

What Are ACEs?

Background on Adverse Childhood Experiences



The Origin of ACEs

ACEs stands for "adverse childhood experiences", which is a term coined through the original ACEs study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente. The original ACEs study was a retrospective population study that looked at the relationship between a set of adverse childhood experiences and current health outcomes of a cohort of adults. Study participants were sent a yes/no-format questionnaire to identify their ACEs exposure.

What was Included in the Original ACEs Questionnaire?

The ten categories of adverse experiences included in the original ACEs questionnaire are typically referred to as the 'original' list of ACEs and include the following:



Psychological Abuse



Physical Abuse



Sexual Abuse



Physical Neglect



Emotional Neglect



Household Substance Use



Household Mental Illness



Violence Against Mother



Incarceration of a Family Member



Divorce or Separation

This research found there is a relationship between the number of ACEs experienced and negative health outcomes later in life.

Ongoing ACEs Research

ACEs research has continued to build and expand on the original study. Ongoing collection of population-level ACEs prevalence data is occurring through several major studies. An emerging area of research and evaluation is focused on understanding the impacts and outcomes of practice that aims to identify and address ACEs. There is significant opportunity to continue generating knowledge by learning from promising practice.



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