ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE)

ACEs: HISTORY AND RELEVANCE

ACES are Adverse Childhood Experiences that harm children's development so much so, that the effects emerge in adulthood. The ACE study was a public health study initiated in 1995 by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and Kaiser Permanente and it uncovered a link between child maltreatment & experiences and later life health outcomes and well-being. Findings suggest that some of the worst health and social problems arise as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences.

WHAT ARE ACES AND WHO HAS THEM?

![Bar chart showing frequency of ACES](chart)

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Household Substance Abuse
- Parental Separation/Divorce
- Household Mental Illness
- Mother Treated Violently
- Incarcerated Household Member

ACEs are common. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of adults have at least one ACE.

If a person has one ACE, there's a nearly 90 percent chance that they have two or more.
WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT ACES?

- Adults with an ACE score of 4+ were 460% more likely to have depression and 19% of adults with an ACE score of 4+ have attempted suicide.
- High ACE scores yield increased rates of broken bones, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, cancer, and stroke.
- Cost to taxpayers is roughly $120 billion a year.
- Victims of early ACES are more vulnerable to being revictimized by sexual violence. Women with an ACE score of 4+ are 500% more likely to experience domestic violence and 900% more likely to become victims of rape.
- High ACE scores can lead to greater likelihood of school dropout as well as teen pregnancy rates.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO? BUILDING RESILIENCY

- Take care of our minds & bodies: We can reduce the likelihood of ACES negatively impacting our health with exercise, mindfulness practices, good nutrition, adequate sleep, healthy social interactions and seeking mental health treatment.
- Learn the facts: Take the time to learn and recognize the different childhood traumas so that we can better identify who experiences ACES.
- Build trauma informed responses: It is important not to re-victimize individuals seeking services. Since the ACE study, many pediatrician offices, homeless shelters, classrooms, and police departments integrate trauma-informed approaches.
- Take action: If you know of know of any abuse or neglect, make a report! Seek help from colleagues, supervisors and/or friends.

Sources:

Contact Baltimore Child Abuse Center for more information
www.baltimorechildabusecenter.org
410-396-6147