

## What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years).

For example:

- experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
- witnessing violence in the home or community
- having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with:

- substance misuse
- mental health problems
- instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education and job opportunities. However, ACEs can be prevented.



## What Can We Do?

ACEs are preventable. Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full potential.

Get educated. Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention Services offers a course on the basics of ACEs and how individuals can make a difference. For more information on classes, contact Patricia Crumrine at 757-385-0815 or pcrumrine@vb.gov.com.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



## Why do ACEs matter?

ACEs can have lasting, negative effects on health, well-being, and opportunity. These experiences can increase the risks of injury, sexually transmitted infections, maternal and child health problems, teen pregnancy, involvement in sex trafficking, and a wide range of chronic diseases and leading causes of death such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and suicide.

Children growing up with toxic stress may have difficulty forming healthy and stable relationships. They may also have unstable work histories as adults and struggle with finances, jobs, and depression throughout life. These effects can also be passed on to their own children. Some children may face further exposure to toxic stress from historical and ongoing traumas due to systemic racism or the impacts of poverty resulting from limited educational and economic opportunities.

Information gathered from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information on the above topic, [click here](#).

Virginia Beach's Behavioral Health Wellness and Prevention Services