

Adverse childhood experiences have been defined as moderately to severely stressful experiences during the first 18 years of life, originally focused on intrafamily experiences (Felitti et al., 1998). Ellis and Deitz (2017) expanded the definition to include community and societal structures, as indicated in the graphic below, that also adversely impact a child's healthy development.

**The Pair of ACEs**

**Adverse Childhood Experiences**

- Maternal Depression
- Emotional & Sexual Abuse
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Homelessness
- Physical & Emotional Neglect
- Divorce
- Mental Illness
- Incarceration

**Adverse Community Environments**

- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Community Disruption
- Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital
- Poor Housing Quality & Affordability
- Violence

Ellis, M., Deitz, W. (2017). A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. Academic Pediatrics, 17 (2017) pp. 506-509. DOI Information: 10.1016/j.acp.2016.12.011

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Building Community Resilience

### Understanding ACEs and trauma as it presents in higher education

- ACEs are common** - About 64% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE (CDC Kaiser, 1998)
  - 26% - one ACE
  - 16% - two ACEs
  - 9.5% - three ACEs
  - 12.5% - four or more
- Women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for having experienced 4 or more types of ACEs (CDC Kaiser, 1998)
- 66-85% of college age youth report traumatic exposures in their lives (Butler et al., 2009)
- Younger cohorts report more ACEs than older cohorts, implying ACEs are on the rise (Austin & Herrick, 2014)
- Community and societal structures of economic inequity, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are significant contributing events
- Trauma exposure occurs "When the unique individual experience of an event, series of events or **a set of enduring conditions** (emphasis added)... overwhelms an individual's ability to integrate their emotional experience..." (Saakvitne et al, 2000)

Trauma Integration Initiative, BCSSW 2020-2021

So we know the prevalence of trauma our students have experienced- how can we respond in advising?  
Use SAMSHA Six Key Principles of Trauma Informed Response

<p><b>Empowerment, voice and choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and honor resilience</li> <li>Instill hope</li> <li>Patience</li> <li>Learn to tolerate discomfort</li> <li>Understand and be willing to negotiate power differential</li> <li>Identify student's strengths and resources</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self awareness – your own implicit biases</li> <li>Help student assess their own risk factors</li> <li>Increase capacity for self awareness</li> <li>Able and willing to hear concerns of racism, sexism, discrimination</li> <li>Provide support and resources</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence, patience, accessible, accepting</li> <li>Clear and consistent boundaries and expectations</li> <li>Acknowledge &amp; discuss their reactions</li> <li>Expect and prepare for difficult discussions</li> <li>Teach and model regulation of emotions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Trustworthiness &amp; Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open ongoing discussion and feedback</li> <li>Genuineness</li> <li>Acknowledge your concerns, biases, challenges                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normalize</li> <li>Apologize</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Peer Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promote relational health and connection</li> <li>■ Encourage Safe spaces for dialog</li> <li>■ Opportunity for mentorship and networking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Collaboration and mutuality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ "Power with" – shared investment in their learning</li> <li>■ Be clear about your philosophy of field and advising</li> <li>■ Provide opportunity to listen and use feedback</li> <li>■ Learning as a process</li> <li>■ Use I statements – "I wonder..."</li> </ul>
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How might students with ACE history present?

- May exhibit as performance issues
  - Lack of focus
  - Avoidant or overly attached
  - Time management challenges
- May exhibit in social/emotional reactions
  - Shame
    - Depression
    - Anxiety
  - Frustration
    - Emotional regulation
    - Reactive

How can we best support our students?

- Understand the ways in which violence, victimization, and other traumatic experiences impact the lives of individuals involved
- Apply this understanding to the
  - Design of systems
  - Provision of services
- Actions should be consonant with healing and recovery

Butler, Critelli and Rinfrette, 2011

How can we best support our students?  
Through our relationships with them...

- Protective Factors
  - Strong relationship with advisor
    - Gives them "Relational Wealth"
  - Professionalism – Role model
  - Regular feedback on performance
    - Progress
    - Improvement
  - Positivity and hopefulness