

# brave fACES

## Adverse Childhood Experiences

Brave fACES utilizes research conducted by Kaiser Permanente and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to implement strategies to positively impact social determinants of health. The landmark ACEs study measures 10 potentially traumatic experiences that may occur during childhood. These experiences are categorized into three buckets: abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), neglect (physical, emotional) and household dysfunction (mental illness, intimate partner violence, divorce, incarcerated relative, substance abuse). Expanded ACEs research now includes exposure to toxic stress and other types of trauma, such as systemic racism and poverty.

Early intervention is critical for children with ACEs, as addressing complex trauma at its onset contributes to a healthy and productive adult life. 90% of a child's brain is developed by the age of 3, and is influenced heavily by early experiences. ACEs research suggests a striking 20-year life expectancy difference between children who receive intervention to treat their chronic stress and trauma and children who go without treatment. Brave fACES exists to prevent ACEs and equip the community with the knowledge and tools to respond effectively to trauma.

*National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, 2020*

## The Impact of ACEs



### CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS\*

Coronary heart disease • Stroke • Asthma  
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)  
Cancer • Kidney Disease • Diabetes • Obesity



### MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS\*

Depression • Anxiety  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



### HEALTH RISK BEHAVIORS\*

Smoking • Heavy drinking or alcoholism  
Substance misuse • Physical inactivity • Risky  
sexual behavior • Suicidal thoughts & behavior

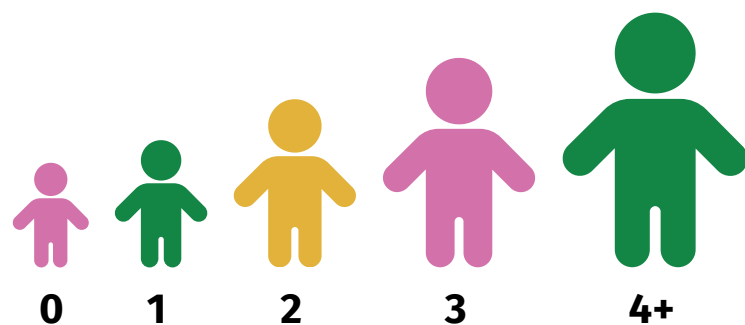


### SOCIAL OUTCOMES\*

Lack of health insurance • Unemployment •  
Less than a high school diploma or  
equivalent education

**\*Not an exhaustive list**

### MORE ACEs = INCREASED RISK



### 4 OR MORE ACEs

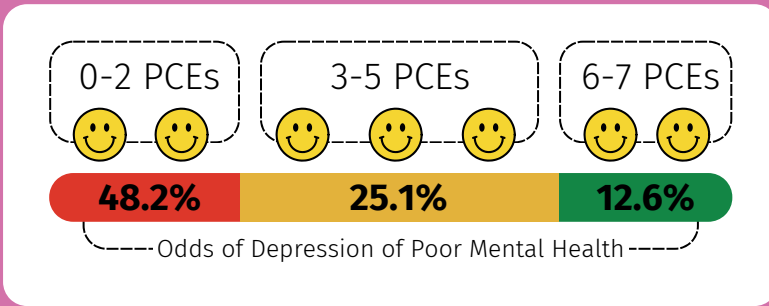
- 3x the levels of lung disease and adult smoking
- 11x the level of intravenous drug abuse
- 14x the number of suicide attempts
- 4.5x more likely to develop depression
- 2x the level of liver disease

*Adapted from: Violence Prevention Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

# Positive Childhood Experiences CAN BUFFER ADVERSITY

Positive Childhood Experiences stem from safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, and have the power to buffer or protect children from traumatic events, toxic stress, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). These positive experiences can happen both in and outside of the home. Parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, community members, and neighbors can create environments, experiences, and relationships that allow children to feel protected and cared for.

## The Impact of Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs):



There is a growing body of research that states PCEs can be statistically linked to positive emotional and mental health in adults.

Increasing positive childhood experiences builds resilience in kids who have experienced trauma, and those who may in the future. The relationship between PCEs in childhood and positive mental health in adults is dose-responsive, meaning the more positive experiences that individuals have, the more likely they are to report few or no issues of adult mental health challenges.

**The more PCEs a child has, the more likely they are to be healthy and resilient.**

Individuals with 3-5 PCEs have a 50% lower likelihood of experiencing depression or poor mental health in adulthood compared to those with 0-2 PCEs. This protective effect is even greater for individuals with 6-7 PCEs, who have a 72% lower likelihood of adulthood depression or poor mental health compared to those with the fewest PCEs.

## Positive Childhood Experiences:



Ability to talk with family about feelings.



Sense that family is supportive during difficult times.



Enjoyment of participation in community traditions.



Feeling a sense of belonging in school.



Feeling supported by friends.



Having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care.



Feeling safe and protected by an adult in the home.

Bethell C, Jones J, Gombojav N, Linkenbach J, Sege R. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2019;173(11):e193007. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3007

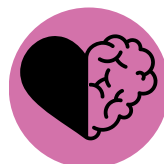
## Who should become ACEs Aware:



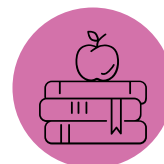
Parents & Caregivers



Healthcare Providers



Mental Health Professionals



Early Childhood/  
Education Providers



Community Members

# Strategies for PREVENTION

ACEs and their correlated negative health outcomes are preventable. Creating environments where children and families feel safe and supported can help prevent or mitigate the harms of ACEs. The CDC has identified six (6) evidence-based strategies that are key to prevention efforts.



## Ensure a strong start for children

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



## Strengthen economic supports to families

- Strengthen household financial security
- Family-friendly workplace policies



## Connect youth to caring adults and activities

- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs



## Teach skills

- Emotional intelligence development
- Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs
- Parenting skills and family relationship approaches



## Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity

- Public education campaigns
- Trauma-informed legislative initiatives
- Men & boys as allies in prevention



## Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms

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

*Adapted From: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)  
Prevention Resource for Action  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

