

ACE STUDY

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- € Emotional Abuse (recurrent)
- € Physical Abuse (recurrent)
- € Sexual Abuse (contact)
- € Physical neglect
- € Emotional neglect
- € Substance Abuse in the household (e.g., living with an alcoholic or a person with a substance-abuse problem)
- € Mental illness in the household (e.g., living with someone who suffered from depression or mental illness or who had attempted suicide)
- € Mother treated violently
- € Divorce or parental separation
- € Criminal behavior in household (e.g., a household member going to prison)

**The questionnaire collected crucial information about what Dr. Felitti (Kaiser Permanente, San Diego), and Dr. Anda (CDC), termed "adverse childhood experiences," or ACEs. Their goal was to determine each patient's level of exposure by asking if he/she had experienced any of the ten categories before the age of eighteen.*

The ACE Study is powerful for many reasons. First and foremost, the research was created by internal medicine doctors not a psychologist. Most people understand there is a connection between trauma in childhood and risky behavior, like substance and alcohol abuse, poor diet in adulthood. What most people do not recognize is that there is a connection between early life adversity and well-known killers like heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Factors That May Increase Toxic Stress Supplemental Categories

- € Community Violence
- € Homelessness
- € Discrimination
- € Foster Care
- € Bullying
- € Repeated medical procedures or life-threatening illness
- € Death of caregiver
- € Loss of caregiver due to deportation or migration
- € Verbal or physical violence from a romantic partner
- € Youth incarceration
- € Human Trafficking (Labor and Sex)
- € Mass Shootings
- € Repeated Incarceration
- € Death
- € Economic Hardships
- € Senior Citizen/Elder challenges i.e. healthcare, life insurance, social security, transportation, caregiving of grandchildren with limited resources, community resources

***Researchers are just beginning to look at the supplemental categories on a large scale, but the preliminary data indicates that stressors at the household level (traditional ACEs) seem to have a greater effect on health than stressors at the community level. Although data also suggests that if a child grows up in a stressful community environment but has a well-supported and healthy caregiver, he or she is more likely to stay in the tolerable stress zone as opposed to the toxic stress zone*