

WEEK 15

Adverse Childhood Experiences



“Children’s exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences is the greatest unaddressed public health threat of our time.”

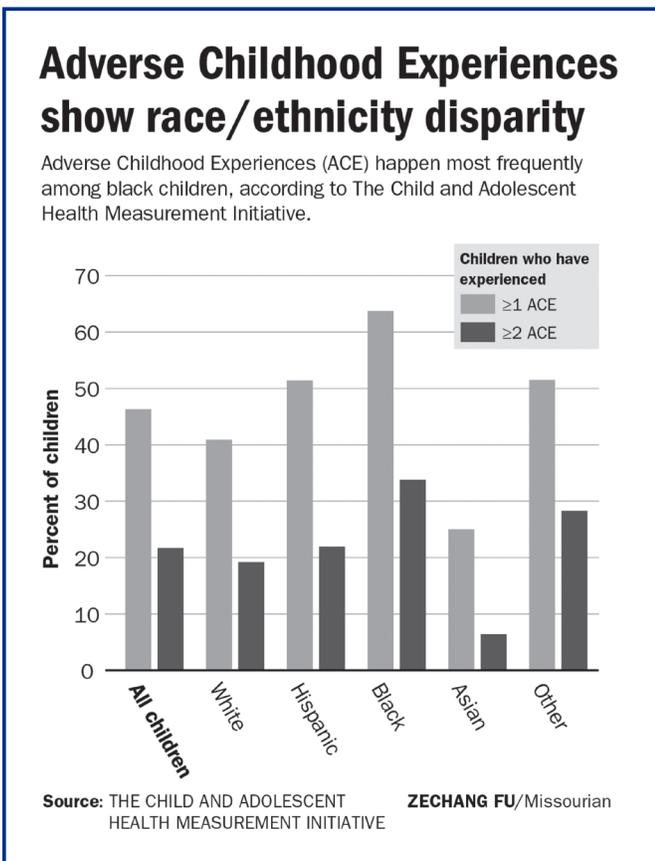
ROBERT W. BLOCK, PAST PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, have a tremendous impact on lifelong health and opportunity. ACEs are defined as a toxic source of stress with the potential to disrupt a child’s ability to learn, relate, grow, play, communicate, and problem-solve. It can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence. The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely he or she is to suffer from things like heart disease and diabetes, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life. Racism is now recognized as an ACE.

Disturbingly, **Black and Hispanic children and youth in almost all regions of the United States are more likely to experience ACEs than their white and Asian peers.**

To some extent, these racial disparities reflect the lasting effects of inequitable policies, practices, and social norms. Discriminatory housing and employment policies, bias in law enforcement and sentencing decisions, and immigration policies have concentrated disadvantage among Black and Hispanic children, in particular, and leave them disproportionately vulnerable to traumatic experiences like ACEs.

Healthy school, community and home environments are critical to preventing children from experiencing ACEs and appropriately supporting students living with chronic stress, so that it does not get in the way of them achieving their aspirations and reaching their full potential.



Source: Missouriian; Original Data from The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative

Week 15 Challenge

Please **choose one or two** of the below activities to engage with for 15 minutes this week, and if you have time, we encourage you to complete more.



ACTIVITY A

Assess your ACEs score to see how childhood trauma may be impacting your life. Then, assess your resilience score and explore resources on how to support yourself and others by **building resilience**. Consider reading *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem and reflect on how trauma has shaped your responses to inequity.



ACTIVITY B

View this infographic that explains how ACEs affect our lives and society and summarizes findings from a landmark Kaiser study that looks at the link between ACEs and long-term well-being.



ACTIVITY C

See Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris on the TED stage explain how the repeated stress of abuse, neglect and parents struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues has real, tangible effects on the development of the brain. Reflect on your own coping skills during the most difficult life experiences and how any privilege may have helped you cope. Consider how different the outcome may have been without that privilege.

Share your reflections and any resources that helps further the discussion on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#UWIEquityChallenge**.

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