# ACEs, Overdose, and Suicide are Related Public Health Challenges

## Christopher M. Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH

### Deputy Director, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC

“ACEs are inextricably linked with overdose and suicide in terms of shared risk factors. But on a more positive note, they share a lot of protective factors too. So there are a lot of exciting opportunities for us to think about how to build layers of protection into our communities and our systems, and our structures. At the individual and family levels, we want to talk about making sure that families have the tools and the resources they need to foster things like good family communication, conflict management, behavior management, positive behavior management approaches, and any other resources we can share to help parents with the extremely hard job of raising kids. We also want to make sure we're doing everything we can to ensure that kids have a strong start in school. So we should be intentional about using schools as a positive venue for building social, emotional, and cognitive skills. But also as a way for kids to connect with caring and trusted adults so that onus for building a network of support around every child isn't solely resting on the parents and the caregivers.

But in addition to families and schools, we also want to think beyond that and talk about community and systems and institutions and how they can be a source of protection. So, for example, let's talk about ensuring the economic stability of families, which offers strong protection against ACEs, overdose, and suicide. Things like childcare subsidies, livable wage, paid sick and family leaves, access to affordable healthcare access to unemployment assistance or food assistance and housing assistance, and debt relief during times of stress. We can work through these systems to build a layer of protection into the fabric of the institutions that we all navigate on a daily basis.”