



Everyone has a Score

A Resilience-based Approach to
Adverse Childhood Experiences



Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

ACE's Training Vision Statement

“Creating community awareness through dialogue and training to disseminate a deeper understanding of how to better serve our children and their families by dramatically reducing the stigma of a score and by building resilience with strength based philosophy and approaches.”



Group Inquiry

What are some other examples of traumatic experiences not reflected in the study?

Everyone has a Score

- Trauma is universal
- No trauma free zones
- Everyone has experienced trauma in one form or another
- **Watch out for “us and them”**
- Instead think “we”



Experiential Exercise

Debrief

Share **one** word that captures how you feel right now.

How did it feel to walk with a group?

How did it feel to be left behind?

What do you take away from this activity?

How could this be used in your work or personal life?

Training Modules

ACE's and AFE's Study Review

Participants-Findings-Results

Positive Implications

Dangers of the data

Missing Elements

Trauma, Neglect and the Brain

Resilience Based Approach

Experiential Practice of Adult Resilience Techniques

Starting a Movement

Module One: Adverse Childhood Experiences-The Study

One of the largest investigations ever conducted by...

Center's for Disease Control & Prevention
Kaiser Permanente's Health Appraisal Clinic

- **17,000 individuals surveyed**
- **Answer a ten question survey about their childhood**
- **Physical exam results were included**



Group Reflection

- What were the demographics of the participants in the original ACE study?

Populations Studied

54% women

46% men

Median age of 56

75% white

39% college graduates

36% had some college education

18% high school graduates

7% did not graduate from high school

Adverse Childhood Experience-Defined

Abuse: treat (a person or an animal) with cruelty or violence, especially regularly or repeatedly

Neglect: a form of child abuse, and is a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, housing as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational and safety needs

Household Dysfunction: a family with multiple internal conflicts, domestic violence, mental illness, single parenthood, substance misuse, extramarital affairs, gambling, unemployment; influences that effect the basic needs of the family unit

Five Personal Questions

- physical abuse
- verbal abuse
- sexual abuse
- physical neglect
- emotional neglect

Five Family Member Questions

- a parent who is an alcoholic or substance user
- a mother who's a victim of domestic violence
- a family member in jail
- a family member diagnosed with a mental illness
- disappearance of a parent through divorce, death or abandonment

What is Your Score?



Initial Findings

87% of the 17,000 reported a score of 1 or more

1 or 2 out of every **10 adults** have a score of **5** or higher

***30%** of men had been physically abused as boys

***25%** women had experienced childhood sexual abuse.

Original Study Results

- 50% of the individuals reported at least one ACE Score
- 25% of the individuals reported two ACE Scores
- Participants that reported 4 or more or more ACE Scores had a 4 to 12 times the chance of increased health risks

Health Risks Identified

With a score of 4 or more there was an 4 to 12 times the chance of having the following:

- Disease of addiction
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- Sexual assault
- Leading causes of death

Ten Top Leading Causes of Death

- Heart disease.
- Cancer
- Chronic lower respiratory disease.
- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Stroke
- Alzheimer's disease.
- Diabetes
- Influenza and pneumonia

Center for Disease Control 2014

Additional Findings

- ACE's are common, in white, middle class, well educated people with great health insurance
- ACE's tend to occur in clusters, rather than single occurrences
- The ACE score captures the **increasing risk of negative** consequences of traumatic stress
- The ACE score **reflects a significant** relationship to numerous health, social, and behavioral problems in a person's lifespan

Potential Positive Implications

- A whole health approach to helping people by understanding how trauma can manifest in **medical conditions**
- Looking at behaviors through a **softer lens reducing blame** on the individual and the avoidance of referring to “poor choices”
- Technology to visually **measure biology affecting the brain structure** and function
- A new individual, family, team and **community effort approach** that reaches beyond traditional boundaries

Module Two:

The Missing Pieces



Group Reflection



- What are some key elements that are missing in this study?

Missing Elements

- Other types of traumatic events
- Genetics and other major health issues
- Innate resilience

- **A tally of positive experiences in early life**
- **Experiences post childhood**





The ACE's Study is Not a Magic
Eight Ball that Determines your
Future

Potential Dangers of the Study



The Doomsday Effect



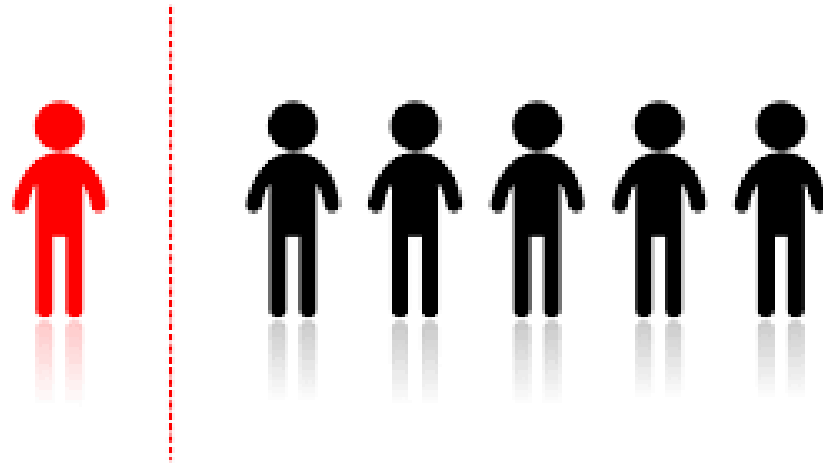
Self Fulfilling Prophecies



Youth Taking the Quiz without Support



Increased Stigma or Judgement



Assumptions About Health Conditions



“Trendy Messaging of ACE’s Scores”



Additional Considerations

- Using the study only for reducing health care costs
- Potential insurance hikes for those who score high
- Assumptions that the study is only linked to poverty
- A deficit based approach

Break Time



Module Three-Vermont Sample AFE's Study



AFE's Study Differences

- Focus was not on the same age group
- Parents or guardians were asked the questions versus the individuals participating in the study
- Different questions were asked
- Smaller population participation
- **Insignificant data due to limited follow up time**

Examples of Adverse Family Experiences

- Not having enough to eat
- Not having stable housing
- Having parents who are divorced or separated
- Having a parent who died or went to jail
- Seeing or hearing physical violence between adults in the home
- Being a victim of neighborhood violence
- Living with an adult who was mentally ill or suicidal
- Living with an adult who has the disease of addiction

AFE's Study Findings

1 in 8 Children between age 1-17 have experienced 3 or more AFE

26 % Divorce or separated parents (1 in 4)

25% Family Income Hardship (1 in 4)

16% Moved four plus times since birth (1-6)

15% Lived with someone's addiction (1-7)

11% Lived with someone who is mentally ill (1 in 9)

8% Victim of witnessed neighborhood violence

Findings Continued

8% Victim of witnessed neighborhood violence

6% Incarcerated Parent

6% Witnessed domestic violence

3% Death of a parent or guardian

2% Treated or judged unfairly due to race or ethnicity

AFE's Initial Study Results

- 1 in 8 kids have 2 or more chronic health problems
- Youth between 2-17
 - 1-27 currently have depression
 - 1-15 have anxiety
 - 43 % have more than 3 AFE's
 - **1-12 have ADD or ADHD**
 - **1-50 have autism**
 - **1-33 have behavioral problems**

Considerations

- Be aware of the belief that these experiences are adequately dealt with by emergency **response** systems
- Adoption of concepts from the ACE study and brain research have been remarkably slow
- What will we do with the data?
- How can we help these children and youth?

Score Results for Guidance Only!

ACE's scores don't tally the positive experiences in early life that help build resilience

There are many people with high ACE's scores that do remarkably well

Use the information to view behavioral issues through a new and less blaming lens

There could be many other variables to behavior under the iceberg

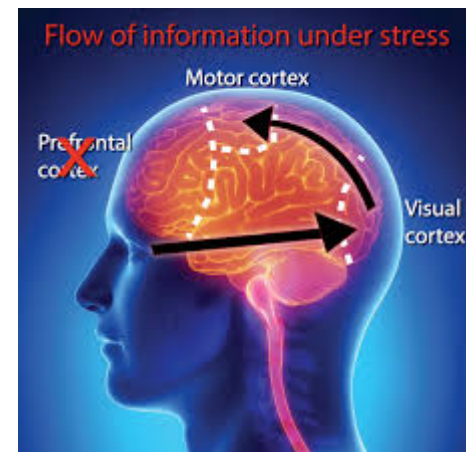
Not an Excuse

Some people are going to resist against this information.

Some people are going to say ACE's sounds like an excuse.

- Children and adults with childhood trauma did not ask for the consequences.
- Most cases they are not aware of it
- Until the linkage between trauma and behaviors (health) are taught there is no awareness.
- Instead the person is blamed for all the consequences.

Module Four: Trauma and the Brain



The Brain can Heal

- Knowledge is helpful and freeing
- Range of promising approaches to help create new neurons
- We can help promote new patterns of thoughts and reactions
- We can help to bring under-connected areas of the brain back online and reset the stress response

Experiential Exercise



Break Time



Module Five

Got Bounce?



The Antidote to Toxic Stress

Resilience

is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes.

How do we help our fellow Vermonters to bounce back?

Building Resilience in Adults



Considerations

- Some people seem to be more resilient than others
- Everyone can cultivate resilience on different levels individual to them and based in their experience
- Studies show that the daily repertoire of emotions of people who are highly resilient is remarkably different from those who are not
- Resilient people have an ability to experience both negative and positive emotion in difficult situations
- Resilient people are able to find the **“silver lining”** in any situation

True Grit-Does it Exist?

Being **a gritty** person means that the one tends to stick to their goals despite numerous issues, problems, setbacks and failures. The person has firmness of mind and unyielding courage.

The synonyms of **true grit** are: fortitude. determination.

Do you have “true grit”?

Elements of Resilience

- Sense of Purpose
- Positive Realism
- Relationships
- Determinations *(open-minded and flexible)
- Self Awareness
- Self Management

Sense of Purpose

- Core component of the six
- Foundation of all of the others
- The stronger it is the better you are equipped
- If not clear-leads to feelings of frustration or aimlessness



Positive Realism

A balancing act between thinking positively and being realistic about what can be achieved.



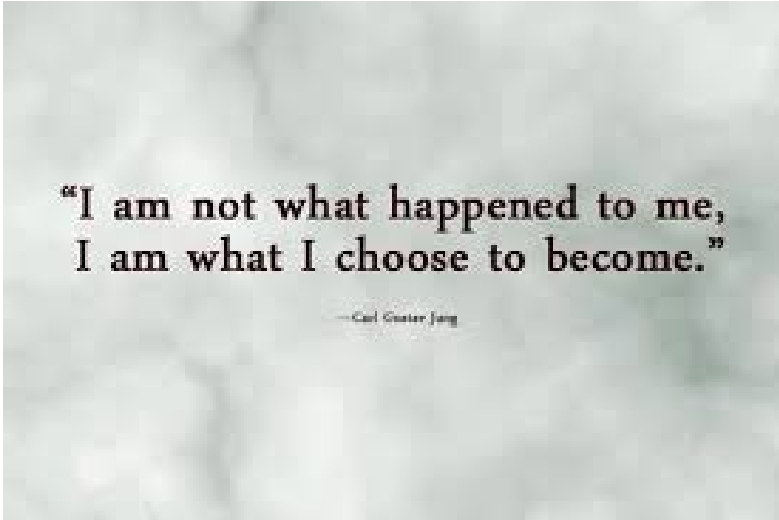
Relationships

- Other people matter to us
- Supportive and caring relationships are essential
- Being okay with asking for help is a skill



Determination

- The ability to see things through
- Being proactive and taking action
- The ability keep going in the face of adversity



“I am not what happened to me,
I am what I choose to become.”

—Carl Gustav Jung

Self Awareness

- Knowledge of your inner self
- How you think, feel and react
- Patterns in the way you think about and respond to situations or challenges
- Identification of causes of your success and failures
- Ability to learn from them

Self Management

- How well you know your strengths
- How well you use your strengths
- How well you recognize your limitations

Managing Self

Traits and Characteristics

Integrity & Honesty
Resilience
Flexibility
Initiative

Core Competencies

Interpersonal skills
Communications
Problem Solving
Analytical Skills
Lifelong Learning

Break Time





Module Six

Time to Bounce

Where do we go from here?

“People who are hurt are not thinking, living and engaging in their communities in the way they want to. They have not been supported in the way they needed”

Start a Resilience Based Movement in Your Community



What are We Waiting For?

- Talk to each other
- Trail blaze in your community
- Attend trainings
- Share information
- Reach out
- Reduce stigma
- Remove labels
- Talk about the strengths not the score
- It is about “us” not “them”



Love People Back to Life





Please Fill Out the Post
Training Assessment

**Thank You for
Participating!**

Contact us at:

vffcmh.org

or call us at:

(802) 876-7021

(800) 639-6071

