The CDC’s Vital Signs/ACEs report represents a milestone in our collective understanding of the overall health and socioeconomic impacts of ACEs in this country and what can be done to prevent them.

For this report data were collected between 2015 and 2017 through the BRFSS from more than 144,000 adults in 25 states.

Takeaway #1: ACEs are common—probably more common than you think—nearly 61% of all respondents experienced at least one type of ACEs.

Additionally, nearly one in six respondents (16%) reported four or more types of ACEs.

Females and American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic groups were more likely to experience 4 or more ACEs. Evidence supports that some children and families are at greater risk for ACEs due to the historical, social, structural, political, and economic environments in which they live.

Takeaway #2: The effects of ACEs add up over time and impact our health and life outcomes.

The more types of adversities you experience, the higher your risk of experiencing poor health outcomes, like depression, overweight/obesity, and cardiovascular disease.

Also, you are more likely to engage in health risk behaviors, such as smoking and heavy drinking, and to experience poor socioeconomic outcomes, such as unemployment.

(cont’d.)
• For example, odds of depression were five times higher among adults with high levels of ACEs exposure v. those reporting no ACEs exposure.

• Takeaway #3: Preventing ACEs could help prevent poor health and life outcomes.

• At least five of the top ten leading causes of death are associated with ACEs

• This study found that preventing ACEs could potentially result in a:
  o 44% reduction in depression
  o 26% reduction in COPD
  o 24% reduction in heavy drinking
  o Almost 13% reduction in coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the US

• Applied to national estimates in 2017, this translates to up to 1.9 million cases of coronary heart disease...
  o 2.5 million cases of overweight or obesity
  o 1.5 million instances of high school noncompletion, and
  o 21 million cases of depression that would have been potentially avoided by preventing ACEs

• Plus, reductions in socioeconomic challenges, including a nearly 15% reduction in unemployment.

• Takeaway #4: ACEs are preventable.

• Creating the conditions for safe, stable, nurturing relationships for children, families, and entire communities are fundamental to preventing ACEs.

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There are many ways to achieve this:
- Strengthening economic supports for families (EITC and family-friendly work policies)
- Promoting social norms that protect against violence and adversity (public education campaigns);
- Ensuring a strong start for children (high quality child care and home visiting programs, such as Healthy Families America);
- Enhancing skills to help adults and youth handle stress, manage emotions and tackle everyday challenges;
- Connecting youth to caring adults and activities (mentoring and programs)
- Intervening to lessen immediate and long-term harms (e.g., enhanced primary care to identify and address ACEs exposures through screenings, referrals, and supports)

We must approach ACEs prevention comprehensively and collaboratively...because prevention happens in partnership.

This means focusing on primary prevention and comprehensive approaches to prevention, working closely with our partners in the child abuse and neglect prevention field.

It also means engaging partners outside the field, such as the business sector, media, and national, state, and local legislators.

We all have a role to play in preventing early adversity and ACEs.

Together, we can prevent child abuse, America—because childhood lasts a lifetime.