The Power of Preventing ACEs

J. Bart Klika, MSW, PhD
Chief Research Officer

CA ACEs ACADEMY
March 18, 2021
Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.

Institute of Medicine
10 Categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences

**ABUSE**
Physical, emotional, or sexual

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
Physical or emotional

- Physical
- Emotional

**HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES**
Growing up in a household with incarceration, mental illness, substance dependence, absence due to separation or divorce, or intimate partner violence

- Mental Illness
- Incarceration
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Substance Dependence
- Parental Separation or Divorce
ACEs are common

61% of surveyed adults reported experiencing at least one ACE

1 in 6 people reported experiencing 4+ ACEs

Females, LGBTQ+ individuals, and most racial/ethnic minority groups are at higher risk of experiencing 4+ ACEs

Sources:
ACEs have a lasting impact across the lifespan

Potential reductions in negative health outcomes

**Health Conditions**
- Depressive Disorder: -44%
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: -27%
- Asthma: -24%
- Kidney Disease: -16%
- Stroke: -15%
- Coronary Heart Disease: -13%
- Cancer: -6%
- Diabetes: -6%
- Overweight/Obesity: -2%

**Health Risk Behaviors**
- Current Smoking: -33%
- Heavy Drinking: -24%

**Socioeconomic Challenges**
- Unemployment: -15%
- Less than a High School Education: -5%
- No Health Insurance: -4%

The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Maternal Depression
- Emotional & Sexual Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence

Adverse Community Environments

- Physical & Emotional Neglect
- Divorce
- Mental Illness
- Incarceration
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Community Disruption
- Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital
- Poor Housing Quality & Affordability
- Violence

---

Role of Public Health in Violence Prevention

ROLE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, CHILD WELFARE, SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTHCARE
CDC’s 6 Strategies to Prevent ACEs

**Strengthen economic supports for families**
- Strengthening household financial security
- Family-friendly work policies

**Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity**
- Public education campaigns
- Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment
- Bystander approaches
- Men and boys as allies in prevention

**Ensure a strong start for children**
- Early childhood home visitation
- High-quality child care
- Preschool enrichment with family engagement

**Teach skills**
- Social-emotional learning
- Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs
- Parenting skills and family relationship approaches

**Connect youth to caring adults and activities**
- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs

**Lessen harms and prevent future risk**
- Enhanced primary care
- Victim-centered services
- Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs
- Treatment to prevent problem behavior and toxic stress
- Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders
Prevention Happens in Partnership
Thank you