



PARENTING FUNDAMENTALS

ACE Awareness for Prevention

Adverse Childhood Experiences



Community Counseling
Centers of Chicago

The information provided in this booklet was excerpted from:

The Ace Study
<http://acestudy.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/ace/index.htm>

It is my hope that this booklet on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) will help you better understand your own childhood experience with both its positive and painful memories. After taking the ACE survey you may find that you have many ACEs. If this happens, know there is hope and help not only to heal, but also to replace the cycle of harmful parenting with a more nurturing and empathetic model. You have already taken the first step. Congratulations!

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What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

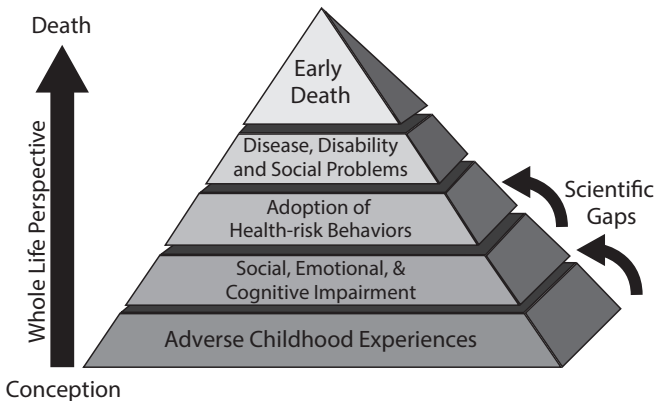
An Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) is the experience of any type of abuse or neglect during childhood. An ACE could be physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or witnessing domestic violence or substance abuse. Essentially, the more ACEs children have during their childhoods the more they are at risk for immediate and future danger to their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

The ACE Study was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the health care company Kaiser Permanente. Between 1995 and 1997, over 17,000 people completed surveys asking questions about abuse, neglect or other family dysfunction they may have experienced as children. The surveys also inquired about their health status and behaviors. As a result, we are now finding that traumatic emotional experiences that have occurred in childhood later turn into legitimate disease.

The ACE Pyramid

The pyramid represents the framework for how ACEs ultimately affect a child's life from conception until death. ACEs occur at the beginning of a child's life and set the groundwork for life-long risks and poor decisions and behaviors.



Types of ACEs

The three ACE categories include:

- Abuse: physical, psychological and/or sexual. Examples of abuse include hitting, spanking, shaking, name calling, yelling, swearing, etc.
- Neglect: emotional and/or physical. Examples include a child not being fed or not being fed properly, not receiving hugs, a lack of a warm environment or clothes, etc.
- Household Dysfunction: substance abuse in home, parental separation/divorce, mental illness, spousal abuse/battered mother, criminal behavior, incarcerated family member or loss of a parent.

Usually, children will have more than one ACE occur throughout their childhood. According to the study, almost two-thirds reported at least one ACE. More than one in five people reported three or more ACEs. These multiple ACEs increase risk factors.

What are some risks linked to ACEs?

The more ACEs children have, the greater the risk of:

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease (IHD)
- Liver disease
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Smoking
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity

Important Facts to Remember

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are common. ACEs tend to happen in multiples, rather than isolated incidents. For example, a parent who is abusive may also be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The ACE score can help determine the negative impact on a child's development. The ACE score has a strong correlation with problems that can occur during someone's lifespan. Just like the ACEs themselves, the problems that result occur in multiples. Or, a problem may lead to more severe problems. For example, depression can influence alcohol or drug abuse which can cause or worsen other physical health problems.

How Do ACEs Lead to Long-Term Health Problems or Early Death?

People tend to develop behaviors as a way of coping with their traumatic or adverse experiences. The study implies that it is these coping mechanisms that link negative childhood experiences with health problems and early death. For example, drinking, smoking, drug use and adverse sexual behaviors are all forms of coping mechanisms. People who have had a number of ACEs may feel depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem. People will sometimes smoke to minimize those negative feelings.

While smoking may make someone feel better at first, we know it contributes to different types of cancer, emphysema, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), heart disease and often, early death. In a pregnant woman, smoking can also have a negative effect on the health of an unborn baby.

How to Find Your ACE score

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

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

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

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

Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

or

Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

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

Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

4. Did you often or very 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?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

5. Did you often or very often feel that?

You did not 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?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

7. Was your mother or stepmother:

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

or

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

or

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

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

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

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes No If yes, enter 1 _____

Now add up your “Yes” answers: _____ This is your ACE Score.

What does your ACE score mean?

The ACE Score determines how many types of traumatic experiences a person had under the age of 18.

The types include:

- Recurrent physical abuse
- Recurrent emotional abuse
- Contact sexual abuse
- An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- An incarcerated household member
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
- Mother is treated violently
- One or no parents
- Emotional or physical neglect

A score of “0” means that none of these types of ACEs occurred. A score of “9” means that all of the types of experiences occurred. The higher your score the more likely it is that you experienced mental, emotional or behavioral problems resulting from the Adverse Childhood Experiences you had as a child. Without intent, you could be causing Adverse Childhood Experiences for your child.

Note: A longer version of this questionnaire can be found at www.cdc.gov/ace/questionnaires.htm.

Resources

To prevent ACEs from happening to your child or to find help in healing from your own ACEs contact:

Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)

4740 N Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 769-0205
www.c4chicago.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

(800) 799-SAFE

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.aa.org

ChildHelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453)

Illinois Poison Control

1-800-222-1222

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Helpline

1-800-950-NAMI

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Hopeline

1-800-622-2255

National Runaway Switchboard

1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Youth Crisis Hotline

1-800-442-HOPE (4673)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline

888-293-2080

Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago

312-341-1070

TDD 312-265-2019

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-252-2873

About Parenting Fundamentals

Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4) established Parenting Fundamentals to promote the social and emotional development of children, prevent child abuse, strengthen families and improve school readiness and achievement. Since 1996 Parenting Fundamentals has helped over 5,000 parents raising more than 10,000 children in the Chicago area.

Included in the National Registry for Evidence-based Programs and Practices, Parenting Fundamentals is a multi-component program that includes group-based behavioral parenting education and training sessions, home visits, and comprehensive referral services. It consists of an eight- or 10-week series of classes, offered in English and Spanish, and is designed to provide parents with instruction in positive parenting skills, support, personal consultations, and referral information. Parenting Fundamentals offers four different curricula designed for parents with children ages 0-3, 4-7, 7-12, and 12-16.

Parents who graduate from the program consistently demonstrate:

- more knowledge of child development, communication skills, problem-solving skills, and non-violent discipline strategies;
- more enriching and supportive home environments for their children;
- more well-adjusted children as measured by communication, depression and attention scores.

For more information, contact Katharine Bensinger at 773.765.0829 or katharine.bensinger@c4chicago.org.

About Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)

Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4) is a leading community mental health agency in Illinois providing mental health services, crisis intervention, and substance use disorder treatment to more than 10,000 at-risk children, adults and families each year. It also offers evidence-based public education programs that improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and the community.

C4's innovative, compassionate and culturally sensitive services reflect best practices in mental health and behavioral health care. Through its continuum of care, C4 provides people with the skills necessary to improve the health and quality of their lives.

Accredited by The Joint Commission, the nation's largest accrediting body in health care, C4 is the recipient of numerous national awards, including the 2011 Science and Service Award from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

For more information, visit c4chicago.org.

Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)
4740 N. Clark
Chicago, IL 60640

773-769-0205 Crisis Line and All Services

Parenting Fundamentals



Patience – caring for children is hard work. It requires you to have a lot of patience and good will.



Awareness – it is important to know your reactions, and those of your children, to all types of situations. This will help you understand how to encourage good emotions and behaviors, and prevent negative ones.



Role Modeling – children learn from what adults say and do. An effective way to develop positive behaviors and skills in the child is to show them yourself.



Esteem – one responsibility of parents is to develop healthy, confident children. This takes a confident parent who has good self-esteem.



Nurturing – giving a lot of love and attention to your children helps them grow into confident and caring persons.



Timely and Consistent – parenting requires you to be timely and consistent in your beliefs and actions. You want to give timely and consistent messages on acceptable behaviors. You also want to be timely and consistent with your discipline.



Self-care – for you to be the best parent you can be, you need to be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy. This means you need to take care of yourself and take time just for you.

