

# The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma on Black Males

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# Purpose Statement

**The purpose of this workshop is to examine the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma on Black males.**

# Introduction

- **Black males who are exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) before the age of 18 may be at an increased risk of being homeless, substance use, suicide, and mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety at a higher rate than the regular population. Adverse events experienced in childhood may affect the individual for a lifetime**

# Adverse Childhood Experiences Background

- ACEs were initially identified in the groundbreaking research conducted at Kaiser Permanente by Felitti et al. (1998) in which data were collected from 17,000 patients from 1995 to 1997. Felitti et al. concluded most patients who were experiencing health concerns and related problems had also experienced at least one of the 10 indicators of ACEs.

# The Ten Indicators of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Felitti (2002) identified the ten indicators in groundbreaking Kaiser Research Study as:

1. Physical neglect

2. Emotional neglect

3. Physical abuse

4. Emotional abuse

5. Sexual Assault

6. Substance misuse in the home

7. Mental illness in the home

8. Parental separation or divorce

9. Domestic Violence

10. Incarcerated Member in the household.

# Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire-10

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire was developed by Felitti and colleagues (Felitti et al., 1998). The Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire is a self-administered instrument. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire is a 10-item scale used to assess adversity in childhood in the areas of emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, mother treated violently, household substance misuse, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce and incarcerated household member. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire measure the number of childhood adversities the individual experienced before 18 years of age.

# ACE 10 Screening Tool

- 1. Before your 18th birthday, 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](#)
- 2. Before your 18th birthday, 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](#)
- 3. Before your 18th birthday, did an adult or person at least five 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](#)
- 4. Before your eighteenth birthday, 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](#)
- 5. Before your 18th birthday, 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](#)

# ACE 10 Screening Tool

- 6. Before your 18th birthday, was a biological parent ever lost to you through divorce, abandonment, or other reason? [YES](#) [NO](#)
- 7. Before your 18th birthday 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](#)
- 8. Before your 18th birthday, did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs? [YES](#) [NO](#)
- 9. Before your 18th birthday, was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide? [YES](#) [NO](#)
- 10. Before your 18th birthday, did a household member go to prison? [YES](#) [NO](#)

# The Philadelphia ACE Urban Study

This report provides findings on the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) of Philadelphia residents. Past studies, including the seminal 1998 Kaiser study by Felliti and Anda, have confirmed the negative impact of ACEs, such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse and household dysfunction, on health behaviors and health outcomes in adulthood. However, most of these findings have been confirmed in studies composed of primarily white, middle-class, and highly educated individuals. The Institute for Safe Families formed the ACE Task Force in 2012 with an interest in examining the prevalence and impact of ACEs in Philadelphia, an urban city with a socially and racially diverse population.

# Demographic Characteristics of Philadelphia Residents, 18 years and older and Philadelphia Urban ACE Survey Respondents, 2013

RACE	Philadelphia Resident	Philadelphia Urban Study
White	38.8% (N=466,677)	44.1% (n=786)
Black	36.1% (N=434,312)	42.5% (n=758)
Latino	11.4% (N=136,697)	3.5% (n=63)
Asian	6.2% (N=74,916)	3.6% (n=63)
Biracial	2.1% (N=24,778)	3.8% (n=68)
Other	5.3% (N=64,161)	2.4% (n=43)

# Key Findings of Philadelphia ACE Study

- 33.2 percent of Philadelphia adults experienced emotional abuse and 35 percent experienced physical abuse during their childhood.
- Approximately 35 percent of adults grew up in a household with a substance using members; 24.1 percent lived in a household with someone who was mentally ill; and
- 12.9 percent lived in a household with someone who served time or was sentenced to serve time in prison.
- A total of 1,784 adults completed the Philadelphia Urban ACE Survey for a response rate of 67.1 percent. The survey found a higher prevalence of ACEs than found in previous studies.

# Philadelphia ACE's Urban Study

- **The Philadelphia ACE's Urban Study also look at the following areas:**
- Experiencing racism,
- Witnessing violence,
- Living in unsafe neighborhoods.
- Living in Foster Care.

# Philadelphia ACE's Study Additional Screening Questions

- 11. Did you ever spend time in foster care or a juvenile facility? YES NO
- 12. Have you experienced a recent death of a family member or close friend? YES NO
- 13. Have you been a victim or violence or witness violence against someone else? YES NO
- 14. Have you been a victim of racism or racial discrimination? YES NO
- 15. Have you lost family members or friends to neighborhood violence? YES NO

# Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences may have an enduring impact in the lives of Black males. The impact may be in the form of risky health behaviors, inappropriate alcohol and drug usage, homelessness, post traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, and other emotional and psychological concerns.

Crouch, Strompolis, Bennett, Morse, and Radcliff (2017) found individuals who were exposed to adverse childhood experiences at an elevated rate to have a greater risk for poor health as adults. For example, experiencing abuse or witnessing domestic violence in childhood may have negative effects on the health of those individuals as adults.

# ACE Research on Black Males

- Youssef et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study of 413 participants ages 19 and above who had experienced traumatic experiences prior to age 18. The researchers examined the role of resilience and how it affected African Americans and European Americans. They looked at ACEs, depressive symptoms, and the effects of race and ethnicity. Participants were assessed for depression. The researchers concluded that ACEs were highly associated with the severity of depression in that the higher the number of ACEs, the greater the impact of depression on the participant.
- Depression is one of the most common diagnosed mental illnesses, but minimal information is known regarding the impact of depression on African American men (Plowden et al., 2016). African American men are often misdiagnosed based on the different presentation of depression but are at a greater risk for depression (Plowden et al., 2016). Suicide is often linked to depression (Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2013). Chang (2018) recommended future research to fill the gap regarding ACEs, depression, and Black men.
- Markkula et al. (2017) concluded from their quantitative study that multiple childhood adversities were one of the risk factors for depression.

# Impact of Adverse childhood experiences

- **Feeling hopeless, lack of family support, and poor relationships.**
- **Poor physical health.**
- **Drug usage; self medicating to ease the pain.**
- **Poor interpersonal communication skills.**
- **Lack of employment.**
- **Unstable lifestyles.**
- **Risky sexual behaviors.**
- **Low self-esteem, poor self-concept and lack of self confidence.**

# ACE Impact Continued

- The neurobiological and psychological effects of child neglect, abuse, or trauma persist during adulthood, representing fundamental factors influencing health status. Adverse childhood experiences (ACE) influence several aspects of psychiatric disorders outcome (Poletti, 2017).
- Black Fathers' to be who are victims of adverse childhood experiences may have increase depressive and anxious feelings during pregnancy. More attention should be paid to fathers' mental health during pregnancy to provide optimal healthcare (Skjothaug, 2015).

# Results of Research Conducted at FFSC 2020

- There were significance differences in the depression scores of Black men who experienced emotional abuse, physical abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, mother treated violently, substance misuse, mental illness, parental separation, and incarcerated household member. There was no significant difference for those who experienced sexual abuse. The findings are consistent with previous results that showed ACEs affect individuals in terms of depression. Youssef et al. (2017) concluded ACEs were highly associated with the severity of depression. The results of the study showed Black men who experienced one of the 10 indicators of ACEs had significantly higher depression scores than Black men who did not experience one of the 10 indicators of ACEs. Black men who experienced sexual abuse did not have significance higher mean scores than Black men who did not experience sexual abuse. This may be the result of Black men feeling ashamed to disclosed they were sexually abused.

# Key findings from Dr McCaskill's Research

Variable	ACE present			ACE not present		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Emotional abuse	64	9.11	6.59	87	5.61	6.33
Physical abuse	52	9.44	6.77	99	5.86	6.28
Sexual abuse	24	6.04	2.40	127	2.98	2.33
Emotional neglect	51	5.61	2.03	100	2.38	2.12
Physical neglect	28	6.75	1.60	123	2.72	2.15
Parental separation	103	4.44	2.32	48	1.40	1.80
Parental violence	39	6.03	2.01	112	2.58	2.14
Household substance misuse	70	5.27	2.02	81	1.91	1.93
Household mental illness	37	4.86	2.21	114	3.02	2.54
Household member incarcerated	55	5.35	2.18	96	2.40	2.16

# Assessment and Screening Tools

- **PHQ-9-Patient Health Questionnaire (*depression*)**
- **GAD-7-Generalize Anxiety Disorder Scale (*Anxiety*)**
- **ACE-10-Adverse Childhood Questionnaire (*Adverse childhood experience*)**
- **ACE-15-Adverse Childhood Questionnaire (*Adverse childhood experience*)**

# Therapeutic Intervention Approaches

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy;** the goal is to reframe the client's faulty thinking and to let go of the past and focus on the present.
- **Reality Therapy;** Assist the clients to regain control of their lives and environment and to take the steps to initiate change and growth.
- **Group Therapy;** the client talk about their progress on a regular basis with the focus on learning and practicing productive choices. The therapeutic goal of the group is to build a bond with group members and a support system. The client learn how to choose effective behaviors to verbalize their Interpersonal needs and to be empowered with interpersonal social skills to build healthy relationships. The focus is to assist the clients to concentrate on the things they can control in their lives and realize what they cannot control.
- **What's it been like for you as a Black male;** the client tells his life story to the group and share what's it been like for him as a father. This exercise usually assist the clients to become unstuck emotionally and psychologically and to move their lives forward in a positive manner.

# Questions and Discussions

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