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Poverty/ACE's Reflection

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Before going into this online activity, I had an idea of how much of a strain poverty and stress put on our bodies. However, I did not realize how deeply they affect our health on a long-term basis. In the first video, we learned about homeless children who were living in their cars and how they were adapting to their circumstances. I believe they exhibited an amount of maturity that was uncharacteristic for their age. They had such positive attitudes and believed that they could better themselves. They never complained and had very positive attitudes that never indicated their situation to those around them. However, there is more to these kids than what meets the eye. ACEs are adverse childhood experiences and the homelessness experienced in the video is a very notable form of that. Although it may seem like the affect is over once the experience ends, that couldn't be further from the truth. The brain is hardwired to rely on both genetics and environmental factors to determine how it functions. When you introduce an ACE it can trigger a permanent fight-or-flight response in the body that releases hormones that are toxic with prolonged levels. This puts these individuals at an exponentially higher risk for depression, suicidal ideations, COPD, hypertension, and a variety of other health issues. So, if ACEs have such a harmful effect on long-term health, why don't we pay more attention to them? As someone who would like to work in pediatrics and is passionate about caring for children and their families, I believe that this is invaluable information to have learned about. When seeing patients, it is easy to take them at face value, only look at their illness, and focus on the straightforward methods of treating it. However, as nurses, we must take a more holistic approach to achieve better outcomes and reduce future hospitalizations. We need to consider the factors that might have led to the illness and work on providing support to families who are experiencing difficulties. We

also need to provide better resources to parents and their children about how to effectively cope with stress. This assignment was eye opening, and I hope to apply this knowledge in my future career.