

# Adverse Childhood Experiences in Jefferson County, IN

**2021 Sociology Research Lab  
Indiana University Southeast**

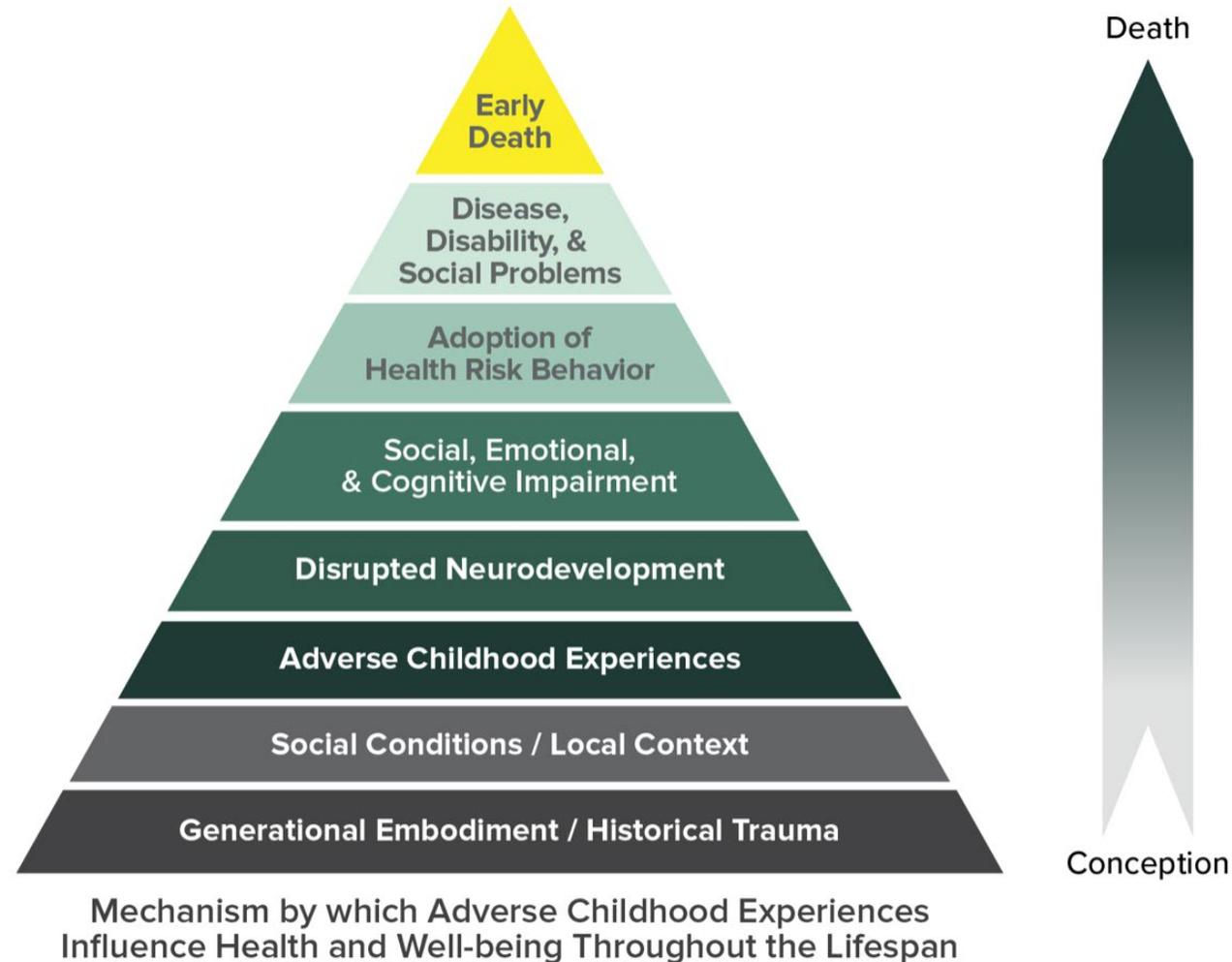
**In partnership with Resilient Jefferson County**



**RESILIENT**  
JEFFERSON COUNTY

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# ACEs are a Community Public Health Issue



# Before age **ACE: ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

18...

LIVED WITH ANYONE WHO WAS...

**a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs**



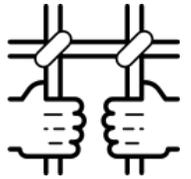
LIVED WITH ANYONE WHO WAS...

**depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal**



LIVED WITH ANYONE WHO...

**served time or was sentenced to serve time in a prison, jail, or other correctional facility**



HAD A MOTHER OR STEPMOTHER WHO WAS OFTEN...

**slapped, hit, grabbed, kicked, pushed, or had things thrown at her**



HAD PARENTS OR ADULTS IN YOUR HOME WHO OFTEN...

**hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way before you were age 18**



HAD A PARENT OR ADULT IN YOUR HOME WHO OFTEN...

**swore at you, insulted you, or put you down**



HAD PARENTS WHO WERE...

**separated or divorced**



HAD NO ONE IN YOUR FAMILY WHO...

**loved you or thought you were important or special**



HAD ANYONE AT LEAST 5 YEARS OLDER THAN YOU OR AN ADULT WHO OFTEN...

**touched you sexually or tried to make you touch sexually**



HAD ANYONE AT LEAST 5 YEARS OLDER THAN YOU OR AN ADULT WHO OFTEN...

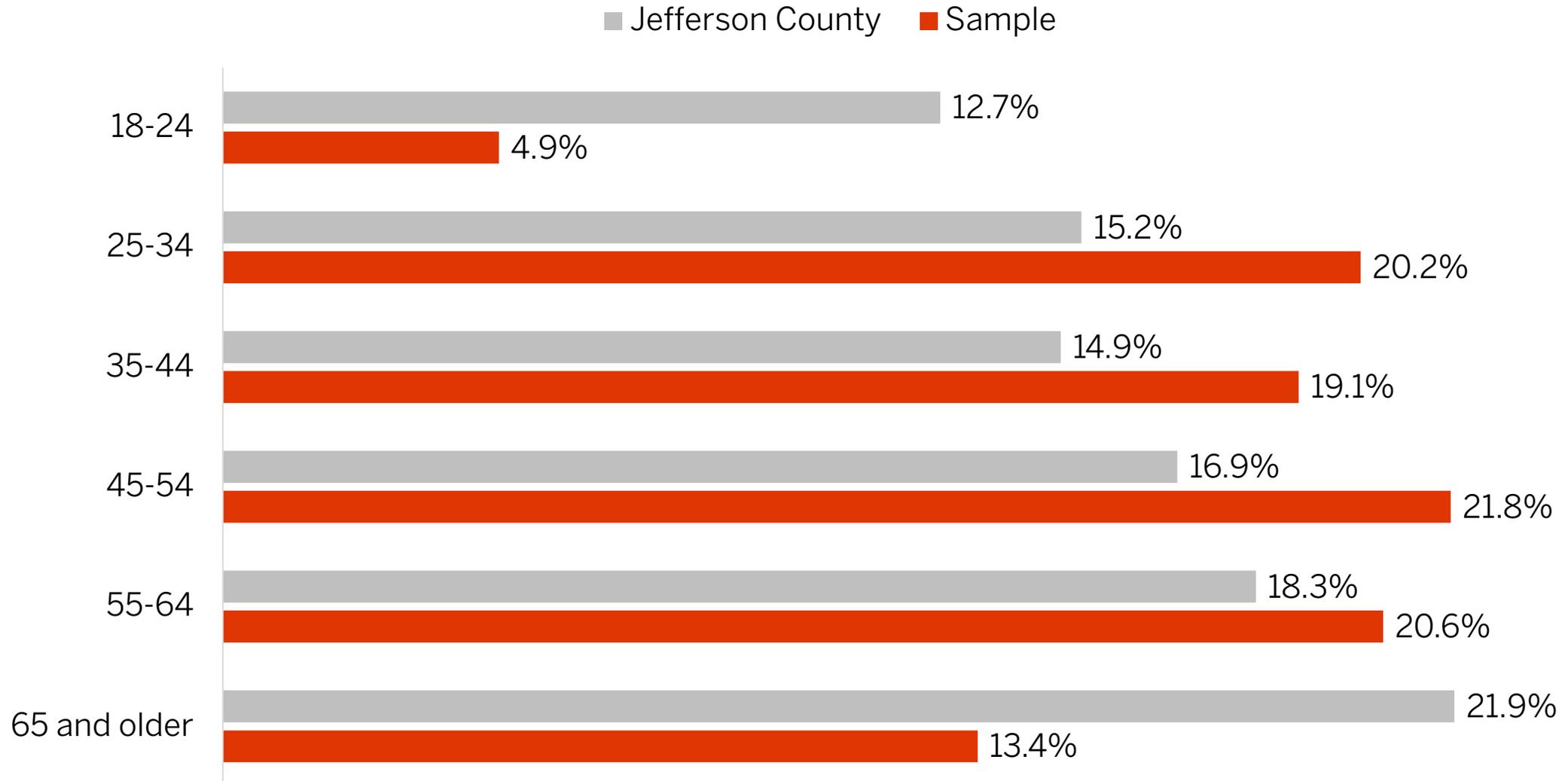
**forced you to have sex**



# Demographics

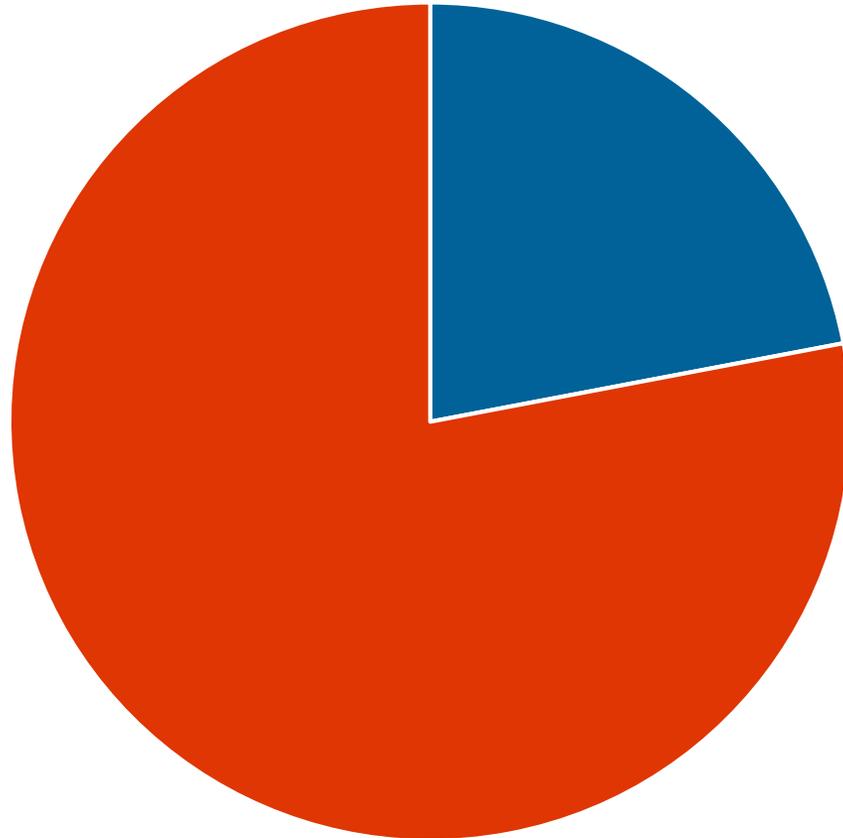
Sex and Age

# AGE—Sample and Jefferson County



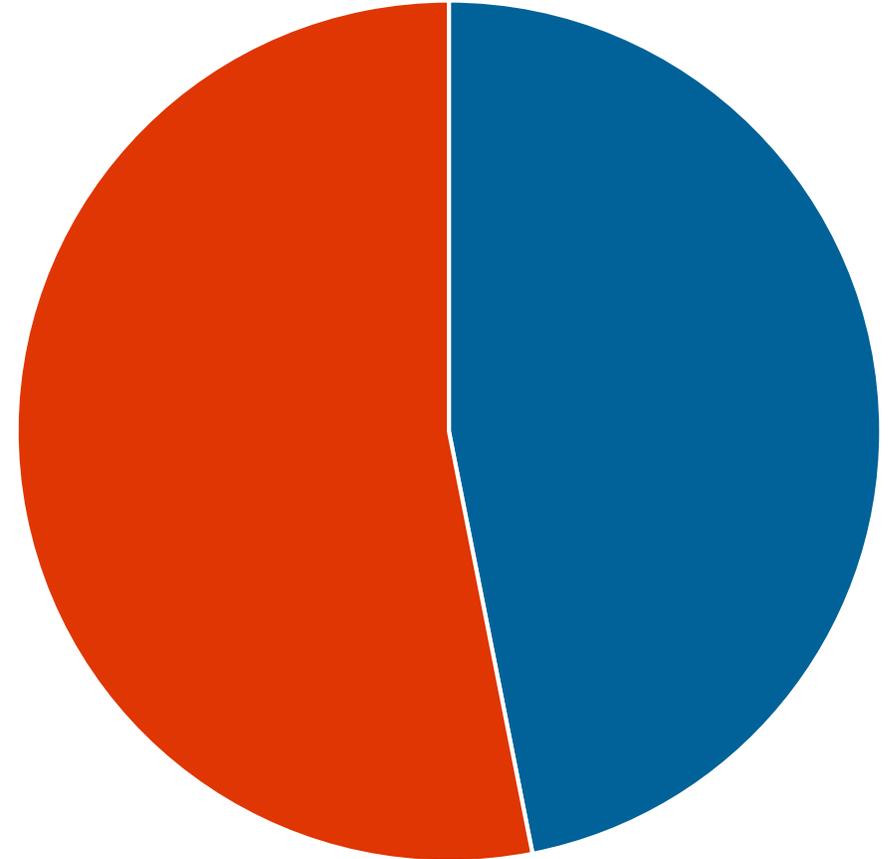
# Sex

Sample



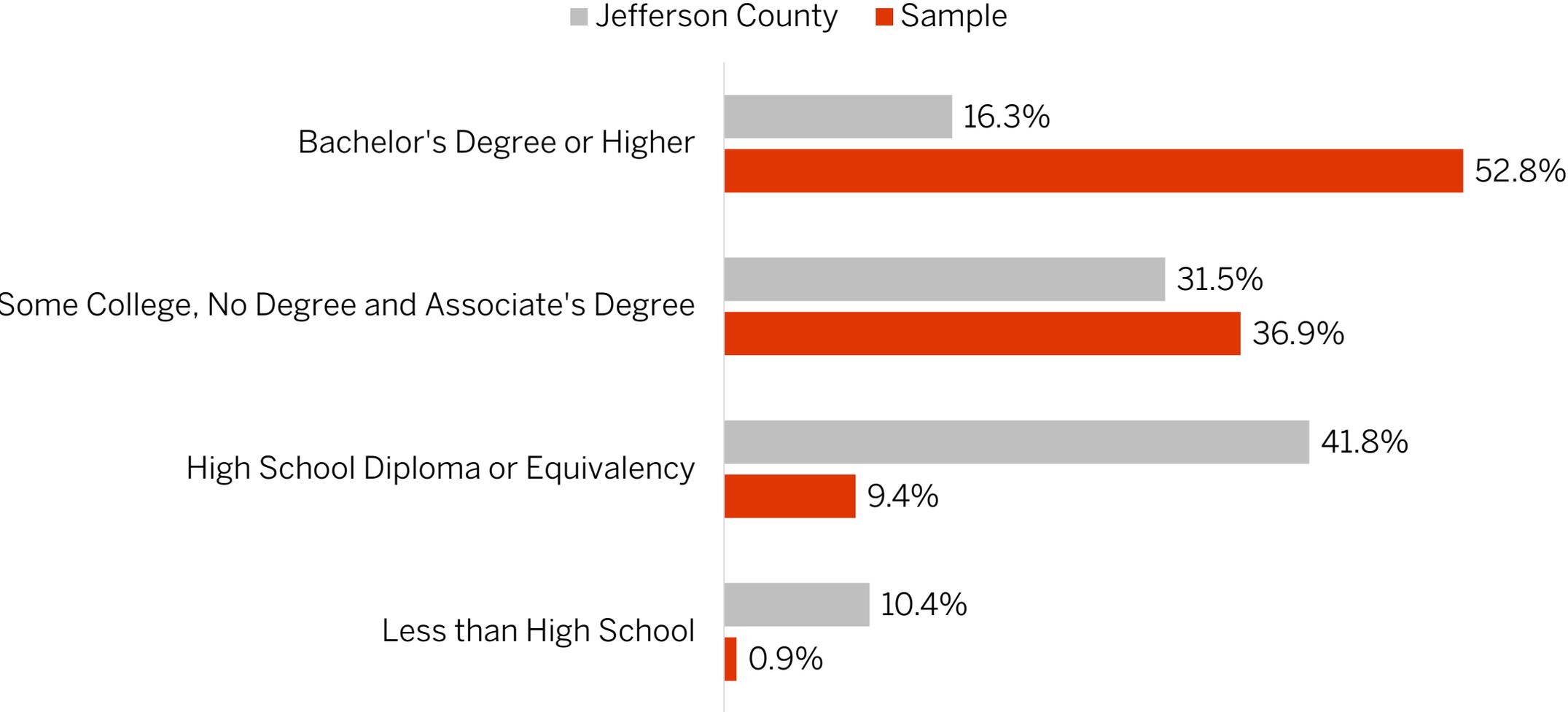
■ Male ■ Female

Jefferson County

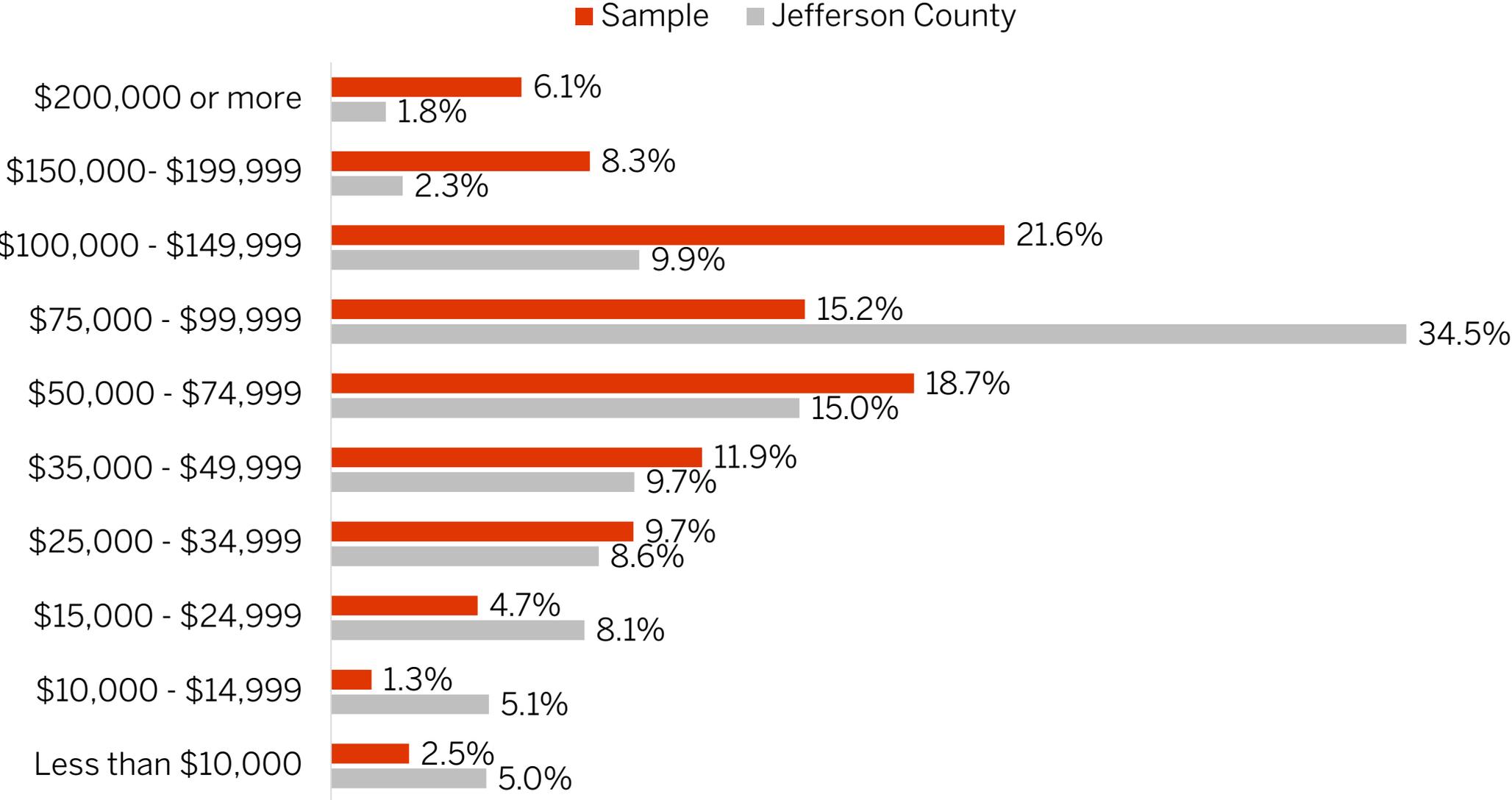


■ Male ■ Female

# Educational Attainment



# Household Income

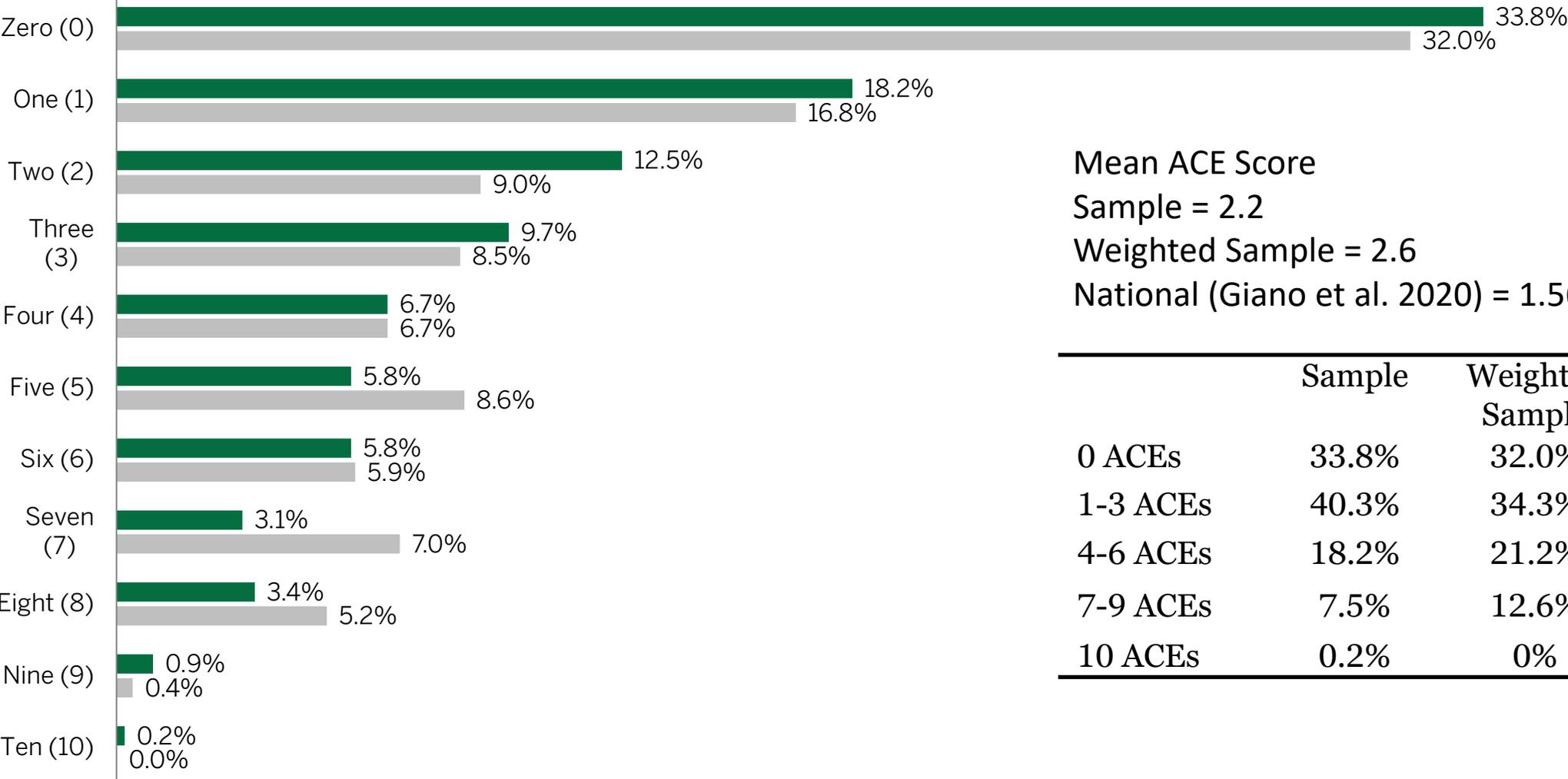


# ACEs in Jefferson County

# Percent of Respondents with Each ACE Score

■ Sample (N=642)   ■ Weighted Sample (25,567)

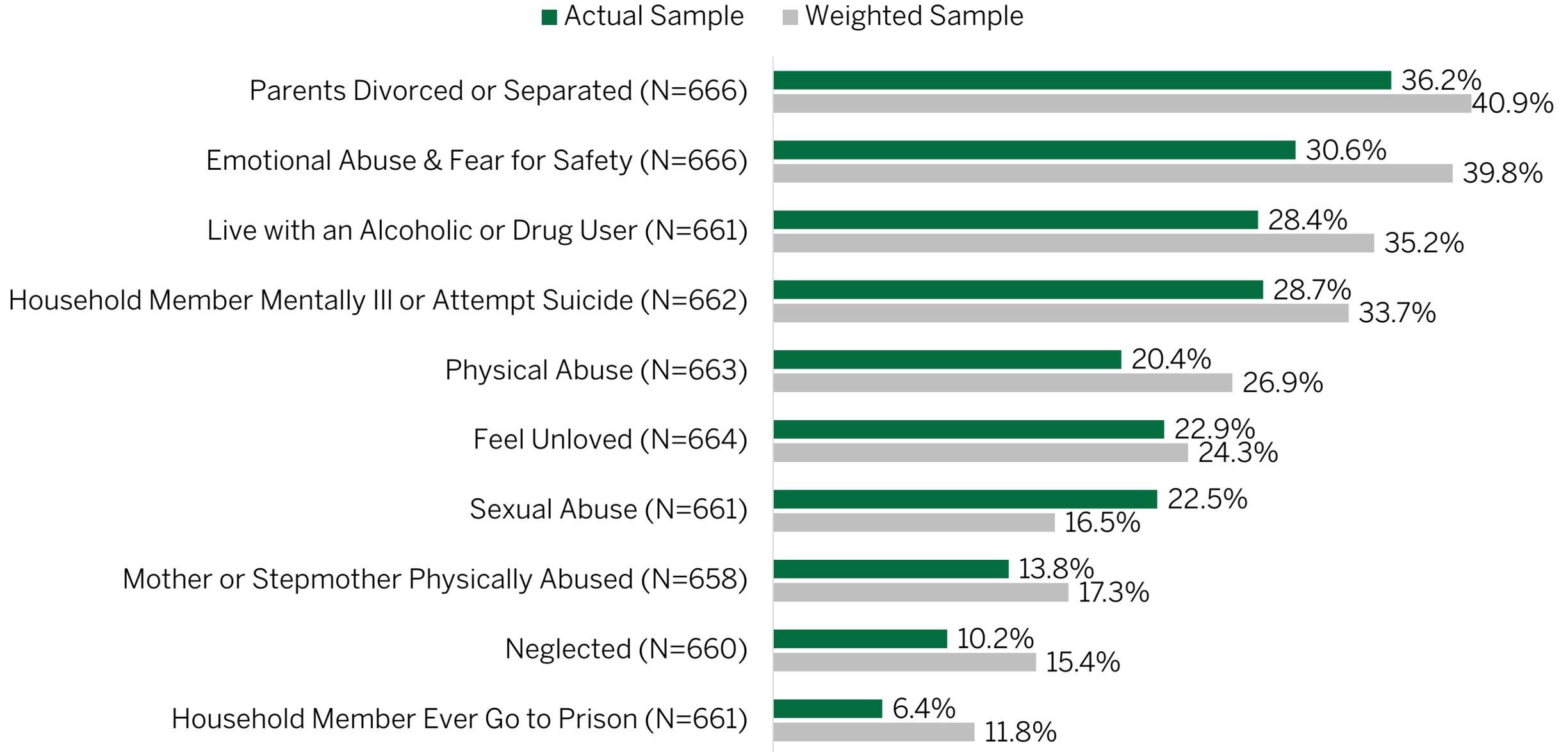
ACE Score



Mean ACE Score  
 Sample = 2.2  
 Weighted Sample = 2.6  
 National (Giano et al. 2020) = 1.56

	Sample	Weighted Sample
0 ACEs	33.8%	32.0%
1-3 ACEs	40.3%	34.3%
4-6 ACEs	18.2%	21.2%
7-9 ACEs	7.5%	12.6%
10 ACEs	0.2%	0%

# Prevalence of ACEs in Jefferson County



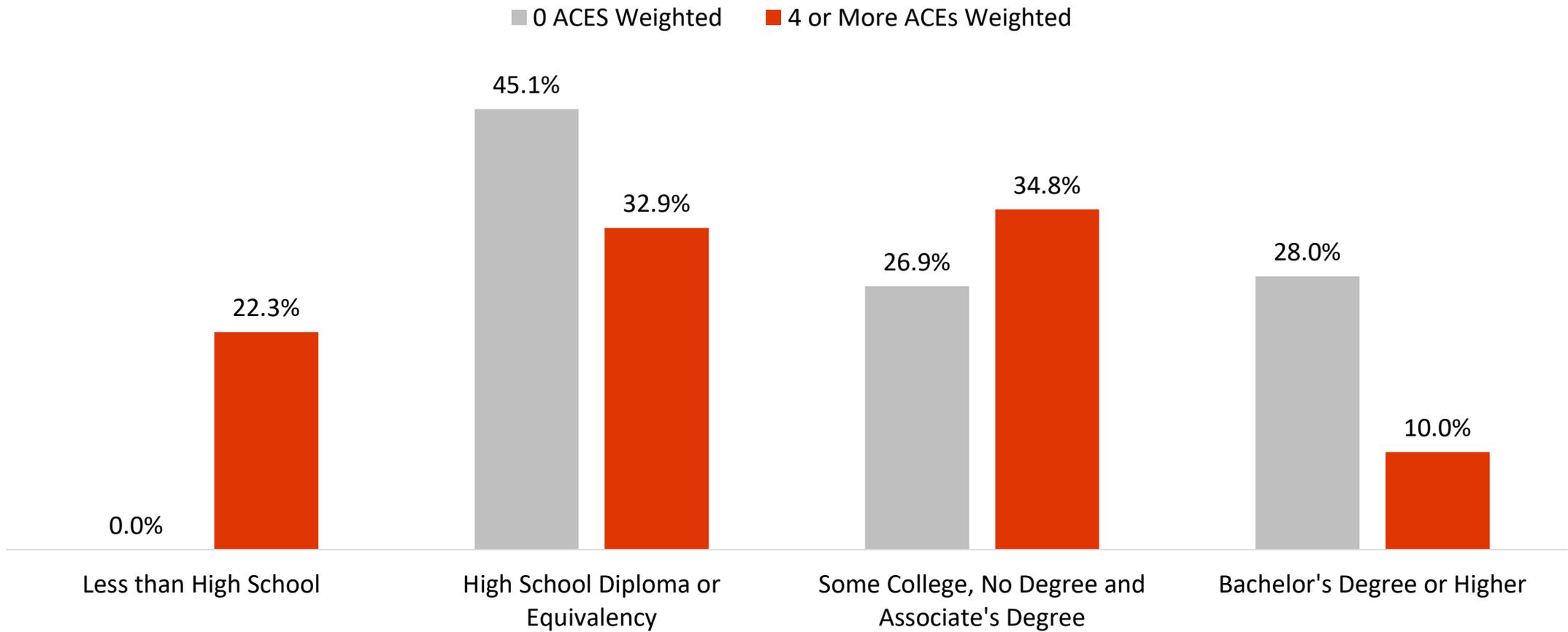
# Educational Attainment

# Education

- High ACE scores→
  - Below average literacy skills.
  - Behavior problems that affect school performance.
  - Frequent somatic symptoms when a teacher asks them to do something
  - Likely to have left formal education with no qualifications
- One child's delays and behavior issues can affect a whole classroom.



# Educational Attainment\*\*\*





Health

Lived With Alcoholic  
Felt Neglected  
You Or A Family  
Member Has Been  
Abused  
Lived With Someone  
Who Is Mentally Ill  
Had Parents Who Are  
Divorced

ACEs

Physical Inactivity  
Unprotected  
Sex/Teen  
Pregnancy  
Smoking/Drug Use  
Violent/Suicidal  
Behavior  
Eating disorders  
Poor Mental Health  
Toxic Stress

Risk Behavior

Heart Disease  
Obesity  
Diabetes  
Physical Disabilities  
Mental Disabilities

Health Outcomes

Physical Health

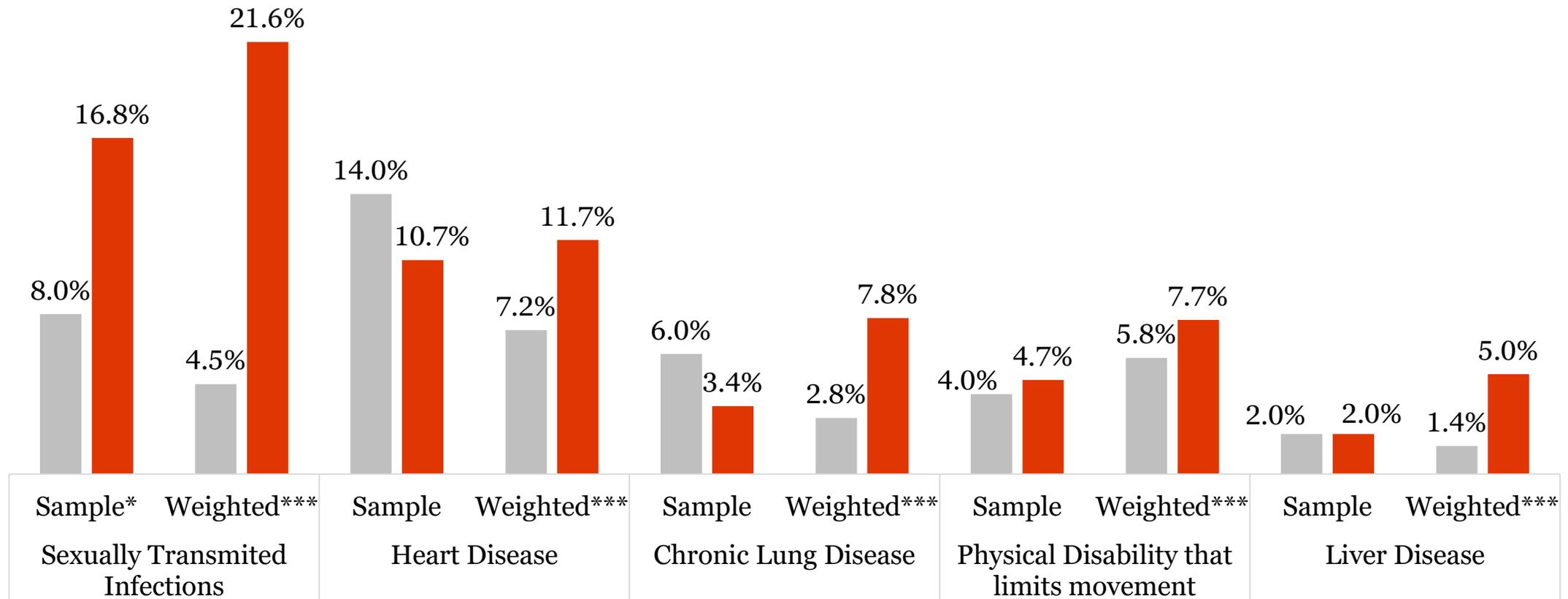


Though the literature finds statistically significant associations between higher ACE scores and obesity, this relationship does not bear out in Jefferson County.

The association between ACE score and obesity is inverse (higher ACE score negatively associated with reported obesity) and statistically significant.

# Significant Impacts on Health Outcomes

■ 0 ACEs ■ 4 or more ACEs



Mental Health

# ACEs and Mental Health

## ACEs

- Physical/emotional neglect
- Physical/sexual abuse
- Parental separation/divorce

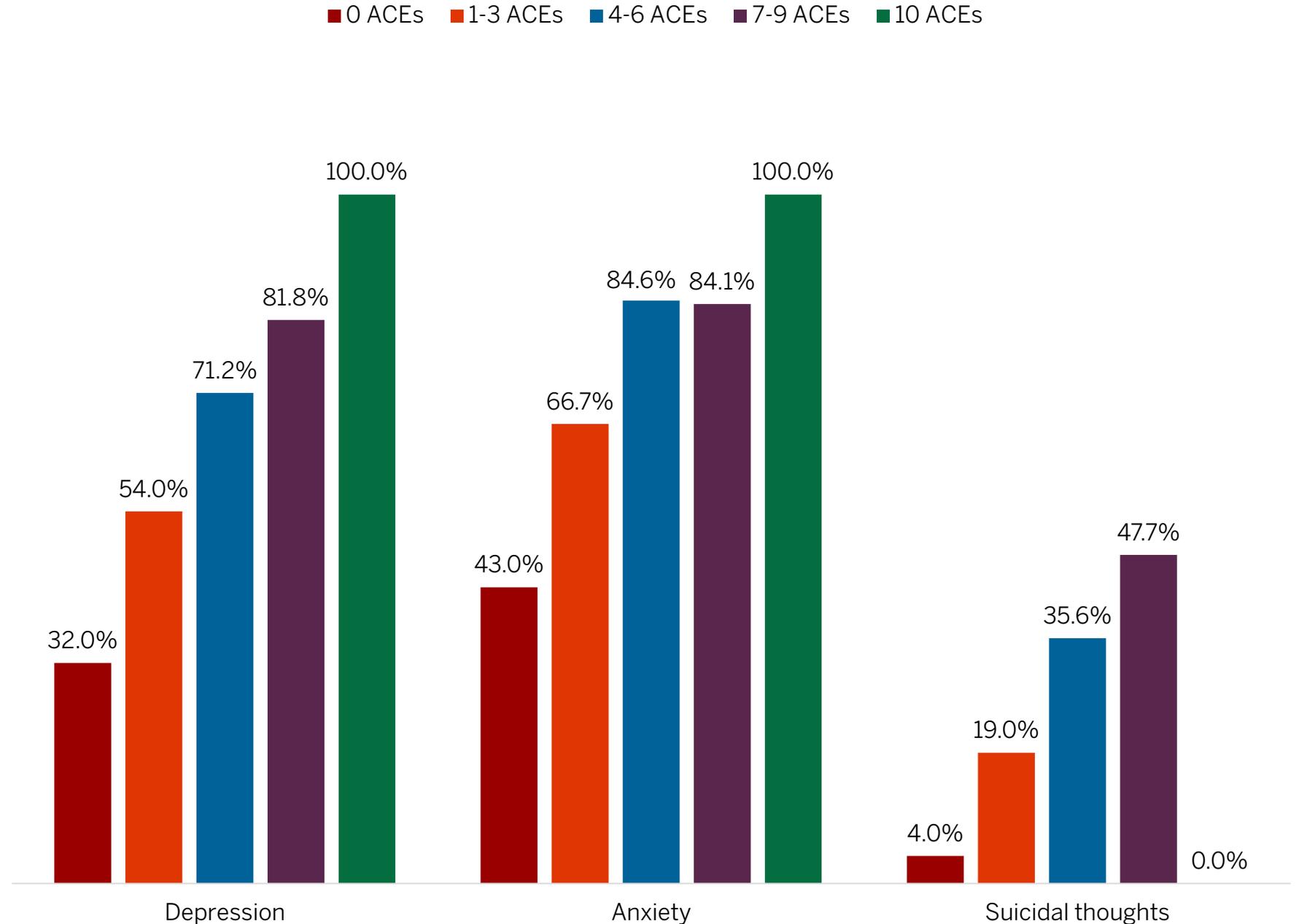
## Outcome

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Personality Disorders
- Suicide



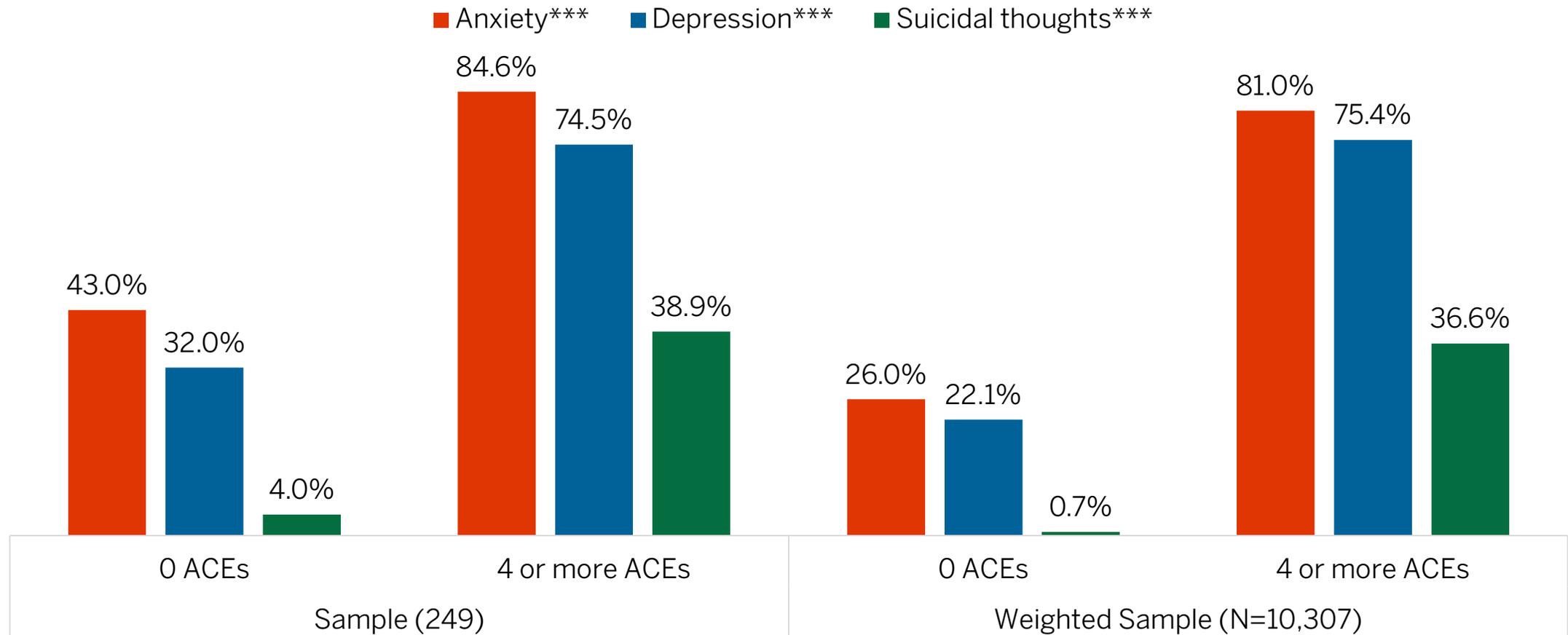
# Mental Health

- Adverse Childhood Experiences are significantly associated with anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.



# Mental Health

(0 ACEs compared to 4 or More ACEs)



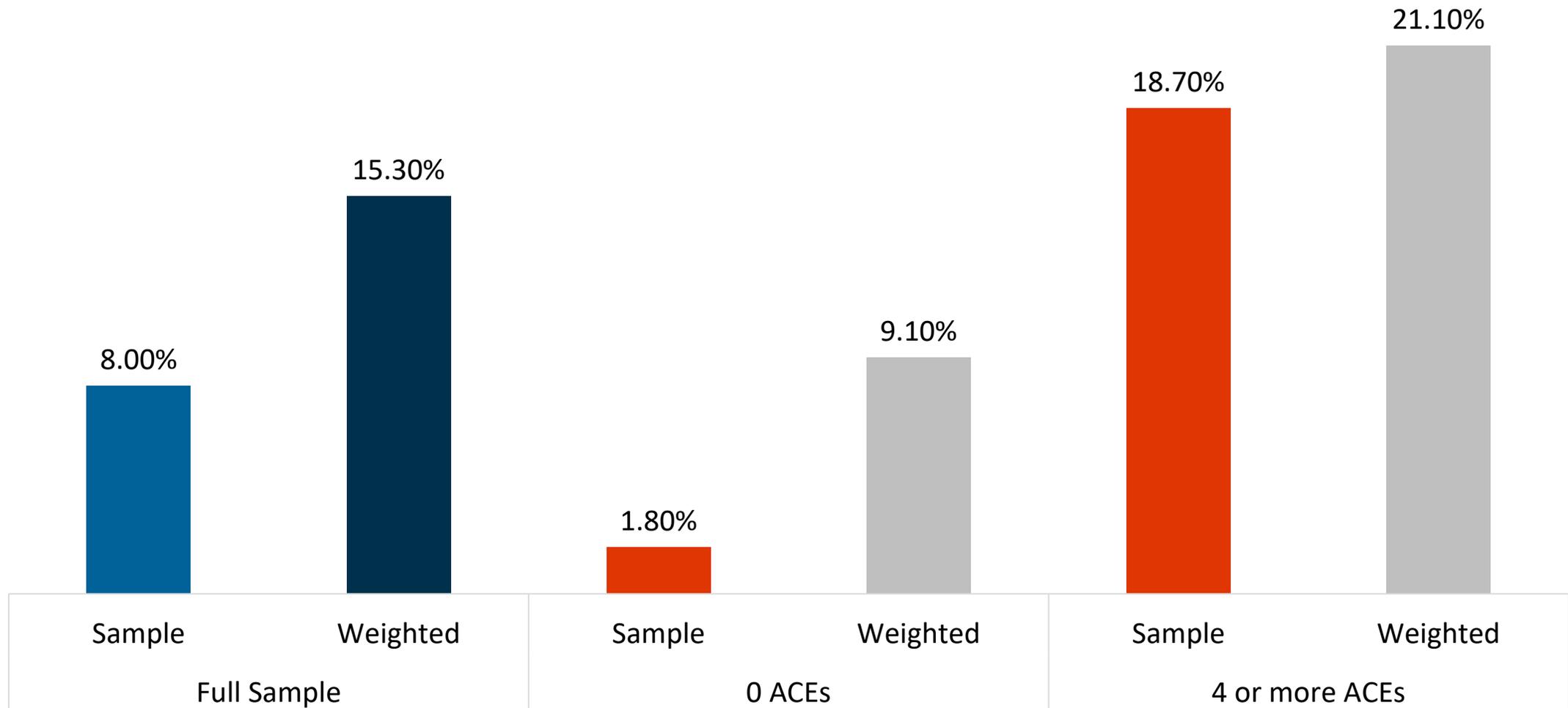
# Substance Use

# ACEs and Substance Abuse

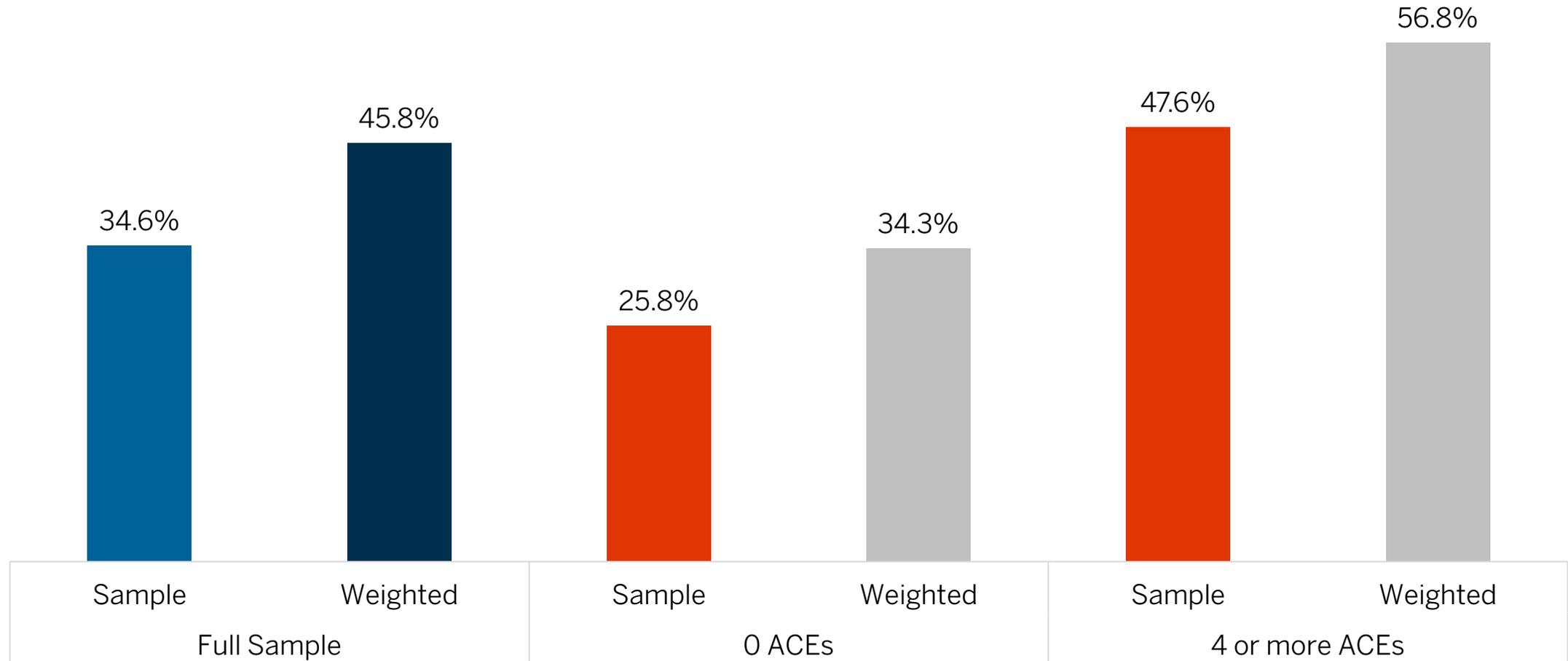
- The higher the ACE score, the higher the potential for substance abuse.
  - Research indicates the impacts of toxic stress make survivors of childhood trauma more susceptible to substance use disorder due to changes to brain chemistry.
  - Often used as a coping mechanism to self-medicate toxic stress that results from ACE's; this may lead to substance use disorders.



# Have you ever misused prescription pain killers or used street opioids such as heroin? (N=661)



# Do you smoke cigarettes? Or have you ever regularly smoked cigarettes? (Sample N= 642)

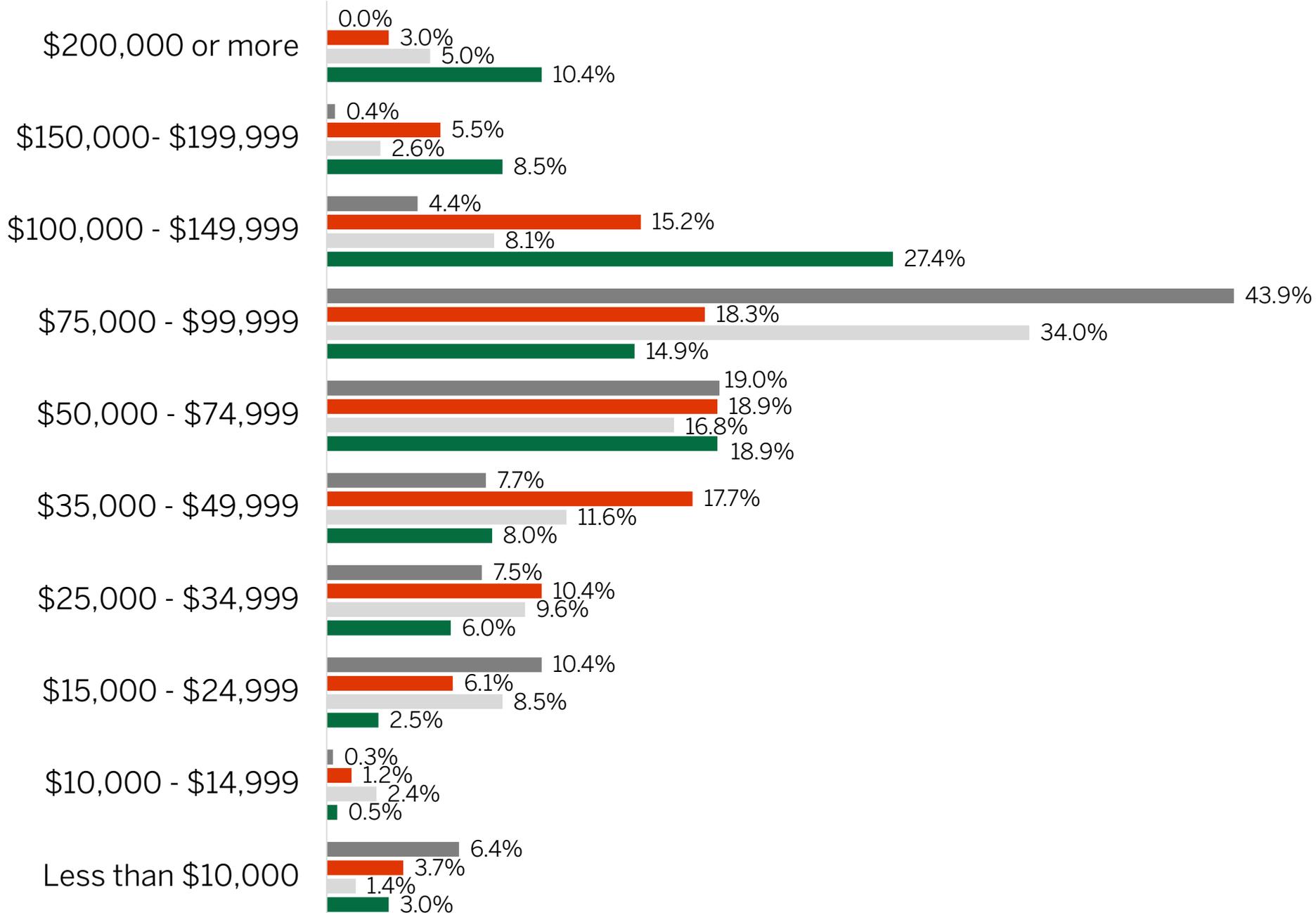


# Economy

Income and Employment Stability

■ 4 or More ACEs Weighted ■ 4 or More ACEs Sample ■ 0 ACEs Weighted ■ 0 ACEs Sample

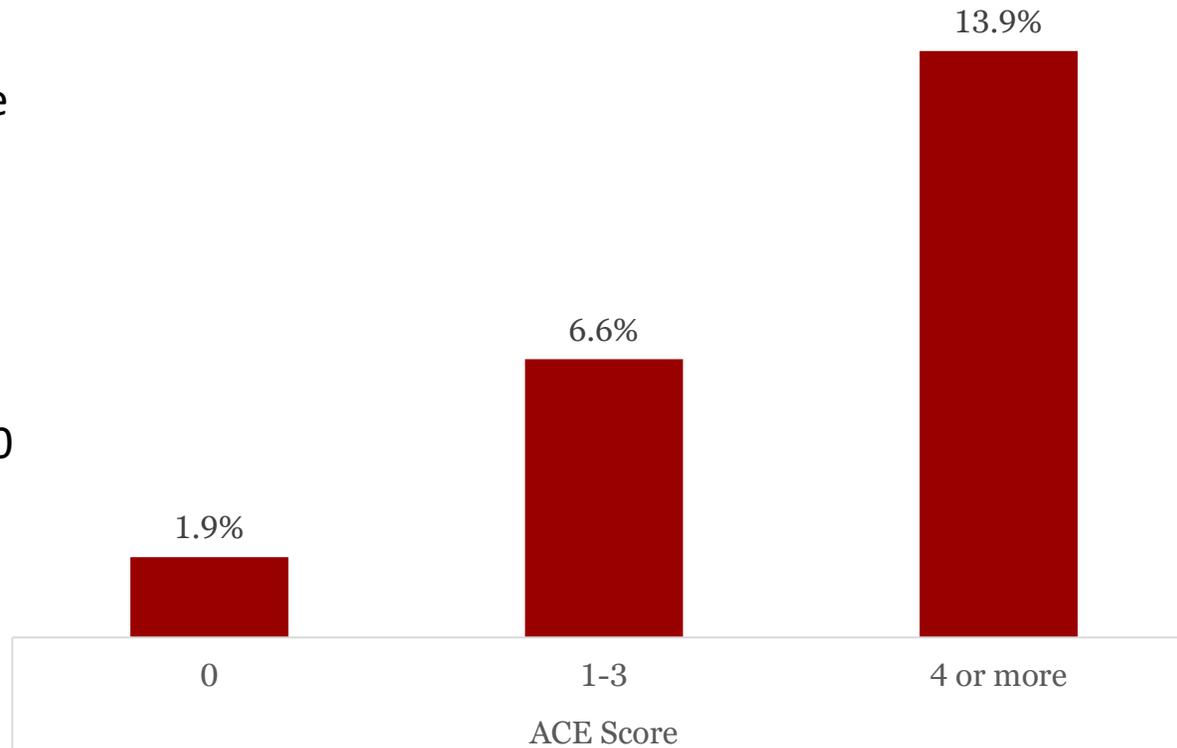
Income by ACE Score  
 For those with 0  
 ACEs and those with  
 4 or more ACEs  
 (Sample Collected  
 and Weighted  
 Sample)



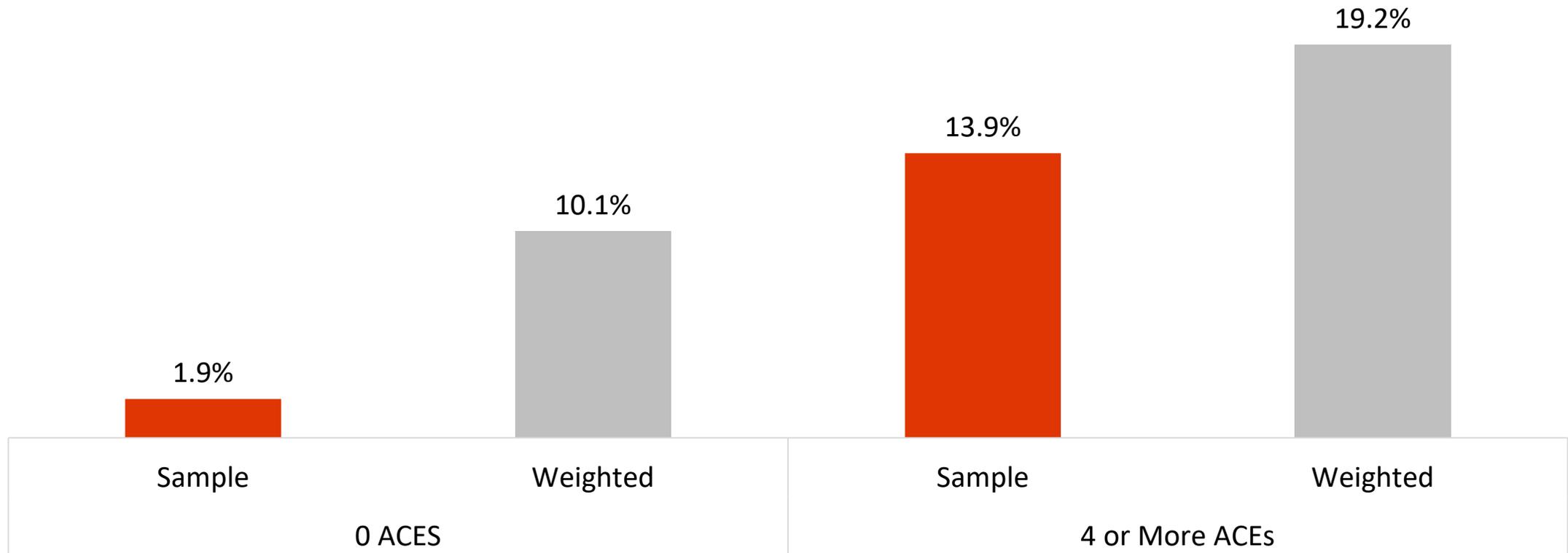
# Economy

- Those who report four or more ACEs are twice as likely as those who report 1-3 ACEs to struggle with employment stability and more than 7 times as likely as those with 0 ACEs.

Has struggled with employment stability (n=639)



# Employment Stability (Sample = 639, Weighted Sample = 16,172)



# Building Community Capacity for Resilience

- Strengthen economic supports to families.
- Promote social norms that protect against violence.
- Ensure a strong start for children.
- Teach coping skills.
- Connect youth to caring adults and activities.
- Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms
- Maintain & fund infrastructure and personnel to keep efforts moving forward.
- Engage cross-sector coordination.

# Choosing leverage point projects that go beyond current “choir.”

- Home visiting to families with new infants (consider potential partners—Nurse Family Partnership does this).
- High quality early care and education.
- Coping Skills: LifeSkills and Families in Transition type programs that build developmental assets and teach constructive communication and coping strategies.
- Mentoring: encourage connections between youth and trusted, caring adults.
- Primary Care: access to quality affordable primary care means more screening for potential problems.
- Work with employers to develop programs that promote employment stability and provide pathways to treatment and support to mitigate likelihood of reproducing childhood trauma in the next generation
- Wages: financial stress generates toxic stress and also contributes to other problem behaviors.
- Create a trauma-informed community.

# Communicating the Case & Choosing Strategies

- Engage public education.
- Keep purpose and audience in mind.
- Make the case for potential community impacts of a universal (i.e., creating a trauma-informed community) strategy.