Understanding and Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Phyllis Holditch Niolon, PhD
National Institute for Health Care Management Webinar
August 23, 2022
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Expanded view of ACES, not included in the traditional measure:

- Experiencing discrimination
- Experiencing bullying or peer violence
- Experiencing teen dating violence
- Housing insecurity or homelessness
- Food insecurity
- Living in extreme poverty
- Witnessing violence in your community
POSITIVE
Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

TOLERABLE
Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

TOXIC
Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.
ACES influence health and opportunity
Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts Across the Lifespan
ACEs Surveillance Efforts
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
Surveillance Data on ACEs Among Adults

Included ACEs questions on their state BRFSS questionnaire, 2009–2020
ACEs are common and are associated with many health problems.
Potential Reduction of Negative Outcome in Adulthood

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Systems (YRBSS)
Surveillance Data on ACE/PCEs Among Youth

- Included 8 CDC-developed ACEs questions on their YRBS questionnaire in 2021
- Included 16 CDC-developed ACE/PCEs questions on their YRBS questionnaire in 2021
Two Tiers of ACE/PCEs Questions for Inclusion

TIER 1
- 8 Traditional ACE Questions

TIER 2
- 2 Past-year ACE Incidence Questions
- 3 Community ACE Questions
- 3 Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE) Questions
Other Surveillance of ACEs and PCEs

- CDC: National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG)
- CDC: National Health Interview Survey
- HRSA: National Survey of Children’s Health
Preventing ACES is a CDC Priority
6 Strategies to Prevent ACEs

- Strengthen Economic Supports for Families
- Promote Social Norms that Protect Against Violence and Adversity
- Ensure a Strong Start for Children
- Teach Skills
- Connect Youth to Caring Adults and Activities
- Intervene to Lessen Immediate and Long-term Harms
Strengthen Economic Supports for Families
Promote Social Norms that Protect Against Violence and Adversity
Ensure a Strong Start for Children
Teach Skills
Connect Youth to Caring Adults and Activities
Intervene to Lessen Immediate and Long-term Harms
Goal 1: Build/enhance an ACE surveillance infrastructure

Goal 2: Implement ACE prevention strategies

Goal 3: Conduct foundational activities to support D2A

Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: Data to Action (PACE:D2A)

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/preventingace-datatoaction.html
Essentials for Childhood: Steps to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments

+ **Goal 1:** Raise Awareness and Commitment to Promote Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments and Prevent Child Maltreatment

+ **Goal 2:** Use Data to Inform Actions

+ **Goal 3:** Create the Context for Healthy Children and Families through Norms Change and Programs

+ **Goal 4:** Create the Context for Healthy Children and Families through Policies

VetoViolence helps communities use the best-available evidence to prevent violence.
Thank you!