

Developmental/Attachment (D/A) and Adverse Child Experience (ACE) Scores

Some childhood adverse experiences are major and obvious. Others are less obvious and more subtle, often occurring before your memories can store them in conscious awareness. Nevertheless, these experiences can also have a profound impact on your nervous system's capacity to feel safe and to self-regulate. Therefore, it is important to take less obvious experiences into account.

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**...

- Require perfection or extremely high achievement, and if you fell short, express major disappointment, insult you, put you down, scorn or humiliate you?
- Actively reject you emotionally or make you afraid that you might be rejected?
- Do harshly critical voices, learned from these experiences, continue to attack you from within?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**...

- Punish you by isolation, with time-outs alone longer than you could tolerate?
- Refuse to speak to you for significant periods of time?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**...

- Recoil from or shame you for innocent expressions of your sexuality as a young child?
- Make harsh disapproving comments or evince disgust or excessive interest in your developing body or gender in ways that made you feel ashamed?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

4. Did you **often or very often** feel that...

- No one in your family loved you, understood you, or thought your particular unique qualities were important, special, or fit in your family? That you were not being seen/invisible?
- Only when certain criteria were met did your family look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

5. Did you **often or very often** feel that...

- A parent was very focused on your weight, appearance or diet?
- Were there battles of wills over food?
- Your parent(s) were anxious about your health, frequently took you to the doctor for antibiotics, allergies, asthma or eczema, stomachaches, bowel problems, headaches, etc.?
- Your parent(s) couldn't let you go explore the world even when it seemed safe and appropriate?
- A parent needed your accomplishments for their sense of self-worth?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents staying together in an atmosphere of tension, resentment, bitterness over an extended period of time without resolution?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

7. Was one or both of your parents:

- **Often or very often** humiliated, treated with contempt/disrespect, coldness or indifference by the other parent/stepparent?
- **Sometimes, often, very often** experienced being powerless in relationship with his/her spouse?
- **Ever** threatened with or experienced divorce, loss of their children, loss of "privileges" or access to transportation or financial resources?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

8. Did you live with anyone who was a workaholic or addicted to food, shopping, sex, the internet, video games, gambling, extreme sports?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

If yes, please list the first initial of the person and their relationship to you on the back of this form.

9. Was a household member, especially a parent, confusingly erratic in their behaviour toward you?

- Did you spend a lot of time trying to figure out how to please them____ or avoid them____?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member(s) go to a prestigious college/university, hold high public office, military rank, or powerful private sector position like CEO? Was this high level of achievement expected?

Was/were any members(s) of your family immigrant(s) who worked incredibly hard to succeed here?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

11. Did family members expect loyalty and self-sacrifice of your individual hopes, plans and dreams for the good of the family as a matter of course without recognition, appreciation or reciprocity?

• Were you the parent in the family?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

12. When your mother was pregnant with you or soon after, were there any catastrophic events occurring for her, your family or the larger world in which your family lived?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

13. Did parents, grandparents, or any close relatives flee or suffer political or other repression?

Yes / No If yes enter 1 _____

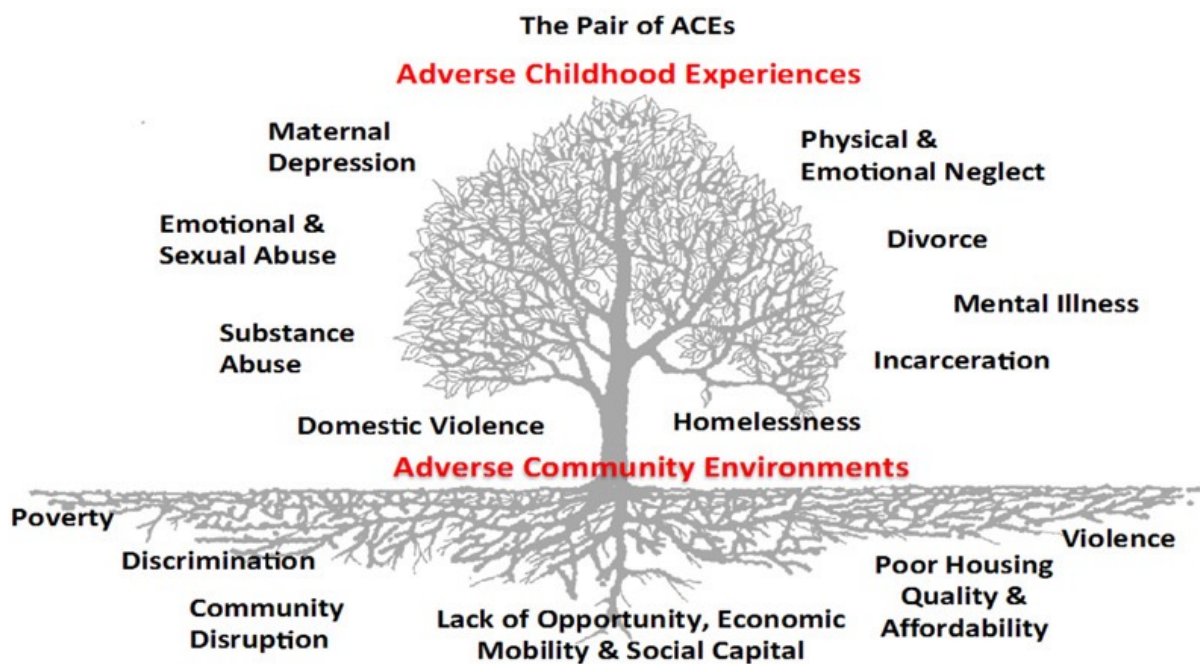
14. Is there any other kind of adverse experience, not described here, that you feel has had a profound influence on your life? Please create your own question, as it seems true for you:

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____

Pair of ACEs Tree

The **Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model** created the **Pair of ACEs Tree** image to illustrate the relationship between adversity within a family and adversity within a community.

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences.** The leaves on the tree represent the symptoms of ACEs that are easily recognised in clinical, educational and social service settings. Adverse childhood experiences can increase a person's risk for chronic stress and adverse coping mechanisms, and result in lifelong chronic illness such as depression, heart disease, obesity and substance abuse. Physical or sexual violence, and abuse or neglect are often less obvious but can exist as chronic stressors.
- **Adverse Community Environments.** The tree is planted in poor soil that is steeped in systemic inequities, robbing it of nutrients necessary to support a thriving community. Adverse community environments such as a lack of affordable and safe housing, community violence, systemic discrimination, and limited access to social and economic mobility compound one another, creating a negative cycle of ever worsening soil that results in withering leaves on the tree.



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. *Academic Pediatrics*. 17 (2017) pp. S86-S93. DOI information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011

The **Pair of ACEs Tree** resource was created to more readily engage community leaders in developing policies that address adversities embedded in communities that have their roots in systems.

Read more about BCR coalitions at go.gwu.edu/BCR