

## ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study is an important piece of research.

It outlines a number of damaging experiences which could occur in childhood. With increasing numbers of these experiences there is an increase in physical and mental difficulties later in life.

It has been stated that there is no information about what other experiences could do to counter the negative impact of ACEs.

Nevertheless what is useful is that it is a very stark reminder that there are certain experiences in childhood which, when added to each other can lead to poor outcomes for the individual as he or she grows up.

There are 10 categories of adversity relating to the first 18 years of life, about which there are questions and which have been shown to be related to later life difficulties.

They are:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Mother treated violently
- Household substance abuse
- Mental illness in household
- Parental separation or divorce
- Criminal household member
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect

As the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for the following\*:

- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression

- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence
- Poor academic achievement<sup>1</sup>

If you are interested as a person or professional it is worth googling and doing the test for yourself.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Centre for Disease Control website [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)