

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study analyzes the relationship between multiple categories of childhood trauma, and health and behavioral outcomes later in life. The study found that children who experienced certain adverse conditions in the household prior to age 18 are more likely to experience negative consequences as an adult. The study assessed recurrent experiences, as well as those experiences that occurred at least one time (single event).¹

Adverse Childhood Experiences include:

- Recurrent physical abuse	-Recurrent emotional abuse
- Contact sexual abuse	- Emotional or physical neglect
- An incarcerated household member	- Mother is treated violently
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal	- An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- One or no parents	

ACES can have lasting effects on....



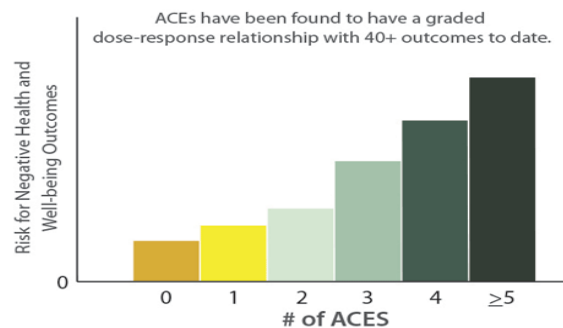
Health (obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)



Behaviors (smoking, alcoholism, drug use)



Life Potential (graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time from work)



*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.

Health Outcomes²

Outcome	No ACEs	1-3 ACEs	4-8 ACEs
Heart disease	1 in 14	1 in 7	1 in 6
Smoker	1 in 16	1 in 9	1 in 6
Alcoholic	1 in 69	1 in 9	1 in 6
Suicide attempt	1 in 96	1 in 10	1 in 5
IV-drug user	1 in 480	1 in 43	1 in 30

What *can* Be Done About ACES?

These wide-ranging health and social consequences underscore the importance of preventing ACES before they happen. **Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments** (SSNREs) can have a positive impact on a broad range of health problems and on the development of skills that will help children reach their full potential. Strategies that address the needs of children and their families include:

Voluntary home visiting programs can help families by strengthening maternal parenting practices, the quality of the child's home environment, and children's development.
Example: Nurse-Family Partnership



Home visiting to pregnant women and families with newborns



Parenting training programs



Intimate partner violence prevention



Social support for parents



Parent support programs for teens and teen pregnancy prevention programs



Mental illness and substance abuse treatment



High quality child care



Sufficient income support for lower income families

Resilience

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. ³

10 Ways to Build Resilience

Make connections.	Nurture a positive view of yourself.
Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.	Look for opportunities for self-discovery.
Accept that change is a part of living.	Keep things in perspective.
Move toward your goals.	Maintain a hopeful outlook.
Take decisive actions.	Take care of yourself.

References

1. Center for Disease Control. Adverse Childhood Experiences: Looking at how ACES affect our lives and society. http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/phl/images/ACE_Accessible.pdf
2. Washington State Family Policy Council. "The High Cost of Adverse Childhood Experiences". 2007. PowerPoint
3. American Psychological Association. The Road to Resilience. 2010. <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>