

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

RISK FACTORS

WHAT IS AN ACE?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. Understanding the prevalence of ACEs and the risks associated with ACEs in early childhood is critical for creating interventions that promote positive development for youth

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RISK FACTORS

- ☐ Families experiencing caregiving challenges related to children with special needs.
- ☐ Children and youth who don't feel close to their parents/caregivers and feel like they can't talk to them about their feelings.
- ☐ Youth who start dating early or engaging in sexual activity early.
- ☐ Children and youth with few or no friends or with friends who engage in aggressive or delinquent behavior.
- ☐ Families with caregivers who have a limited understanding of children's needs or development.
- ☐ Families with caregivers who were abused or neglected as children.
- ☐ Families with young caregivers or single parents.
- ☐ Families with low income.
- ☐ Families with adults with low levels of education.
- ☐ Families experiencing high levels of parenting stress or economic stress.
- ☐ Families with caregivers who use spanking and other forms of corporal punishment for discipline.
- ☐ Families with inconsistent discipline and/or low levels of parental monitoring and supervision.
- ☐ Families that are isolated from and not connected to other people (extended family, friends, neighbors).
- ☐ Families with high conflict and negative communication styles.
- ☐ Families with attitudes accepting of or justifying violence or aggression.

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS



- ☐ Communities with high rates of violence and crime.
- ☐ Communities with high rates of poverty and limited educational and economic opportunities.
- ☐ Communities with high unemployment rates.
- ☐ Communities with easy access to drugs and alcohol.
- ☐ Communities where neighbors don't know or look out for each other.
- ☐ Communities with few community activities for young people.
- ☐ Communities with unstable housing and where residents move frequently.
- ☐ Communities where families frequently experience food insecurity.
- ☐ Communities with high levels of social and environmental disorder.

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PROTECTIVE FACTORS

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INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS



- ☐ Families who create safe, stable, and nurturing relationships.
- ☐ Children who have positive friendships and peer networks.
- ☐ Children who do well in school and families that encourage the importance of school.
- ☐ Children who have caring adults outside the family who serve as mentors/role models.
- ☐ Families where caregivers can meet basic needs of food, shelter, and health services for children.
- ☐ Families where caregivers have college degrees or higher.
- ☐ Families where caregivers have steady employment.
- ☐ Families with strong social support networks and positive relationships with the people around them.
- ☐ Families where caregivers engage in parental monitoring and consistent enforcement of rules.
- ☐ Families where caregivers/adults work through conflicts peacefully.
- ☐ Families where caregivers help children work through problems.
- ☐ Families that engage in fun, positive activities together.

COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTORS



- ☐ Communities where families have access to economic and financial help.
- ☐ Communities where families have access to medical care and mental health services.
- ☐ Communities with access to safe, stable housing.
- ☐ Communities where families have access to nurturing and safe childcare.
- ☐ Communities where families have access to high-quality preschool.
- ☐ Communities where families have access to safe, engaging after school activities.
- ☐ Communities where adults have work opportunities with family-friendly policies.
- ☐ Communities where residents feel connected to each other and are involved in the community.
- ☐ Communities where violence is not tolerated or accepted.