



Handle With Care: Why Using Trauma Informed Care Can Make a Difference With Your Patients and Clients

Objectives

- Describe the mental and physical impacts of trauma on health.
- Explain the purpose and benefits of using the adverse childhood experiences screening tool.
- Recognize behaviors that may indicate a person has experienced trauma.
- Identify strategies that can help individuals cope and heal from trauma.
- Integrate best practice interventions in trauma-informed care within the provider setting.



Trauma

- Trauma results from exposure to an incident or series of events that are emotionally disturbing or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on an individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being.
- Examples of Trauma include:
 - Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
 - Childhood neglect
 - Living with a family member with mental health or substance use disorders
 - Sudden, unexplained separation from a loved one
 - Poverty
 - Racism, discrimination, and oppression
 - Violence in the community, war, or terrorism

Response to Trauma in Childhood



Childhood responses to trauma

- A fight, flight, or freeze response
- An overpowering sense of terror, helplessness, and horror
- Automatic physical responses such as rapid heart rate, trembling, dizziness, or loss of bladder or bowel control

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood.
- ACEs and the associated stress they create can cause some of the most common, serious, and costly health and social challenges.
- ACEs are strongly linked to **9 of the 10** leading causes of death in the United States.
- ACEs affect all communities and cross racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, and geographic lines.
- **Two-thirds** of us have at least one ACE.

The Impact of ACEs on Health

Babies	School-age children	Adolescents	Adults
Failure to thrive	Increased risk for viral infections	Somatic complaints, including headache and abdominal pain	Diabetes, COPD, stroke, heart disease, cancer
Growth delay	Pneumonia	Increased engagement in high-risk behaviors	Depression and anxiety
Sleep disruption	Asthma and other atopic disease	Teen pregnancy Teen paternity	Chronic pain
Developmental delay	Learning and behavior disabilities	Sexually transmitted disease	Substance use disorder
		Substance Abuse	Post-traumatic stress disorder

What Effects does Trauma have on Health?



2 times
as likely to smoke



2.5 times
more likely to have sexually-
transmitted infections



4 times
more likely to have chronic
obstructive pulmonary disease



7 times
more likely to consider
themselves an alcoholic



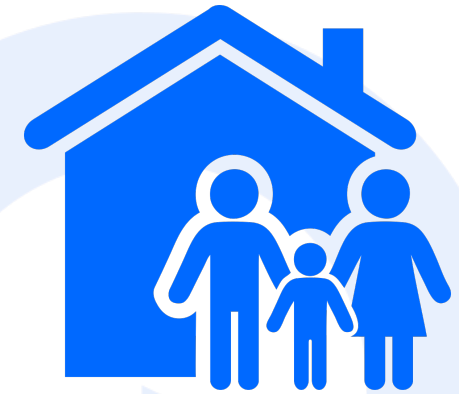
10 times
as likely to have injected
street drugs



12 times
as likely to have
attempted suicide

ACEs Across Generations

- The consequences of ACEs can be passed down from one generation to the next if children don't have protective buffers like positive childhood experiences or a caring adult in their lives.
- When families experience historical and systemic racism or living in poverty for generations, the effects of ACEs can add up over time.



What Could Happen If We Prevent ACEs?



15% reduction in the number of adults who are unemployed



16% reduction in the number of adults with kidney disease



24-27% reduction in the number of adults with respiratory problems such as asthma and COPD



33% reduction in the number of adults who smoke



44% reduction in the number of adults with depression



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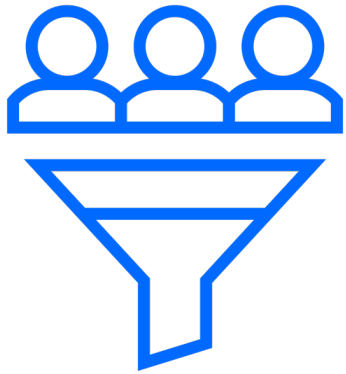
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The purpose of a complete ACE screening is to rapidly identify which patients are at highest risk for toxic stress and perform the next steps of a more complete, individualized assessment for each of them.

A complete ACE screening involves:

- Adversity (the ACE score)
- <https://www.acesaware.org/learn-about-screening/screening-tools/>
- Clinical manifestations of toxic stress (ACE-Associated Health Conditions)
- Protective factors

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



Potential benefits to ACE screening include:

- Supports health promotion and prevention of illness.
- Helps clinical teams and patients form stronger therapeutic relationships.
- Improves clinical decision-making and treatment of serious and difficult-to-treat health conditions.
- Promotes an intergenerational cycle of health by reducing the transmission of ACEs and toxic stress.

Response to Trauma in Childhood

In reaction to traumatic stress children may exhibit a variety of troubling, confusing, or upsetting behaviors and emotions. They may have:

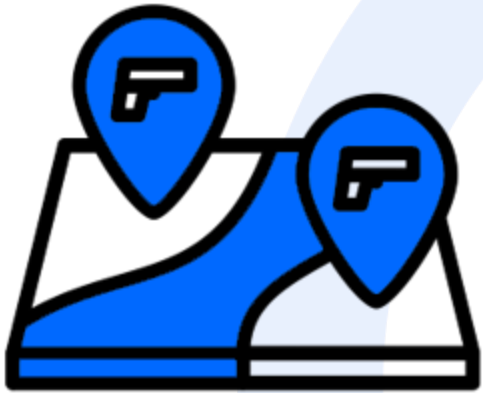
- A hard time concentrating or learning new information
- Nightmares or trouble falling or staying asleep
- Difficulty managing their feelings and emotions; they may be sullen one minute and cheerful the next, or suddenly become angry or aggressive
- A persistent feeling that they are not safe
- Problems forming trusting relationships
- A hard time handling even simple changes



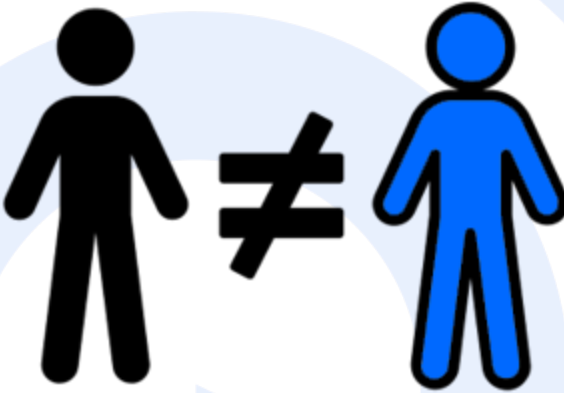
SDOH Increase the Risk of Trauma



Poverty



Neighborhood
Crime and Violence



Racism

How to Help a Child Cope with Trauma

Many factors can promote resilience and help children see the world as manageable, understandable, and meaningful. These include:

- Healthy relationships with competent, caring, supportive adults
- Connections with positive role models or mentors
- Having their strengths and abilities acknowledged and cultivated
- A sense of control over their lives
- Being part of a community (e.g., family, scout troop, church, etc.)

Helping a Child Heal from Trauma



Understand trauma's impact on the children in your care.



Help the child feel safe.



Help the child understand and manage overwhelming situations.



Help the child understand manage difficult behaviors.

Helping a Child Heal from Trauma (Cont.)



Respect and support the child's positive and stable relationships.



Help the child develop a positive reflection of their life.



Advocate.



Understand your child's treatment (if applicable).



Take care of yourself.

Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care framework:

- Understanding the prevalence of trauma and adversity and their impacts on health and behavior for patients/clients coming into your practice;
- Identifying triggers which may re-traumatize individuals with a history of trauma;
- Training leadership, providers, and staff on responding to patients/clients using best practice interventions in trauma-informed care;
- Integrating knowledge about trauma and adversity into policies, procedures, practices and treatment planning; and
- Avoiding re-traumatization by approaching patients/clients who have experienced ACEs and/or other adversities with non-judgmental support.

Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Care

The following principles of trauma-informed care should serve as a guide for all clinicians and staff:



Establish the physical and emotional safety of patients/clients and staff.



Build trust between providers, patients/clients and families.



Recognize signs and symptoms of trauma exposure on physical and mental health.



Promote person-centered, evidence-based care prior to admission by reviewing the medical record for any signs of trauma in their history.

Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Care (cont.)

The following principles of trauma-informed care should serve as a guide for all clinicians and staff:



Ensure provider and patient collaboration by bringing individuals into the treatment process and discussing mutually agreed upon goals for treatment.



Provide care that is sensitive to the individual's racial, ethnic, and cultural background, and gender identity.

Interventions for Trauma-Informed Care

Anticipating Emotional Responses & Avoiding Re-Traumatization

- Assess for, recognize, and integrate the patient's strengths and experiences into a jointly formulated care plan.
- Utilize specific trauma-informed assessments if trauma has been identified in their life and has potential for impacting their overall health.
- Educate the health team on specific interventions needed for appropriate care.
- Empower patients/clients by providing education on simple things they can do every day to recognize how stress shows up in their bodies and help regulate their stress response system and buffer the negative impacts of toxic stress.

Interventions for Trauma-Informed Care (cont.)

- Refer patients/clients to mental health providers who are trained in evidence-based trauma-specific therapy, if necessary.
- Practice compassionate resilience to maintain provider well-being while caring for the patient/client to be able to combat compassion fatigue, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma, and related concerns.
- Staff education must be ongoing for Trauma-Informed Care compliance.
- Protective factors, such as supportive relationships with family members, a teacher, or others in the community, can help shield individuals from the effects of trauma and build resilience to help overcome adversity and confront challenges.
- Focusing on wellness and self-care are important aspects of healing from trauma.

Encouraging Balance and Routine

Balance – Creating time to do the things that make us feel happy and fulfilled.

- Each person will have a different idea of what balance looks like in their life
- How do you like to relax? What makes you feel safe?
- Balance is often affected by life events (expected and unexpected)
- Stress, illness, and *trauma* all affect balance

Routine – Establishing self-defined habits that meet our daily needs.

- Can have a positive or negative effect on our wellness
- Routines can be hard to change
- Developing healthy routines can lead to a healthier life and greater happiness
- It's never too late!

Wellness and Selfcare Planning – How to Get Started



Identify what wellness areas in your life that you could improve



Think about the ways you could improve your wellness in this area by using self-care activities



Identify resources and support to help you achieve your wellness goals



Write down and keep track of your goals and progress

Open Discussion



How have you implemented trauma-informed care practices within your organization?

Resources

- Aces Aware. (2023). *www.acesaware.org*. Retrieved from Ace Fundamentals: <https://www.acesaware.org/ace-fundamentals/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021, April). *www.cdc.gov*. Retrieved from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html
- Menschner, C., & Maul, A. (2016, April). *www.samhsa.gov*. Retrieved from Key Ingredients for Successful Trauma Informed Care Implementation: https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/childrens_mental_health/atc-whitepaper-040616.pdf

Thank You

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