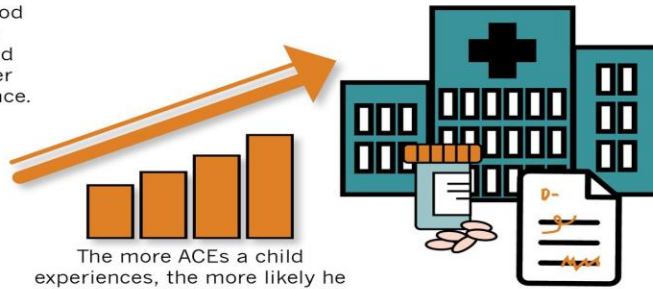


WHAT ARE ACES?

AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO TOXIC STRESS?

“ACEs” stands for “Adverse Childhood Experiences.” These experiences can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence.



The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely he or she is to suffer from things like heart disease and diabetes, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life.

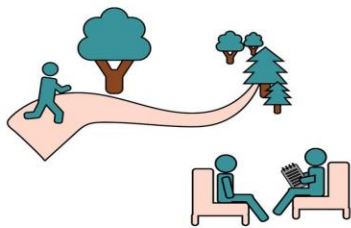
TOXIC STRESS EXPLAINS HOW ACES “GET UNDER THE SKIN.”

Experiencing many ACEs, as well as things like racism and community violence, without supportive adults, can cause what’s known as **toxic stress**. This excessive activation of the stress-response system can lead to long-lasting wear-and-tear on the body and brain.



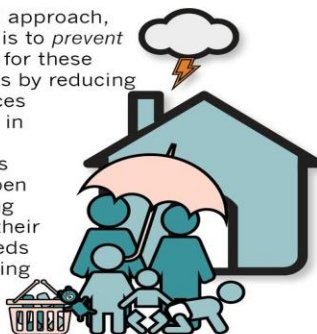
The effect would be similar to revving a car engine for days or weeks at a time.

WE CAN REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF ACES AND TOXIC STRESS.



For those who have experienced ACEs, there are a range of possible responses that can help, including therapeutic sessions with mental health professionals, meditation, physical exercise, spending time in nature, and many others.

The ideal approach, however, is to *prevent* the need for these responses by reducing the sources of stress in people’s lives. This can happen by helping to meet their basic needs or providing other services.



Likewise, fostering strong, **responsive relationships** between children and their caregivers, and helping children and adults build **core life skills**, can help to buffer a child from the effects of **toxic stress**.

ACEs affect people at all income and social levels, and can have serious, costly impact across the lifespan.

No one who’s experienced significant adversity (or many ACEs) is irreparably damaged,

though we need to acknowledge trauma’s effects on their lives. By reducing families’ sources of stress, providing children and adults with responsive relationships, and strengthening the core life skills we all need to adapt and thrive, **we can prevent and counteract lasting harm.**

The most important thing to remember is that the ACE score is meant as a guideline: If you experienced other types of toxic stress over months or years, then those would likely increase your risk of health consequences, depending on the positive childhood experiences you had (see below).

Prior to your 18th birthday:

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?
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?
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?
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?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
5. 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?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
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 over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide? No___If Yes, enter 1 __
10. Did a household member go to prison?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _ This is your ACE Score
