

Engaging Douglas County Communities in systematic planning efforts to integrate ACEs science

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



“Oregon is in the middle of transforming three of its largest service-delivery systems that impact children and families: health, education and early childhood. Nothing more tangibly demonstrates the linkages between these three systems than the ACE Study.”¹

What is the ACE Study?

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations ever conducted to assess associations between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. The ACE Study has been described as “the largest, most important public health study you never heard of”. A collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente, the ACE Study is changing the way communities and states “rethink” health, social service, education, and judicial interventions.

The ACE Study findings show that adverse childhood experiences are major risk factors for leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States. The impact of these early experiences on lifetime health and wellbeing is far greater than other known risk factors. ACE research provides data which explains how some of the worst health, education, and social problems in our nation can arise as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences and defines the importance of early intervention and prevention.

¹ David Mandell (2014). The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: How Are the Findings Being Applied in Oregon? The Ford Family Foundation. Accessed at: http://www.tfff.org/sites/default/files/CVFall2014_3.pdf

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention (2014). ACE Study. Accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html>

ACE Study Major Findings²

Childhood abuse, neglect, and exposure to other traumatic stressors are common. Almost two-thirds of study participants reported at least one ACE, more than one in five reported three or more ACEs, and one in six people had an ACE score of 4 or more. The short and long-term outcomes of these childhood exposures include a multitude of health, educational, social and occupational problems throughout life that result from disruptions in normal developmental pathways.

The ACE Study uses the ACE score to assess toxic stress levels during childhood and findings demonstrate a powerful ‘dose response’ relationship: as the number of ACEs go up, the risk for the following health problems increase in a strong and graded fashion.

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Auto Immune Diseases
- Liver disease
- Smoking
- Illicit Drug Use
- Unintended pregnancies
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Fetal Death
- School Failure – early dropout
- Suicide attempts
- Ischemic heart disease
- Health-related quality of life
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic unemployment - Work Absenteeism
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Risk for intimate partner violence

“The implications of the ACE Study are...far reaching: adverse childhood experiences leave a trail of cognitive, behavioral, and health wreckages in their wake, and when untreated, these adverse experiences are often revisited on the next generation.”¹

This publication was made possible by Grant #1SP1AH000019 from the HHS Office of Adolescent Health.



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Risk and Resilience

Beyond risk factors, ACE findings afford a pathway to build resilience in individuals and communities through holistic efforts of prevention and care. Battered Persons' Advocacy (BPA) has received a one year planning grant from Northwest Health Foundation's Healthy Beginnings+Healthy Communities Initiative and is poised to participate in ground breaking change. By introducing ACE research throughout Douglas County, we hope to initiate new understanding that shifts culture, policy, and practice. Efforts are underway across the state and nation to change the conversation from "what is wrong with you?" to "what has happened to you?" and support members of the community as they describe, "I have...I am...I can...". ACE science provides the common foundation for integrating community initiatives too often separated and disconnected. Establishing ACEs as the "common ground" for community change holds potential for mitigating our most critical public health, education, and social issues. Understanding and applying ACE research provides an opportunity to change outcomes in quality, scope and scale. We invite you to join us in this collaborative journey to build a framework for change by preventing ACEs and promoting community health and wellbeing.

If we can Predict It...we can Prevent it'

A planning GRANT for 2015: Applying ACEs in Douglas County

Healthy Beginnings+Healthy Communities will enable BPA to engage Douglas County communities in systematic planning efforts to reduce health disparities through integration of ACE science within our community. The HB+HC grant will promote coordinated, collaborative efforts, and engage consumers of services to plan for local change. This planning grant will bring education about ACEs to our community, will facilitate collaboration with community partners, and will empower consumers to define and describe how to build integrated systems that strengthen resilience, hope, and healing.

Oregon has begun to apply ACE research in many ways. Across Oregon and across the nation work is underway to change our systems of response, prevention, and care to assure they are "culturally appropriate, person-centered and trauma-informed". ACE research is driving this movement through new understanding of the frequency, chronicity, and impact of trauma.³ Oregon collected the first statewide data on ACEs in 2011 and in 2014 adopted the first statewide policy requiring all behavioral health services be Trauma Informed.² "A consistent theme of Oregon's transformation work has been the need not only to think across the sectors, but also across the age continuum and lifespan.¹

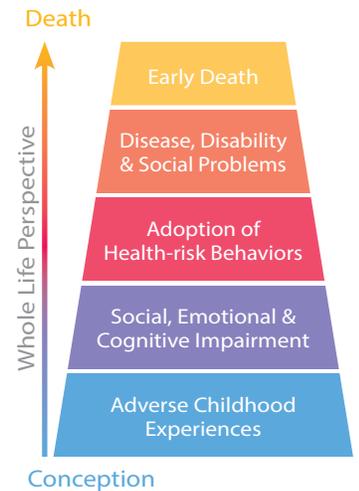
Beyond the health risk story of ACEs, there is a story of resilience. Individuals, families, agencies, systems and communities...all transforming the way they live, do business and participate and interact with one another. "Some cities have set up ACE task forces. Trauma-informed practices are popping up around the U.S., in schools, hospitals, social service agencies, prisons, behavioral health clinics, pediatric practices, crisis nurseries, local public health departments, homeless shelters, substance-abuse clinics, child welfare services, youth services, domestic violence shelters, rehab centers for seniors, residential treatment centers for girls and boys, and courtrooms. In these diverse organizations and settings, the results of the new approach are nothing less than astounding: lives turned around, parents speaking "ACEs" and determined not to pass on their high ACEs to their children, and a significant reduction in costs of health care, social services and criminal justice."⁴ Washington State's integration of ACE research has resulted in "a decrease in youth alcohol and drug use, high school dropout rate, children in out-of-home placement due to abuse or neglect, teen suicide attempts, teen pregnancy, teen violent crime, and domestic violence." In total, Washington estimates a \$55.9 million savings for the state each biennium⁵.

³ Oregon Health Authority (2014). 2015-2018 Behavioral Health Strategic Plan. Accessed at: <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/amh/docs/Behavioral%20Health%20Strategic%20Plan%202015-2018.pdf>

⁴ Stevens, Jane Ellen (2012). The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study — the largest, most important public health study you never heard of — began in an obesity clinic. ACEs Too High News. Accessed at: <http://acetoohigh.com/2012/10/03/the-adverse-childhood-experiences-study-the-largest-most-important-public-health-study-you-never-heard-of-began-in-an-obesity-clinic/>

⁵ The Alliance for Children & Families (2012). Adverse Childhood Experiences Data Links Trauma and Outcomes: New research demonstrates investing in prevention and treatment garners significant returns. Alliance for Children & Families Magazine Issue 1. Accessed at: http://www.alliance1.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/peter/2012-1_aces.pdf

The last 20 years of ACE research has been part of a perfect storm unifying science across many fields from neuroscience to pediatrics.



A Collaborative Effort in Douglas County, Oregon:

- Battered Persons' Advocacy
- Cow Creek Health & Wellness Center
- Department of Human Services - Child/Adult Services
- Douglas County Partners for Student Success
- Family Development Center
- South-Central Oregon Early Learning Hub
- Umpqua Health Alliance

Please Join Us in this community wide effort!



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