

Resilience

can bring back health and hope.



STRESS & EARLY BRAIN GROWTH

THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD experiences on our health

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

ACEs are serious childhood traumas - a list is shown below - that result in toxic stress that can harm a child's brain. This toxic stress may prevent a child from learning, from playing in a healthy way with other children, and can result in long-term health problems.

Childhood Trauma can include:

- Loss of a parent to divorce, abandonment or death
- Household substance abuse
- Caregiver treated violently
- Household mental illness
- Incarceration of a parent or caregiver
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse

Trauma can also include many other circumstances such as witnessing an accident or crime, bullying, being homeless, discrimination, natural disasters and war... Trauma is experienced individually, caregivers need to know the signs!



What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to return to being healthy and hopeful after bad things happen. Research shows that if **parents, caretakers and community members** provide a safe environment for children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Resilience trumps ACEs!

You can help children become resilient by:

- Creating safe and stable physical and emotional environments at home, school and in neighborhoods
- Assuring they have strong, nurturing and positive relationships with caring adults
- Helping them build strong social connections to their peers, schools and neighborhoods
- Helping them learn emotional and physical calming skills and role model them
- Providing them with opportunities to learn new skills such as riding a bike, playing a musical instrument, joining a sports team or club, children thrive when they learn new things



Learn More

- **Family Resources**
www.famres.org | 563.445.0557
- **Child Abuse Council of the Quad Cities**
www.childabuseqc.org | 309.736.7170

Thanks to the Community and Family Services Division at the Spokane (WA) Regional Health District and ACES Connection (www.acesconnection.com) for their efforts in engaging parents and the community in ACE education.



EASTERN IOWA - WESTERN ILLINOIS

Trauma-Informed Care CONSORTIUM

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How does Childhood Stress affect health and behavior?

When children experience highly stressful events they often develop what's called "toxic stress." Toxic stress causes emotional and physical tension in children and can increase their heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking is knocked off-line and they go into self-protection or "flight or fight mode." When children do this they are just trying to feel safe. Adults need to understand this so we are to respond in a way that is helpful.



Lowers tolerance for emotional and physical stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, defiance, checking out, or isolation.



Decreases ability to focus and concentrate which can cause problems with learning and memory and result in problems in school.



Increases difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships.



Increases stress hormones called cortisol, which affects the body's ability to stay healthy and may cause lasting health problems.

learning new things
play healthy diet
friends **praise**
safety family
nurturing caregiver

Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:

- Unhealthy attachments with caregivers
- Running away
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Depression or Anxiety
- Obesity
- School absence, suspensions and dropouts
- Problems with attention
- Dating violence/abusive relationships
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STD)
- Smoking
- Self-harm
- Unintended pregnancies
- Feeling that you don't "fit in" with peers
- Lifelong health problems such as cancer and heart disease

Change the moment,
Change the future.

STRESS Frequent or prolonged exposure to Childhood trauma can create toxic stress which can damage the developing brain of a child and affect overall physical and emotional health.