

Caring Safely Module 7-2

Organizational Health Trauma Informed Work and ACEs

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In This Module

- What Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are
- The ACEs questionnaire
- How ACEs impact behavior and health
- Toxic stress and the stress response

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Trauma Informed Work and ACES

- What are ACEs and what does Trauma Informed practice mean?
- Adverse Childhood Experiences – trauma and toxic stress experienced in childhood that can have a negative impact on physical and mental health in adulthood.
- ACEs study: is a research study conducted by the American health maintenance organization Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Participants were recruited to the study between 1995 and 1997 and received long-term follow up for health outcomes. The study has demonstrated an association of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) with health and social problems as an adult.

ACEs 10 Questions

- 1) Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? Or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
- 2) Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
- 3) Did anyone older than you ever...touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
- 4) Did you often or very often feel that...no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? Or your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
- 5) Did you often or very often feel that...you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Or your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

ACEs 10 Questions

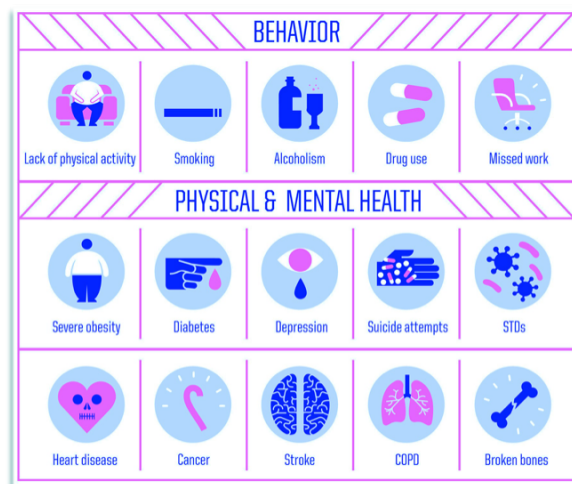
- 6) Was a biological parent ever lost to you through divorce, abandonment, or other reason?
- 7) Was any parent, stepparent, or parent figure: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at him or her? Or sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? Or ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
- 8) Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
- 9) Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
- 10) Did a household member go to prison?

Behaviors and Health

Important to understand or have compassionate curiosity as to why people might be engaging in behaviors that are risky or unhealthy.

They are coping strategies for physical and mental pain that even people in helping professions use.

Remember ACT paradigm – humans don't like unpleasant experiences. Without healthy coping strategies, people will use what they have to escape it.



ACEs Impact

As the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for the following:

- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence
- Poor academic achievement

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Impact of Toxic Stress

Toxic Stress impacts the development of the brain, the cardiovascular system, the immune system and more.

Stress response is in a heightened state – is triggered more easily than brains that did not develop within those same conditions.

Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw>

Video on toxic stress:

<http://www.albertafamilywellness.org/resources/video/toxic-stress>

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