

Adverse Childhood Experiences

CASA In-Service Training

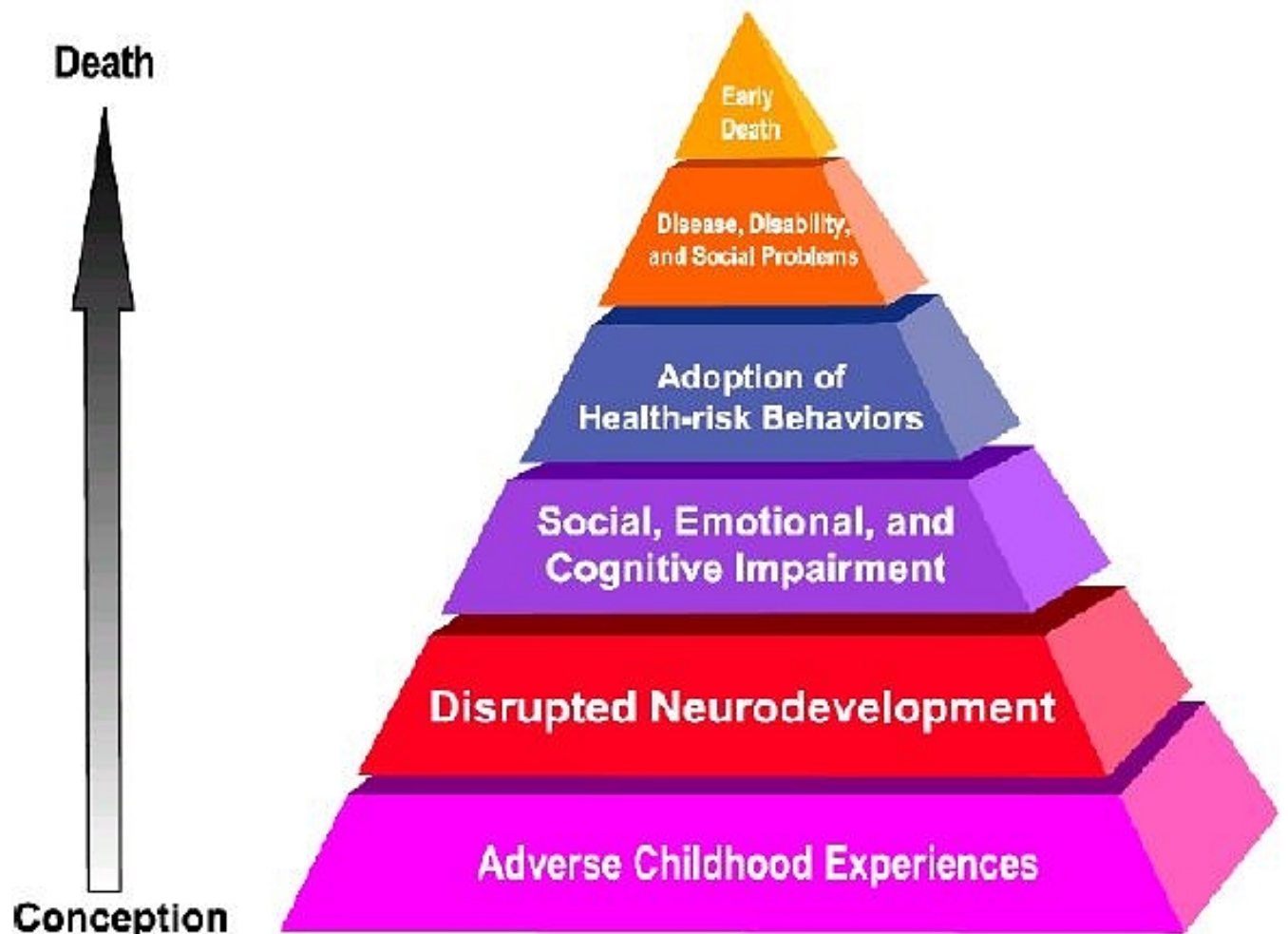
October 25, 2017

Definition:

- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. They may also include household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have [substance use disorders](#). ACEs are strongly related to the development and prevalence of a wide range of health problems throughout a person's lifespan, including those associated with substance misuse.

ACES include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Intimate partner violence
- Mother treated violently
- Substance misuse within household
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member



Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

TED Talk:

- Nadine Burke Harris: How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime
- Childhood trauma isn't something you just get over as you grow up. Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris explains that the repeated stress of abuse, neglect and parents struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues has real, tangible effects on the development of the brain. This unfolds across a lifetime, to the point where those who've experienced high levels of trauma are at triple the risk for heart disease and lung cancer. An impassioned plea for pediatric medicine to confront the prevention and treatment of trauma, head-on.

ACES are incredibly common:

- 67% of the population had at least one ACE
- 12.6% had 4 or more ACES

Relationship between ACES and health outcomes:

- ACES score of 4 or more=
- 2 ½ times more likely to develop Pulmonary Disease
- 2 ½ times more likely to develop Hepatitis
- 4 ½ times more likely to develop Depression
- 12 times more likely to develop Suicidality (suicidal ideation, suicide plans and suicide attempts)

Relationship between ACES and health outcomes:

- ACES score of 7 or more=
- Triple the lifetime risk of Lung Cancer
- 3 ½ times more likely to develop Heart Disease

Science:

- Exposure to early adversity affects the developing brains and bodies of children.
- There are measurable differences in MRI
- The brain and body's stress response system- Fight or Flight Response

Repeated Stress Activation Affects:

- Brain Structure and Development
- Developing Immune System
- Developing Hormonal System
- The way DNA is read and transcribed

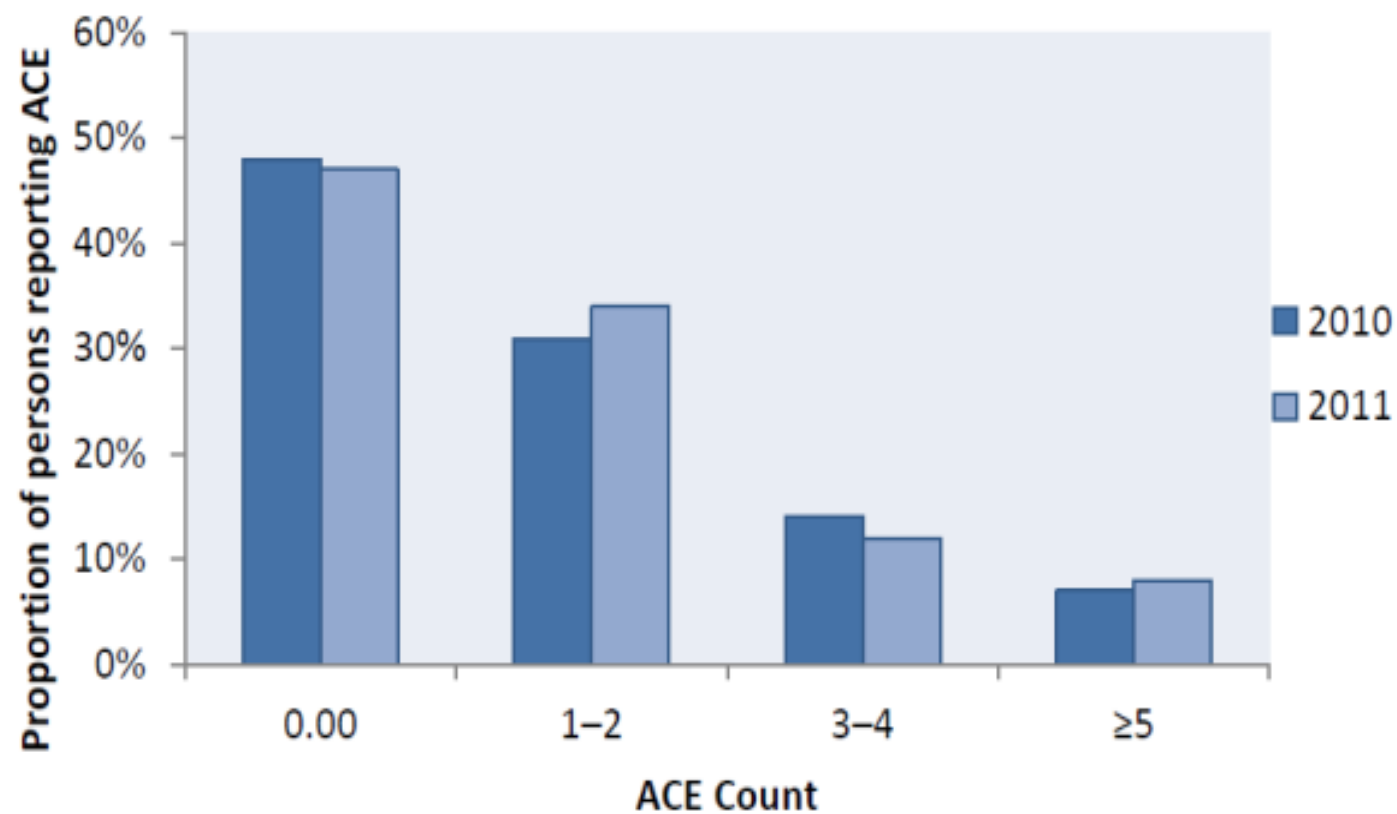
How does Nebraska stack up on ACES?

- Nebraska Children and Families Foundation- 2013
- Thanks to information from the 2012 ACE study by the Office of Epidemiology at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, we now have the answers.

More of Nebraska's kids experienced ZERO ACES in 2010-2011

- That's good news. Nationally, about 36% of children have exposure to zero ACEs, so on the whole our children have been better protected with nearly 47% being ACE-free. This may be in due in part to the efforts of organizations like [Prevent Child Abuse Nebraska](#), [PIWI and PCIT programs in some cities](#), or early childhood education programs ([like Sixpence](#)) that focus on teaching parenting skills to at-risk families.

Prevalence of ACE count in 2010 and 2011



Prevalence of ACE count in 2010 and 2011

- However, a look at the chart tells you that in 2010 and 2011, about 22% of Nebraska's children experienced 3 or more ACEs. The national average here is about 21%. So while fewer of our children are experiencing ACEs at all, the ones who do are as likely to have multiple exposures as children nationally.
- What's that mean? It means that Nebraskans need to do a better job protecting the kids at greatest risk. And they are, of course, the hardest to reach.

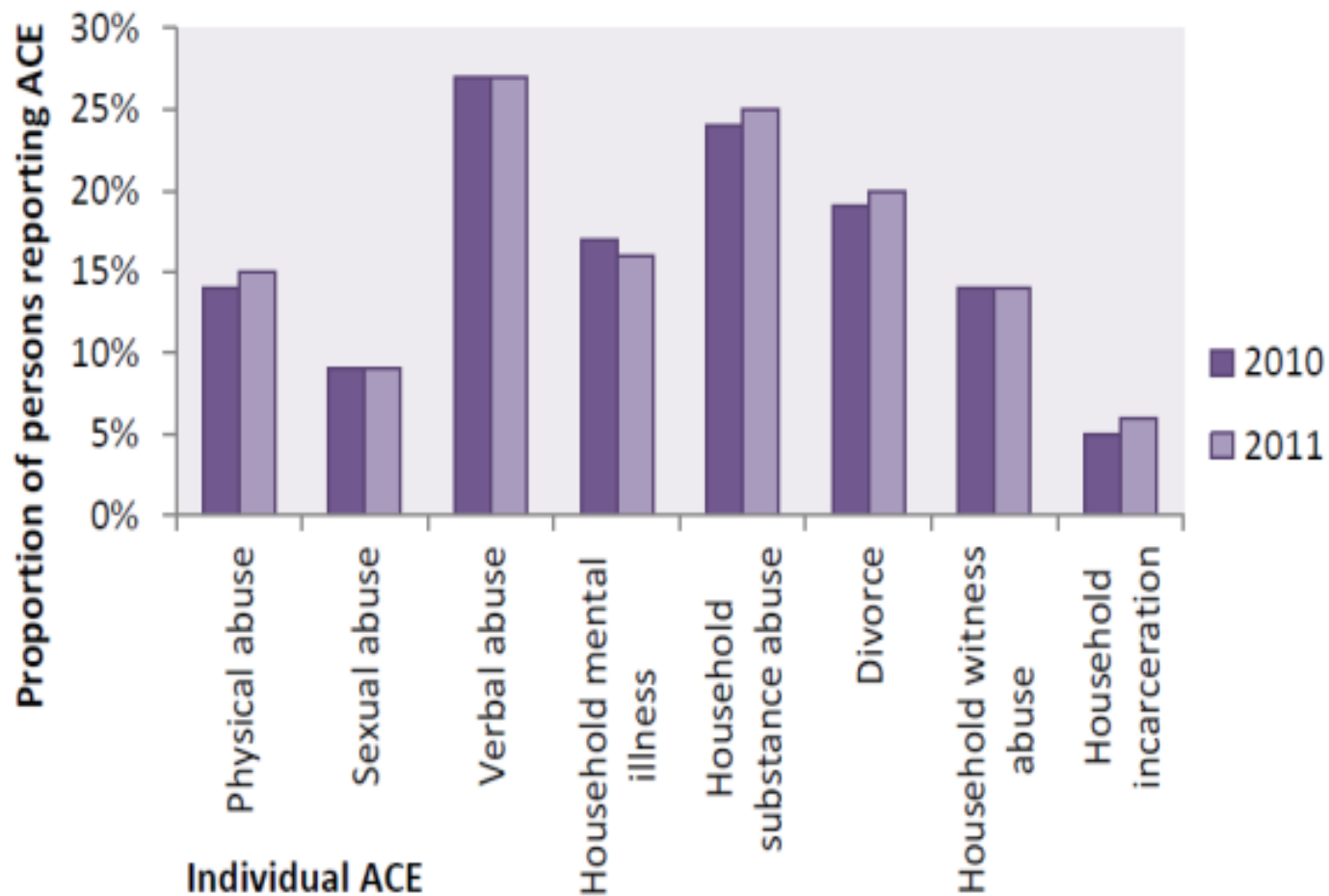
Nebraska children are less likely to suffer from physical or sexual abuse

- While 15% of ACEs reported in Nebraska in 2011 were physical abuse, the national stat was 28%. About 8% of Nebraska ACE victims report sexual abuse, compared to 21% nationally. While zero incidents is the only acceptable number for physical and sexual abuse, it's clear that Nebraska is protecting its children more effectively than other states.

Nebraska children are more likely to suffer verbal/ emotional abuse

- Nationally, only 11% of ACE victims cite this offense. In Nebraska, it's 23%. These numbers make it clear that interaction education (like PIWI, PCIT, high-quality home visitation like the Sixpence programs) need to expand their reach, and teach parents how to have more positive interactions with their children. This is also an area where expanding [early childhood mental health outreach for parents and caregivers](#) can make a powerful difference.

Prevalence of individual ACEs by year



**Nebraska has slightly fewer ACES
related to household mental illness,
substance abuse and divorce.**

- We have far fewer household incarcerations (6% here compared to 11% nationally) but more children witnessing abuse in their households (15% here compared to 13% nationally).

Overall:

- **We're doing a good job, but need to make headway in verbal and emotional interactions with at-risk families.**
- We will continue doing our part by working with communities to pull their resources together for at risk families, providing funding for home visitation, PIWI and PCIT training, supporting statewide Child Abuse Prevention Councils, advocating for more protections for children, and setting up systems that look after early childhood mental health.

Here's what we can do:

- Examine the way you think about abuse and your role in preventing it. The protective factors that stop abusive patterns from forming in families are often built in communities and supported by people like you. [Read more about protective factors](#), and look for small ways to help your neighbors at risk every day.

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire: Finding Your ACE Score

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

Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?

or

Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

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

Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

or

Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

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

Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

or

Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

- 4. Did you **often** feel that ...

No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

or

Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

- 5. Did you **often** feel that ...

You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?

or

Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire

Finding Your ACE Score

- 7. Was your mother or stepmother:

Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

or

Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?

or

Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

- 8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

- 9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire:

Finding Your ACE Score

- 10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 _____

Now add up your “Yes” answers: _____

This is your ACE Score