

ADOPTING A FAMILY APPROACH

Short Guide Series

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



What are ACE's?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events occurring to children at any point before the age of 18.

The Ten Adverse Childhood Experiences

There are ten ACEs; five which relate directly to the child and five which relate to the parents / household.

<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents / household</u>
Physical abuse	Incarcerated household member
Sexual abuse	Parental separation or divorce
Emotional abuse	Household mental illness
Physical neglect	Household substance misuse
Emotional neglect	Mother treated violently

Why are they important?

ACEs have been found to have lifelong impacts on health and behaviour. They are relevant to all sectors and involve anyone from any area of society. When children are exposed to adverse and stressful experiences, it can have a long-lasting impact on their ability to think, interact with others and on their learning.

Evidence shows that ACEs can increase an individual's risks of developing health harming behaviours. These behaviours then lead to an increased risk of poor physical and mental health later in life (including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression and anxiety) as well as negative social outcomes, such as domestic violence, low levels of education, a criminal record / incarceration, and potentially early death. Where ACEs occur in family settings, there is a high risk of intergenerational transmission, contributing to a cycle of disadvantage and health inequity.

Adverse childhood experiences do not define people nor do they solely determine a life outcome; they are simply a tool to understand the potential risks an individual or population may face.



Where can I find out more?

There is a wealth of research available online, including comprehensive studies undertaken in Wales and Scotland. Here are a few publications which illustrate the research behind ACEs:

This video provides some further information on the medical and health research that support the concept of ACE's:

- [Ted Talks—Nadine Burke Harris, How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime](#)

Public Health Wales have developed this film to explain ACEs:

- [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) \(Wales\)](#)

Public Health Wales have published these helpful infographics on ACEs:

- [Infographic 1](#)
- [Infographic 2](#)

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