

Trauma Toolbox

Provided by the OCYF Trauma Team

Please direct all questions and suggestions to RA-PWOCYFTRAUMA@pa.gov

Preventing ACEs	
Strategy	Approach
Strengthen economic supports to families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening household financial security• Family-friendly work policies
Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education campaigns• Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment• Bystander approaches• Men and boys as allies in prevention
Ensure a strong start for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early childhood home visitation• High-quality child care• Preschool enrichment with family engagement
Teach skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social-emotional learning• Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs• Parenting skills and family relationship approaches
Connect youth to caring adults and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentoring programs• After-school programs
Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced primary care• Victim-centered services• Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs• Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence

- Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders

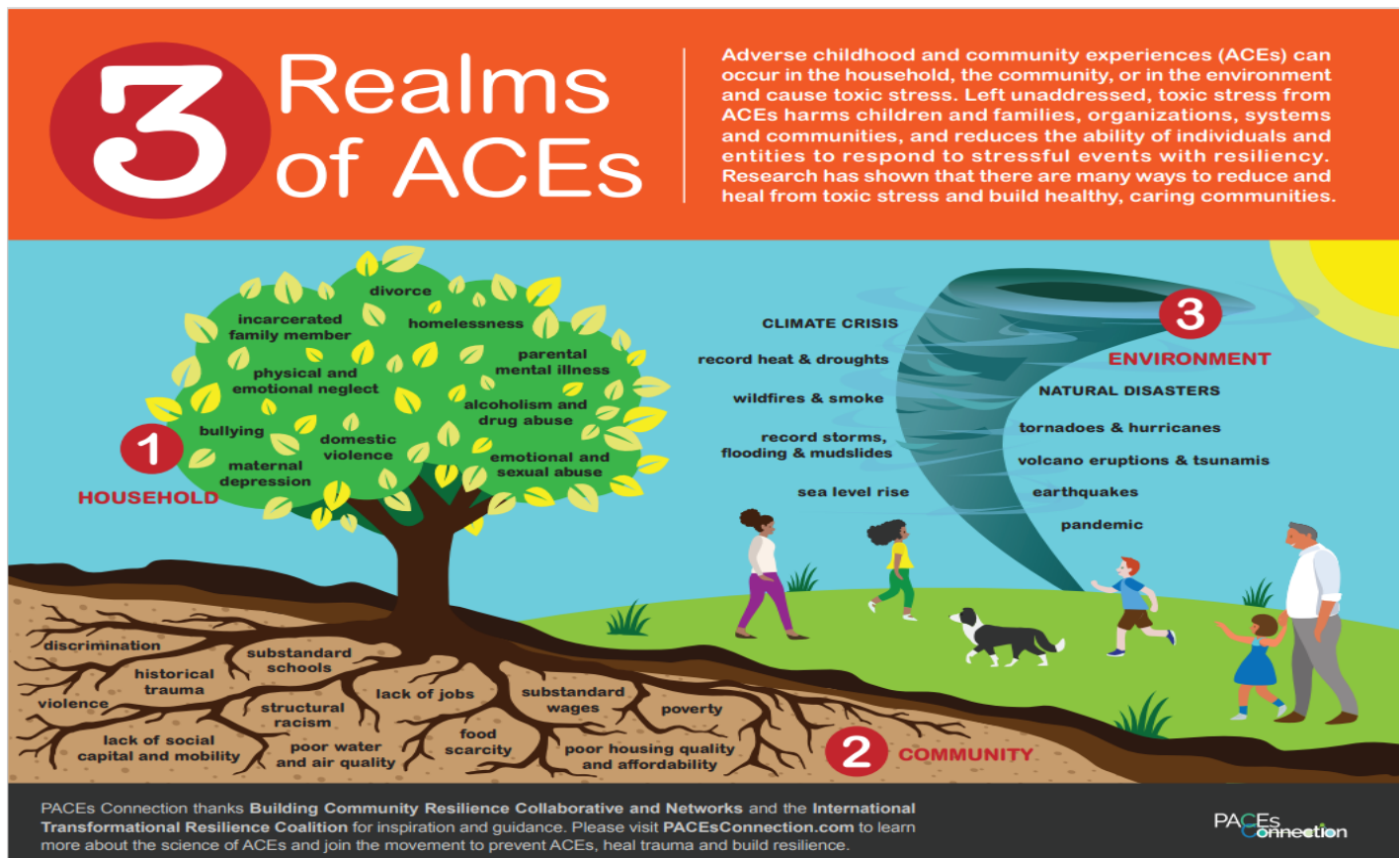
Raising awareness of ACEs can help:

- Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

From <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html?CDC_AA >

Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full potential. CDC has produced a resource, [Adverse Childhood Experiences Prevention Resource for Action \[4 MB, 38 Pages\]](#), to help states and communities use the best available evidence to prevent ACEs. It features six strategies from the [CDC Resources for Action](#), formerly known as “Technical Packages to Prevent Violence.”

[3 Realms of ACEs - English \(pacesconnection.com\)](https://www.pacesconnection.com)



ACE Study — Five Important Findings

- 1 ACEs are surprisingly common — 64% of the 17,000 in the ACE Study had one of the 10 ACEs; 12 percent had four or more.
- 2 There's an unmistakable link between ACEs and adult onset of chronic disease, mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence.
- 3 The more types of childhood adversity, the direr the consequences. An ACE score of 4 increases the risk of alcoholism by 700%, attempted suicide by 1200%; it doubles heart disease and lung cancer rates.
- 4 ACEs contribute to most of our health problems, including chronic disease, financial and social health issues.
- 5 One type of ACE is no more damaging than another. An ACE score of 4 that includes divorce, physical abuse, a family member depressed or in prison has the same statistical outcome as four other types of ACEs. This is why focusing on preventing just one type of trauma and/or coping mechanism isn't working.

ACEs are just ONE PART of ACEs science. The Five Parts of ACEs Science:

- The ACE Study and other ACE surveys (epidemiology).
- How toxic stress from ACEs damages children's brains (neurobiology).
- How toxic stress from ACEs affects our short- and long-term health.
- How we pass ACEs from parent to child through our genes (epigenetics).
- And how resilience research shows our brains are plastic, our bodies can heal.

We're Not Doomed!

Our brains are plastic. Our bodies want to heal. To reduce stress hormones in our bodies and brains, we can meditate, exercise, sleep and eat well, have safe relationships, live and work in safety, ask for help when we need it.

We can build resilient families. Educating parents about their own ACEs helps them understand their lives and motivates them to become healthy parents to prevent passing their ACEs on to their kids.

For resilient families, we need healthy organizations, healthy systems and healthy communities. The frontier of resilience research lies in creating communities and systems that prevent childhood adversity, stop traumatizing already traumatized people, and build resilience.

Many people, organizations and communities are integrating trauma-informed and resilience-building practices based on ACEs science, including pediatricians, schools, juvenile detention facilities, businesses, social services, people in the faith-based community, health clinics, etc. For examples, go to <https://acestoohigh.com/aces-101/>.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gm-INpzU4g> - Video

Parenting to prevent and heal ACEs

(Adverse Childhood Experiences)



Donna Jackson Nakazawa, *Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology & How You Can Heal*

"The main point is this: No matter how old you are – or how old your child may be, there are scientifically supported and relatively simple steps that you can take to reboot the brain, create new pathways that promote healing, and come back to who it is you were meant to be."

NURTURE & PROTECT KIDS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE



Be a source of safety and support.

MOVE AND PLAY

Drum. Stretch. Throw a ball. Dance. Move inside or outside for fun, togetherness and to ease stress.

MAKE EYE CONTACT

Look at kids (babies, too). It says, "I see you. I value you. You matter. You're not alone."

SAY, "SORRY"

We all lose our patience and make mistakes. Acknowledge it, apologize, and repair relationships. It's up to us to show kids we're responsible for our moods and mistakes.



GIVE 20-SECOND HUGS

There's a reason we hug when things are hard. Safe touch is healing. Longer hugs are most helpful.



SLOW DOWN OR STOP

Rest. Take breaks. Take a walk or a few moments to reset or relax.

HUNT FOR THE GOOD



When there's pain or trauma, we look for danger. We can practice looking for joy and good stuff, too.

BE THERE FOR KIDS

It's hard to see our kids in pain. We can feel helpless. Simply being present with our kids is doing something. It shows them we are in their corner.

HELP KIDS TO EXPRESS MAD, SAD & HARD FEELINGS

Hard stuff happens. But helping kids find ways to share, talk, and process helps. Our kids learn from us.



KEEP LEARNING

Understand how ACEs impact you and your parenting.

More tips & resources for parents on back.



WITH SUPPORT FROM **Family Hui**
A Program of SouthWestHealth

Support for parents with ACEs

"The best thing we can do for the children we care for is to manage our own stuff. Adults who've resolved their own trauma help kids feel safe." –Donna Jackson Nakazawa



"Learning about ACEs is a start but sometimes we need more. Many people with ACEs have never had their pain validated. Understanding that there exists a biological connection between what they experienced in childhood, and the physical and mental health issues they face now, can help set them on a healing path, where they begin to find new ways to take care of themselves, and begin new healing modalities."

–Donna Jackson Nakazawa



WITH SUPPORT FROM **Family Hui**
A Program of SouthWestHealth

Thanks to Donna Jackson Nakazawa for allowing PACES Connection to paraphrase her research. Please add your logo on the front and share freely.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Understanding ACEs

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) are serious childhood traumas that can result in toxic stress. Prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress, which can damage the developing brain and body of children and affect overall health. Toxic stress may prevent a child from learning or playing in a healthy way with other children, and can cause long-term health problems.



ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) can include:

- Abuse: Emotional / physical / sexual
- Bullying / violence of / by another child, sibling, or adult
- Homelessness
- Household: Substance abuse / mental illness / domestic violence / incarceration / parental abandonment, divorce, loss
- Involvement in child welfare system
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters and war
- Neglect: Emotional / physical
- Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination
- Violence in community

! SURVIVAL MODE RESPONSE

Toxic stress increases a child's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking brain is knocked off-line. Self-protection is their priority.

Parents and caregivers can help. **Turn over to learn about resilience.**



This resource was reviewed by the California Collaborative ACEs Learning and Quality Improvement Collaborative (CALQIC) Patient Community Advisory Board.



Help children identify, express and manage emotions.



Create safe physical and emotional environments. (home, school, community, systems).



Understand, prevent and respond to ACEs.



"...One of the biggest myths that we have to bust is that if you have experienced childhood adversity, there's nothing we can do about it."
 — Nadine Burke Harris, MD, MPH, FAAP, Surgeon General of California

What is resilience?

Research shows that if caregivers provide a safe environment for children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of ACEs.

What does resilience look like?

Having resilient parents and caregivers who know how to solve problems, have healthy relationships with other adults, and build healthy relationships with children.

Building attachment and nurturing relationships:

Adults who listen and respond patiently to a child in a supportive way, and pay attention to a child's physical and emotional needs.

Building social connections.

Having family, friends, neighbors, community members who support, help and listen to children.

Meeting basic needs:

Provide children with safe housing, nutritious food, appropriate clothing, and access to health care and good education, when possible. Make sure children get enough sleep, rest, and play.

Learning about parenting, caregiving and how children grow:

Understand how caregivers can help children grow in a healthy way, and what to expect from children as they grow.

Building social and emotional skills:

Help children interact in a healthy way with others, manage emotions, communicate their feelings and needs, and rebound after loss and pain.

Resources:

- 📞 National Parent Helpline 1-855-4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736)
- 📖 Number Story
- 📖 PACEs Connection
- 📖 ACEs Too High
- 📖 Resource Center
- 📖 Parenting with PACEs



Special thanks to the Community & Family Services Division at the Spokane (WA) Regional Health District for developing and sharing the original parent hand-out.



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[Understanding ACEs - English \(pacesconnection.com\)](https://www.pacesconnection.com)