

Adverse Childhood Experiences

(ACEs)



What are they and what do they mean to me?

Adverse Childhood Experiences—also known as ACEs—can affect your and your family's health. ACEs affect all communities. In fact, two-thirds of us have had at least one ACE.

ACEs are events that occur during childhood that can cause high levels of stress in your body and your brain. That stress is considered "toxic," and can have life-long health effects if not recognized and treated.

There are 10 ACEs that we talk about. You may be asked to review this list and let our health care team know how many of these you or your child have experienced. This is known as the ACE "score"—it will help us do a better job of meeting your health care needs.

The 10 ACEs

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Having caregivers with mental health concerns
- Having caregivers with problematic substance use
- Having caregivers that are separated or divorced
- Having a caregiver that has been incarcerated
- Domestic violence at home



More than a Number.

Having ACEs does not determine our futures—our stories are more than a number. The important thing is to identify and understand our ACEs and toxic stress, and then work to find ways to heal.

Research shows there are several things we can do to reduce the stress that we feel and prevent further health conditions from developing:

- Having healthy and supportive relationships with a parent, family member, or mentor
- Getting regular sleep
- Eating healthy food
- Spending time outside and in nature
- Getting regular exercise
- "Mindfulness" practices like yoga, meditation, and deep breathing
- Talking to a mental health professional

Let your health care team know if you have questions.

Go to NumberStory.org to learn more about ACEs and toxic stress, and what you can do to improve your health.

