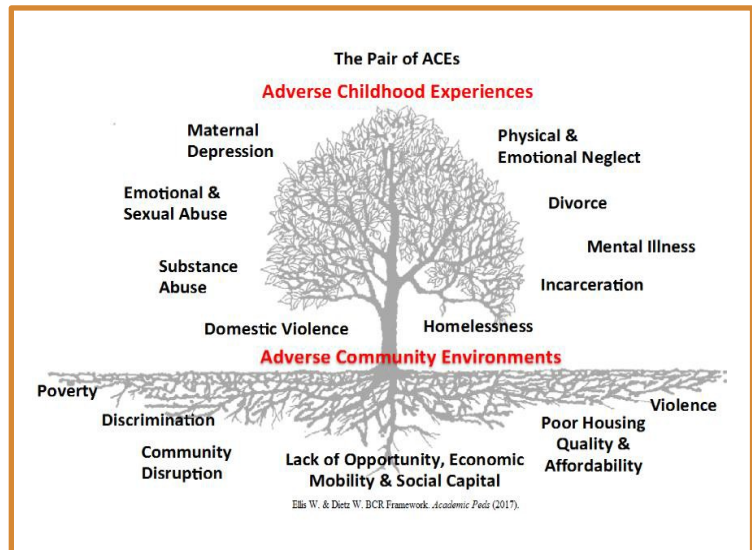




THE PAIR OF ACEs

Knowledge to Action Brief

Children and adults who have had adverse childhood experiences often live in communities that are affected by widespread adversity. Significant health and well-being inequalities exist among the children and adults living in these adverse community environments. As illustrated in the “Pair of ACEs Tree,” [pictured right] adverse community environments can foster adverse childhood experiences. Current research addresses the interconnectedness of Adverse Community Environments (ACEs) and the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that form the Pair of Aces (Ellis & Dietz, 2017).



The Pair of ACEs can inform communities on ways to frame and address the adversity in their locality or population of interest. For example, children who live in poverty are three times more likely to be abused and seven times more likely to be neglected than children in higher socioeconomic status families (Sedlak et al., 2010). Therefore, when efforts are made to address adverse community environments like poverty, families may be less likely to experience chronic stress and more likely to meet their child’s basic needs; this can result in lowered adverse childhood experiences and greater community resilience.

“Fostering collaboration and developing strategic partnerships, multiple sectors can come together in an effort to build stronger, healthier and more resilient communities” (Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention & Wellness, 2017). Family strengthening professionals and prevention partners can team up with stakeholders and communities to utilize their existing strengths to build resilience and mitigate adverse childhood experiences and environments.

Take Action

Start building **community resilience** today!

1. Challenge your organization to explore root causes and other systemic issues when discussing adversity. Have your agency review the different tools and frameworks that are available for building community resilience and discuss their practicality for the communities you serve. Create steps to take toward implementation. There are a few tools and frameworks listed in the references and resources section to begin your review.
2. Engage in opportunities to join a Prevention Learning Community, participate in a community collaborative, or join a network/coalition in your area. Engaging stakeholders and forming strategic partnerships is a critical part of building community resilience.
3. Sign up for a training on “The Pair of ACEs: Building Community Resilience”, where you will

learn about the crucial foundations for building resilient communities and identify techniques for addressing the root causes of ACEs to help alleviate their effect in your community.

For further information or additional resources, contact the Social Policy Institute at: www.sdsusocialpolicyinstitute.org, socialpolicyinstitute@sdsu.edu

Resources:

ACEs Aware: www.acesaware.org

New Jersey Department of Children and Families. *New jersey aces statewide action plan*. (2021, February). Retrieved from: <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/documents/NJ.ACEs.Action.Plan.2021.pdf>

PACEs Connection: www.acesconnection.com

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Porter L., Martin, K., & Anda, R. (2016, June). *Self-healing communities: A transformational process for improving intergenerational health*. Princeton, NJ: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

SDSU Social Policy Institute/Strategies 2.0. *Building community resilience toolkit series*. Retrieved from: <https://sdsusocialpolicyinstitute.org/category/toolkit/>

Weinstein, E., Wolin, J., & Rose, S. (2014, May). *Trauma informed community building: A model for strengthening communities in trauma affected neighborhoods*. Retrieved from: <http://BridgeHousing.com/PDFs/TICB.Paper5.14.pdf>

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Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention & Wellness & Milken Institute School of Public Health. (2017, March). *Building community resilience: Coalition building and communications guide*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Sedlak et al., (2010). *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.



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Across the lifespan, everyone is safe, educated, healthy and well; with a sense of belonging, purpose, and opportunity to achieve their aspirations.

