

IMPACT WV TIP SHEET

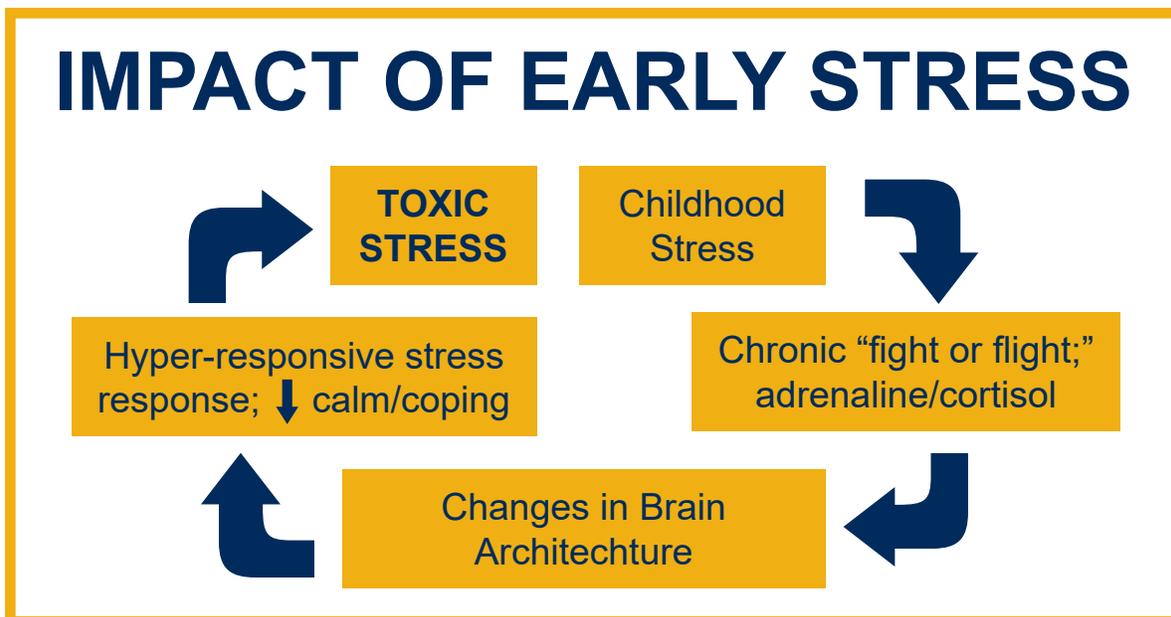
How Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) affect our body and how resiliency helps with Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)

*The information in this IMPACT WV product was taken from a Community of Practice presentation by Dr. Judy Romano, Director of Wheeling Hospital’s Center for Pediatrics

“If you must screen for ACEs and other risks, you must also screen for strengths.” - Dr. Andrew Garner

ACE is an Adverse Childhood Experience and everyone has a score. The original ACE study looked at abuse, neglect and household dysfunction and found that health problems were related to ACEs.

There are three types of stress: **Positive, tolerable and toxic stress are physiological responses to trauma.** *Positive stress* can be good for your body by increasing heart rate and adrenalin, which is important to development in the context of stable and supportive relationships. *Tolerable stress* is mild and helps the body learn, grow and develop naturally. *Toxic stress* can occur when exposed to stress over a long period in the absence of protective relationships. The fight or flight is not turned off by the negative feedback loop and the architecture in the brain changes. The response is decreased calm and coping and perceived as overwhelming. This can lead to anger, fear, anxiety, emotional outbursts and withdrawal.



Epigenetics: Experiences alter gene expression and shape development

Experiences leave a chemical 'signature' on genes, which affects whether and how the genes are expressed. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011) Social experience changes how our genes work, which changes how our body works, which changes how we behave, which changes who we become.

Resiliency questionnaire www.acesconnection.com/blog/got-your-ace-resilience-scores

Resilience is:

- The ability to avoid physiologic and behavioral damage from exposure to chronic stress
- The process of adapting well in the face of adversity
- The result of using protective factors to manage multiple stressful circumstances without toxic effects
- Transforms toxic stress to tolerable stress

How does resilience develop?

- Combination of innate, intrinsic and extrinsic factors
- Combination of supportive relationships, skill-building and positive experiences
- Resilience is the result of multiple interactions between environmental protective factors and highly responsive biologic systems

Harvard center on the developing child developingchild.harvard.edu

Resilient children have in common:

- At least one stable, caring and supportive relationship
- A sense of self-efficacy or mastery over life circumstances
- Strong executive function and self-regulation
- Solid grounding in faith or cultural traditions



Relationships buffer toxic stress, so if we can support the mom and give her what she needs, she can in turn support her infant and this toxic stress can be eliminated.

- Learning how to cope with moderate, short-lived stress can build a healthy stress response system
- Toxic stress (when the body's stress response system is activated excessively) can weaken brain architecture
- Without caring adults to buffer children, toxic stress can have long-term consequences for learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health

Using a relationship model in your work helps prevent adverse events and build resiliency.

Resilience games kits www.CRIResilient.org

Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2749336>

The antidote to **Adverse Childhood Experiences** is **Positive Childhood Experiences**.

