

Vital Signs/ACEs Report Talking Points

- 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.

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- 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:
 - 44% reduction in depression
 - 26% reduction in COPD
 - 24% reduction in heavy drinking
 - 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...
 - 2.5 million cases of overweight or obesity
 - 1.5 million instances of high school noncompletion, and
 - 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.