

## Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)

Adverse Childhood Experience refers to a pattern of abuse and neglect found among children who grew up in the environment where they faced a combination of harmful factors such as physical and sexual abuse, emotional neglect and deprivation, and family disfunction involving parents' addictive behavior, mental illness, or imprisonment. A survey of some 50,000 of Kaiser parents reveal the heavy toll of the childhood and adolescent trauma sustained in the formative years. Each yes answer to the following questions was scored one point, generating a possible ACE score ranging from zero to ten.

- One out of ten individuals responded yes to the question “Did a parent or adult in the household often or very often swear at you, insult you, or put you down?”
- More than a quarter of responded yes to the question “Did one of your parents often or very often push, grab slap, or throw something at you?” and “Did one of your parents often or very often hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? This means that more than a quarter of the U.S. population is likely to have been repeatedly abused as a child.
- To the questions “Did an adult or person at least 5 years older ever have you touch their body in a sexual way?” and “Did an adult or person at least 5 years older ever attempt oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?” 28 percent of women and 16 percent of men responded affirmatively.
- One in eight people responded positively to the question “As a child, did you witness your mother sometimes, often, or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?” “As a child, did you witness your mother sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit, with a fist, or hit with something hard?”

**Source:** Bessel Van Det Kolk, “The Body Keeps the Score. Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma. Penguin Books, 2014.