

LEARN MORE ABOUT **ACEs**

» Childhood trauma isn't something you just grow out of.

Our body is primed to respond to stress. But in her inspirational TED Talk, Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris explores what happens if that stress never goes away.

<https://tinyurl.com/64v72s58>

» How asking, "What happened to you?" can change a life.

Growing up with unresolved trauma, Tonier Cain describes what it was like and what happened when someone finally asked her the right questions.

<https://tinyurl.com/yucft5ew>

» ACEs are treatable. ACEs are beatable.

Resilience practices overcome students' ACEs in a trauma informed high school.

» Where can I find the ACEs survey?

This link allows human service providers to administer an ACEs survey.

<https://tinyurl.com/5navayc6>

» An interview with Vincent Felitti, MD

This interview features co-founder of The ACE Study, Vincent Felitti, MD.

<https://tinyurl.com/4jt5yst5>

» Learn more about ACEs, trauma-informed care, and resiliency:

- Center for Disease Control: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- [ACEsConnection.com](https://www.acesconnection.com)
- [ACEsTooHigh.com](https://www.aces-too-high.com)

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Learn more about the research behind a variety of ACE topics at our CHS website:

chssd.org/Prevention_Training/ACEs

ACEs

A Guide to Understanding
Adverse Childhood Experiences

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STAND FOR **GOOD**



» WHAT ARE ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic childhood events that create dangerous levels of stress and can negatively impact the development of a child's brain and body.

This results in long-term effects on learning and behavior, as well as the social and physical health of the individual throughout their lifetime.

In addition to the specific traumatic events categorized as ACEs, there are other types of childhood trauma such as poverty, death of a loved one, neighborhood safety issues, and historical trauma that may also affect a child's stress level.

The important thing to remember is that an ACE score is meant as a guideline. If other types of toxic stress occurred during childhood, that would only increase the risk of health consequences.

Types of ACEs: Abuse



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

Neglect



Physical



Emotional

Household Dysfunction



Mental Illness



Mother Treated Violently



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse



Divorce

HOW COMMON ARE ACES?

Almost two-thirds of the adults surveyed reported at least one Adverse Childhood Experience—and the majority of respondents who reported at least one ACE reported more than one.

» ACE STUDY RESEARCH REVEALED

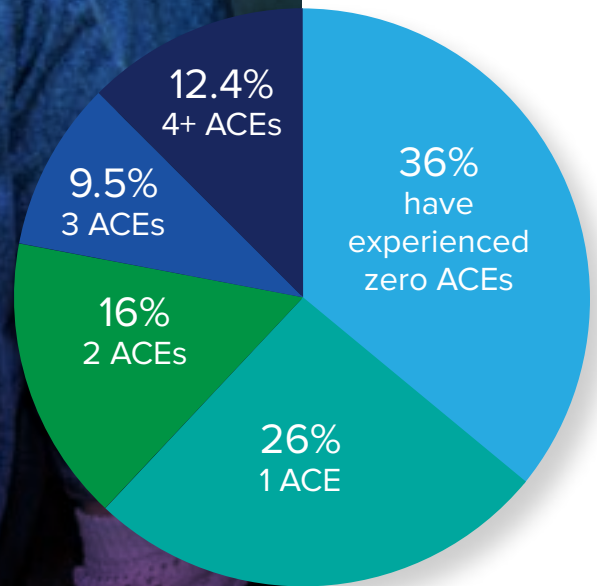
The ACE Study

Dr. Vincent Felitti and Dr. Robert Anda, co-founders of **The ACE Study**, conducted research from 1995–1997, with findings published in 1998. Study demographics included 17,337 adults ages 19-94, 46% were men and 54% were women, 75% were college educated, and 75% were Caucasian with 25% African American, Asian, or other races.

It is worth noting that participants in this study reflected a cross-section of middle-class American adults, and that “marginalized” populations were under-represented.

Study participants received physical exams and completed confidential surveys giving information about their childhood experiences, and their current health status and behaviors.

Survey information was combined with results from their physical exams to form the study’s findings. Participants were given one point for every ACE they had experienced.



SOURCE: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

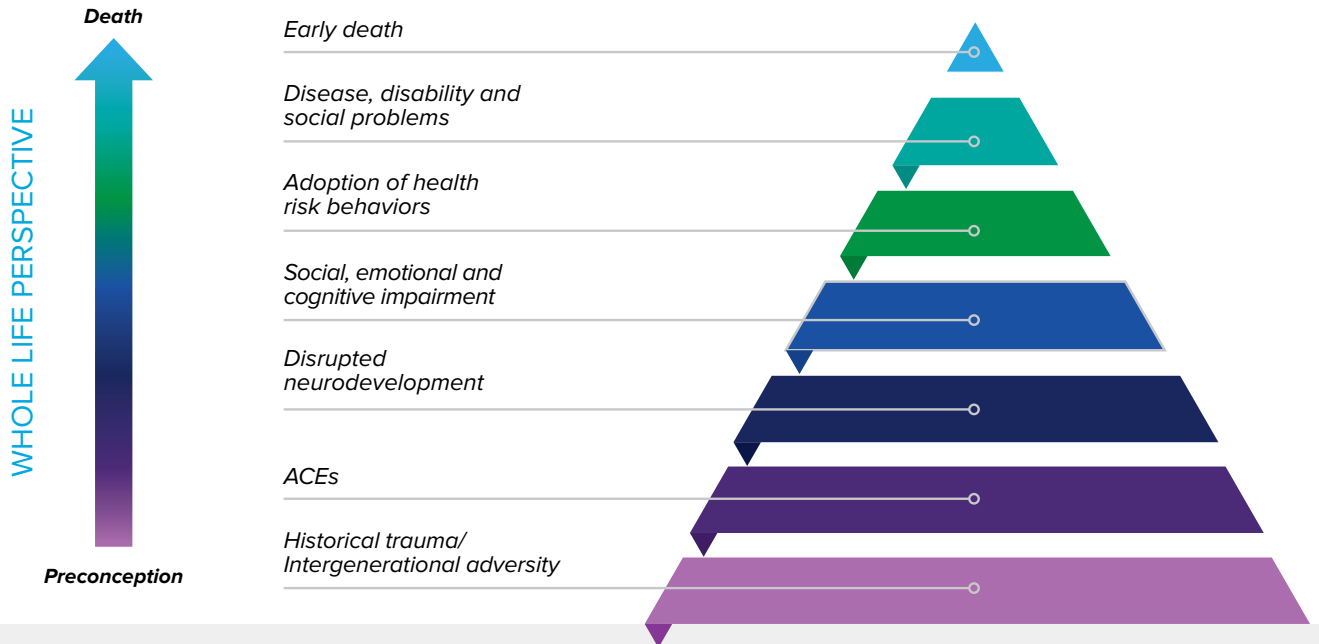
» THE IMPACT OF AN ACE SCORE

Left untreated, ACEs can have a lifelong impact.

Childhood experiences have a tremendous, lifelong effect on our health and the quality of our lives. The ACE Study showed dramatic links between childhood trauma and risky behavior, psychological issues, serious illness, and the leading causes of death. As your ACE score increases, so does the risk of disease, social dysfunction, and emotional problems.



HOW DO ACEs affect us?



With an ACE score of 4 or more, the likelihood of these health issues increases. For example:

Hepatitis	240%
Chronic pulmonary lung disease	390%
Depression	460%
Suicide	1,220%

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

People with 6 or more ACEs **die nearly 20 years earlier** on average than those without ACEs.

» THE IMPACT OF ACES ON SOCIETY

ACEs are a public health issue as they affect communities and society in significant ways.

Individuals affected by ACEs appear in a variety of human service systems throughout their lifespans as clients with behavioral, learning, social, criminal and chronic health problems. Individuals often turn to food, alcohol, tobacco, drugs and other high-risk behaviors without recognizing these coping methods as the problems they are.

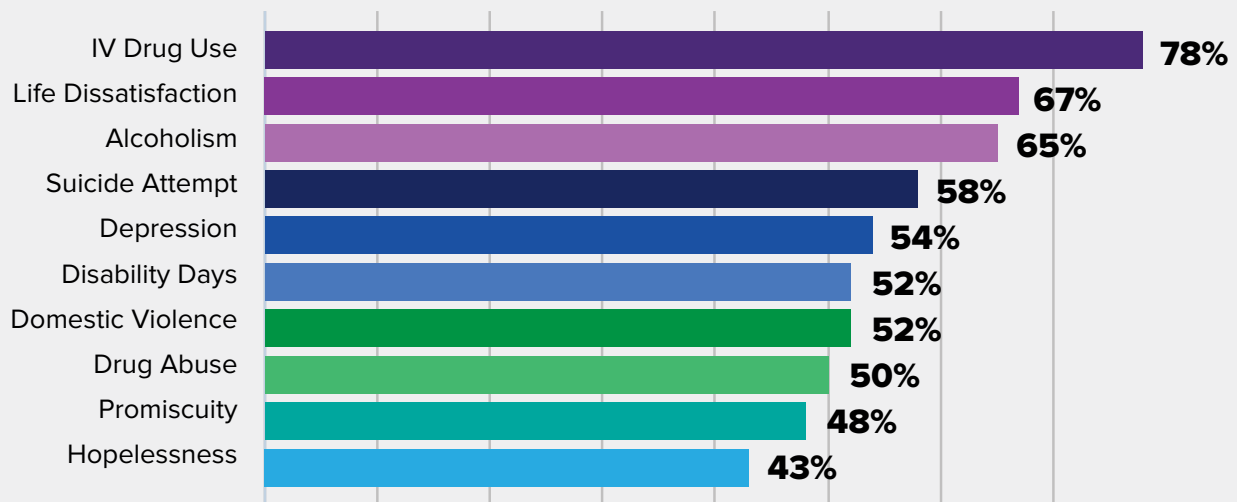
However, ACEs are not just an individual's problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), just one year of



confirmed cases of child maltreatment in the U.S. costs \$124 billion over the lifetimes of the traumatized children.

Effective prevention and treatment require integration of educational, criminal justice, healthcare, mental health, and societal reform.

ACEs and Societal Problems



Over 65% of alcoholism can be attributed to ACEs, **58% of suicide attempts**, and **78% of IV drug use**, as reported by the CDC.

The wide ranging health and social consequences underscore the importance of preventing ACEs before they happen.

A growing network of leaders in research, policy, and practice are developing approaches to prevent ACEs and diminish their impact.

Approaches to treating ACEs:

- » Raising public awareness about ACEs
- » Promoting routine, universal screenings
- » Investing in early and effective interventions and prevention programs
- » Implementing best practices by an integrated health services team.

Building resilience is key.

“Resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever.”

– *Psychology Today*

» **WHAT CAN BE DONE TO TREAT ACEs?**

Everyone, by virtue of being human, will face stress, trauma, or adversity, and our bodies are “wired” to handle some of that.

But what about when that stress, trauma, or adversity is prolonged? Just as you might take extra vitamins when you feel a cold coming on, incorporating resiliency-building practices into your life can help expand your capacity to manage these challenges.

Some resiliency-building strategies include having healthy relationships, getting adequate sleep, physical activity, good nutrition, mindfulness (prayer, meditation, yoga), and mental health services.

Trauma-Informed Care changes the question from: “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”

