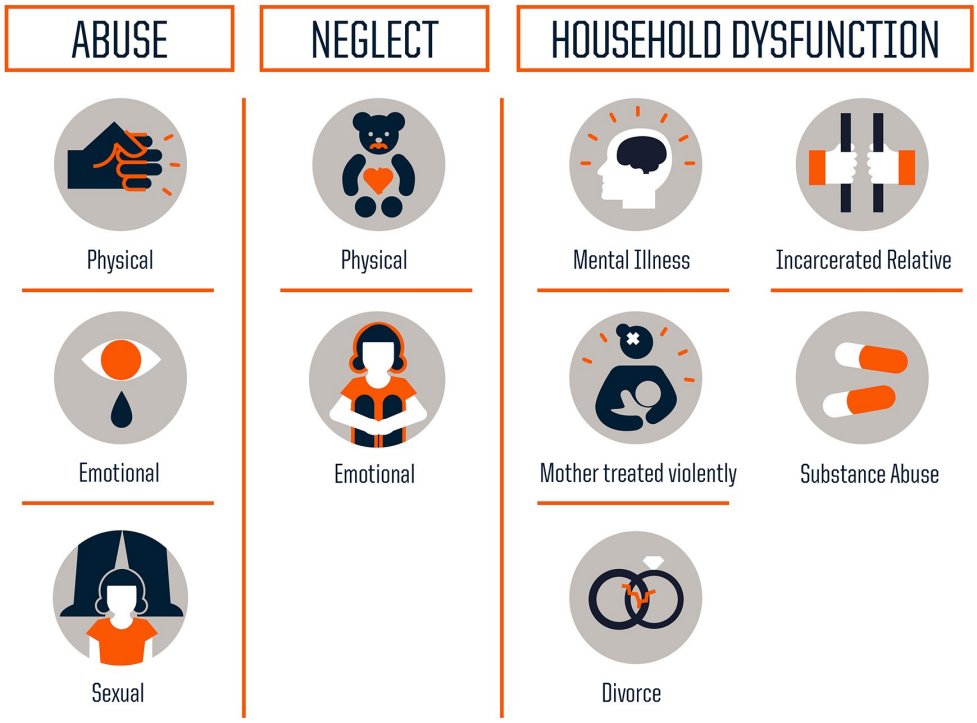
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



35% of people in Michigan have 4 or more ACEs….You are not alone!*

Learn your number—make a difference.

*Michigan behavioral Risk Factor Survey ACE Study

Could your past be affecting your current health?

So, what are ACES?

- They are difficult experiences that you had when you were young.

Why do they matter?

- Because they put you at risk for things like heart disease, depression, addiction, and more.

Why should I learn about ACES?

- Because they help you understand how your life and experiences shape who you are and they help you let go of self-blame.

What do I do if I have had ACES?

- Find a trusted person to talk to, take care of yourself, find help when you need it.

Can you bounce back if you have had ACES?

- Definitely. There is always hope and things to do to bounce back.

Keeping the Family Strong

Every family has strengths, and every family faces challenges. When you are under stress-the car breaks down, you or your partner lose a job, a child's behavior is difficult, or even when the family is experiencing a positive change, such as moving into a new home-sometimes it takes a little extra help to get through the day.

Protective factors are the strengths and resources that families draw on when life gets difficult. Building on these strengths is a proven way to keep the family strong and prevent child abuse and neglect. This tip sheet describes six key protective factors and some simple ways you can build these factors in your own family.

Protective Factor and What it Means	What You Can Do
Nurturing and Attachment: Our family shows how much we love each other.	* Take a few minute at the end of each day to connect with your children with a hug, a smile, a song or a few minutes of listening and talking. * Find ways to engage your children while completing everyday tasks (meals, shopping, driving in the car). Talk about what you are doing, ask them questions, or play simple games (such as "I Spy").
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: I know parenting is part natural and part learned. I am always learning new things about raising children and what they can do at different ages.	* Explore parenting questions with your family doctor, child's teacher, family or friends. * Subscribe to a magazine, website, or online newsletter about child development. * Take a parenting class or attend a parent support group. * Sit and observe what your child can and cannot do. * Share what you learn with anyone who cares for your child.
Parental Resilience: I have courage during stress and the ability to bounce back from challenges.	* Take quiet time to reenergize: Take a bath, write, sing, laugh, play, drink a cup of tea. * Do some physical exercise: Walk, stretch, do yoga, lift weights, dance. * Share your feelings with someone you trust. * Surround yourself with people who support you and make you feel good about yourself.
Social Connections: I have friends, family and neighbors who help out and provide emotional support.	* Participate in neighborhood activities such as a potluck dinners, street fairs, picnics or block parties. * Join a playgroup or online support group of parents with children of similar ages. * Find a church, temple or mosque that welcomes and support parents.
Concrete Supports: Our family can meet our day-to-day needs, including housing, food, health care, education, and counseling. I know where to find help if I need it.	* Make a list of people or places to call for support. * Ask the director of your child's school to host a Community Resource Night, so you (and other parents) can see what help your community offers. * Dial "2-1-1" find out about organizations that support families in your area.
Social and Emotional Competence of Children: My children know they are loved, feel they belong, and are able to get along with others.	* Provide regular routines, especially for young children. Make sure everyone who cares for your child is aware of your routines around mealtimes, naps and bedtimes. * Talk with your children about how important feelings are. * Teach and encourage children to solve problems in age-appropriate ways.

This tip sheet was created with information from experts in national organizations that work to prevent child maltreatment and promote well-being, including the Strengthening Families Initiatives in New Jersey, Alaska, and Tennessee. Preventing Child Maltreatment and Promoting Well-Being: A Network for Action. Local information was added.

Children's Trust Fund