Screening for Trauma and Resilience in Pediatric Health Care: Pros and Cons

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First Things First Early Childhood Summit
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Children’s exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences are the greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today.

Robert Block MD, former AAP president
What are ACEs?

1) Abuse or Neglect
   - Recurrent physical abuse
   - Recurrent emotional abuse
   - Sexual abuse
   - Emotional or physical neglect

2) Household Challenges
   - Alcohol or drug abuser
   - Incarcerated household member
   - Someone chronically depressed, suicidal, institutionalized or mentally ill
   - Mother being treated violently
   - One or no parents
Many Other Types of Trauma

- Bullying
- Homelessness
- Growing Up in Foster Care
- Extreme Illness or Injury
- Historical Trauma
- Community Violence
- Judged Unfairly on Race/Ethnicity, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Place of Birth, Disability or Religion
Community Also Plays a Role

The Pair of ACEs
Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Maternal Depression
- Emotional & Sexual Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence

Physical & Emotional Neglect
- Divorce
- Mental Illness
- Incarceration

Homelessness

Adverse Community Environments
- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Community Disruption
- Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital
- Poor Housing Quality & Affordability
- Violence

Ellis W., Dietz W. BCR Framework Academic Peds (2017)
Question

What do you think is the average ACE score of Children in Arizona?
2016 Natl. Survey of Children’s Health
(Does not include child maltreatment or neglect)

• Nearly half – 34 million kids - at least 1 ACE

• 1 in 5 children - 2 or more

• 1 in 7 children - 3 or more

• Fewer than 2 in 5 flourish with 2 or more ACEs

ACEs are Interrelated and Predictive

Without interruption, ACEs tend to escalate across generations
ACEs in AZ Teens & Adults

8th, 10th & 12th Graders

AZ Youth Survey:
53% Adults Insulted Them
47% Parents Separated or Divorced
25% Lived with Alcoholic
23% Incarcerated Household Member
23% Lived with Adults Who Fought
17% Lived with Drug User

2016 Arizona Youth Survey

ACEs in AZ Adults

AZ BRFSS:
32% Verbal Abuse
26% Parents Separated or Divorced
22% Drinking Problem in Household
9% Incarcerated Household Member
16% Violence Between Adults
12% Drug Use in Household

2014-2016 AZ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
Trauma Screening in Pediatrics

- Is Controversial
- Who to screen?
- Scary and intimidating
  - Training and education
  - What to do with the results?
- Screening for Resiliency and Protective Factors
Driver’s of Health Outcomes

15-20% Clinical Care

20-25% Social & Environmental

30% Health Behaviors

30% Genetics
### Adverse Childhood Experiences

- **Abuse and Neglect** - Psychological, physical, sexual
- **Household Dysfunction** - Domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, divorce
- **Other** - Poverty, homelessness, bullying, LGBTQ

### Neurobiological Effects
- Brain abnormalities, stress hormone dysregulation

### Psychosocial Effects
- Poor attachment, poor socialization, poor self-efficacy

### Health Risk Behaviors
- Smoking, substance abuse, promiscuity, obesity

### Disease
- Mental - depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicide
- Substance abuse and smoking
- Inflammation - allergies, Asthma, eczema
- Endocrine - diabetes, Thyroid Dz
- Emotional - constipation, encopresis, enuresis
- Cancer
- CV - stroke, heart attack
- Intergenerational transmissions

### Social Problems
- Prostitution
- Criminal behavior
- Unemployment
- Poor work quality
- Parenting problems
- High utilization health and social services

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CANarratives.org
As “HEALERS”, wouldn’t (shouldn’t) we do everything we can to protect our children?
Why Screen?

• Cost to society
  – ACEs associated with 8 of the 10 leading causes of death in the USA
  – Chronic illnesses including mental health 2015
    • > 85% of all health care expenditures
    • >2.7 trillion dollars (15% GDP)

• Identify a subset of children
  • who are at increased risk
  • who may benefit from more “integrated healthcare”

• Improve:
  • interaction with child and family
  • understanding of the diagnosis/disease
  • ability to make a positive, lasting impact
Why Screen?

• You can’t help what you don’t know
• Children often present psychiatric concerns with behavioral or somatic complaints
• Early intervention leads to improved outcomes
Concerns

• ACES are not the whole story
  – Bullying, food insecurity, marginalized communities and population, etc.
• Adversity, when overcome, builds resilience
• ACE score can tell you who *might be* at risk
Concerns

- So many screenings
- No validated, norm references
- Assumption - the effect for each ACE is the same
- Confidentiality
- Not paid and takes time to perform
- Uncover ACE’s in the parent or adult caregiver
- What to do with this data?
  - Who refer to?
  - How to counsel?
- Resources
  - Limited or lack of resources
  - Insurance issues
  - Long wait time
Things to Consider

- Staff Education Needs
- Patient/Family Education
- When/Where/How Often to Screen?
- Workflow
- Documentation
- What to Do with “Positive Screens”?  
- Payment
- Potential Harms
Office Screening Options

- Give to every patient – Universal Screening
- Give to every patient in a certain age
- Give to every patient with a certain diagnosis
  - Asthma
  - Allergies
  - Chronic SA
  - ADHD
  - Overweight/Obesity
  - Headaches/Migraines
Open Ended Questions as Alternative to Screening

- “Has your home life changed in any significant way?” (e.g., moving, new people in home, people leaving the home)

- “Since the last time I saw you, has anything really scary or upsetting happened to you or anyone in your family?”

- “Are there any behavior problems at home, at childcare or school, or in the neighborhood?”

Cautions on ACE Screening

https://www.pbs.org/video/adverse-childhood-experiences-ezewgc/

"What you always want to look at is the balance. What's the balance between the challenges and adversities somebody has, and the relational wealth or relational poverty they are experiencing?" - Dr. Bruce Perry
Tipping the Scale

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
Protective Factors

• Nurturing and Attachment
• Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
• Parental Resilience
• Social Connections
• Concrete Support in Time of Need
• Social Emotional Competence of Children

* Free Online Training: http://www.ctfalliance.org/onlinetraining.htm
“What Happens in Childhood Does Not Stay in Childhood”
6 Things That Impact Epigenetic Regulation


- Healthy Relationships
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Mindfulness
- Mental Health Interventions
National Pediatric Practice Community on Adverse Childhood Experiences

Pediatric ACEs and Related Life-Events Screener (PEARLS)

https://nppcaces.org/faqs/
## ACE Results: Community practice, Arizona and Original ACE study

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<th>ACE Scores (original)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>AAKP (%)</th>
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<th>ACE Study</th>
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<td>12</td>
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Out of 100 people...

33% Report No ACEs
- With 0 ACEs
  - 1 in 16 smokes
  - 1 in 69 are alcoholic
  - 1 in 480 use IV drugs
  - 1 in 14 has heart disease
  - 1 in 96 attempts suicide

51% Report 1-3 ACEs
- With 3 ACEs
  - 1 in 9 smokes
  - 1 in 9 are alcoholic
  - 1 in 43 use IV drugs
  - 1 in 7 has heart disease
  - 1 in 10 attempts suicide

16% Report 4-10 ACEs
- With 7+ ACEs
  - 1 in 6 smokes
  - 1 in 6 are alcoholic
  - 1 in 30 use IV drugs
  - 1 in 6 has heart disease
  - 1 in 5 attempts suicide

American Academy of Pediatrics


Resources

- Arizona ACE’s in Action - www.acesconnection.com/g/arizona-aces-in-action
- ACES Too High – http://ac estoohigh.com
- ACES Connection Network – http://www.acesconnection.com
- CDC – http://cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/
- Center for Youth Wellness - https://centerforyouthwellness.org/
- Center on the Developing Brain - https://developingchild.harvard.edu/
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network - www.nctsc.orgNational
- National Pediatric Practice Community (NPPC) - centerforyouthwellness.org/building-a-movement/
- Resilience - http://resiliencetrumpsaces.org/
- Sesame Street -
Resources

• AZ ACE Data
  – 2016 Arizona Youth Survey

• Videos / Movies
  – Brain Hero -https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/brain-hero/
  – How Brains are Built -The Core Story of Brain Development. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmVWOe1ky8s
  – Paper Tigers
  – Resilience
  – Tedmed Nadine Burke - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXXTLf7ouuU

• Books / Articles
  – The Deepest Well (Nadine Burke-Harris MD)
  – AAP - The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress
  – AAP - Early Childhood Adversity, Toxic Stress and the Role of the Pediatrician: Translating Development Science into Lifelong Health
  – Pediatrics - The Science of Early Life Toxic Stress for Pediatric and Advocacy
Complete the Breakout Session Evaluation on the Mobile App