

Sacramento Promise Zone

Mind, Body, & Spirit
Health Series



**Adverse Childhood
Experiences (ACEs)
Awareness and Resilience**

Digital Guide



**Samuel Merritt
University**



Sacramento Promise

ZONE

Connecting partners and resources

Intro

The Sacramento Promise Zone has partnered with Samuel Merritt University to host a bimonthly mind, body, & spirit webinar series that features medical professionals sharing information focused on improving health outcomes and eliminating disparities.

This digital guide offers the valuable information from the webinar series in a convenient, accessible, and printable format. Just like the webinars themselves, the guide is completely free to download, re-upload, and share with others. We encourage you to share it with all of your networks, family, and friends. Together, we can make an impact on the health disparities that our communities face.

For more information, please visit the official website [here](#).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Awareness and Resilience

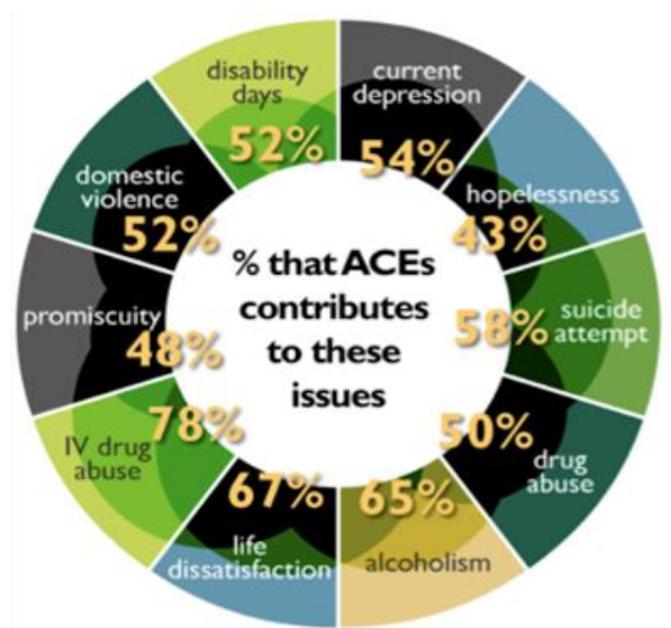
Presenter: Wendie Skala, RN, BSN, MS - Resilient Sacramento ACEs Connection



- **Adverse childhood experiences** are very stressful events or circumstances that children may experience during their childhood.
 - In Sacramento County, 21% of children report having two or more adverse childhood experiences.
 - 20 years of extensive international research have since shown a strong predictive relationship between the number of ACEs one is exposed to as a child and the probability of physical, mental, and social-behavioral problems occurring throughout childhood into adult life and being passed on to the next generation.
 - Sacramento Violence Intervention Program (SVIP) launched in 2010 by Kaiser and WellSpace Health to address re-injury and retaliation. Very successful in preventing reinjury.
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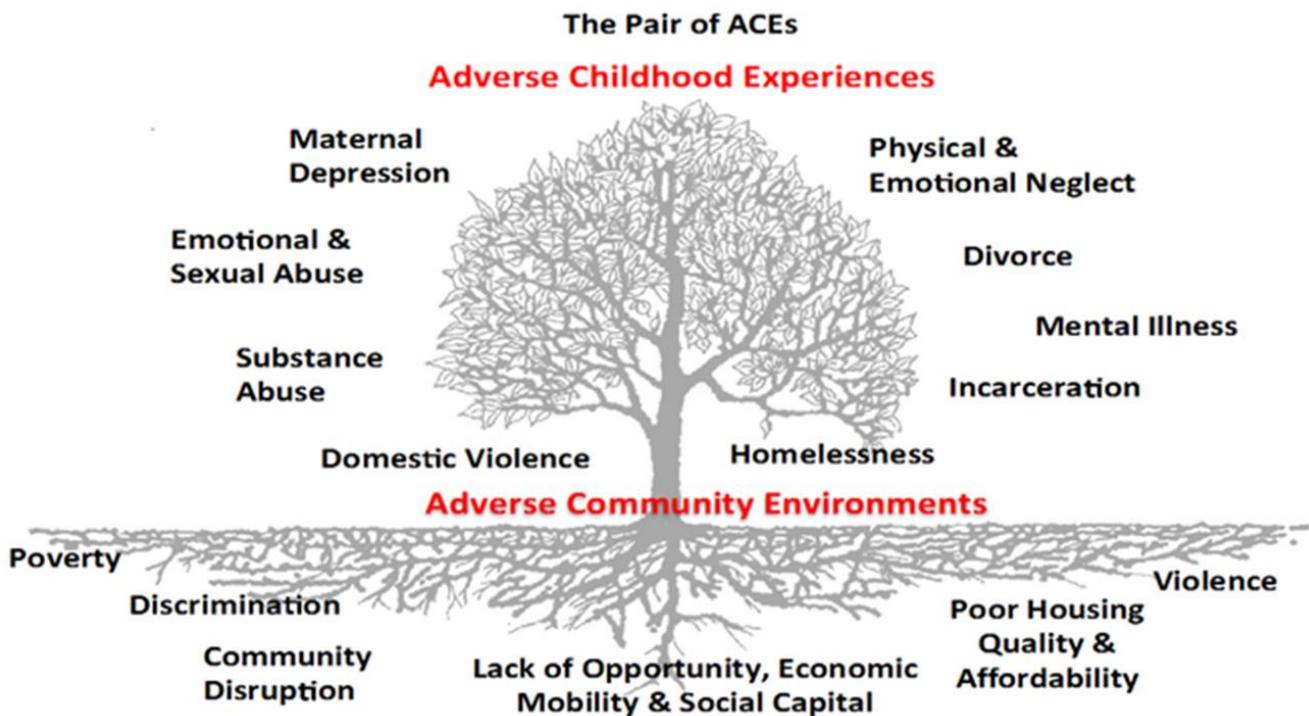
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Awareness and Resilience

- Five major parts of ACEs science:
 1. **Epidemiology** – ACE study and expanded ACE surveys
 2. **Impact on the brain** – Toxic stress caused by ACEs impact children while they and their brains are still developing.
 3. **Impact on the body** – Health consequences of toxic stress (short & long-term)
 4. **Epigenetics** – Generation-to-generation impact/historical trauma.
 5. **Resilience** – Body can heal. Brain is plastic. Relationships & resources as resilience.
- The first ACE study was performed by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente.
- There are 10 major types of childhood trauma. The usual suspects are abuse and neglect. There are also five household dysfunctions that many people consider normal, due to how common they are.
- ACEs also include other childhood adversity such as racism, sexism, bullying, witnessing violence, and living in an unsafe neighborhood.
- CDC/Kaiser study found five major results:
 - Childhood trauma is extraordinarily common. Nearly 2/3 of the 17,000 mostly-white, college-educated people with healthcare in the Kaiser system have experienced at least one type of serious and chronic childhood adversity. 12% reported having four or more.
 - There is an unmistakable link between ACEs and the adult onset of chronic disease, mental illness, violence, and becoming a victim of violence.



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Awareness and Resilience

- ACEs contribute to most of our major chronic health, mental health, economic health, and social health issues.
- It didn't matter what the type of ACEs were. An ACE score of 4 that included divorce, physical abuse, an incarcerated family member, and a depressed family member, had the same statistical health consequences as an ACE score of 4 that included living with an alcoholic, verbal abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect.
- Sacramento: How does it stack up?
 - In Sacramento County, 19% of all households report 4 or more ACEs. That's 1/5 of the population with an increased risk of adverse health consequences.
- Since the CDC study, the list of ACE types has been expanded to also include **adverse community environments**.



- We all need positive stress in order to thrive. Life has its ups and downs and comes with tolerable, temporary stress, with time allowed for recovery.
- **Toxic stress** = Extreme or frequent activation of the body's stress response without the buffering presence of a supportive adult. It damages the function and structure of a kid's brain.
 - Floods the brain with stress hormones and triggers flight-or-freeze mode. Thinking brain goes offline and doesn't develop as it should.
 - **Fight, flight, or freeze** is a normal, expected response to trauma, preventing kids from learning properly. Kids experiencing trauma act out. They can't focus or sit still, or they withdraw.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Awareness and Resilience

- Schools often respond by expelling or suspending students, which further traumatizes them.
- As children get older, they cope by drinking, overeating, doing drugs, smoking, overachieving or engaging in thrill sports.
 - Nicotine reduces anxiety. Food soothes. Some drugs, like meth, act as antidepressants.
- **Genetic consequences** – Toxic stress can turn genes on or off. These changes can then be transferred from parent to child. The science of epigenetics reveals how the choices you make can change your genes – and those of your kids. Also referred to as historical trauma, or generational trauma.
- **Historical trauma** –
 - *Example:* Native American children taken from their parents to attend the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania around the 1900s.
 - *Example:* Public policies of slavery



- It has been projected that, without intervention, those with 6 or more ACEs live **20 years less** than people with 6 or less ACEs.
 - Good news: Our brains are plastic, and our bodies are able to heal. We know a lot about how to increase individual resilience and reduce stress hormones in our bodies and our brains.
 - ACEs Aware Program – Launched by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, the CA Surgeon General as of March 2021. Pledged to decrease ACEs by 50% over the next decade. www.acesaware.org
 - ACEs Connection – 55,000 members across the globe. www.ACEsConnection.com
 - Resilient Sacramento - 290 members. www.ACEsConnection.com/g/Sacramento
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Presenter

Wendie Skala, RN, BSN, MS
Resilient Sacramento ACEs Connection



Wendie Skala is the Resilient Sacramento ACEs Connection Steering Committee Lead. She has a diverse nursing background including intensive care, emergency and air medical evacuation nursing. Wendie also is a Retired Lt. Col. in the Air Force and has served seven deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Most recently, she was the Injury Prevention Coordinator for Kaiser Permanente's first trauma center in South Sacramento. She is also Adjunct Faculty at Samuel Merritt's School of Nursing. Wendie is passionate about spreading the word about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resiliency throughout the community.

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Special Thanks



Dr. Alice Vestergaard
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AmeriCorps



The Mind, Body and Spirit series is also made possible by the AmeriCorps VISTA members of the [Sacramento Promise Zone](#).

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