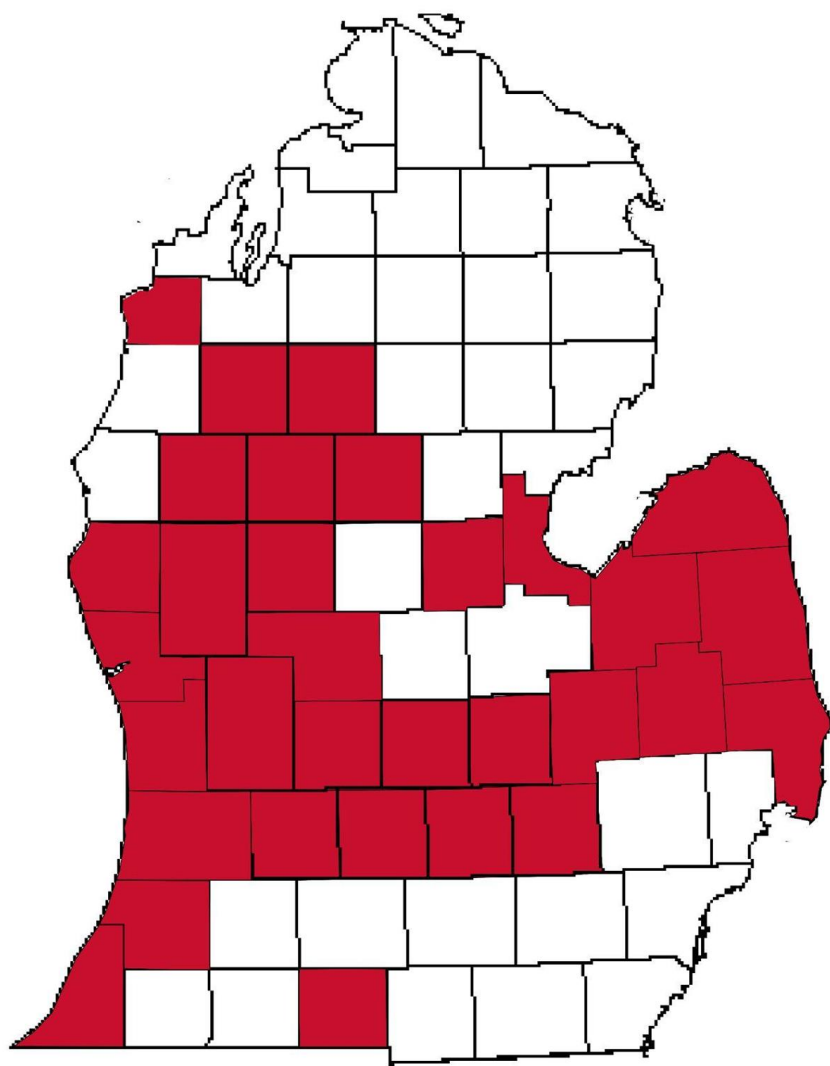


*The Journey Continues:  
Trauma, Addiction, Recovery, and the Bible*





# Who We Are

Our mission is to provide Christ-centered hope and healing through biblically-based, chaplain led, volunteer jail ministries.

Our vision is for every incarcerated person to experience new life in Christ and develop healthy family, church, and community relationships.

# Task Force



**Sallie Nyenhuis**

Regional Leader &  
Barry County Chaplain



**Patrick Nelson**

Trauma Counselor, MA,  
LLPC, MAML, CPS



**Dr. Heather Bunting**

Addiction Medicine  
Specialist, MD



**Aaron Lewis**

Pastor



**Erika Mariglia**

RTF Consultant

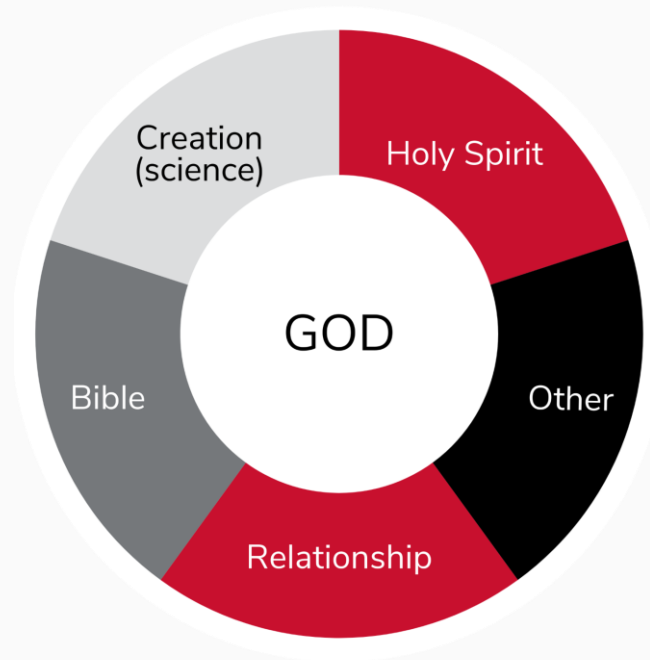


**Rick Eschenburg**

Rev. Dr.

# The Journey → Continues

- Foundation built on faith in Jesus Christ
  - The jail setting is full of individuals suffering from chronic trauma, and addiction.
- ↓
- How do we respond?
- ↓
- How does RTF define addiction, trauma, recovery?
  - What is the role of RTF in Michigan county jails?



# Objectives for *The Journey Continues*

1. **To deepen** our understanding of trauma as a risk factor for potential addiction issues.
1. **To provide** scientific evidence of how trauma and addiction impact the brain and bodily functions.
1. **To grow** in compassion as we continue to define, guide, understand, and shift our perspectives as we understand the intricacies of trauma and addiction. The purpose of this, however, is not to encourage victim mentalities or excuse destructive lifestyles.
1. **To equip** the Body of Christ to see recovery through a holistic lens that empowers individuals to lean into their health as it relates to biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors.

# Key Terms

**Trauma:** Trauma is a wound that leaves a lasting imprint on a person. These wounds can occur from events that cause one to be overwhelmed with intense fear, helplessness, or horror. The trauma isn't from the event itself, *but is what happens inside of a person as a result of what happened to them.*

**Second Hand Trauma:** Second hand trauma is when a person either witnesses, or hears about, someone's traumatic experience. It can have the same effect on a person as first hand trauma.

**Trauma Informed:** Trauma-informed organizations realize the impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery. They respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and they seek to actively resist re-traumatization.

# Key Terms

**Addiction:** Addiction is a complex spiritual and medical condition. Spiritually, as a result of the fall, addiction reflects the brokenness of humanity. It thrives as voluntary actions evolve into uncontrollable patterns, manifesting in compulsive behaviors that defy one's free will. Medically, addiction is defined as a treatable, chronic medical disease where one uses substances, or engages in behaviors, despite harmful consequences. Addiction is mostly seen between two categories: chemical and behavioral.

**Recovery:** Recovery is both a process and a sustained status by which an individual abstains from the substances or behaviors that kept them stuck in their addiction cycle. One often seeks recovery due to unmanageable addiction, codependent, and/or mental health issues and they look to create a life that is manageable and balanced where it was once chaotic.



# Trauma

*Trauma is what happens inside of someone as a result of what happened to them. It leaves a lasting imprint on a person.*

- Trauma is a risk factor in nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders.
- 70% of the population have experienced at least one traumatic event.
  - Over 90% for the jail population
- 10.6% of adults in general population experience mental health problems compared to:
  - 64.2% of jail inmates
  - 56.2% of state prisoners
  - 44.8% of federal prisoners
- Jail inmates remain less likely to receive treatment than state or federal prisoners.



# HOW *Trauma* IMPACTS THE BRAIN

trauma can alter the structure and functioning of the brain

## *Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex*

SHRINKS

this area is responsible for mood & emotion regulation & rational thought

it causes higher-order processes like problem-solving to become underfunctioning, while processes geared towards defense become overactive



## *Hippocampus*

SHRINKS

this area is responsible for differentiating between the past & present

## *Amygdala*

OVERACTIVE

this area is responsible for responding to stress

STARTLE  
RESPONSE

SHAME, SELF-HATRED

DISSOCIATION

SELF-DESTRUCTIVE  
BEHAVIORS

AVOIDANT

DEPRESSION

PANIC ATTACKS

LOSS OF INTEREST

*Hopelessness*

*Nightmares,  
Flashbacks*

DECREASED  
CONCENTRATION

*Trauma*

IRRITABILITY

RELIVING THE  
EXPERIENCE

INSOMNIA

NUMBING,  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

*On Alert*

**EATING  
DISORDERS**

EMOTIONAL OVERWHELM

CHRONIC PAIN,  
HEADACHES

INTRUSIVE MEMORIES,  
LITTLE OR NO MEMORY

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

*ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in children, ages 0-17.*

*Here are the questions asked:*

Did a parent or other adult in the household often:

- Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? Or, act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
- Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or, ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
- Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or, Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

[Take The ACES Quiz - American SPCC](#)

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Did you often feel that ...

- No one in your family loved you or thought you were important? Or, Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close, or support each other?
- You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Or, your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed?

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
- Was your parent/caregiver: a) often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at him/her? Or b) Sometimes, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? Or c) ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or wife?
- Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcohol, or who used street drugs?
- Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
- Did a household member go to prison?

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Compared to someone with an ACE score of 0, those with a score of 4+ were:

- 4x more likely to suffer from depression
- 11x more likely to become an alcoholic
- 16x more likely to inject street drugs
- 19x more likely to attempt suicide

A teen with an ACE score of ZERO, has a **1 in 500** chance of attempting suicide before their 18th birthday.

A teen with an ACE score of SEVEN, has a **1 in 7** chance of attempting suicide before their 18th birthday

# ACES and Racialized Trauma

*Many experts now emphasize expanded ACES that disproportionately affect Black and Brown adolescents, such as racism and racial profiling, community violence, family incarceration, and immigration-related trauma.*

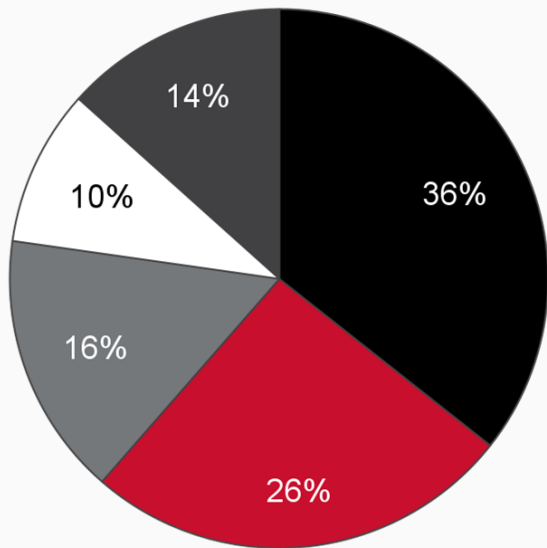
We need to consider:

- Cultural protective factors
- Racial Trauma
- Incarcerated youth vs. youth in society, including Black and Brown youth
- Systemic Inequities - the school-to-prison pipeline

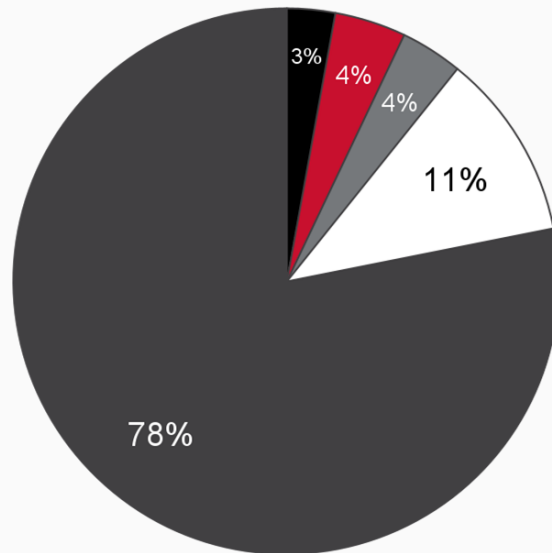
Adverse Childhood Experiences: Expanding the Concept of Adversity. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, *Cronholm*, 49.  
Toward a Psychological Framework of Radical Healing in Communities of Color; The Counseling Psychologist, *French*, 48.

# Comparison of Populations with ACEs

ACE Percentages for the US

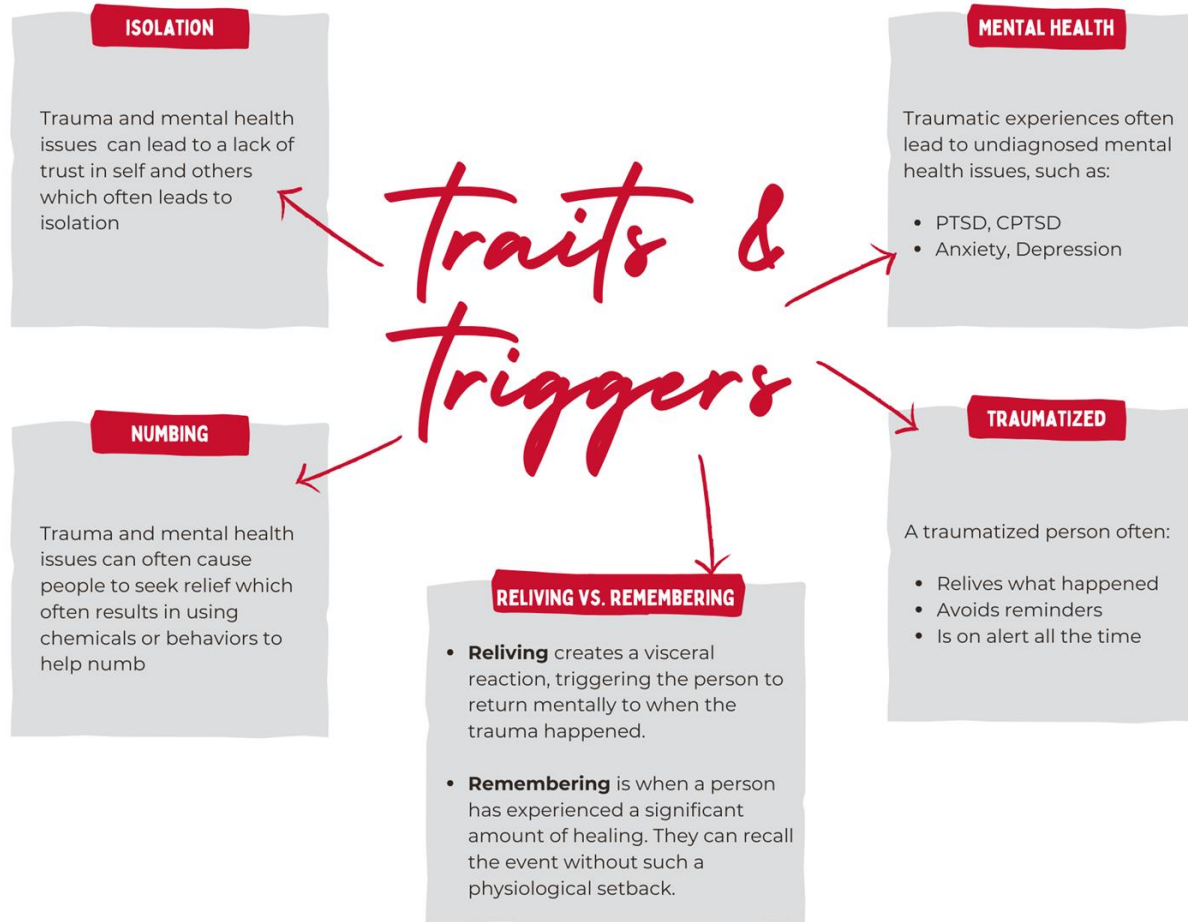


ACE Percentages for the Incarcerated



# of ACEs    Zero    One    Two    Three    Four+





# Addiction

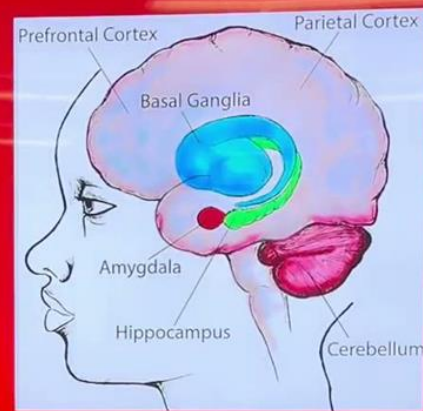
Addiction is a **complex** spiritual and medical condition.

Spiritually, as a result of the fall, addiction reflects the brokenness of humanity. It thrives as voluntary actions evolve into uncontrollable patterns, manifesting in compulsive behaviors that defy one's free will.

Medically, addiction is defined as a treatable, chronic medical disease where one uses substances, or engages in behaviors, despite harmful consequences.

Addiction is mostly seen between two categories: chemical and behavioral.

- We can't address addiction without addressing trauma.
- Addicted Brain vs. Healthy Brain
- "Disease of free will?"



# Recovery

*Both a process, and a sustained status*

- “The opposite of addiction isn’t sobriety, it’s connection.”\*Johann Hari
- Not a destination; a journey.
- Recovery work is all-encompassing, and it can change over time.



# What to expect in early recovery:

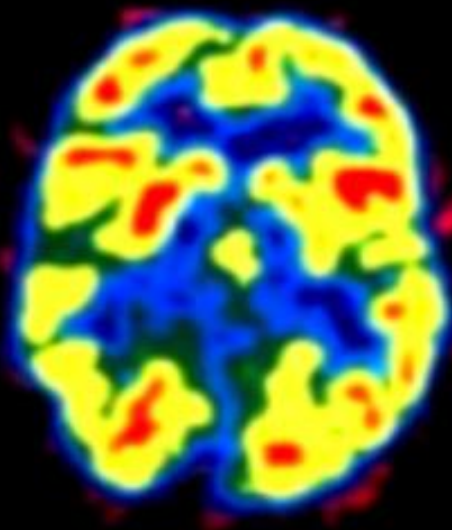
- Emotional highs and lows
- Relationships to experience a lot of transition
- Social gatherings to feel risky, particularly if they are events involving substance use
- Strong emotions, difficulty sleeping / concentrating, and cravings for drugs or alcohol
- Physical withdrawal symptoms and intense emotions as your body and brain adjust to life without substances
- Mood swings and outbursts of emotion linked to withdrawal and a sudden change in habit
- Need for a strong set of coping mechanisms to fall back on

# The Recovering Brain after 6 months:

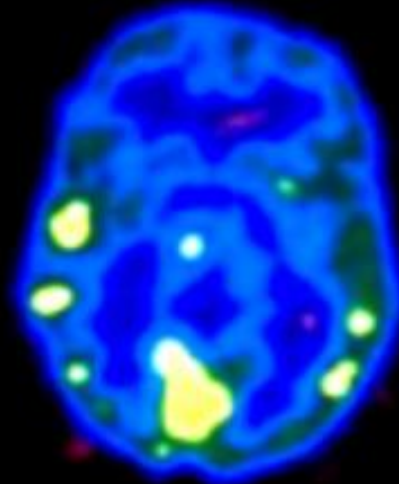
- Cognitive Function Improvements results in regaining control of one's life, improving:
  - Decision making skills, planning, organizing
- Emotional regulation and mood stabilization
  - Better stress management
  - Mood swings start to level out
  - Anxiety and depression start to subside allowing more emotional stability
  - Emotional intelligence - understanding self and others better
- Neuroplasticity and Brain Structure Changes (The Brain's Makeover)
  - Gray matter increases in volume, making one more able to process information
  - Faster and more efficient communication between parts of the brain
  - Brain's ability to adapt and change
  - Increased neuroplasticity supports learning skills, forming habits, and adapting to challenges

# The Recovering Brain after 6 months:

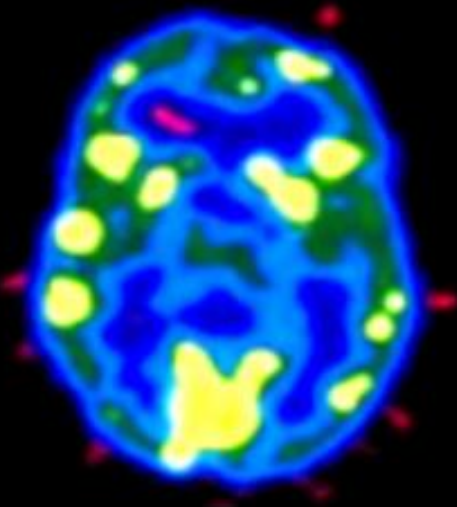
- Sleep Quality and Circadian Rhythm Restoration
  - Sleep patterns change allowing for more restorative sleep
  - The natural sleep-wake cycle get on track
  - REM sleep with vivid dreams
- Neurotransmitter Balance and Reward System Recovery: Chemical Harmony
  - Dopamine and serotonin, the feel-good neurotransmitters, rebalance.
  - GABA, the brain's "chill pill," improves, allows one to handle stress without feeling overwhelmed.
  - The natural reward system starts to recover allowing one to experience pleasure in everyday activities.



NORMAL  
BRAIN ACTIVITY



COCAINE ABUSER  
**10 days abstinent**



COCAINE ABUSER  
**100 days abstinent**



# Post-Traumatic Growth



Spiritual  
Development

Contented  
"I accepted"



New  
Possibilities

Thriving  
"I dream"



Personal  
Strength

Optimistic  
"I can"



Close  
Relationships

Intimate  
"I cherish"



Greater  
Appreciation  
of Life

Grateful  
"I thank"

[www.jailministry.org](http://www.jailministry.org)

**Healing the Wounded Heart**

**Open Arms**

**Reentry Form**

# Stay Connected



@RTFjailministry



@Reachtheforgotten

Website: <https://jailministry.org/>