

# Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Institute

## Adverse Childhood Experiences

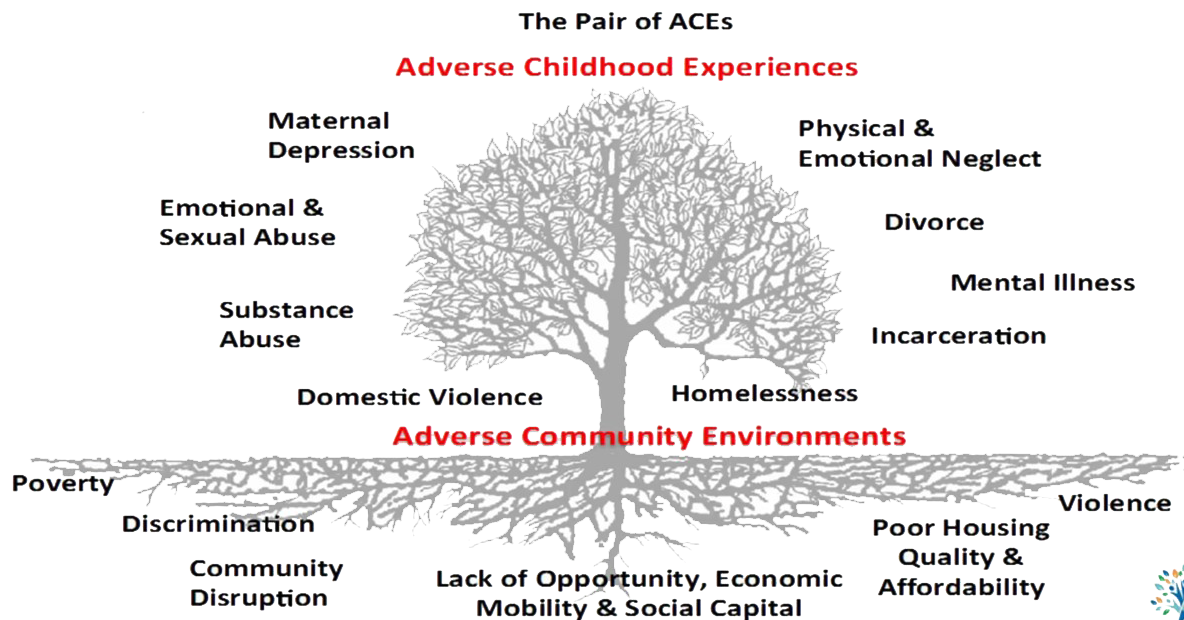
Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential.

- Systemic and institutional racism
- Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, religion, learning differences, or disabilities
- Generational and cultural trauma
- Bereavement or survivorship
- Adult responsibilities as a child
- Mental illness in the household
- Divorce
- Emotional or physical neglect
- Violence in the home or community
- Having a family member attempt or die by suicide
- Substance use problems in the household
- Instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

**ACEs are common.** About 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported they had experienced at least one type of ACE before age 18, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.

**Some children are at greater risk than others.** Women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for experiencing four or more types of ACEs.

**ACEs are costly.** The economic and social costs to families, communities, and society totals hundreds of billions of dollars each year. A 10% reduction in ACEs in North America could equate to an annual savings of \$56 billion.



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Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce many health conditions. For example, by preventing ACEs, up to 1.9 million heart disease cases and 21 **million** depression cases could have been potentially avoided.

Strengthen economic supports to families

- Strengthening household financial security
- Family-friendly work policies

Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity

- Public education campaigns
- Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment
- Bystander approaches
- Men and boys as allies in prevention

Ensure a strong start for children

- Early childhood home visitation
- High-quality child care
- Preschool enrichment with family engagement

Teach skills

- Social-emotional learning
- Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs
- Parenting skills and family relationship approaches

Connect youth to caring adults and activities

- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs

Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms

- Enhanced primary care
- Victim-centered services
- Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs
- Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence
- Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders

Raising awareness of ACEs can help:

- Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

