

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing



People with 6+ ACEs can die

20 yrs

earlier than those who have none



1/8 of the population have more than 4 ACEs




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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 

4x as likely to have begun intercourse by age 15 

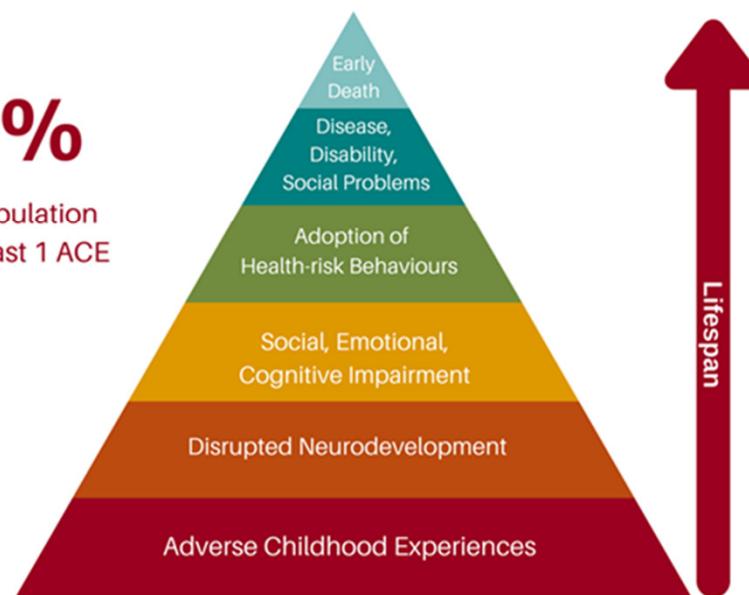
4.5x more likely to develop depression 

2x the level of liver disease 

“ Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today ”

Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics

67%
of the population have at least 1 ACE



Childhood Trauma

An event that a child finds overwhelmingly distressing or emotionally painful, often resulting in lasting mental and physical effects.

2x
more likely to develop
DEPRESSION

3x
more likely to develop
ANXIETY DISORDERS

Common causes:



Child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)

Grief



Witness/victim of violence



War/Terrorism



Neglect

Medical trauma



Substance misuse



Mental illness



Bullying in school

Separation from loved ones



LONG-TERM IMPACTS:

Affects perception of reality



Takes away sense of safety



Wires brain to expect danger

Increases stress hormones flowing through the body



Triggers fight, fright or freeze response



Creates a sense of helplessness



Creates relationship problems

Results in serious behaviour problems



“The initial trauma of a young child may go underground but it will return to haunt us”
James Garbarino

PREFRONTAL CORTEX (PFC)

"Thinking Centre"

Underactivated

Difficulties concentrating & learning.

A traumatised brain is "bottom heavy"

ANTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX (ACC)

"Emotion Regulation Centre"

Underactivated

Difficulties with managing emotions.

AMYGDALA

"Fear Centre"

Overactivated

Difficulty feeling safe, calming down, sleeping

Complex Trauma: a result of repetitive, prolonged trauma



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