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ACES AND YOU AS A PERSON AND PARENT



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ABOUT ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)



ACES CAN IMPACT YOUR HEALTH, BEHAVIORS AND OPPORTUNITIES

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) adverse childhood experiences “can have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity.” This includes chronic disease and depression, higher risk of liver disease, risky and dangerous behaviors such as smoking, both prescription and illegal drugs, alcoholism, and violence, attempted suicide.

BACKGROUND

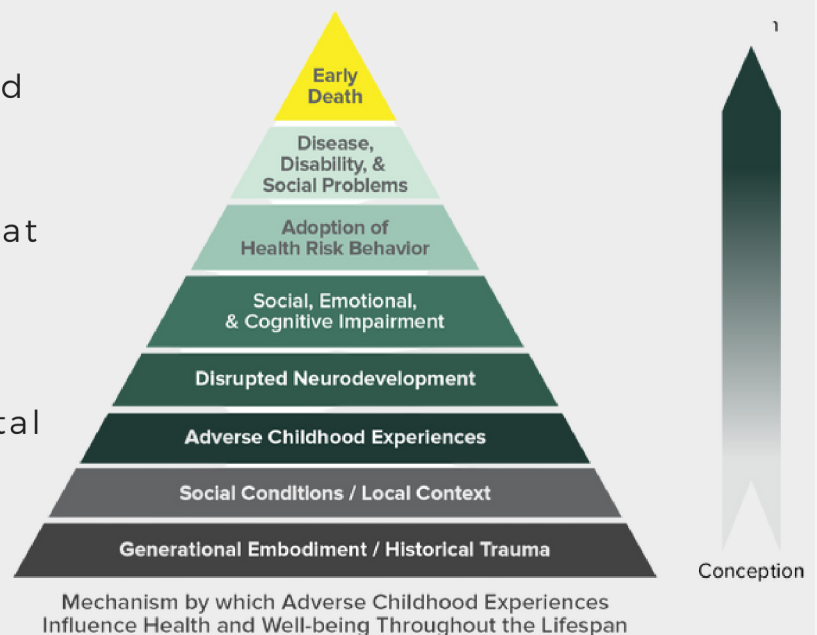
Research presented on Aces Too High also shows that other life outcomes are impacted with a higher ACEs score (above four). This includes poorer worker performance, impacting absenteeism and financial problems. Learn more about ACEs.

The original ACEs contained ten questions, however, recognizing that additional social and demographic factors could impact individuals Philadelphia, Pennsylvania conducted their own ACEs study in 2012-2013. This study added additional questions surveying a population that included more inner-city people of color.

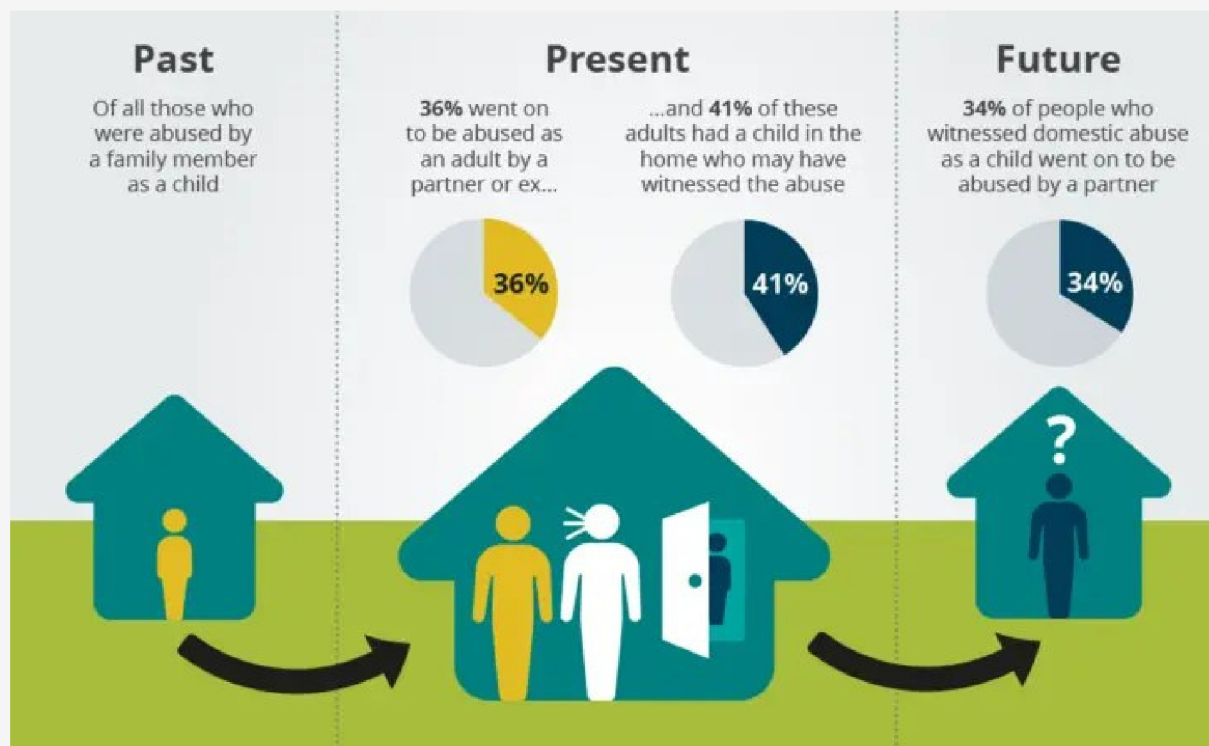
ORIGINAL ACEs STUDY

The original ACEs study leaned more heavily towards white suburban individuals. The Philadelphia study showed that 72.9% had at least one Conventional ACE, 63.4% at least one Expanded ACE, and 49.3% experienced both. A total of 13.9% only experienced the expanded ACEs.

Figure 1. ACE Pyramid Aligned with Socio-Ecological Model



IMPACTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT



Russell Webster Graphic on The Lifelong Impact of Child Abuse

A study by Russell Webster shows the long-term effects of child abuse on adults. Adults who were abused as children are often also abused by a partner or ex-partner (36% of them). Many of these abused adults had children in the home who witnessed that abuse. The children who witnessed abuse may not escape the cycle. More than one third (34%) of these children grow up and are abused by a partner. It must end.

According to the Russell Webster study, "Survivors of childhood abuse rated their well-being as lower than adults who did not experience abuse as a child. They were less likely to be happy, satisfied with life and feel their lives were worthwhile than those who were not abused as children."

IMPACTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Science Helps to Differentiate Four Types of Unresponsive Care				
	OCCASIONAL INATTENTION	CHRONIC UNDER-STIMULATION	SEVERE NEGLECT IN A FAMILY CONTEXT	SEVERE NEGLECT IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING
Features	Intermittent, diminished attention in an otherwise responsive environment	Ongoing, diminished level of child-focused responsiveness and developmental enrichment	Significant, ongoing absence of serve and return interaction, often associated with failure to provide for basic needs	"Warehouse-like" conditions with many children, few caregivers, and no individualized adult-child relationships that are reliably responsive
Effects	Can be growth-promoting under caring conditions	Often leads to developmental delays and may be caused by a variety of factors	Wide range of adverse impacts, from significant developmental impairments to immediate threat to health or survival	Basic survival needs may be met, but lack of individualized adult responsiveness can lead to severe impairments in cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development
Action	No intervention needed	Interventions that address the needs of caregivers combined with access to high-quality early care and education for children can be effective	Intervention to assure caregiver responsiveness and address the developmental needs of the child required as soon as possible	Intervention and removal to a stable, caring, and socially responsive environment required as soon as possible

From Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child: InBrief: The Science of Neglect

Harvard's study indicates that children impacted by child abuse and neglect are also more likely to have struggles with substance abuse, education due to brain development, depression, anxiety, and chronic health issues.

Harvard reported that in 2010, 78% of child maltreatment cases across the country were due to neglect. This is compared to 17% being physical abuse and 9% being sexual abuse.

Explicit child abuse and neglect are only one area counted under ACEs, but other areas can also greatly impact children later in life.



YOUR ACES SCORE

Learning about the childhood experiences that may have adversely affected you may be difficult. However, this personal insight into your present life can also be a powerful opportunity to create change and new ways of being. We can see what is behind some of our current behaviors and how we interact with our loved ones, including how we are raising our children.

If you take the ACEs assessment designed by Bernette Sherman, your score will be based on eighteen questions, including the original ten. Five of these ten are about your household situation and include questions around abuse (physical, verbal and sexual) and neglect (physical and emotional). There is one point scored for each type of trauma you reported. **Higher ACE scores mean there is a higher risk of disease, social, and emotional problems in adulthood.**

The remaining five deal with family members and include questions around family members with characteristics or circumstances including alcoholism, domestic violence, prison or jail, mental illness, divorce, death, or abandonment.

The remaining eight questions deal with additional factors including social, demographic, community, and ethnicity and gender.

WHAT NOW AS A PERSON?

ACEs are just part of the story. And not the end. While ACEs have a strong correlation to social, disease and emotional problems in adulthood, we have the power to overcome the childhood adversity we may have experienced.

If you experienced four or more ACEs, consider seeking licensed professional support in addressing the challenges that may be experienced as a result.

Depending on the ACEs you've experienced, you may also be experiencing challenges parenting your children in a healthy way. We often do what we saw, and there is proof that children who grow up in homes with abuse are more likely to perpetrate abuse as adults.





WHAT NOW AS A PERSON

Other risks of substance abuse, depression, and suicide are also greater with higher ACEs and those risky emotional situations can negatively impact the children around us, causing them to have exposure to more ACEs as well. The cycle continues.

Knowing your ACEs is the beginning. It may be the start to understanding yourself, your triggers, stressors, and even perhaps the unhealthy behaviors and responses you have as a person and a parent. You've taken an important step in learning about your own ACEs. You can have a healthy and productive life, even with ACEs, if you are willing to do the work.

Consider coaching, professional therapy, and energy or spiritual healing to heal and move forward for yourself and your children.

WHAT ABOUT MY CHILDREN?



The research around ACEs is also seen in children who've been exposed to stressors and trauma. Trauma can negatively impact brain development, learning, focus, and executive functioning. It can even present as depression, and children may dissociate.

Morris and Hays-Grudo, et al included in their research that a primary caregiver's unconditional love can result in resilience in children with ACEs and trauma.

Trauma and adverse childhood experiences can turn off a gene while positive childhood experiences and PACEs can turn them on, igniting them. When these chemical modifications of the epigenome switch on or off it may leave a lasting impact or it may be temporary.

The Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University states, in Working Paper 10, that highly stressful experiences that are repetitive in nature can result in epigenetic changes. These changes can harm the ability of our systems to respond to adversity later.

However, there is something that can be done. PACEs!

PACES

There is another branch connected to the childhood experiences, which is often called Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) or Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACES). I'll use the term PACES to describe the power you have as a parent or primary caregiver to change the path of the children in your care. The bottom line is that your healthy love can make the difference between a life impacted by trauma and one of resilience.

This is vitally important if your children have been exposed to ACEs. ACEs have an impact on the development of the young brain. As the brain develops experiences, positive and negative, effect the hardware of the system or all the genes your child has.

The operating system is the combination of those positive and negative experiences overtime, writing onto that hardware telling it what to do, like an operating system. This is the epigenome that determines whether or not the hardware, the genes, are able to do all they are capable of doing.



PACES - YOUR PARENTING SUPERPOWER!

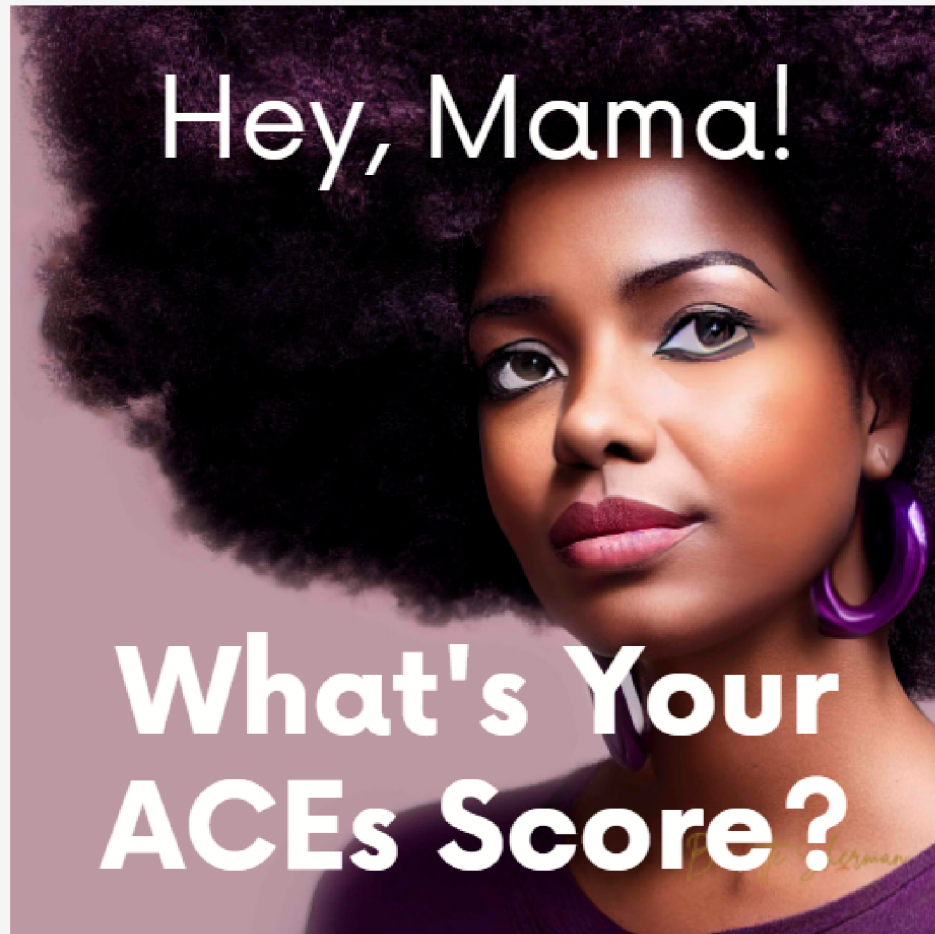
We, as parents and caregivers, have a super power to positively change our children's brains.

Building better bonds with your children means building a better future for your children. You can be the change for future generations.

If you haven't already, get my free pdf booklet, 7 Powerful Ways to Emotionally Feed Your Child and follow me for new tips, resources, events and more.



FIND OUT YOUR ACES



CLICK BUTTON OR SCAN QR CODE

**TAKE THE ACES
ASSESSMENT**



GET MY FREE PDF BOOKLET: 7 POWERFUL TIPS TO EMOTIONALLY FEED YOUR CHILD



LET'S BUILD BETTER BONDS - TOGETHER

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ABOUT BERNETTE SHERMAN



**CERTIFIED PARENT INSTRUCTOR AND LIFE COACH USING
SPIRITUAL GIFTS & SOULFUL SOMATICS TO TRANSFORM LIVES**

Bernette Sherman is a mom and partner/wife first. Seeing her family thrive brings the greatest joy to her spirit. From that joy and what she learns from personal experiences and training she seeks to help others, especially Black women, be and raise good humans.

Bernette's approach recognizes that as Black women we carry burdens those who don't have shared lived and historical experiences don't have. This impacts how we live, parent, and thrive.

Bernette shows up as a coach, spiritual and soulful somatic energy healer, creative and nonfiction writer and mom. Her play, *Four Wives and a Will*, produced by SheATL Summer Theater Festival in 2021 weaves in the impacts of mental health, self-care, and trauma on self and relationships. Bernette is also a daughter, sister, aunt, and friend.



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