

# A Look Into the Trauma Experienced in America's First Trauma-Informed Community

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Peace<sub>4</sub>Tarpon  
TRAUMA INFORMED | BUILDING RESILIENCY

CONNECT • INFORM • TRANSFORM • HEAL

# Background



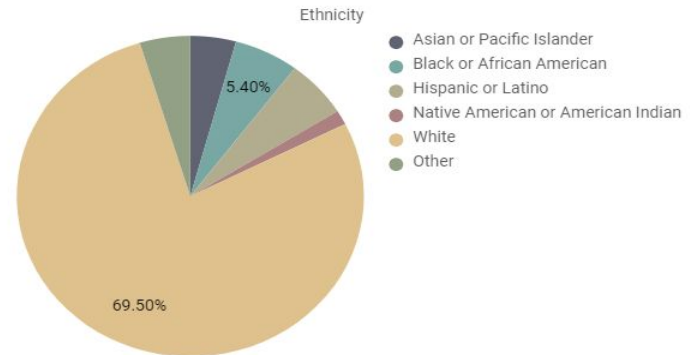
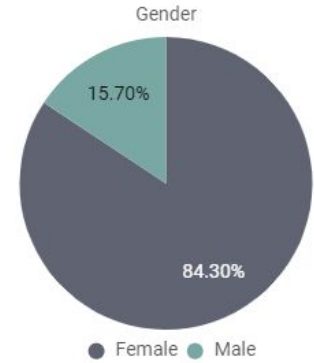
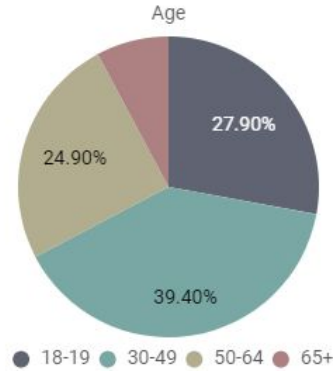
A study conducted by Felitti et al. (1998) sought to determine the effects of childhood household dysfunction and abuse on health outcomes in adults. A result of this was the creation of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire.

From this research, Peace4Tarpon, a trauma-informed and resilience-building initiative was created to educate the community around ACEs and reduce the negative impact of ACEs on children and adults. The data presented is a result of two years of surveys measuring demographic information along with ACEs of individuals who encounter Peace4Tarpon.

This information is compared with the 2010 ACEs module which was included as part of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey completed by individuals in Washington DC, Hawaii, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. Evidenced-based outcomes in adulthood of the ACEs are presented as well.

# Sample Demographics

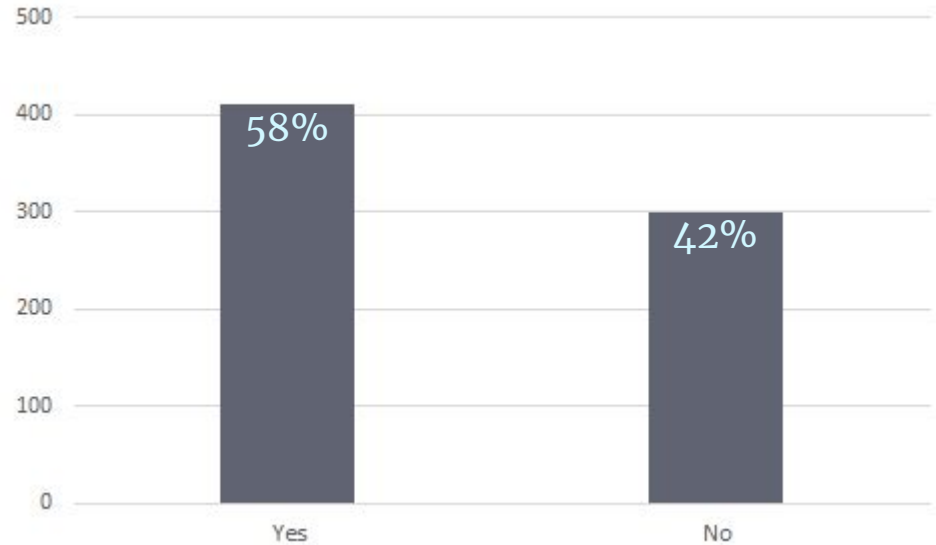
Eight-hundred and seventy-seven people began the survey with seven-hundred and nine completing all ten of the ACEs questions. Only those participants' data were used in this analysis. Not all demographic information had been completed by those participants.



# ACE #1

According to the Adverse Childhood Experience Module on the 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), 35% of people report experiencing emotional abuse as a child. This number is the same for men and women. Exposure to this kind of trauma puts children at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, suicide attempts, drug use, risky sexual behavior and mental health disorders in adulthood (Norman et al., 2012).

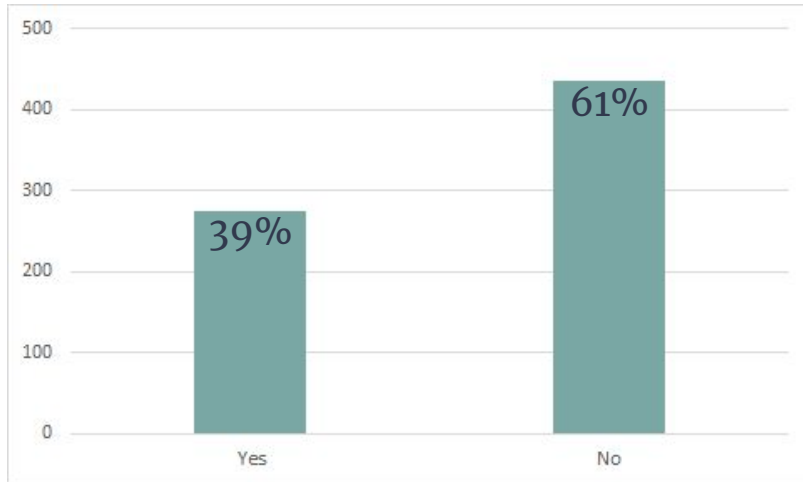
Prior to your 18th birthday, did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?



Peace4Tarpon Respondents

# ACE #2

Prior to your 18th birthday, 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?



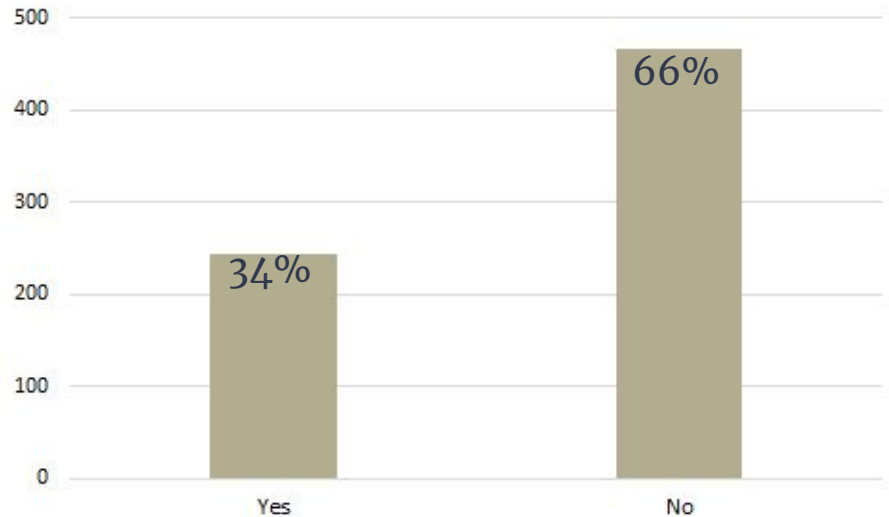
Peace4Tarpon Respondents

The results of the 2010 BRFSS revealed that 12.9% of adults reported being physically abused as a child. Evidence from a longitudinal study demonstrates the possible outcomes of physical abuse like increases in depression, anxiety, anger, and medical diagnoses (Springer, Sheridan, Kuo, & Carnes, 2007). These diagnoses include allergies, arthritis, high blood pressure, and issues with circulation, among others.

# ACE #3

Childhood sexual abuse, one of the hardest ACEs to discuss, was reported in 10% of the individuals who completed the 2010 BRFSS. Survivors of this abuse more frequently report problems with gastrointestinal health, gynecologic or reproductive health, pain, cardiopulmonary symptoms, and obesity than those who do not report abuse (Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2009). Overall, they report poorer general health than others.

**Prior to your 18th birthday, 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?**

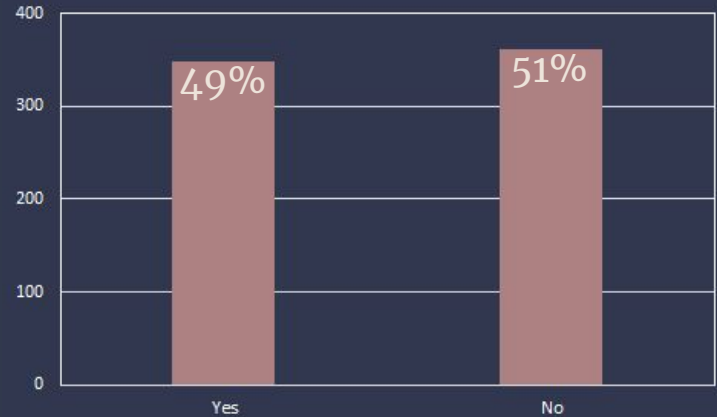


Peace4Tarpon Respondents

## ACE #4

Prior to your 18th birthday, 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?

There were no questions on the 2010 BRFSS regarding childhood neglect. However, the original ACEs study by Felitti et al. (1998) found that almost 15% of respondents had experienced emotional neglect as a child. While the risk is not as high for victims of neglect, these individuals are often diagnosed with depressive disorders and are involved in risky sexual behaviors as an adult (Norman et al., 2012).

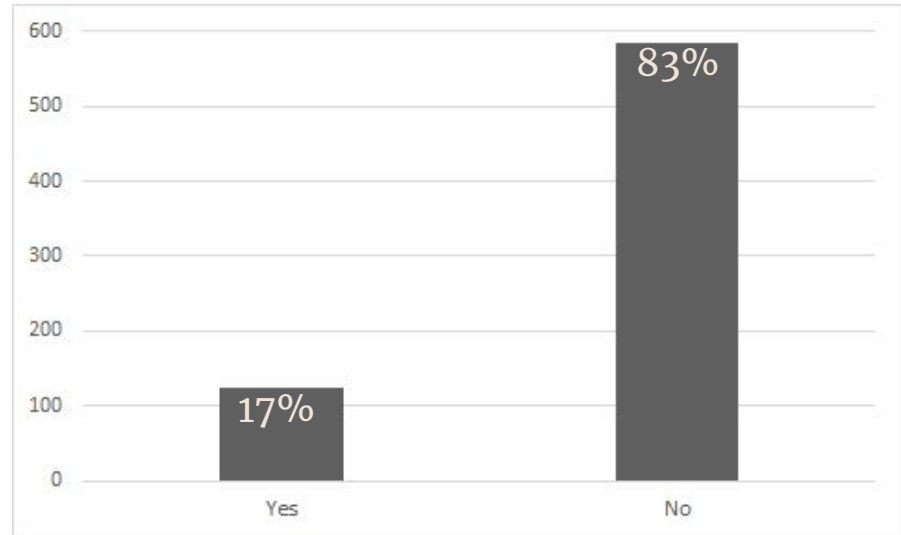


Peace4Tarpon Respondents

## ACE #5

Prior to your 18th birthday, did you often or very 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?

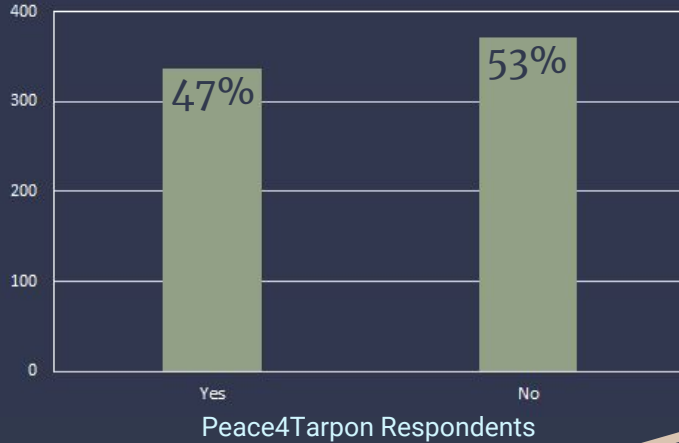
Physical neglect was also measured on Felitti et al. (1998) survey. Nearly 10% of participants reported being neglected physically, with more men reporting this than women. These adults are more likely to report their health as fair or poor and engage in alcohol and marijuana misuse along with getting into physical altercations (Hussey, Chang, & Kotch, 2006).



Peace4Tarpon Respondents



# ACE #6

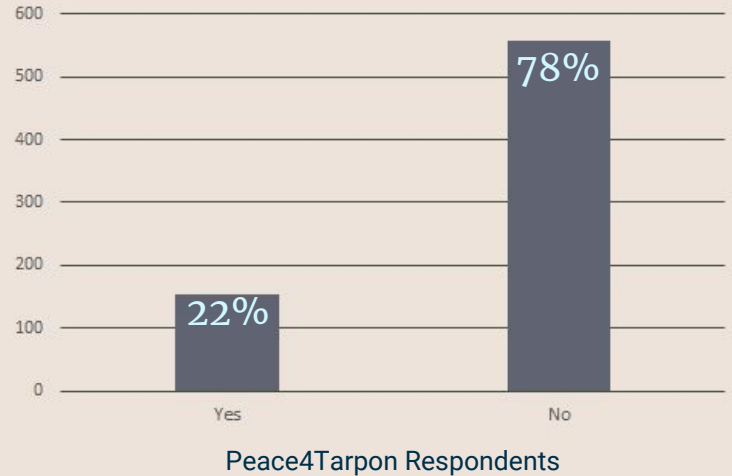


Prior to your 18th birthday, was a biological parent ever lost to you through divorce, abandonment, or other reason?

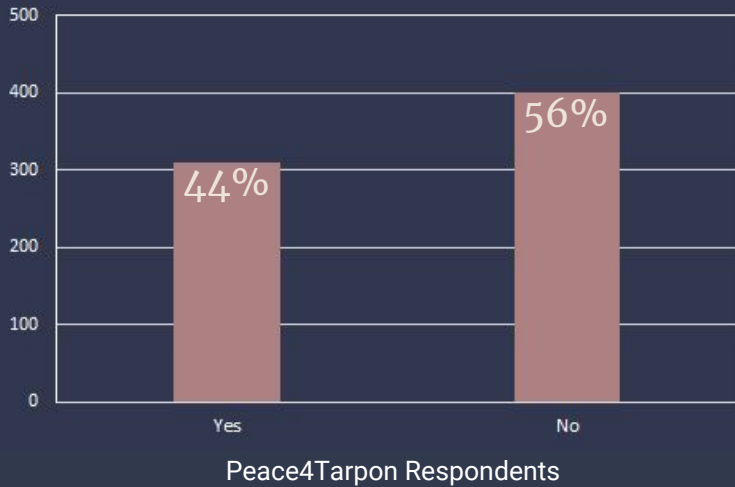
Roughly 23% of adults who completed the 2010 ACEs Module of the BRFSS reported parental separation or divorce. Studies have found that the consequences of this later in adulthood can include low life satisfaction, divorce, low occupational prestige, and poorer physical health compared to children who have continuously married parents (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Prior to your 18th birthday, 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 over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

## ACE #7



BRFSS 2010 findings reveal that 15% of children have witnessed interpersonal violence in their home or between family members. Children who witness interpersonal violence at a young age are 2.6 times more likely to become an adult perpetrator than those who do not witness similar violence (Roberts, Gilman, Fitzmaurice, Decker, & Koenen, 2010). As children, they had 4 to 7 times the prevalence of abuse and neglect, and 3 times the prevalence of living with someone in the home who has substance abuse issues.



## ACE #8

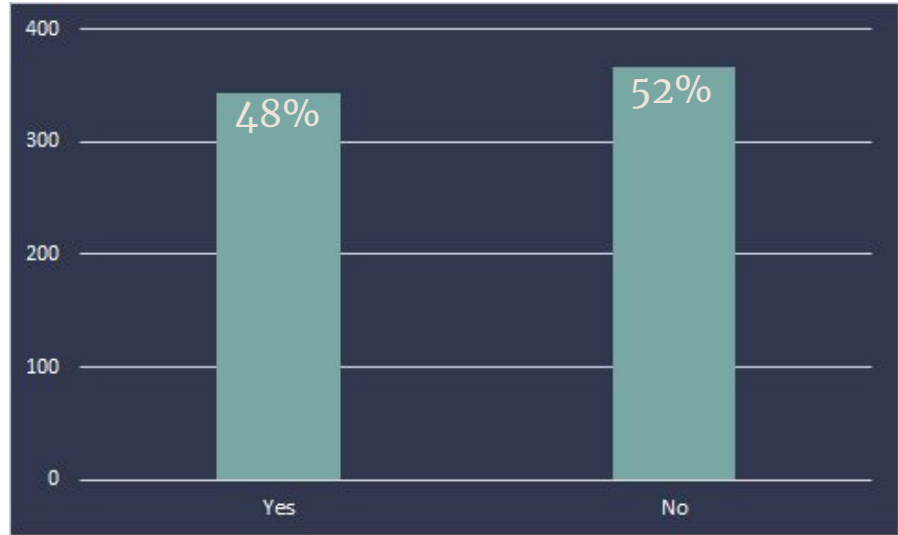
Prior to your 18th birthday, did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?

Other than emotional abuse, household substance abuse was the most frequently reported ACE, with 25% of 2010 BRFSS respondents confirming that someone in their childhood home misused alcohol or other drugs. Children who grow up with at least 1 alcohol-abusing parent are at a 30%-50% increased risk of depression and are 3 to 4 times more likely to develop alcoholism as adults than children who have non-alcoholic parents (Anda et al., 2002).

# ACE #9

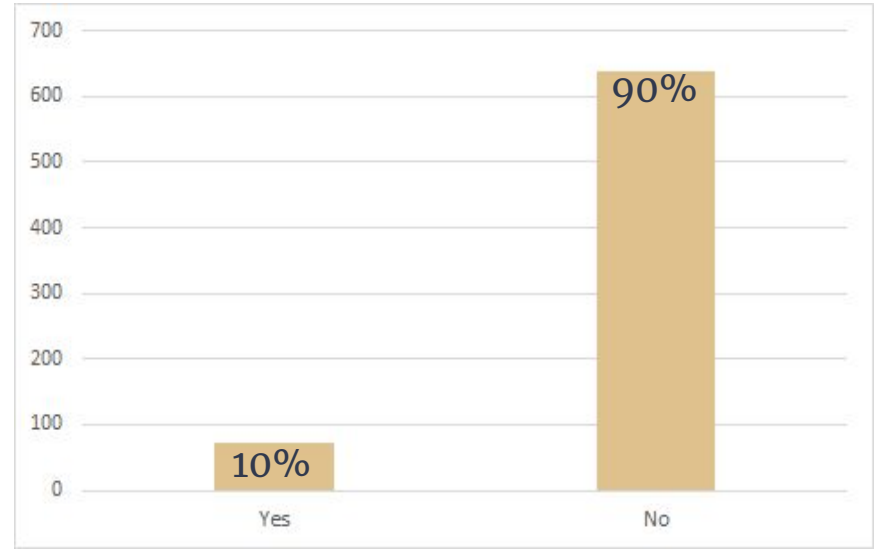
Living with a person who had a mental illness or had attempted suicide was reported by 16% of the adults who completed the ACEs Module of the BRFSS. The odds of ever attempting suicide as an adult are 3.3 times more if one lived with someone with mental illness as a child than if no one in the home experienced mental illness (Dube et al., 2001).

Prior to your 18th birthday, was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?



Peace4Tarpon Respondents

Nearly 6% of the participants in the 2010 BRFSS reported experiencing an incarcerated household member. One study revealed that for individuals aged 21-34, the odds of being incarcerated are 1.35 times more if the father was incarcerated and 1.51 times more if the mother was incarcerated (Guis, 2016). Interestingly, about 4% of these individuals surveyed were arrested at some point during the survey period.

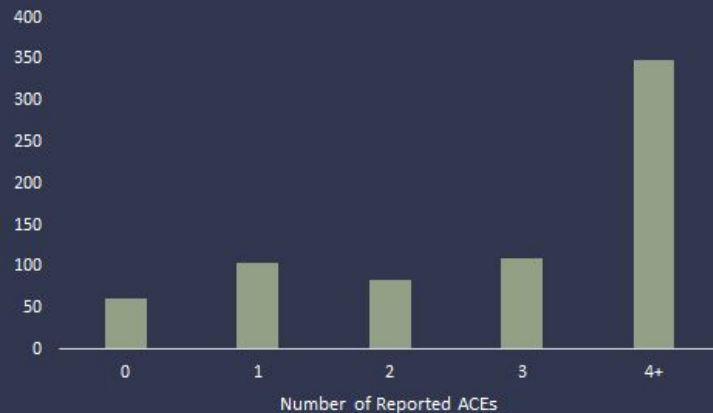


Peace4Tarpon Respondents

**ACE #10:** Prior to your 18th birthday, did a household member go to prison?

# 49%

Of participants surveyed reported 4 or more ACEs compared with 14.3% of those who completed the 2010 Adverse Childhood Experiences module of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey.



# Limitations



The data collected through Peace4Tarpon outreach is not a randomized population survey like the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, which is representative of the general population. The presented data is from a convenience sample of individuals around Tarpon Springs, Florida. Because of their involvement with Peace4Tarpon, the respondents may have been more aware of and had experienced more ACEs than the general population as a whole. The convenient nature of the sample could explain why the prevalence of ACEs is much higher in this data than a national survey like the BRFSS.

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