Building Resilience by Addressing Root Causes of Complex Problems

A presentation for The Resiliency Summit
April 28, 2020
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

1998 CDC-Kaiser Study

Found correlation between 10 childhood experiences and specific health outcomes
The three types of ACEs include:

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Relative
- Mother treated violently
- Substance Abuse
- Divorce
Some Key findings of the ACEs Research

- **ACEs** significantly increase risk of serious health consequences, including 9 of the 10 leading causes of death.
- **ACEs** are highly prevalent. 61.7% of adults have experienced at least one **ACE** and one in six, or 16.7%, have experienced four or more **ACEs**.
- There are many individual **ACEs**, as well as **Adverse Community Experiences** like violence, bullying, racism and other systemic and historic trauma.
- **ACEs** affect all communities.
ACEs and Co-Occurring Problems

Health & Social Problems:
- Panic Reactions
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Hallucinations
- Sleep Disturbances
- Severe Obesity
- Pain
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Illicit Drug Use
- IV Drug Use
- Early Intercourse
- Promiscuity
- Sexual Dissatisfaction
- Amnesia (Childhood)
- Problems with Anger
- Perpetration of Family Violence

Affect Regulation
Somatic Issues
Substance Use
Sexuality
Memory
Arousal
Impact of ACEs on Adult Health

People with **4 or more ACEs** are:

- 3 x as likely to have chronic lower respiratory disease
- 2 to 2 ½ x as likely to have a stroke, cancer, or heart disease
- 1 ½ x as likely to have diabetes
- 11 x as likely to have Alzheimer’s disease
- Live less long: People with 6 or more ACEs have a life expectancy that is 19 years shorter than individuals with none.
% that ACEs contributes to these issues:

- Disability days: 52%
- Current depression: 54%
- Domestic violence: 52%
- Promiscuity: 48%
- IV drug abuse: 78%
- Life dissatisfaction: 67%
- Alcoholism: 65%
- Hopelessness: 43%
- Suicide attempt: 58%
- Drug abuse: 50%
What adversity does to the brain and body

- Stress response
- Chronic, unmitigated, duration
- Changes the brain and body
- Adaptations in behaviors
- Disease
Different Types of Stress

**POSITIVE STRESS**
Mild/moderate and short-lived stress response necessary for healthy development

**TOLERABLE STRESS**
More severe stress response but limited in duration which allows for recovery

**TOXIC STRESS**
Extreme, frequent, or extended activation of the body’s stress response without the buffering presence of a supportive adult

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Social-emotional buffering, parental resilience, early detection, and/or effective intervention

Credit unknown
Prevent the Progression of Adversity

**EARLY TRAUMA & STRESS**
- Predictable patterns of brain development, traits & behaviors

**EARLY TRAUMA & STRESS**
- Slowed language & reading
- Lateralization
- Diminished IQ
- Poor decision making skills
- Memory Problems

**EARLY TRAUMA & STRESS**
- Attention problems
- ADD
- ADHD

**EARLY TRAUMA & STRESS**
- Aggressive behavior
- Social isolation among peers
- Poor understanding of social cues = conflict

**Significant risk of early use/abuse of:**
- Alcohol, tobacco, illicit & prescription drugs

**ADULT STRESS**
- Special education
- School failure
- Dropping out

**ADULT STRESS**
- Low-wage jobs
- Unemployment
- Public Assistance
- Prison
- Teen Pregnancy
- Chronic health problems
- Debilitating mental illness
- Victimization

**NEXT GEN RISK**
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Delinquency
- Incarceration
ACEs across the lifespan

- Early Death
- Disease, Disability & Social Problems
- Health Risk & Behaviors
- Social, Emotional & Cognitive Functioning
- Adverse Childhood Experience
- Historical Trauma / Intergenerational Adversity
But ACEs aren’t our destiny!

Resilience is the ability of a person to adapt to adversity.

The body can heal.
The brain is plastic.
Increasing Your Resilience

Resilience can protect and rebuild the brain. You’re not born with it but can always grow it.
Changing the narrative about yourself

Move from blame, shame and punishment, to compassion, support and understanding.

Ask “What happened to you?” rather than “What’s wrong with you?”
Pillars of Resilience

- Relationships, connections
- Identity and the connections those bring
- A perceived sense of control and ability to make choices
- Self-regulation
- Spirituality
Self-care isn’t just a buzzword

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Mindfulness improves health outcomes, regardless of your ACE score.
New science supports transformation

Understand.

Heal.

Prevent.
Radiating Positive Effect of Understanding of ACEs

- Individual
- Family
- Organizations
- Systems
- Community
What Can You Do About It

- Learn more about ACEs
- Join a community, locally or online, that will let you connect with others to have conversations about ACEs and their stories
- Do ONE THING today or tomorrow that lets you practice this new way of thinking. Doing so will help you build resilience, and might also help whoever you are interacting with.