



Adverse Childhood Experiences and the ACE Awareness Foundation

When traumatic events such as abuse, violence, or the death of a parent, are experienced in childhood, they can contribute to poor health and well-being in adulthood. Children who experience one or more **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** have an increased chance of heart disease, obesity, depression and suicide, are more prone to alcoholism and drug use, and experience higher rates of criminality, including incarceration and unemployment. Data shows that ACEs not only drive our later-life behaviors, emotions, and physical health, but they also can affect anyone regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or educational level.

ACEs can have lasting effects on...



Health

(obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)



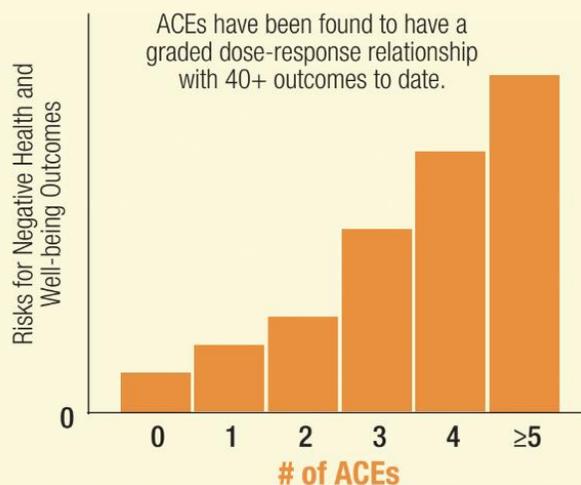
Behaviors

(smoking, alcoholism, drug use)



Life Potential

(graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time for work)



*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Association between ACEs and Negative Outcomes"

To align with early childhood development strategies and make Tennessee a leader in ACEs prevention, **The ACE Awareness Foundation** was founded in 2015. Our focus is to make a

generational impact in our community and the state by preventing ACEs before they can create lasting negative health outcomes.

The Foundation informs the community about the role of emotional trauma in mental, physical, and behavioral health, and implements innovative models that provide preventable and sustainable solutions to reducing toxic stress in family systems.

We've become a leader in the state and nationally in innovating **ACE prevention**. The Foundation is pioneering ACE curriculum development with the University of Memphis, is leading the county's first ACE Aware Community Partnership Initiative training program, and was the catalyst for the State of Tennessee's "Building Strong Brains" initiative.

Understanding that parents are the key to preventing many ACEs, our signature program is **Universal Parenting Places (UPPs)**, revolutionary care centers that provide parents with therapies, information, and intervention tools at the earliest signs of concern. Currently there are four UPPs in Memphis, serving hundreds of families across the area at no cost. With UPPs, we are executing a long-term, preventive, and sustainable approach that reaches ALL families, regardless of income.

Our licensed UPPs counselors offer preventative care and therapies, including:

- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Community outreach
- Community education
- Stress-reducing activities

Why are making licensed counselors available and sustaining preventative models like UPPs important to all Tennesseans? In Tennessee alone, the social services receive \$800 million annually from the Legislature, which historically results in modest results. Government dollars have never been utilized to fund a preventive model. According to Jim Henry, Tennessee Deputy Governor and former head of the Department of Children Services, "*...millions of dollars going toward interventions later in life have not paid off.*"

In an article in *Forbes*, **Senator Bill Frist** added, "*The state government assessed the cost of adverse childhood experiences to communities at more than \$200,000 per child, with one in five Tennesseans having an ACE score of three or more. We are a state that is ripe for change.*"

We couldn't agree more. And the Foundation is positioned to be the catalyst for our state's change, which will result in a healthier tomorrow for all Tennesseans.

Outreach and Partnerships

The ACE Awareness Foundation partners with organizations, leaders, and service providers in an effort to transform our community by helping parents and caregivers limit or prevent a child's chronic exposure to trauma. Current strategic partnerships include:

Universal Parenting Places

Universal Parenting Places (UPPs) provide professional counseling, information, and emotional support for family-related issues or concerns, no matter how large or small. Current UPP locations include **Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women, Christ Community Health Services, Knowledge Quest, and Perea Preschool in Klondike Elementary**. They are open to all families, regardless of income.

Training for Shelby County Health Department & United Way of the Mid-South

A partnership is currently underway with the Foundation, Lakeside Global Institute, the Shelby County Mayor's Office, and the Shelby County Health Department to develop a trauma-informed training program for healthcare professionals working at the Health Department. Once this program is piloted and tested, the Foundation will work with the United Way of the Mid-South to adapt the training for its staff. The Foundation will then be in a position to scale both training programs so it can be offered at other Health Departments as well as other United Way outposts across the state of Tennessee.

ACEs 101

The Foundation recently provided a first-of-its-kind grant to the **University of Memphis** to develop ACE curriculum through interdepartmental collaboration with its College of Nursing, School of Public Health, Department of Social Work, College of Education, Law School, Department of Psychology, and the University College.

ACE Aware Community Partnership Initiative

Across Shelby County, organizations and civic leaders are engaging in an educational workshop hosted by the Foundation. The goal of the ACE Aware Community Partnership Initiative is to create trauma-informed citizens that effectively inform the community about the role of emotional trauma in

mental, physical, and behavioral health; and who seek to provide preventable and sustainable solutions to reducing toxic stress in family systems.

State of Tennessee “Building Strong Brains” Initiative

In 2015, a three-year statewide community awareness campaign initiated by the Foundation was launched by **Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and First Lady Crissy Haslam** at the first-ever Tennessee ACEs Summit.

In addition to Foundation and State of Tennessee leadership, a public and private sector steering committee has been formed, representing leaders of six state agencies that have some oversight of children’s issues in Tennessee, plus leaders of private foundations, health care organizations, and businesses.