

Calculating an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Score

See the ACE score calculator below:

While you were growing up, during your first eighteen years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...
Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?

or

Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...
Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

or

Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever...
Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

or

Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

4. Did you often or very often feel that ...
No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

or

Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

5. Did you often or very often feel that ...

You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?

or

Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

7. Was your mother or stepmother:

Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

or

Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?

or

Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes No If Yes, enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____ This is your ACE Score.

The sum of the total number of categories (not incidents) reported is your ACE score. It is important to be aware of your emotions and get emotional support if needed when calculating your ACE score, as it can be tough to acknowledge. It is also important to realize that if a score is low or zero, it does not mean that someone's life is perfect or without challenges. No matter what your ACE score is, it can help you understand and process some of your own struggles, as well as help you understand the needs of trauma-exposed children and adults. ACE scores serve as an important recognition point in children, parents, and families, which can help stop a negative generational trend and lead a child towards healing and hope.

Source: Casey Gwinn, CHEERING FOR THE CHILDREN: CREATING PATHWAYS TO HOPE FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO TRAUMA, 23-25 (2015).