Adverse Childhood Experiences: How Faith Based & Community Organizations Can Promote Resiliency

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ACE Study
• 17,000 Middle class
• 75% White sample
• 2 out of 3 adults have at least 3 ACE

Widespread Prevalence of ACEs

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Household dysfunction
- Substance abuse 27%
- Parental separation/divorce 23%
- Mental illness 17%
- Battered mother 13%
- Incarcerated family member 6%

Abuse
- Psychological 11%
- Physical 28%
- Sexual 21%

Neglect
- Emotional 15%
- Physical 10%

Source: V. Felitti, 2005

ACES linked to many problems….

Substance Abuse  Domestic Violence  Delinquency
Child Abuse  Mental Health Issues  Health Problems

We now know more than ever before of the long-term effects of ACES …

TED Talk Video: 3 minute clip. Nadine Burke Harris, MD
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Multigenerational Cycle of Adversity

ACE Transmission Risk

Changing the ACEs Trajectory: Early Childhood Court

Overview of Florida's Early Childhood Court Initiative (5 minutes):
https://youtu.be/q4iXNpAYtU8

Changing ACES Trajectory

Healthy

At Risk

Delayed or Disordered

Nurturing & Stable Adults Can Buffer Toxic Stress for Children

Becoming Foster Parents
Offering Parenting Classes
Hosting Family Events
Parents Night Out
Building Support Groups

High Quality Child Care Can Buffer ACES & Change Trajectory

Source: The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
Targeted Supports Can Change ACES Trajectory

- Trauma Trained Health Professionals
- ACE screen
- Multidisciplinary team
- Home visits
- Care coordination
- Mental health services
- Nutrition
- Medication when necessary
- Parent education on trauma

TED Talk: 1 minute video clip Nadine Burke Harris Solution

Intensive Interventions Can Change ACES Trajectory

- Professional Counselors/Therapists Within the Church, Courts, Health Care and Community Organizations

Resiliency: The Ability to Bounce Back & Gracefully Recover from Adversity

Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities.

Ann Masten, 2001, p. 9

Ways the Faith Based Community Can Help Foster Resiliency

1. Social Connections
2. Listening
3. Inspiration
4. Coping
5. Forgiveness
6. Life Purpose
7. Hope

Social Connections

A strong support network of friends helps to keep us happier and healthier.

Listening Skills

Slowly, I have come to see that Asking and Listening and Accepting are a profound form of Doing.
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Inspiration
Inspiring others to believe they can accomplish their dreams

Coping Strategies
Replacing destructive coping strategies for constructive ways of handling stress

Know When You’re Over Your Head: Get Professional Supports

Forgiveness & Healing Inner Wounds
“We do not treat our patients to cure them of something done to them in the past; rather we are trying to cure them of what they still do to themselves and to others in order to cope with what was done to them in the past.”

- Phillip Bromberg

Solution to Addictions: Quit Chasing the Drug, Focus on ACEs
• Compulsive comfort-seeking is a normal response to the adversity experienced in childhood.
• The solution to changing the illegal or unhealthy compulsive comfort-seeking behavior to addiction is to:
  − Address ACEs individually and in group therapy
  − Treat people with respect instead of shame
  − Provide medication assistance used to treat addictions
  − Help them find alternative comfort-seeking behavior that isn’t lethal or illegal.

Life Purpose

Faith
Spirituality
Religion
Sense of purpose

Some resilient individuals draw strength from religion, others benefit from spirituality, and others achieve a sense of stability by having a sense of purpose and self-worth.
Hope

“... The good news is we now know some things you can do to buffer some of those early adverse experiences, so you can be the kind of parent you really want to be, be healthier, and do the things in life you hope to do.”

CS Lewis

“... You can’t go back and change the beginning but you can start where you are and change the ending.”

CS Lewis

“... It’s the most important opportunity for the prevention of health and social problems and disease and disability that has ever been seen.”

Dr. Vincent Felitti, Co-Investigator ACE Study

Thank you!

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