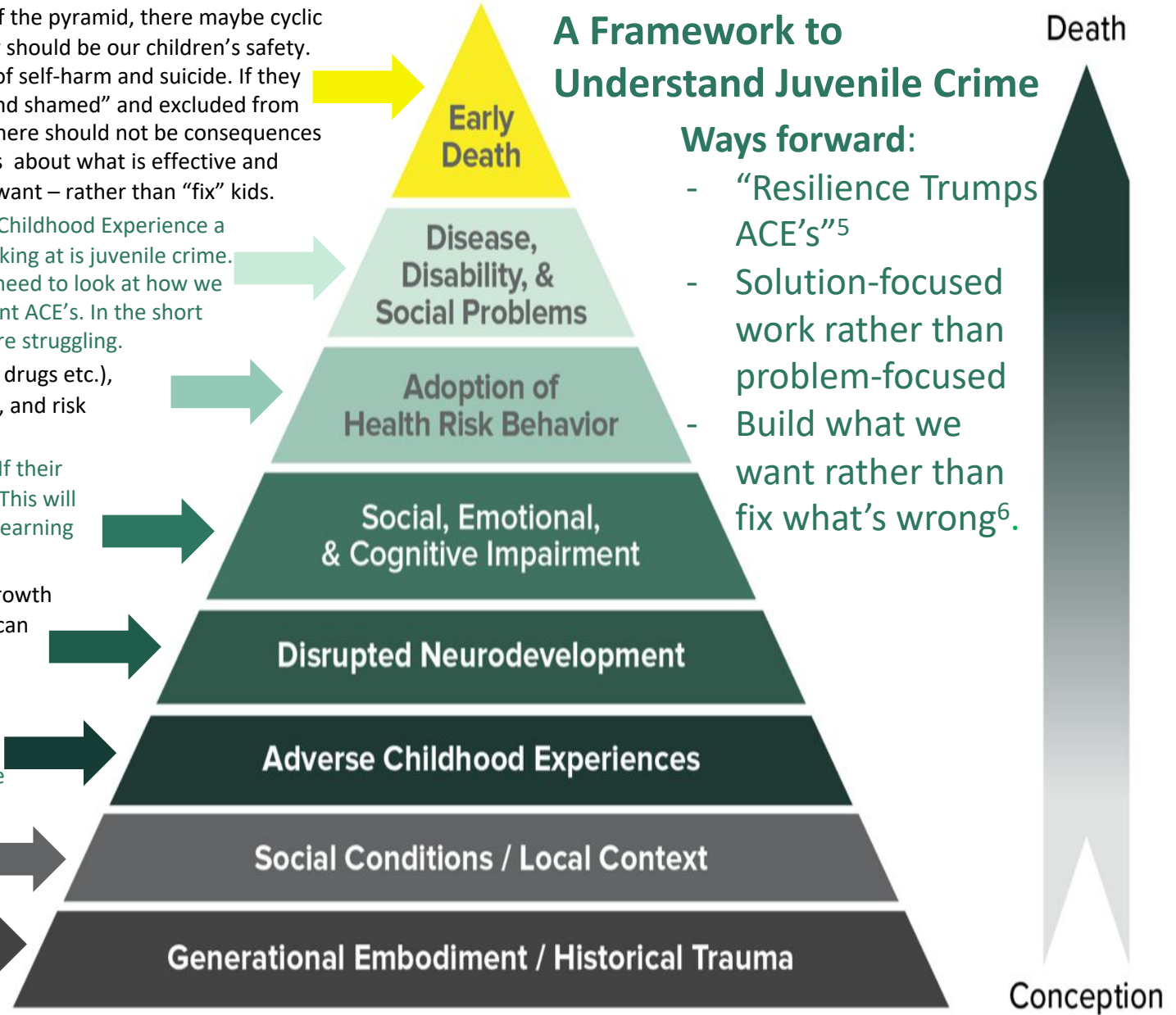
Ways forward:
- "Resilience Trumps ACE's"[5]
- Solution-focused work rather than problem-focused
- Build what we want rather than fix what's wrong[6].

Early Death

Disease, Disability, & Social Problems

Adoption of Health Risk Behavior

Social, Emotional, & Cognitive Impairment

Disrupted Neurodevelopment

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Social Conditions / Local Context

Generational Embodiment / Historical Trauma

Conception

Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan[7]

References

- 1. https://australianstogether.org.au/discover/the-wound/intergenerational-trauma/

- 2. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/aces/fastfact.html

- 3. https://www.theactgroup.com.au/documents/makingspaceforlearning-traumainschools.pdf

- 4. https://beaconhouse.org.uk/useful-resources/

- 5. https://criresilient.org/about-us/whycri/

- 6 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WovGFIuJYpU   Reframing to a Strengths- based Approach (YouTube clip approx. 6 mins)

- 7. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/ace-graphics.html

Understanding ACE's

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk   Nadine Harris-Burke (YouTube clip 16 mins)

Some useful sites if interested in doing things differently

- https://www.theresiliencedoughnut.com.au/about/

- https://rockandwatertraining.com.au

- https://healingfoundation.org.au/community-healing/

- https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/02926.pdf

- http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/healing-through-creative-arts.pdf