

# Becoming ACEs Aware in California Training

## A Case-Based Virtual Curriculum Integrated into Medical Training Programs

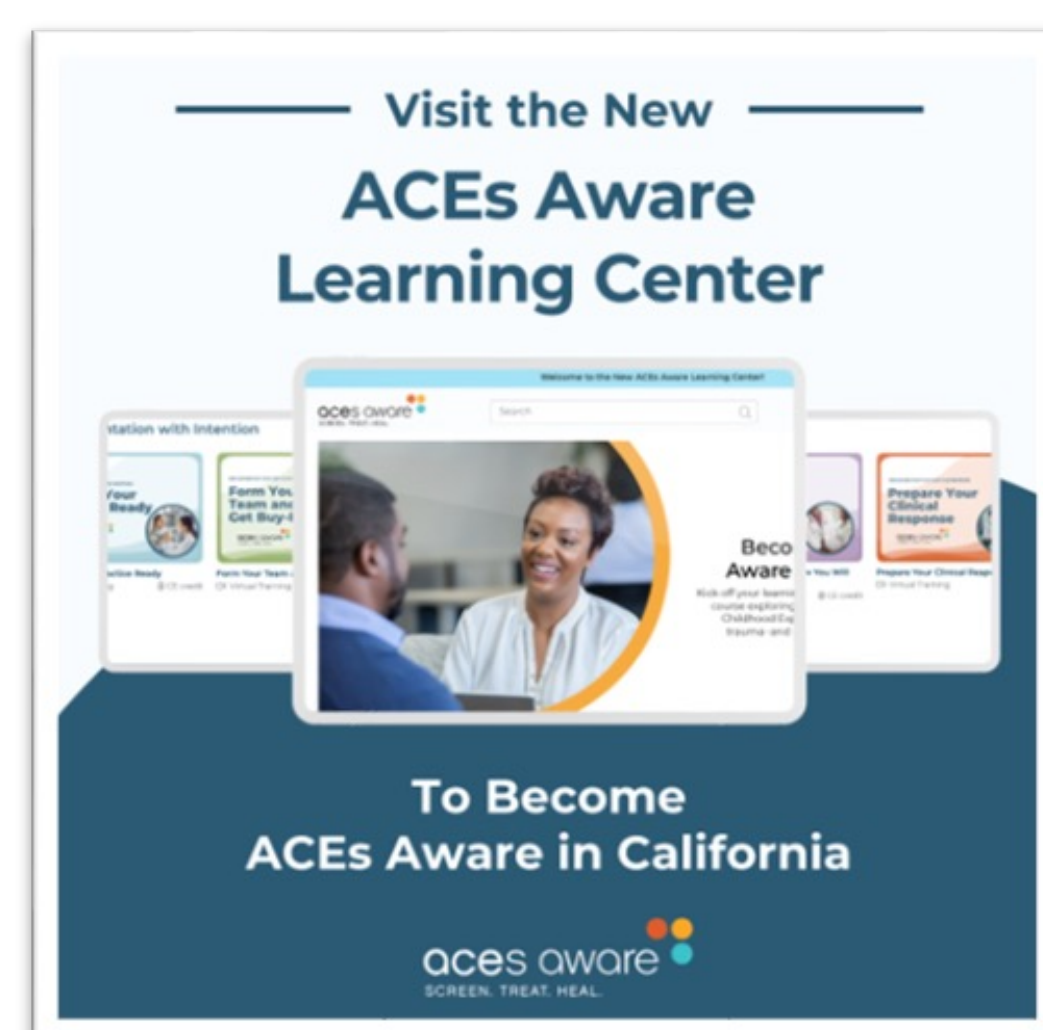
Christine Thang, MD; Erika Ramirez, MPH; Wendy Barrera, MPH; Bahareh Gordon, MD; Aaron Norr, PhD; Shannon Thyne, MD  
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA  
UCLA-UCSF ACEs Aware Family Resilience Network (UCAAN)

### Background

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and household challenges and later-life health and well-being.
- ACEs are associated with increased risk of a wide range of health conditions in both pediatric and adult populations.
- The *Becoming ACEs Aware in California* training is offered for free through the state's ACEs Aware initiative.
- The training aims to equip learners with knowledge and skills to recognize and address the impact of ACEs on health.
- Training modules cover the ACE Study, trauma's impact on health, and trauma-informed care.
- Each module includes interactive case studies, evidence-based guidelines, and resources for further learning.

### Methods

- We integrated the *Becoming ACEs Aware in California* training into the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine and the affiliated Pediatrics, OBGYN, and Family Medicine residency programs.
- Through the ACEs Aware Learning Center, we extracted data from **July 2022 through June 2024** for learners who identified as “physician” and “student/trainee” – to capture the medical students and trainees at UCLA.



The following figures are based on the responses from 278 physician trainees/students with a UCLA Mednet email who completed the *Becoming ACEs Aware in California* training.

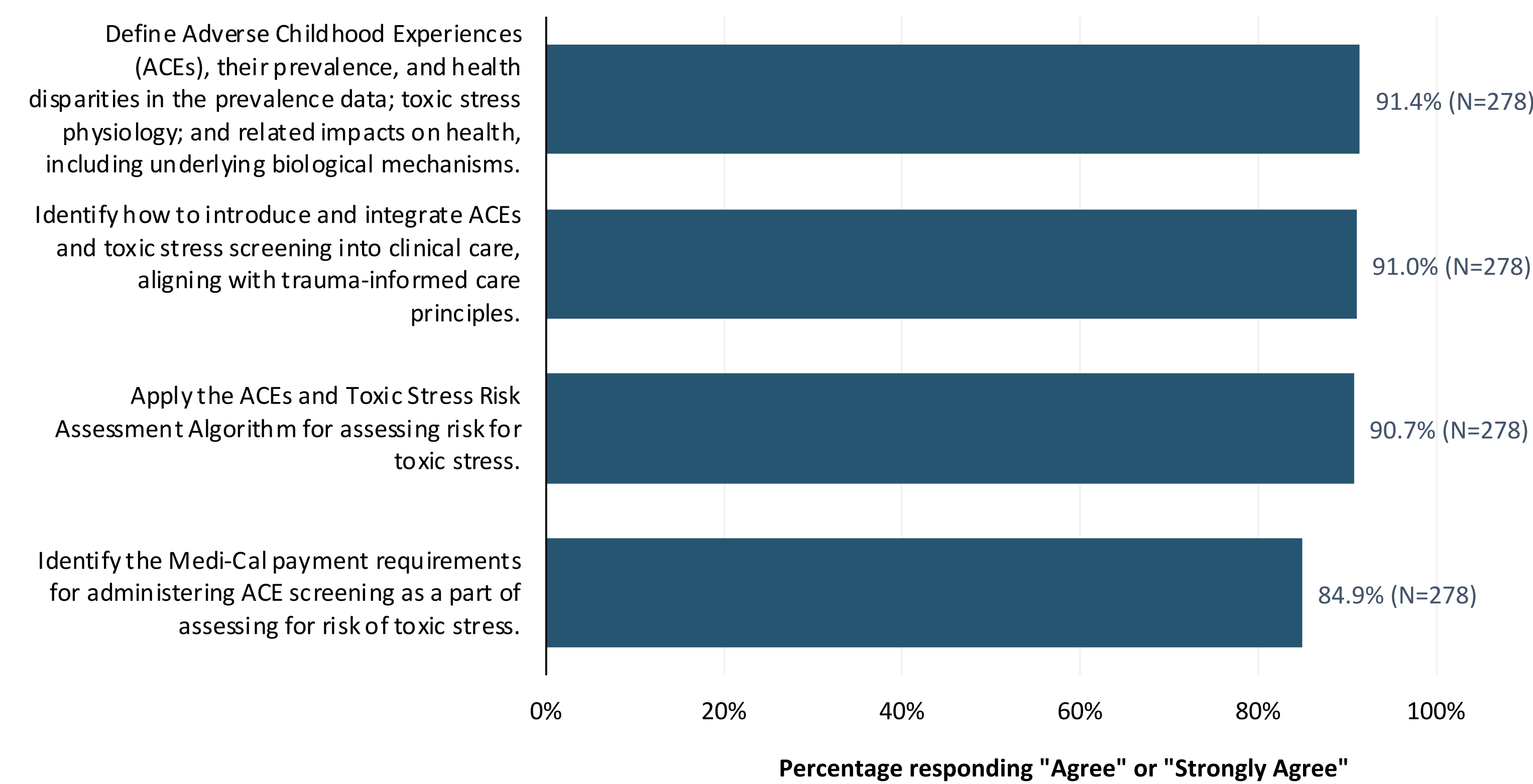


Figure 1. Level of agreement that the training supported the listed learning objectives.

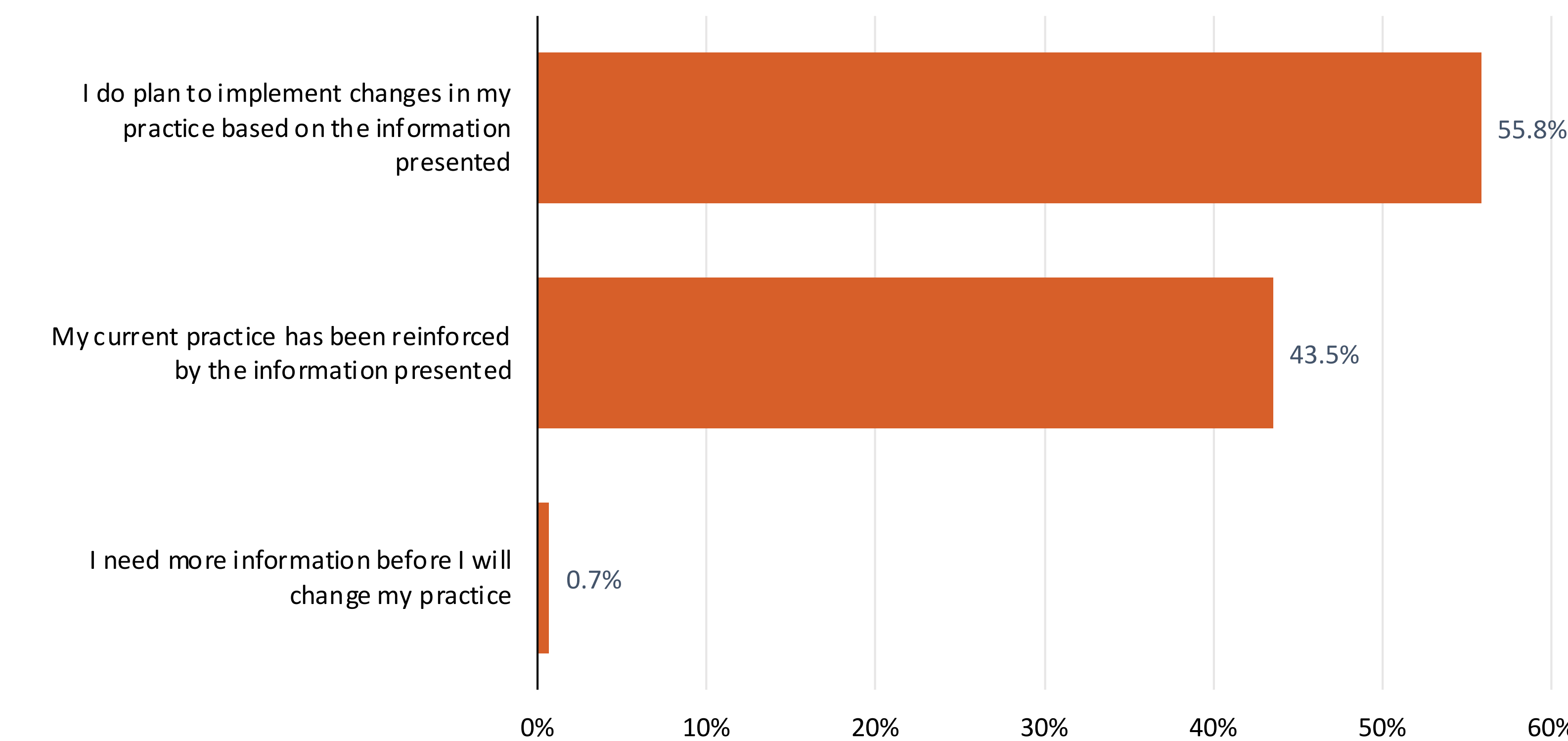


Figure 2. Based upon your participation in this training, do you intend to change your practice behavior? (N=278)

### Results

- We identified **278 UCLA medical student/trainees** who completed the training.
- **Over 90% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed** the training helped them define ACEs, toxic stress, and related health impacts; introduce and integrate discussions around ACEs, toxic stress, and trauma-informed care into clinical practice; and apply the ACEs and Toxic Stress Risk Assessment Algorithm. (Figure 1)
- **Over 89% agreed/strongly agreed** the training enhanced their knowledge base, provided useful educational material, and the content was evidence-based and effective.
- As a result of the training, **55.8% of learners planned to implement practice changes.** (Figure 2)

### Discussion

- We found high learner satisfaction and reported knowledge gain and implementation plans among participants.
- Integration into onboarding processes and existing educational schedules for trainees has optimized participation and learning outcomes.
- There is opportunity to expand this training beyond its current settings.
- Our goal is to create a health care workforce capable of addressing the long-term effects of childhood adversity and improving patient care across the life span.

### Acknowledgements

Funding was provided by the California Department of Health Care Services, in partnership with the Office of the California Surgeon General. The funding source had no involvement in study design, analysis, interpretation of data nor the decision to submit for publication.