

# *The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study*

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(borrowed from the ACE Study website at <http://acestudy.org/home>)



## **ABOUT THE STUDY: What everyone should know!**

Over 17,000 Kaiser Permanente members voluntarily participated in a study to find out about how stressful or traumatic experiences during childhood affect adult health. After all the identifying information about the patients was removed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention processed the information the patients provided in their questionnaires.

### **Here's What We Learned:**

Many people experience harsh events in their childhood. 63% of the people who participated in the study had experienced at least one category of childhood trauma. Over 20% experienced 3 or more categories of trauma which we call **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**.

- ❖ 11% experienced emotional abuse.
- ❖ 28% experienced physical abuse.
- ❖ 21% experienced sexual abuse.
- ❖ 15% experienced emotional neglect.
- ❖ 10% experienced physical neglect.
- ❖ 13% witnessed their mothers being treated violently.
- ❖ 27% grew up with someone in the household using alcohol and/or drugs.
- ❖ 19% grew up with a mentally-ill person in the household.
- ❖ 23% lost a parent due to separation or divorce.
- ❖ 5% grew up with a household member in jail or prison.

ACEs seem to account for one-half to two-thirds of the serious problems with drug use. They increase the likelihood that girls will have sex before reaching 15 years of age, and that boys or young men will be more likely to impregnate a teenage girl. Adversity in childhood causes mental health disorders such as depression, hallucinations and post-traumatic stress disorders.

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The more categories of trauma experienced in childhood, the greater the likelihood of experiencing:

- ❖ alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- ❖ chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- ❖ depression
- ❖ fetal death
- ❖ poor health-related quality of life
- ❖ illicit drug use
- ❖ ischemic heart disease
- ❖ liver disease
- ❖ risk for intimate partner violence
- ❖ multiple sexual partners
- ❖ sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- ❖ smoking
- ❖ obesity
- ❖ suicide attempts
- ❖ unintended pregnancies

**If you experienced childhood trauma, you're not alone.**

Talk with your family health practitioner about what happened to you when you were a child. Ask for help.

For more information about the ACE Study, email [carolredding@acestudy.org](mailto:carolredding@acestudy.org), visit [www.acestudy.org](http://www.acestudy.org), or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: <http://www.cdc.gov/NCCDPHP/ACE/>

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## *Finding Your ACE Score*

**While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:**

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**...

Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?

**or**

Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often**...

Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

**or**

**Ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**...

Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

**or**

Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

4. Did you **often or very often** feel that ...

No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

**or**

Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

5. Did you **often or very often** feel that ...

You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?

**or**

Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

7. Was your mother or stepmother:

**Often or very often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

**or**

**Sometimes, often, or very often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?

**or**

**Ever** repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

10. Did a household member go to prison? Yes No

*If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_*

**Now add up your "Yes" answers: \_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score.**

**Higher score = greater number of negative exposures = greater of negative health consequences.**