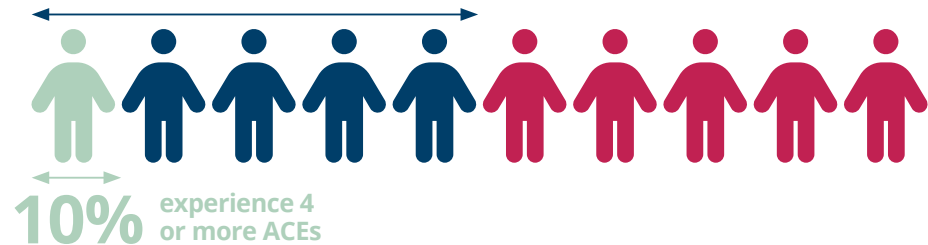


ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

HOW COMMON ARE THEY?

They are very common

50% of people reported experiencing at least 1 ACE before the age of 18



WHAT ARE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES OR ACES?

The term 'ACEs' or 'adverse childhood experiences' refers to 10 categories of highly stressful and potentially traumatic life experiences that happen before the age of 18 years. These are:

- 1 Parental mental illness,
- 2 Parental drug misuse,
- 3 Parental alcoholism
- 4 Living with a parent or adult who went to prison or youth offending institution
- 5 Parental divorce or separation
- 6 Exposure to domestic abuse
- 7 Emotional abuse
- 8 Sexual abuse
- 9 Physical abuse
- 10 Neglect



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS I CAN LOOK OUT FOR?

Children and young people who have experienced trauma can display some or all of the following:

- 1 Distressing mental intrusions and memories of the event,
- 2 A strong desire to avoid reminders of what happened and
- 3 Appear highly stressed, constantly on the lookout for danger and threat and
- 4 Demonstrate a heightened stress response (struggling to relax, problems sleeping, being easily startled, having outbursts of anger or aggression and irritability).
- 5 Difficulty navigating relationships, have
- 6 Reduced concentration, and may experience
- 7 Physical symptoms like headaches, nausea and increased blood pressure and heart rate, tiredness, muscle tension, joint pain, back pain or other types of pain.

<https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/>
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>
<https://advising.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/341/2020/07/The-Road-to-Resiliency.pdf>

Next time you are working with a child whose behaviour is challenging or concerning take time to reflect on the following prompts:

This is not about me, this child is experiencing their stress response, so what has made them feel threatened or unsafe? 'What can I do to help them feel safe again?

What has happened to this child for them to behave in this way in this situation?

Or

Or maybe

What situation or circumstance have they had to survive in order for this (behaviour) to be how they cope?

I need to help this child, feel calm and safe again before they can think clearly and then together we can make sense of what just happened. Problem solving and solutions can't be worked through while someone is highly stressed, upset or angry.

Or

TAKE HOME MESSAGES



ACES are common and will affect half of the children in your sports club,



Knowing the signs and think of behaviour as a form of communication,



Positive childhood experiences, including safe adult relationships and participation in sport can contribute to resilience and be protective



You have a unique opportunity to help children affected by ACEs to feel safe, connect with peers and trusted adults, build ways of coping and contribute to their resilience.



If you have any concerns ask for help from your Club Safeguarding Officer or Local Authority Duty Social Worker. You can contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

To access the complete range of resources
please scan the QR code or visit:
nwgnetwork.org/voices-in-sport

