

Adverse Childhood Experiences

How the impact of “ACEs” Trauma impacts health and impedes access to education.

What are ACEs?

If you have experienced any of the following
before age 18

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Emotional Neglect
- Family Member diagnosed with mental illness
- Mother (or Father) treated violently
- Substance misuse within the household
- Parental separation, divorce or death
- Incarcerated household member

What is happening with ACEs?

- ACEs are an epidemic that's growing!
- They contribute to a huge amount of the burden of chronic disease in this country, as well as most mental illness and violence
- They interfere with the child's ability to learn in school
- The educational system can help reverse the trend

Who is affected?

- Common as salt
- Crosses all social/economic groups
 - Study of 17,000 middle-class, college-educated, mostly white, employed people with great health care
 - 87% had experienced 2 or more types

THE TRUTH ABOUT ACEs

WHAT ARE THEY?

ACEs **are**
ADVERSE
CHILDHOOD
EXPERIENCES

The three types of ACEs include

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative

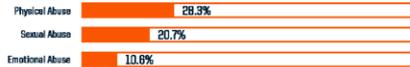


Substance Abuse

HOW PREVALENT ARE ACEs?

The ACE study* revealed the following estimates:

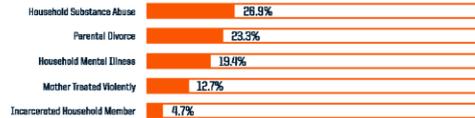
ABUSE



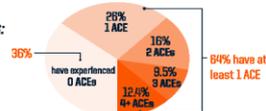
NEGLECT



HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Of 17,000 ACE study participants:



WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes



Possible Risk Outcomes:

BEHAVIOR



PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Hand Model of the Brain

- Make a fist with your thumb tucked inside your fingers
 - Your fist is the brain and wrist and forearm are the spinal cord.
 - Your thumb is the midbrain – emotions and memories are created and processed and fight-or-flight reflex triggered
 - Back of your hand and fingers is the cerebral cortex –thinking logically, act with kindness, reasoning and problem-solving
 - Fingernails logic and reasoning part kicks into gear

When the emotional brain and the rational brain don't communicate so well.

- Emotions of the midbrain are simply too overwhelming
 - Fight-or flight reflex triggers
 - We “flip our lids”
 - Rational brain has very poor connection with our emotional brain.
 - Feelings intense
 - Not able to access the logical, problem-solving part
 - We need to calm our anger and ease our fears

What does it look like?

- The more ACEs a child has, the more likely that child was to have:
 - Failing grades,
 - Poor attendance
 - Severe behavior problems
 - Poor health

Developmental Domains Effected by Complex Trauma

- Attachment/Relationships
 - Problems with family, adults & peers
 - Problems with boundaries
 - Social isolation
- Emotional Responses
 - Emotional self-regulation
 - Labeling & expressing feelings
 - Communicating wishes & needs
- Self-Concept
 - Low self-esteem
 - Shame and guilt
- Thinking & Learning
 - Executive function & attention
 - Information processing
 - Focusing on & completing tasks
 - Learning difficulties
 - Language development
- Behavior
 - Impulse control
 - Risk-taking behaviors
 - Substance abuse
 - Oppositional behavior – complying with rules or respect authority

What can be the role in the school?

- Give school staff real practical tools they can use to:
 - Manage their emotional response
 - Create consistency in their classrooms
 - Give skills to kids to control their own behavior and emotions.

Change of approach

ACE-informed programs that promote resilience and recovery are likely to save high in human, social and health costs.

- Trauma-informed education
 - School discipline, no
 - School expectations, yes

Integrating trauma-informed practices

- How to approach students
- Shift in staff
- Supports PBIS and/or CBITS approaches
 - Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support
 - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools

Community Connections

- Public health nurses in some schools
- Needs supported
 - Medical care
 - Food stamps
 - Transport to and from doctor appointments
 - Mental health assessment
 - Housing
 - Domestic violence intervention
 - Respite care for elderly parents

Some outcomes

- Happier, calmer kids
 - Fewer blowouts
 - More learning
 - More awards

Equals

Drop in suspensions

Drop in teachers' referrals to the principal's office

Very little staff turnover

Improvement of overall reading and math test scores