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Adverse Childhood Experiences: Raising Awareness & Creating Easier Access to Resources

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ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

RAISING AWARENESS & CREATING EASIER ACCESS TO RESOURCES

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UVMHC FM HINESBURG
NOVEMBER 2020, ROTATION 4
DR. CANGIANO

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction including witnessing violence, having a parent with a substance use disorder or mental illness, parental separation, or witnessing a death by suicide
- ACEs are prevalent
 - Nearly 2/3 of the population has at least 1 ACE and 1 in 6 adults have more than 4 ACEs ¹
 - 1 in 7 children in the U.S. experienced child abuse & neglect in the past year ⁷
 - In Vermont, there were 1,004 children who were victims of child abuse and neglect in the past year ²
- ACEs are associated with negative health outcomes and increased morbidity & mortality throughout one's lifetime. Increased number of ACEs corresponds with increased risk for:
 - Mental health problems (depression, suicide) ⁵
 - Immediate health risks (physical injury, substance use disorder) ⁵
 - Chronic health problems (Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, lung disease) ^{3,4,5,7}
- Patients are often unaware that exposure to ACEs increases one's risk for developing chronic health conditions and I don't see it being discussed. Primary care providers play a role in educating the community on how their behaviors and environment can affect long-term health, identifying risks, and connecting patients to appropriate resource to prevent poor outcomes.

PUBLIC HEALTH COSTS

- It is difficult to estimate the cost associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences due to the vast number of negative outcomes that result from exposure to ACEs
 - An estimated 21 million cases of depression and 1.9 million cases of heart disease are attributed to ACEs and thus could have been prevented ⁷
- One study estimated the total annual costs in North America that could be attributed to ACEs, reporting as \$748 billion ⁸
- In 2015, child abuse and neglect in the U.S. cost \$428 billion ⁷
- In 2013, heart disease cost \$88 billion while depression cost \$71 billion ⁹
- At minimum, ACEs contribute to hundreds of billions of dollars each year

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Michelle Cangiano, MD

Family Medicine Physician

- The PHQ-2 and Social Determinants of Health screen are given annually to every patient at the UVMHC Hinesburg family medicine office. Therefore, depression, financial instability, food insecurity, housing insecurity, transportation barriers, and physical abuse are being screened for. There is no ACEs screening tool being used and ACEs are not being tracked.
- The most common identifiable problems in Dr. Cangiano's patient population are food insecurity and parental mental health. She expressed that parents often do not realize how much their mood affects their children.
- When patients screen positive for any question, Dr. Cangiano uses shared decision making to create a plan on how these problems can be addressed. This often involves providing resources and connecting the patient with the community health team, which includes a social worker who follows up with them within one week.
- Dr. Cangiano believes much of the work that needs to be done to prevent ACEs is societal and could potentially be accomplished through petitioning and advocacy work. More social supports need to be put in place for the community.

Dr. Peter Jackson, MD

Child & Adolescent Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine

- On the inpatient Child & Adolescent Psychiatry unit at CVPH, ACEs are assessed with "taking a good history" rather than via a screening tool. He is able to have in depth conversations about each child's home life and directly asks questions about abuse, neglect and household dysfunction.
- Almost all of Dr. Jackson's patients have at least one ACE, he estimates this to be 80-90% of his patient population. He believes parental substance use and emotional neglect are the most common problems he sees.
- Each child who enters the unit is immediately assigned a social worker who helps connect the child to community resources to address ACEs from many different angles.
- Dr. Jackson believes the solution to preventing ACEs is to offer more support to parents and specifically address multigenerational trauma, intervening early before children fall into the same pattern as their parents. It is most importantly the job of each parent to prevent ACEs but the responsibility also falls on every person who has a role in a child's life— teachers, social workers, physicians, coaches, mentors, etc.

INTERVENTION AND METHODOLOGY

Preventing ACEs	
Strategy	Approach
Strengthen economic supports to families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening household financial security• Family-friendly work policies
Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education campaigns• Legislative approaches to reduce corporal punishment• Bystander approaches• Men and boys as allies in prevention
Ensure a strong start for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early childhood home visitation• High-quality child care• Preschool enrichment with family engagement
Teach skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social-emotional learning• Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs• Parenting skills and family relationship approaches
Connect youth to caring adults and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentoring programs• After-school programs
Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced primary care• Victim-centered services• Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs• Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence• Family-centered treatment for substance use disorders

These strategies focus on changing norms, environments, and behaviors in ways that can prevent ACEs from happening in the first place. The last strategy focuses on mitigating the immediate and long-term physical, mental, and behavioral consequences of ACEs. By addressing the conditions that give rise to ACEs and simultaneously addressing the needs of children and parents, these strategies take a multi-generation approach to prevent ACEs and ensure safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments. Together, these strategies are intended to work in combination and reinforce each other to prevent ACEs and achieve synergistic impact.

- The goal of this project is to raise awareness about the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences, educate patients on how ACEs are related to health, and make resources more readily available to patients.
- How this was accomplished:
 - Placed pre-existing CDC flyers addressing ACEs and health related outcomes on the bulletin boards in patient exam rooms to raise awareness and provide education.
 - Created an additional flyer targeted to parents and caregivers promoting “positive parenting” and provided three separate QR codes that will direct patients to online parenting resources on their smart phones.
- By placing flyers in exam rooms, the information is likely to be noticed. By using QR code technology, it is hypothesized that people will be more likely to access the resources compared to being told to visit a website.
- The CDC has made ACE prevention a priority. The information provided by this project addresses several of the CDC strategies to prevent ACEs, such as promoting social norms that protect against violence, ensuring a strong start, teaching skills, and connecting youth to caring adults and activities.

RESULTS

- The CDC Vital Signs flyer provides easy to read information to inform patients about Adverse Childhood Experiences, explains why they matter, demonstrates an association with long-term health outcomes and explain how everybody can contribute to the prevention of ACEs.

POSITIVE PARENTING
Parenting is not easy! We know that. However, we are here to help. Have you heard of "positive parenting"? It refers to a caring, nurturing, involved, and non-violent relationship with your children that is also firm and teaches discipline. The way you speak to your children, how you react to their challenging behaviors, and the structure you enforce has a lasting impact on their lives. Below are several resources that provide parenting advice. We want you to feel supported!

QUICK ACCESS TO HELPFUL RESOURCES!
How to scan the QR codes below:
1) Open your smart phone camera
2) Hover over the code as if you were going to take a picture
3) Click the banner that pops up and you will be directed to the website link!

Healthchildren.org: This link is a great resource for reliable information regarding child health & well-being for all age groups. There are thousands of articles, with tips on:

- Nutrition
- Fitness
- Emotional health
- Sleep
- Oral health
- Safety

Circleofparents.org: Unsure of how to effectively respond to a certain behavior? This link provides effective parenting strategies and helpful tips for how to approach specific situations, such as:

- Setting rules
- Enforcing chores
- Controlling tantrums
- Handling resistance
- Establishing good study habits

Del.vermont.gov: This link will bring you to the parenting page of the VT Department for Children & Families which provides various resources, such as:

- Additional links for parenting tips
- Local activities for children
- Links & contact info for the VT Parent Child Centers
- How to talk to teens about substance use
- Access to the Vermont Parents' Home Companion & Resource Directory (VPHC)
- Search for quality child care

- The second flyer is directed specifically towards parents because they are likely to have the greatest impact on a child's life and therefore can contribute most to the prevention of ACEs.
- Various resources are provided via QR codes with instructions to easily access the sites from their phone. There is a brief summary about what you will find on each website.
- Promotion of "positive parenting" as an approach to non-violent and effective discipline

Vital Signs
Preventing early trauma to improve adult health

Want to learn more?
www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces

1 in 6 1 in 6 adults experienced four or more types of ACEs.

5 of 10 At least 5 of the top 10 leading causes of death are associated with ACEs.

44% Presenting ACEs could reduce the number of adults with depression by as much as 44%.

Overview:
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. However, ACEs can be prevented.

Preventing ACEs can help children and adults thrive and potentially:

- Lower risk for conditions like depression, asthma, cancer, and diabetes in adulthood.
- Reduce risky behaviors like smoking, and heavy drinking.
- Improve education and job potential.
- Stop ACEs from being passed from one generation to the next.

PROBLEM:
Adverse Childhood Experiences impact lifelong health and opportunities.
ACEs are common and the effects can add up over time.

- 61% of adults had at least one ACE and 16% had 4 or more types of ACEs.
- Females and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for experiencing 4 or more ACEs.
- Many people do not realize that exposure to ACEs is associated with increased risk for health problems across the lifespan.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Preventing ACEs could reduce a large number of health conditions.

UP TO 21 MILLION CASES OF DEPRESSION

UP TO 1.9 MILLION CASES OF HEART DISEASE

UP TO 2.5 MILLION CASES OF OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY

Potential reduction of negative outcomes in adulthood

HEALTH CONDITIONS

Depression	-44%
Heart Disease	-37%
Cancer	-34%
Diabetes	-15%
Asthma	-13%
Chronic Pain	-9%
Substance Use	-6%
Mental Illness	-2%

HEALTH RISK BEHAVIORS

Smoking	-33%
Heavy Drinking	-24%

SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Poverty	-15%
Unemployment	-9%
Low Education	-4%

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAN:

- Anticipate and recognize current risk for ACEs in children and history of ACEs in adults. Refer patients to effective services and support.
- Link adults to family-centered treatment approaches that include substance abuse treatment and parenting interventions.

EMPLOYERS CAN:

- Adapt and support family-friendly policies, such as paid family leave and flexible work schedules.

STATES AND COMMUNITIES CAN:

- Improve access to high-quality childcare by expanding eligibility, activities offered, and family involvement.
- Use effective social and economic supports that address financial hardship and other conditions that put families at risk for ACEs.
- Enhance connections to caring adults and increase parent- and youth skills to manage emotions and conflicts using approaches in schools and other settings.

EVERYONE CAN:

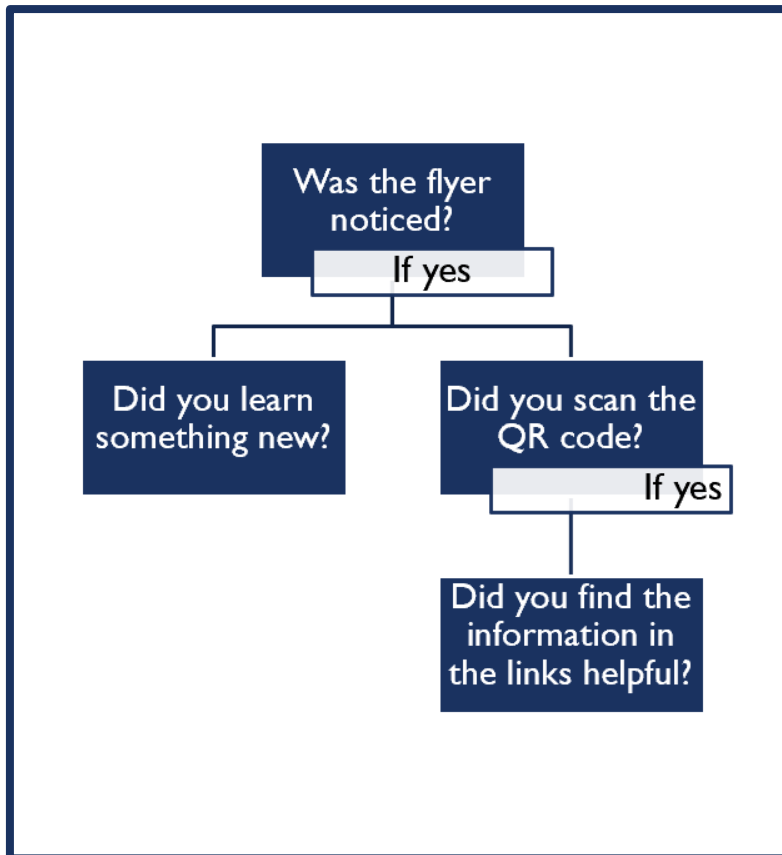
- Recognize challenges that families face and offer support and encouragement to reduce stress.
- Support community programs and policies that provide safe and healthy conditions for all children and families.

Raising awareness about ACEs can help:

- Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or for substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

For more information:
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-6338)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Web: www.cdc.gov
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Publication date: November 5, 2019

EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS & LIMITATIONS



- The image to the left represents the questions that could be asked in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this project
- A survey could be administered to every patient either at discharge or on the “MyChart” account
- Due to time constraints, the effectiveness of this project was not evaluated
- Other limitations include:
 - Limited space on flyers to provide information and number of QR codes
 - Limited accessibility– patients need to have a smart phone in order to access links with QR code
 - Patients who do not speak English, are unable to read, or have significant visual impairments will not benefit

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

- Implement a screening tool for ACEs at UVMMC primary care offices
 - ACE Questionnaire for Adults⁶
 - To the right is an example of California's adult screening tool
 - Pediatric ACEs and Related Life-events Screener (PEARLS)⁶
- Track the prevalence of ACEs or other barriers to healthcare in the patient population in order to better understand the community's needs
 - Work with social workers to provide frequent follow-up to ensure available resources are being utilized and needs are being appropriately addressed
- Evaluate stress management techniques, coping skills and resiliency in the patient population and provide resources when appropriate

Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire for Adults
California Surgeon General's Clinical Advisory Committee

aces aware
SCREEN. TREAT. HEAL.

Our relationships and experiences—even those in childhood—can affect our health and well-being. Difficult childhood experiences are very common. Please tell us whether you have had any of the experiences listed below, as they may be affecting your health today or may affect your health in the future. This information will help you and your provider better understand how to work together to support your health and well-being.

Instructions: Below is a list of 10 categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). From the list below, please add up the number of categories of ACEs you experienced prior to your 18th birthday and put the total number at the bottom. (You do not need to indicate which categories apply to you, only the total number of categories that apply.)

Did you feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or had no one to protect or take care of you?
Did you lose a parent through divorce, abandonment, death, or other reason?
Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide?
Did you live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or using drugs, including prescription drugs?
Did your parents or adults in your home ever hit, punch, beat, or threaten to harm each other?
Did you live with anyone who went to jail or prison?
Did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down?
Did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?
Did you feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were special?
Did you experience unwanted sexual contact (such as fondling or oral/anal/vaginal intercourse/penetration)?
Your ACE score is the total number of yes responses.

Do you believe that these experiences have affected your health? Not Much Some A Lot

Experiences in childhood are just one part of a person's life story.
There are many ways to heal throughout one's life.

Please let us know if you have questions about privacy or confidentiality.

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