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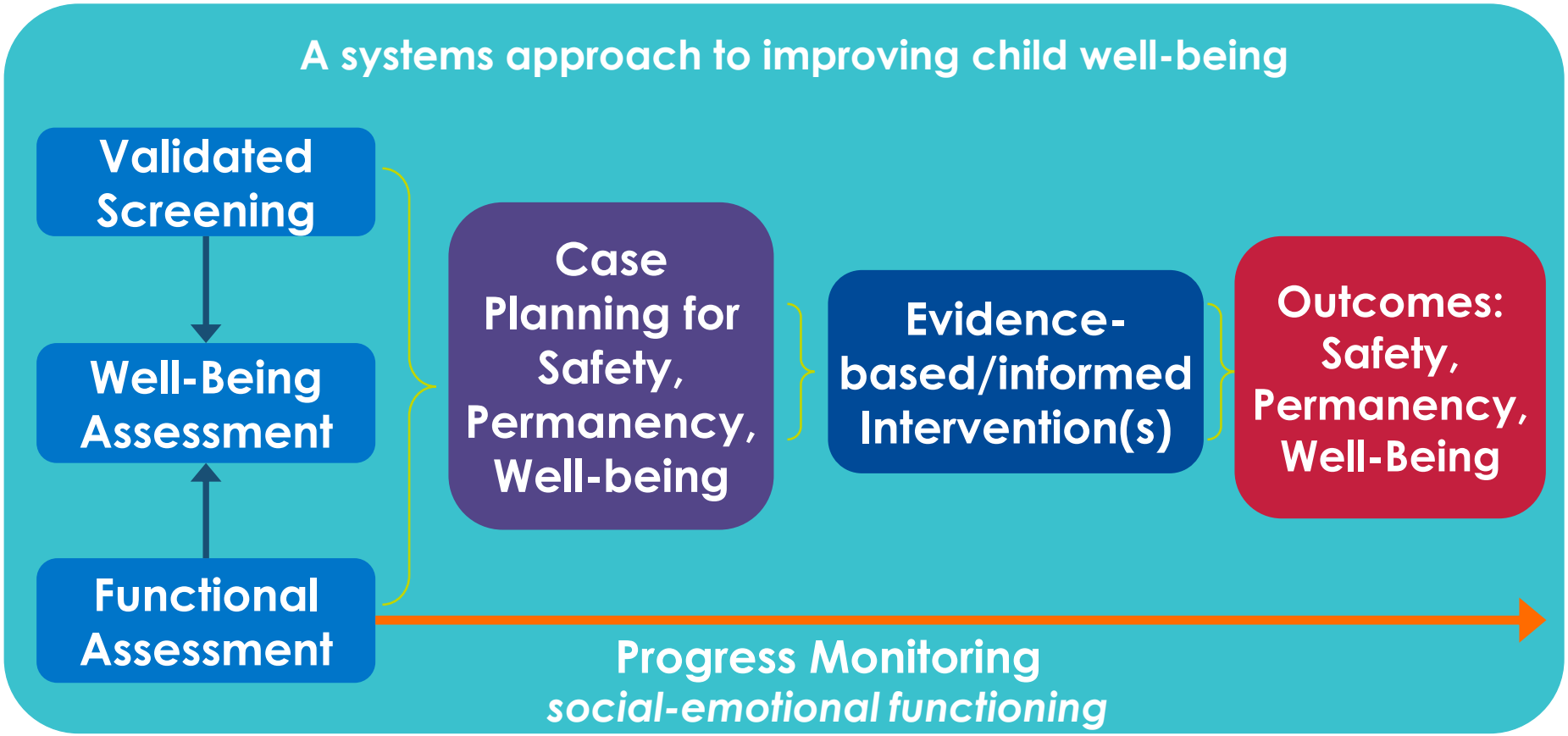
# Housing as a pathway to prevent maltreatment

# The Idea of Home

**The home is the wellspring of personhood. It is where our identity takes root and blossoms, where as children we imagine, play, and question, and as adolescents, we retreat and try.**

**- Matthew Desmond, *Evicted***

# Well-Being in Child Welfare






Slide Courtesy of B. Samuels

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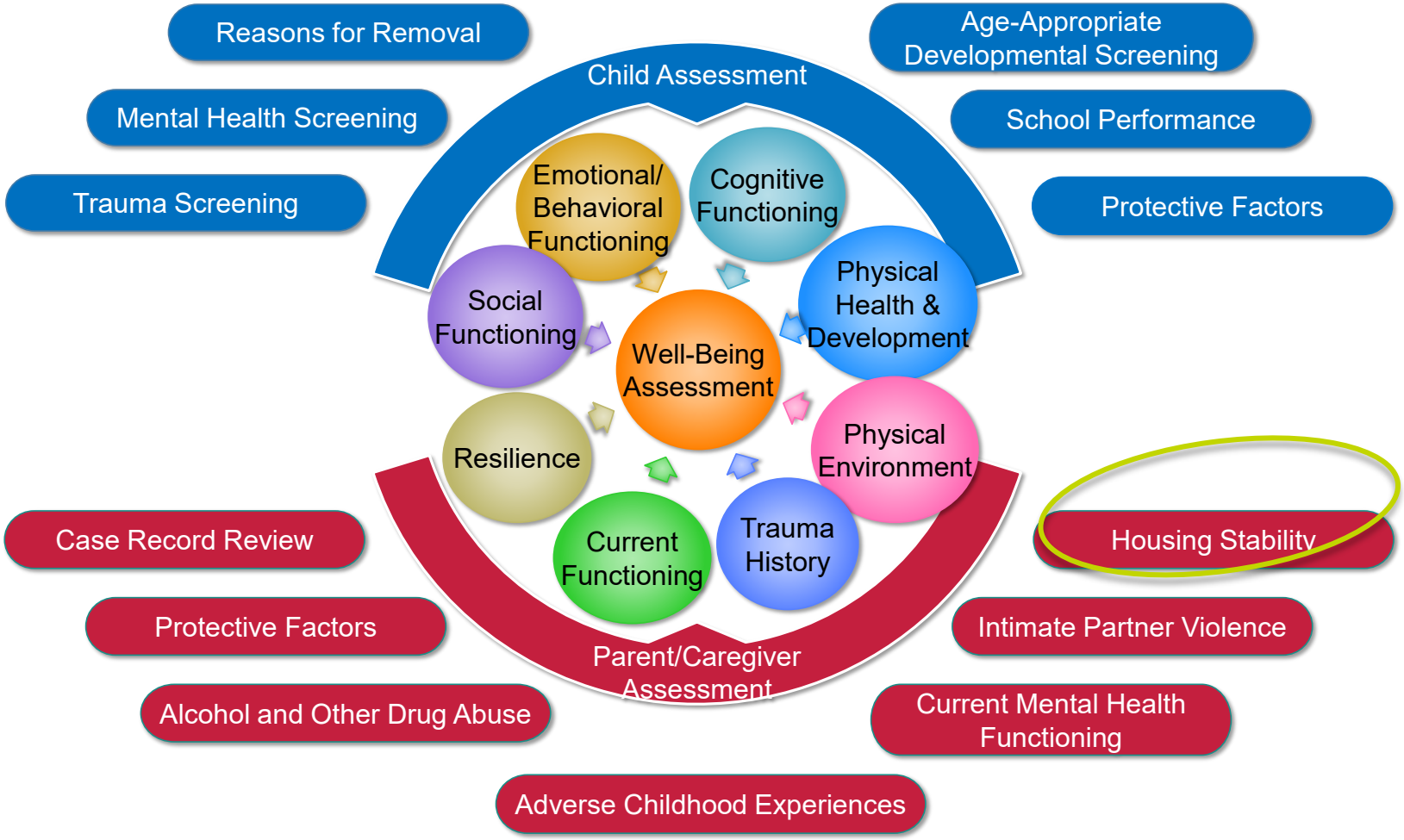
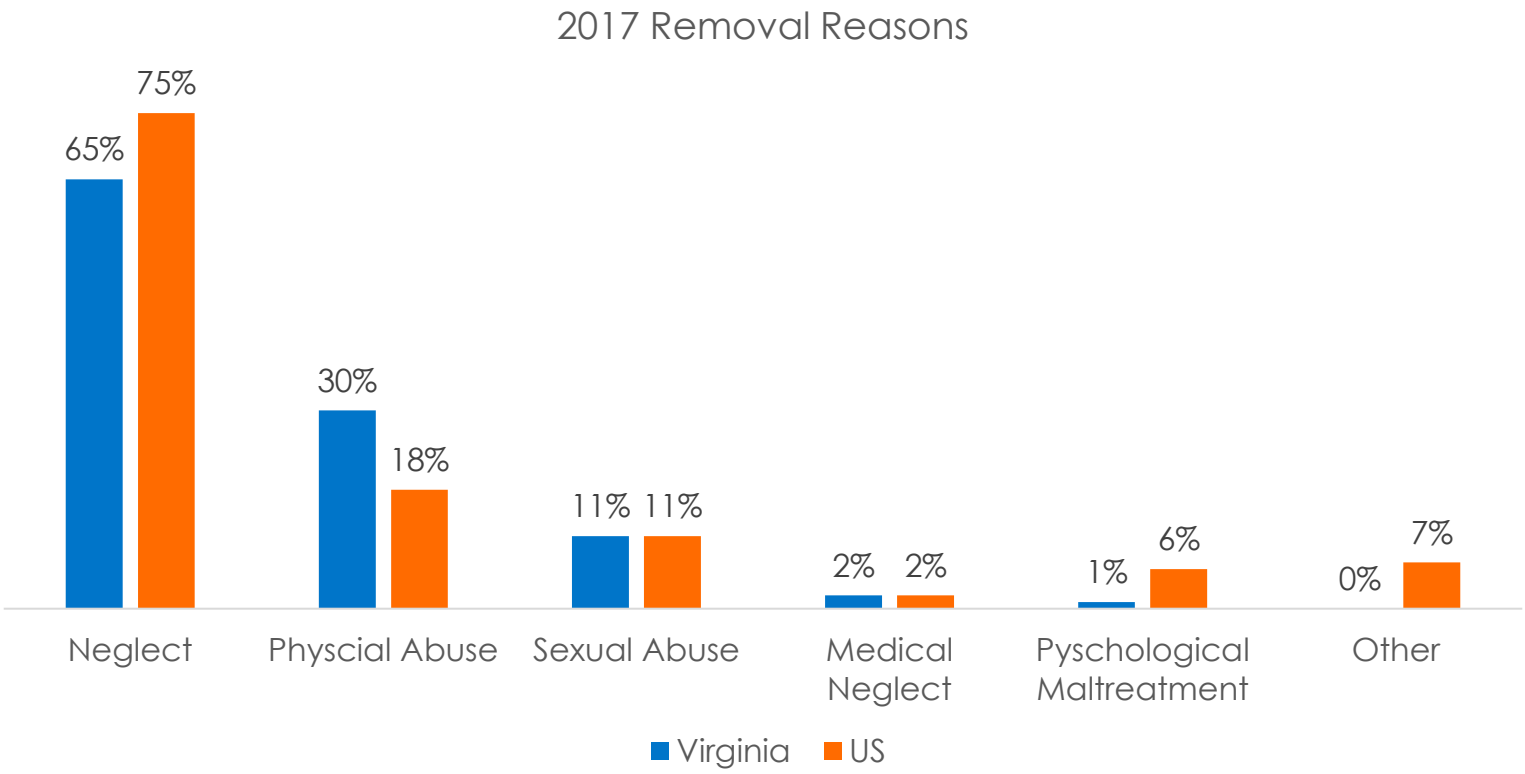
# Assessing Well-Being in Child Welfare

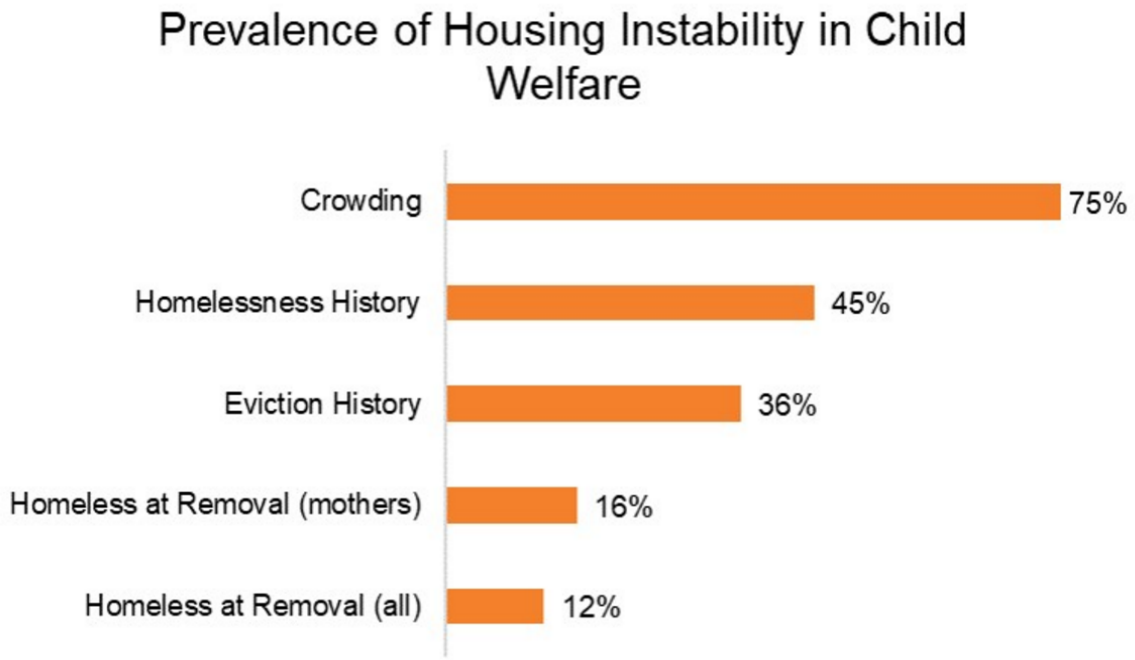


# Neglect is the Most Common Removal Reason



# Housing Instability in Child Welfare

**81%** of parents with children entering foster care report historical or current housing instability*



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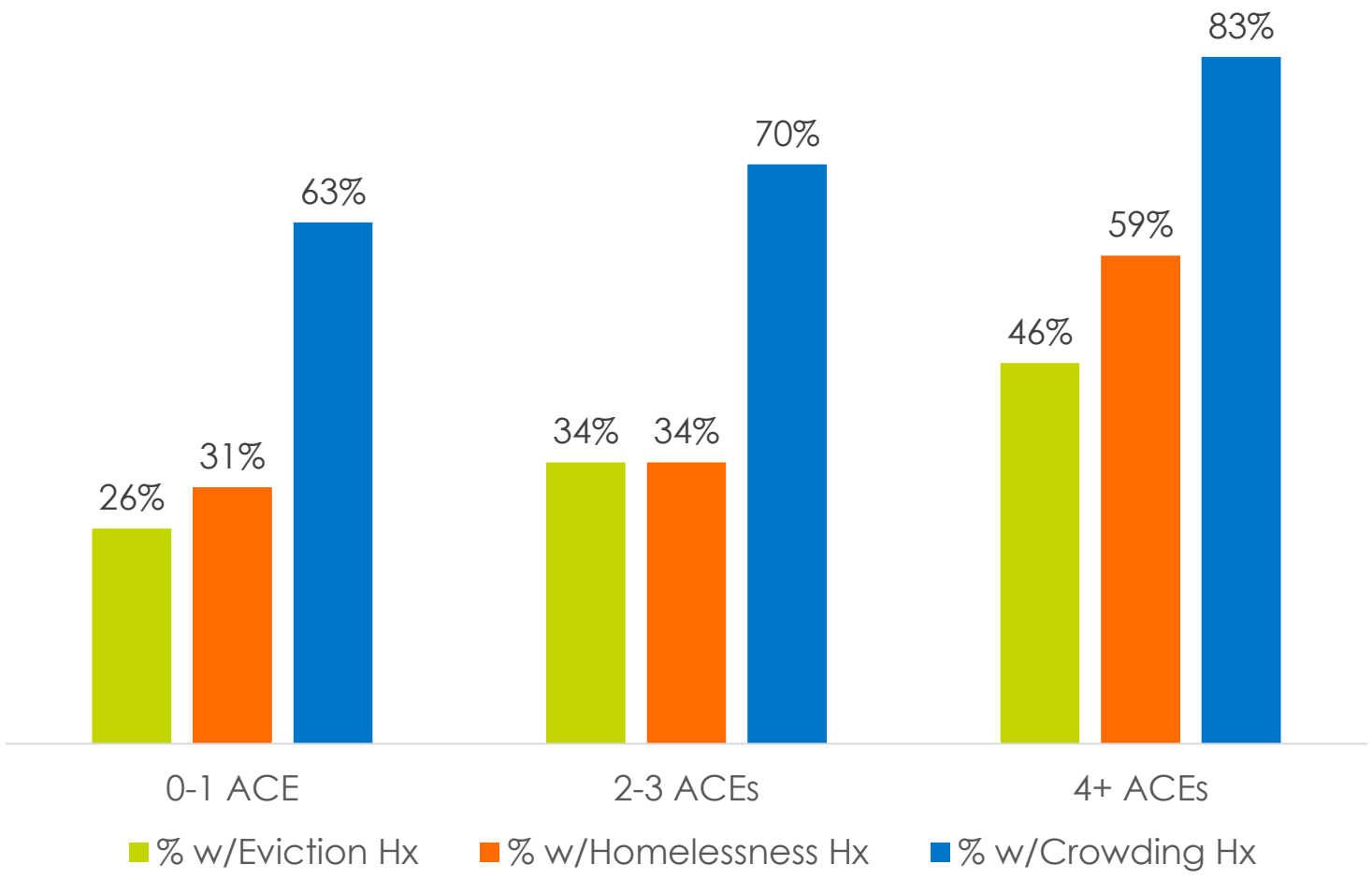
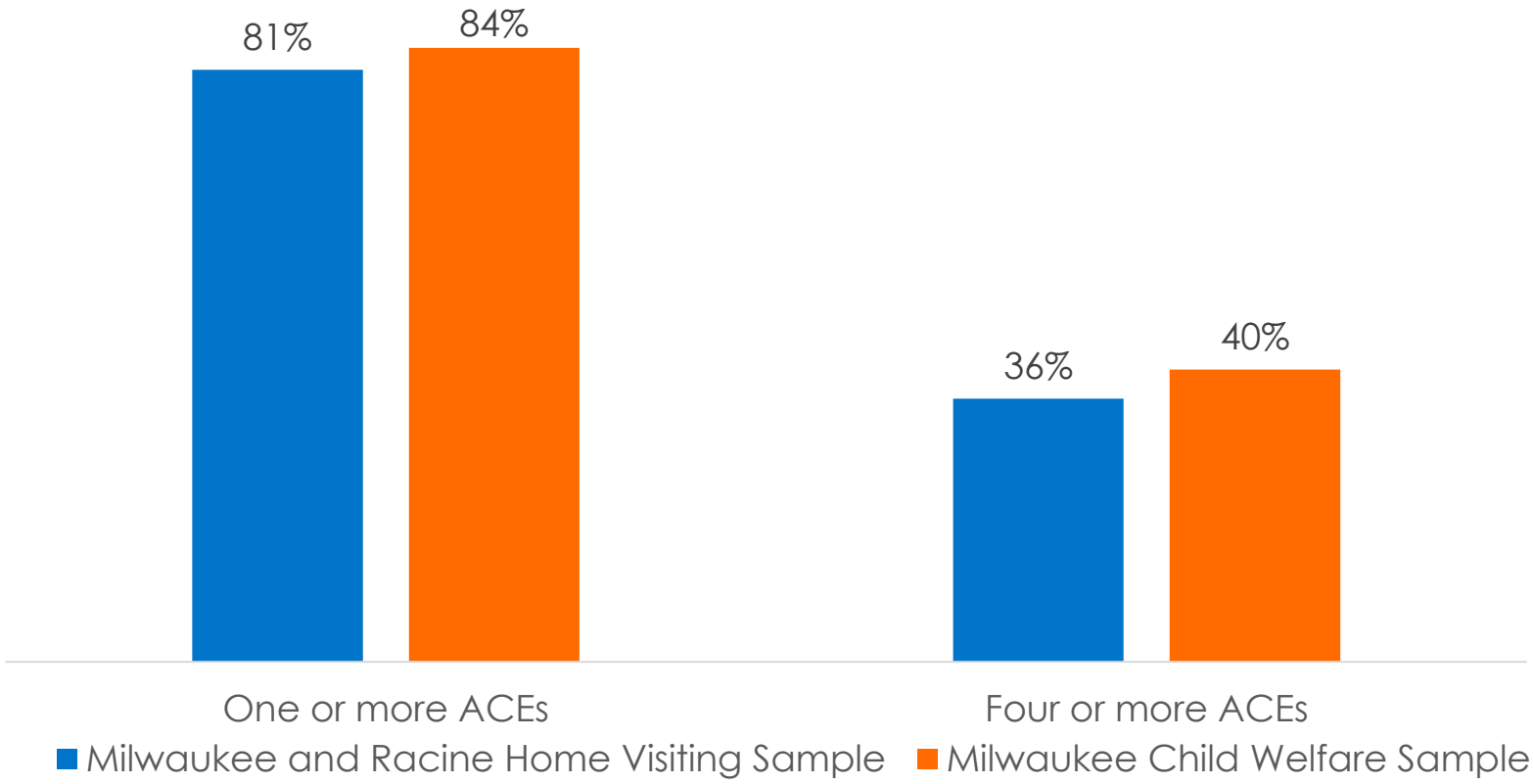
# ACEs & Housing Instability in Child Welfare



# Parent ACEs: Home Visiting & Child Welfare

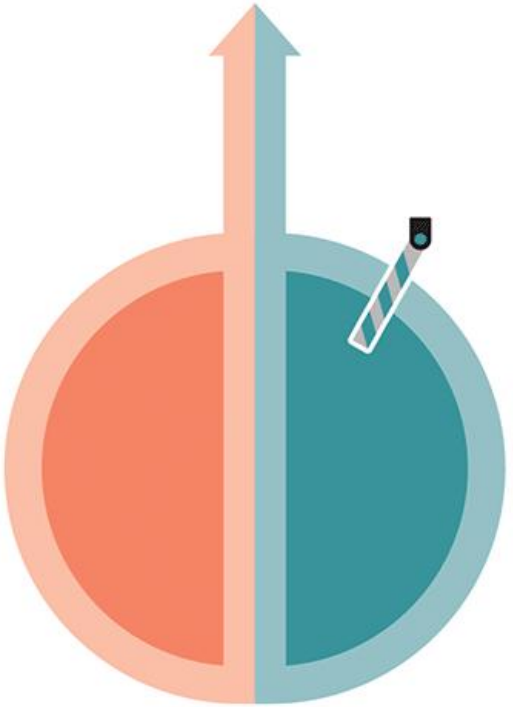



Mersky, 2016

# ACEs, stress, and Executive Functioning

The response to stress in adulthood is based on the foundation of early childhood experiences.

Adversity in childhood undercuts bandwidth and impairs executive functioning, resulting in more automatic responses to stress.



Center on the Developing Child at Harvard, 2016

"Stable housing is a foundation for family stability, not merely a reflection of it." -Cunningham, 2014

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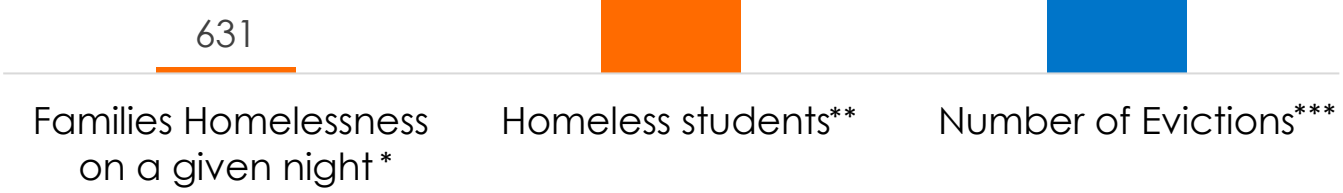
# Housing Instability in VA (2016)




142 Evictions Per Day in VA***

40 affordable housing units for every 100 extremely low income renter. ****

Sources:

* Community point-in-time counts conducted on a given night in January 2018, as reported by Continuums of Care to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Children and youth who experienced homelessness at any point during the 2016-2017 school year, as reported by public schools to the U.S. Department of Education

***This research uses data from The Eviction Lab at Princeton University, a project directed by Matthew Desmond and designed by Ashley Gromis, Lavar Edmonds, James Hendrickson, Katie Krywokulski, Lillian Leung, and Adam Porton. The Eviction Lab is funded by the JPB, Gates, and Ford Foundations as well as the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. More information is found at evictionlab.org.

**** National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2019 Annual Report, https://reports.nlihc.org/gap

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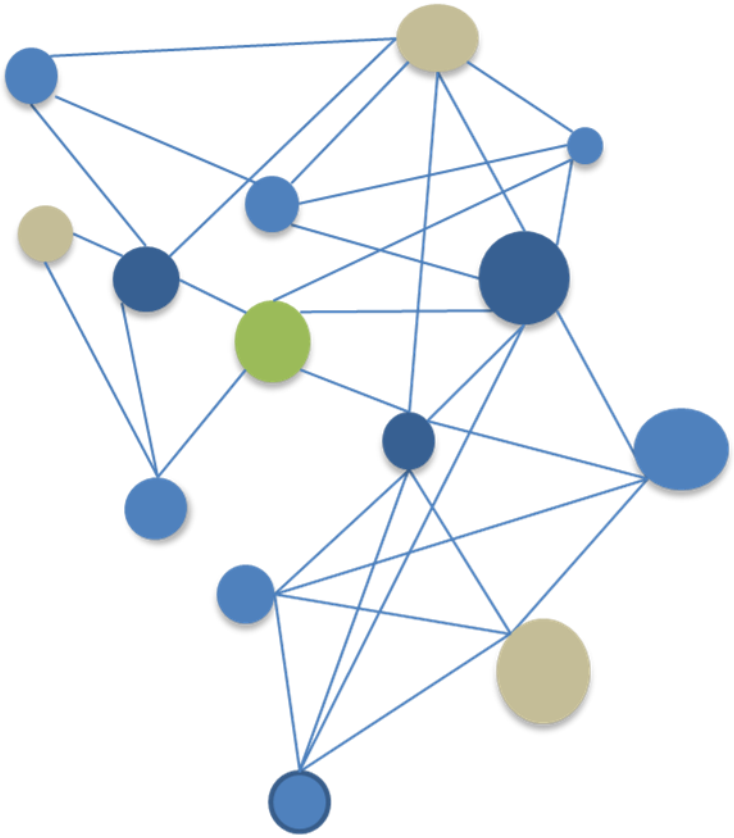
Programmatic interventions help people beat the odds. Systemic interventions can help change their odds.

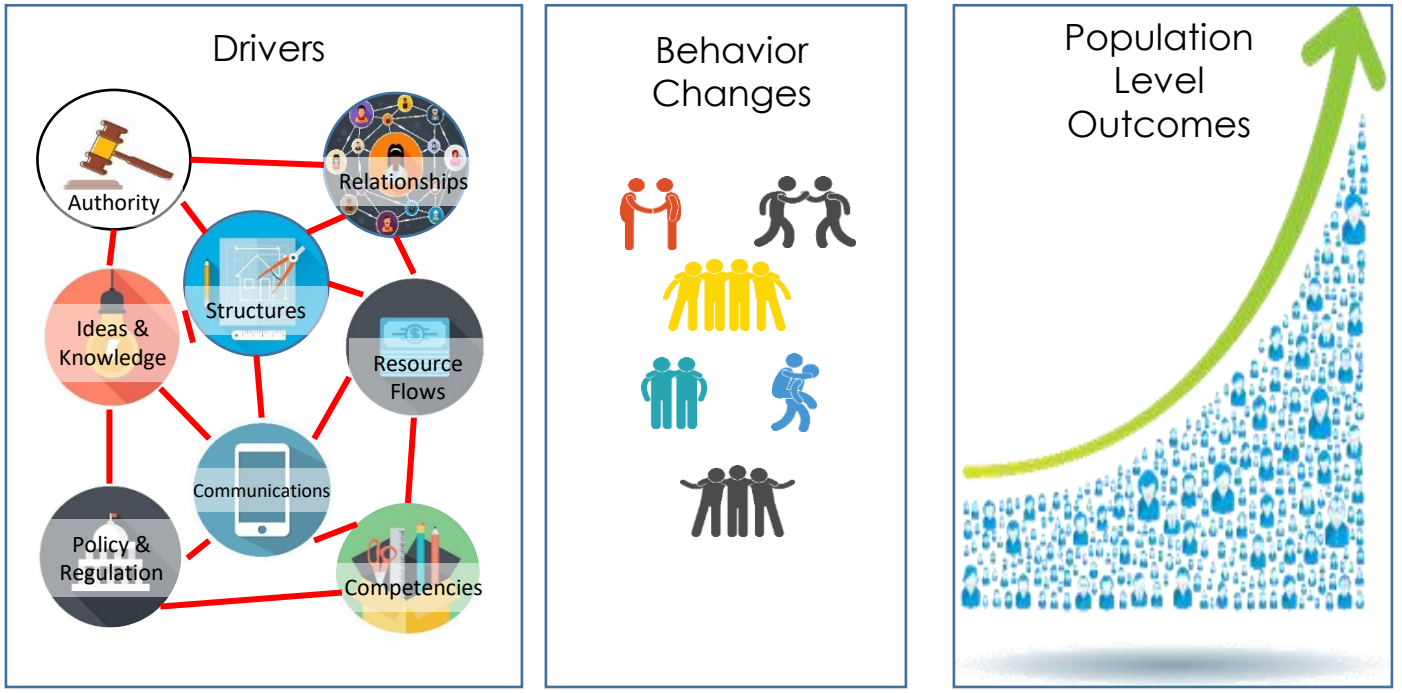
- Karen Pittman

# Systems definition

A system is a configuration of interacting, interdependent parts that are connected through a web of relationships, forming a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Holland, 1998)



# Systemic Interventions




Mark Cabaj, Here to There Consulting Inc

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# Housing Opportunities Made to Enhance Stability

Starting in 2016, the HOMES Initiative vision was to increase awareness of the impact of housing instability on the health and well-being of children, making housing instability a children's health issue. Collaboratively create evidence informed solutions that address housing needs of families in our programs.

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# HOMES Strategies

Influence leaderships
Raise awareness

Identify best available evidence based practice and policies in the child welfare and children's hospital systems.

Advocate for policy changes to support changes in resource flows

Identify and obtain funding for new housing focused initiatives

Create relationship with existing actors in the housing system to inform activities, create collaborative projects, and/or jointly advocate for policy changes.

Develop/adopt programs or practices that change practice on how we identify barriers to housing stability and work with families to resolve those barriers

Make housing a child health issue, advance possible solutions, and garner support for implementing solutions.

Create best practices around assessing for housing instability, create norms around how housing instability impact executive functioning, and advance housing first principles.

# Thank you!

Gabriel McGaughey, MSSW

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Co-Director, Institute for Child and Family Well-Being

www.uwm.edu/icfw