

## PREVENTING ACEs and TRAUMA

### *QRTP Infosheet: Issue Eleven*

#### **Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma**

Roughly 20% of Ohio children are exposed to one or more ACEs, which have both immediate and long-term effects on health.<sup>1</sup> ACEs can have negative, lasting effects on health, wellbeing, and opportunity. These exposures can disrupt healthy brain development, affect social development, compromise immune systems, lead to future victimization, and can lead to substance misuse and other unhealthy coping behaviors. ACEs can also negatively impact education, employment, and earnings potential. The total economic and social costs to families, communities, and society is in the hundreds of billions of dollars each year.<sup>2</sup> By focusing on the implementation of evidence-informed strategies, state and local partners can ensure that every child has a fair chance for a long and healthy life.

#### **Raising Awareness About ACEs**

The first step in preventing ACEs is to raise awareness about the problem. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) preventing ACEs could help prevent up to 21 million cases of depression, nearly 1.9 million cases of heart disease, and up to 2.5 million cases of overweight/obesity.<sup>3</sup> The Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) suggests that negative health outcomes and a significant amount of healthcare spending could be prevented if ACEs exposure were eliminated. For example, 36% of depression diagnoses in Ohio could be prevented and Ohioans could save over \$10 billion annually in public and private healthcare and related spending.<sup>4</sup>

Raising awareness about ACEs can help:

- Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or for substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

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<sup>1</sup> Health Policy Institute of Ohio. "Strategies to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Ohio," August 2021

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: Leveraging the Best Available Evidence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. HealthPolicy Institute of Ohio

## Key strategies to prevent and mitigate the impact of ACEs<sup>5</sup>

These strategies focus on changing norms, environments, and behaviors in ways that can prevent ACEs from happening in the first place. The last strategy focuses on mitigating the immediate and long-term physical, mental, and behavioral consequences of ACEs. By addressing the conditions that give rise to ACEs and simultaneously addressing the needs of children and parents, these strategies take a multi-generation approach to prevent ACEs and ensure safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.

 <p><b>Ensuring a strong start for children.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood education programs</li> <li>• Early childhood home visiting programs</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Strengthening economic supports for families.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical-legal partnerships</li> <li>• Family Income supports</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Promoting social norms that protect against violence and adversity.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based violence prevention</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Enhancing skills so that parents and youth can handle stress, manage emotions and tackle everyday challenges.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-based violence, bullying and intimate partner violence prevention programs</li> <li>• Parents/caregiver and family skills training</li> <li>• School-based social and emotional instruction</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Connecting youth to caring adults and activities.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring programs for delinquency</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Intervening to lessen immediate and long-term harms.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug courts</li> <li>• Trauma-Informed Care</li> <li>• Behavioral health treatment</li> </ul>

ACEs and their associated harms are preventable. Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full health and life potential.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: Leveraging the Best Available Evidence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## RESOURCES

### 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Ohioans who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis and their family members can call, chat or text 988 to reach a trained counselor who can offer help and support.

### Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services

- Crisis Text Line – Text 4Hope to 741 741 for free, confidential conversation  
[Crisis Text Line | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(ohio.gov\)](#)
- Ohio Careline (1-800-720-9616) for free, confidential connection to licensed provider  
[Ohio CareLine | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)
- OhioMHAS Get Help for a variety of resources on control, connection, and meaning  
[Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services | Ohio.gov](#)
- It is important to instill resiliency in Ohio's children. We can do that by giving them a strong start to their education and addressing childhood trauma  
[Early Childhood, Children, and Youth | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(ohio.gov\)](#)
- Resources  
[Resources | Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \(ohio.gov\)](#)

### Health Policy Institute of Ohio

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) is a statewide, nonprofit organization located in Columbus, Ohio, that was created in 2003 by a group of health foundations. These funders recognized the need for a statewide organization focused on independent, non-partisan health policy analysis. HPIO has earned a reputation as a trusted and credible resource for state policymakers and other key stakeholders. HPIO led the [Ohio ACEs Impact Project](#) includes a series of three policy briefs and this resource page to build on and amplify current efforts to address ACEs in Ohio.

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*“Saving Lives, Protecting People”* - CDC is the nation’s leading science-based, data-driven, service organization that protects the public’s health. For more than 70 years, we’ve put science into action to help children stay healthy so they can grow and learn; to help families, businesses, and communities fight disease and stay strong; and to protect the public’s health. [Adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\)](#) can have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. CDC works to understand ACEs and prevent them.

- [Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence](#)
- [CDC Vital Signs, August 2021](#)

## **The Wellness Project**

[The Wellness Project](#) is a multimedia, multi-experiential collection of resources and practices to support and enhance your individual and organizational wellness and resilience. The purpose of this website is to discover a variety of ways for supporting helping professionals, so they can show up as the “best version of themselves.” It includes a holistic system of wellness activities such as reading, listening, watching, cooking, connecting, moving, breathing, and resting.