



Mandated Reporting

Adverse Childhood Experiences & Resilience

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood and have lasting life-long impacts on health and well-being. A person's ACEs do not have to determine their future and can, in fact, be mitigated by Protective Factors that offset trauma. ***As someone who works closely with children and families, you can be a protective factor in a child's life.***

ACEs are common across **all** socioeconomic groups. Children who have experienced a higher number of ACEs in the absence of Protective Factors are more likely to experience negative health outcomes, such as increases in chronic health conditions like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Learn more about ACEs and the original study from the CDC: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces

How ACEs Impact Development

Our bodies are wired to respond to danger and to survive threats. Once a sound, smell, or visual stimulus is registered, it bypasses the intellectual part of our brain and triggers the part of the brain that registers danger. As a result:



The heart pumps blood to the arms and legs more quickly and forcefully, priming us to fight, flee, or freeze and causing a rise in blood pressure.



Breathing speeds up to get oxygen into the lungs, where it is picked up by blood and delivered to muscles.

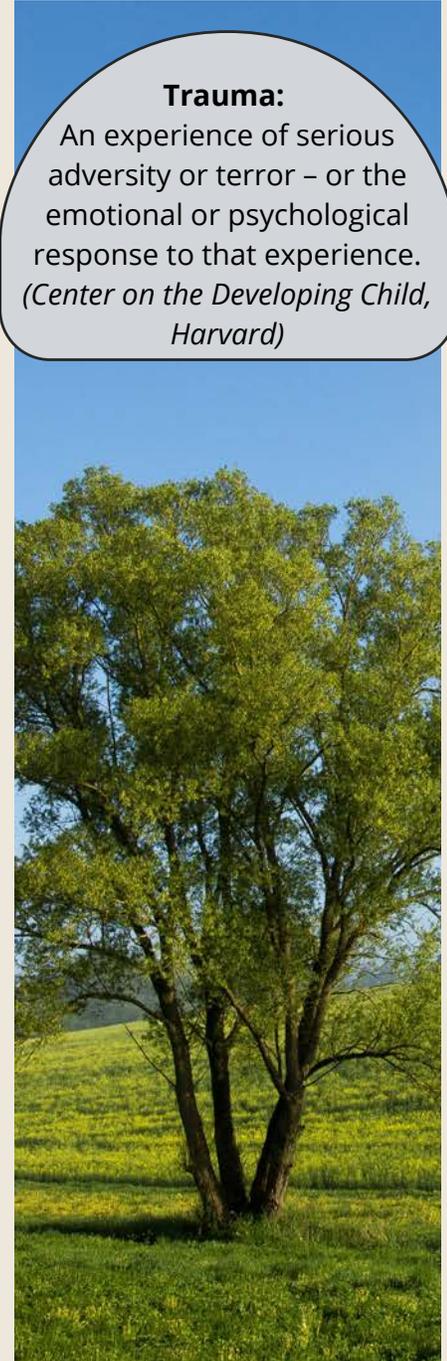


The parts of the brain responsible for short-term memory, concentration, and rational thought go on break while the focus is on survival.

When a child is exhibiting a trauma response, support from a caring adult may relieve the child's anxiety and help their systems return to normal.

Trauma:

An experience of serious adversity or terror – or the emotional or psychological response to that experience.
(Center on the Developing Child, Harvard)



When stress or trauma is ongoing, or there is **prolonged exposure to ACEs with an absence of Protective Factors**, a child may experience **toxic stress**. This means that the stress response stays activated in the body, which can harm the child's developing brain and body.

It is important to recognize how toxic stress and trauma may impact the families with whom you work. Children who have experienced toxic stress may engage in behaviors that some would call "misbehaving" or "acting out." However, these behaviors may actually be a result of toxic stress that has disrupted the child's development. Additionally, adults who experienced multiple ACEs and/or toxic stress as children may continue to exhibit behaviors that impact their relationships – long after the original stress is passed.

Protective Factors

Five Protective Factors that have been identified in research are:



social connections



concrete support in times of need



parental resilience



the parent's knowledge of parenting and child development



understanding where a child is emotionally

You can act as a Protective Factor for children and, depending on your profession, you may be able to increase additional Protective Factors. For example, you may be in a position to provide "concrete support in times of need" by referring a family to the local food bank when food insecurity is identified. Or you may assist with "social connections" by linking a family to an afterschool program. There are many ways to support families, and each will likely be different. Consider resources such as food banks, job coaching, child care providers, and community groups that can provide support to the families with whom you work.

Protective Factors

Positive experiences & relationships



Adversity

Visit the Center for the Study on Social Policy for more on Protective Factors.

The **Mandated Reporter Hotline** for child abuse and maltreatment reports: **(800) 635-1522**

For resources and more information:
<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

If you encounter a child or family who could benefit from support services, but does not meet the criteria for "reasonable cause to suspect," consider referring them to community-based programs in your area.

OCFS HEARS Family Line
1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277)

NYS Office of Children and Family Services



The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities.

For more information about OCFS, please visit our website at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov>