

What Health Risks are Associated with ACEs?

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is the largest longitudinal study of its kind to empirically demonstrate that various types of childhood toxic stress increase the risk for physical and mental disease in adulthood. As your ACE score increases, so does the risk of disease, social and emotional problems. ACEs are very common.

Household dysfunction

Substance Abuse	27%
Parental Separation/Divorce	23%
Mental Illness	17%
Battered Mother	13%
Criminal Behavior	6%

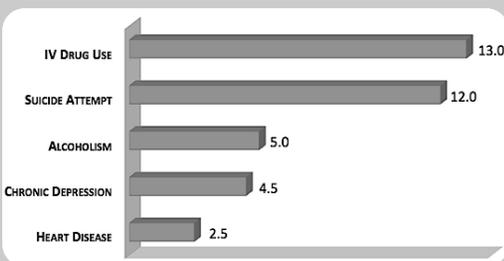
Abuse

Psychological	11%
Physical	28%
Sexual	21%

Neglect

Emotional	15%
Physical	10%

For example, with an ACE score of 4 your risk for heart disease is 2½ times greater and your risk for abusing alcohol is 5 times greater!



Learn more about the ACE study:



What's Your ACE Score?

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often ...

Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? OR Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often ...

Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? OR Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever...

Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? OR Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?

4. Did you often feel that ...

No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? OR

Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

5. Did you often feel that ...

You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? OR

Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

7. Was your mother or stepmother...

Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? OR

Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? OR

Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

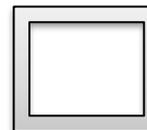
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker, alcoholic or who used street drugs?

9. Was a household member

Depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Add up the all the 10 questions that you answered as YES. This is your ACE score. Score can be 0 – 10.



How Do I Develop Resiliency?

ACEs increase our vulnerability to a range of mental and physical health problems. Resiliency protects us from these risks. We can develop resiliency to support our overall sense of wellbeing and physical health. Building our own resiliency supports the physical and emotional health of our children. How are you resilient and where do you need more support?

Relational Reward

Developing a healthy sense of relational reward is the most important way to build resilience. These questions help clarify if your connection with others is sufficiently nourishing.

- I have good friends who support me.
- I have mentors or someone who shows me the way.
- I feel secure in my close relationships.
- I am empathetic to others.
- I trust my close friends.
- My role as a caregiver/provider is important.
- I feel like I belong in my community.
- I am lovable.
- I regularly reach out those I trust for comfort when I'm distressed.
- I can ask for help.
- It is OK if some people do not like me.
- I am able to say no.

Sensory Reward

These questions help clarify if you are able to enjoy healthy sensory reward in a way the consistently restores your sense of wellbeing. We may rely too heavily on sensory reward to feel better, due to problems with self-regulation and/or our relationships.

- I have a hobby that I enjoy.
- I have a satisfying love life.
- I enjoy regular physical contact with my loved ones.
- I enjoy listening to music, singing, playing an instrument.
- I regularly enjoy moving in my body.
- I eat when I am hungry, drink when I'm thirsty, sleep when I'm tired.
- My weight is within a healthy range.
- I have few or no alcoholic drinks, 1 or less daily.
- I do not use tobacco: smoke, chew, dip
- I eat a healthy diet most days, 5 fruits/vegies.

Advanced Mind

Our advanced mind develops best when our bodies feel good and our relationships nourish us. These are the conditions that help us to develop the most human part of our brain that feels empathy toward the world and ourselves. It is our "big picture" thinking. When this part of our brain is engaged, we can tolerate life's difficulties more easily, and stay connected to others even if we're suffering.

- I practice mindfulness or meditation.
- I am creative.
- I communicate effectively with others.
- I try many different ways to solve a problem.
- I enjoy learning and seek out new knowledge.
- I am open to new ideas.
- I can usually find something to laugh about.
- I express my emotions.
- I am flexible.
- My life has meaning.
- I am a friend with myself.
- When I make plans, I usually follow through.

Self-Regulation

What is your baseline level of arousal and reactivity that you experience both in a physical (elevated heart rate, breathing, perspiration, respiration) and emotional way?

- I can calm myself down.
- I usually wake up feeling refreshed.
- I exercise 2+ times a week.
- I regularly engage in breath centered activities (yoga, tai chi, qigong, walking, running)
- I have the energy I need to do the things that are important to me

