UNDERSTANDING
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Building Self-Healing Communities
Presenter

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Early Adversity Increases Physical, Mental, Behavioral Problems, Scientists Report

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Kaiser Permanente Study

Over 17,000 study participants

The ACE Study confirms, with scientific evidence, that adversity early in life increases physical, mental and behavioral problems later in life.

Dr. Robert Anda & Dr. Vincent Felitti
Investigators
HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM

Nervous system ORCHESTRATES BODY FUNCTIONS & PERCEPTIONS

Neuroscience HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHY A C E s ARE SO POWERFUL

- Brain
- Spinal Cord
- Peripheral Nerves
- Single Nerve Cell
SYNAPTIC DENSITY

At Birth  Elementary Age  Puberty

Single Neuron
VIDEO: Change the First Five Years and You Change Everything

http://viewpure.com/GbSp88PBe9E?start=0&end=0
ADAPTATIONS VS EXPECTATIONS

WHEN BIOLOGY collides WITH SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS we run into TROUBLE
FINDING MORE CONNECTIONS

how multiple forms of childhood adversity can affect many important PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS
Adverse Childhood Experiences ARE COMMON

**Household Dysfunction**
- Substance Abuse: 27%
- Parental Sep/Divorce: 23%
- Mental Illness: 17%
- Battered Mothers: 13%
- Criminal Behavior: 6%

**Neglect**
- Emotional: 15%
- Physical: 10%

**Abuse**
- Emotional: 11%
- Physical: 28%
- Sexual: 21%

TOTAL 10 ACEs
ACEs in Maryland

- CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
  - World's largest continuously conducted telephone health survey, tracks health risks in the U.S.
  - Most recent data from 2015
    - Data not collected for every ACE category
ACEs in Harford County

**Most Common ACEs: Harford County**

- Emotional Abuse: 36%
- Separation / Divorce: 29%
- Domestic Violence: 24%

**Prevalence of ACEs**

- **0 ACEs**:
  - Maryland: 40.2%
  - Harford County: 41%

- **1-2 ACEs**:
  - Maryland: 35.7%
  - Harford County: 32%

- **3+ ACEs**:
  - Maryland: 24.1%
  - Harford County: 27.1%
ACEs are Highly Interrelated:
Where One ACE Occurs, There are Usually Others

87% of one type of ACE occur together, followed by a second type of ACE.

ONE type of ACE

2nd type of ACE

© 2015 ACE Interface
ACE Score = Number of ACE Categories

ACE Scores Reliably Predict Challenges During the Life Course
“The ACE Score is Not!

-A diagnostic tool

-A screening tool

-A predictor at the individual level

Or

-A fun quiz”
“The ACE Score is....

A History tool

A communication tool to comfortably talk about life experiences

Becoming part of a common language

A gateway to empathy, compassion, and healing”

Dr. Robert Anda, Co-Principal Investigator, The ACE Study
ACE Score and Health Problems

% with Health Problems

Dose-Response Relationship

0 ACE  1 ACE  2 ACEs  3 ACEs  4 ACEs  <5 ACEs
ACEs, Smoking and Lung Disease

% with Health Problems

Early Smoking Initiation | Current Smoking | COPD

ACE Score
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more
Anxiety
Depression
Difficulty Concentrating
SMOKING
What is the story of your life?
Video: ACEs Through a Lifetime

https://vimeo.com/189604325
## ACE Attributable Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Poor Mental Health</th>
<th>Health &amp; Social Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>Frequent mental distress</td>
<td>Fair or poor health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heavy drinking</td>
<td>Sleep disturbances</td>
<td>Life dissatisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>Nervousness</td>
<td>Health-related limits to quality of life</td>
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<td>Risk of AIDS</td>
<td>MH problem requiring medication</td>
<td>Disability that impedes daily functioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking</td>
<td>Emotional problems restrict activities</td>
<td>Don’t complete secondary education</td>
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<td>painkillers for</td>
<td>Serious &amp; persistent mental illness</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
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<td>History of adult homelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disease</td>
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<td>Cardiovascular</td>
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<td>Cancer</td>
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<td>Diabetes</td>
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<td>Auto immune</td>
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<td>COPD</td>
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<td>Ischemic heart disease</td>
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<td>Liver disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intergenerational ACE Transmission</td>
<td>Mental Illness</td>
<td>Fair or poor health</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drugs or Alcohol Problem</td>
<td>Life dissatisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple divorces, separations</td>
<td>Health-related limits to quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victim of family violence</td>
<td>Disability that impedes daily functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult incarceration</td>
<td>Don’t complete secondary education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Health & Social Problems
- Fair or poor health
- Life dissatisfaction
- Health-related limits to quality of life
- Disability that impedes daily functioning
- Don’t complete secondary education
- Unemployment
- History of adult homelessness
ACEs are Common, Interrelated, Powerful

High ACE Scores in Population
Increased Risk of Multiple Health and Social Problems
Intergenerational Transmission of ACEs
Population Attributable Risk

- Law & Justice
  - Incarceration: 61%
  - IV Drugs: 78%
  - Drunk Driving: 45%
  - Victim Intimate Partner Violence: 62%

- Workforce
  - Out of Work > 1 year: 20%
  - Worker Injury: 43%
  - ≥ 15 of 30 Days Disturbed Work-Ill Health: 41%
  - ≥ 15 of 30 Days Disturbed Work-Emotional Problems: 69%

- Safety
  - No Satisfaction with Neighborhood: 59%
  - Serious & Persistent Mental Illness: 69%

Civic Engagement

Controls: gender, age, income, education, race-ethnicity
Core Protective Systems

“Nurturing the healthy development of these protective systems affords the most important preparation or ‘inoculation’ for overcoming potential threats and adversities in human development. Similarly, damage or destruction of these systems has dire consequences for the positive adaptive capacity of individuals.”

*Ann Masten, 2009*
Video: Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes: A Theory of Change

http://viewpure.com/urU-a_FsS5Y?start=0&end=0
Community Capacity Development

1. Leadership Expansion
2. Coming Together
3. Shared Learning
4. Results-Oriented Decisions
5. Leadership Expansion
6. Coming Together
7. Shared Learning
8. Results-Oriented Decisions
Trauma in children

Turns off the learning switch!
Results Oriented Decision Making: Data

Not Safe at Home
Not Welcome at School

Among Adjudicated Youth with High ACE Scores, 85% were first suspended from school in second grade.
Changing our perspectives to look through a trauma-informed lens

“What is wrong with you?”

versus

“What happened to you?”

We have the power to shift the dynamics that lead to high ACE scores.
Thanks for coming!
Use your phone’s camera/scanner app below

For PDF copies of handout(s):

To complete the ACE presentation evaluation online:

To request an ACE Interface training, please visit:
https://www.familytreemdn.org/programs/pro--public-training/ace-initiative/