Checking our pulse is essential in monitoring our Vital Signs. The Pulse highlights a specific indicator of human well-being that is contained in United Way of Central Oklahoma’s Vital Signs report or is being noticed through United Way’s work in the community.

Adverse Childhood Experiences, known as ACEs, have the power to negatively impact individuals’ health and behavior throughout their lives. ACEs come in many forms and affect the majority of central Oklahomans. Despite their enduring influence, ACEs can be offset by the presence of PACEs, Protective and Compensatory Experiences, which give children the opportunity to build resilience. **Looking to the future, it is vital to understand the lasting effects of childhood experiences and provide central Oklahoma youth with chances to develop strong coping skills in the face of adversity.**

**ACES – ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

Stressful or traumatic events that affect children and have a lasting impact on their health and well-being.¹

**TYPES OF ACES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABUSE</th>
<th>NEGLECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FAMILY DYSFUNCTION**

- Divorce
- Incarcerated parent/caregiver
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Domestic violence
OKLAHOMANS AFFECTED BY ACES

As the number of ACEs increase, the risk for negative life outcomes also increases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OKLAHOMAN’S AFFECTED</th>
<th>0 ACES</th>
<th>1 ACE</th>
<th>2-3 ACES</th>
<th>4 OR MORE ACES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOW RISK</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODERATE RISK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH RISK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POTENTIAL NEGATIVE LIFE OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH ACES

**BEHAVIOR**
- Lack of physical activity
- Missed work
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Drug use

**PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**
- Severe obesity
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- STDs
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- COPD
- Broken bones

ACES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH AN INCREASE RISK OF PREMATURE DEATH - CAN LOWER LIFE EXPECTANCY BY UP TO 20 YEARS.

BUILDING A RESILIENT CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

**RESILIENCE** – the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma

**PACES** – Protective and Compensatory Experiences – protective factors that reduce or buffer the effects of risk, stress or trauma
TYPES OF PACES

INDIVIDUAL

- Relationships - Forming healthy relationships with peers and adults
- Involvement - Participation in organized activities
- Coping - Experiencing and learning to cope with stress
- Adapting - Strengthening the ability to adapt to new situations
- Self-identity - Development of self-identity through culture, faith and hope

FAMILY

- Informed caregiving - Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Emotional support - Providing children with emotional support and a sense of acceptance
- Parental resilience - Modeling healthy coping behaviors
- Physical care - Ability to provide for physical needs
- Stability - Safe and supportive living environments

COMMUNITY

- Education - Funded and supported public education
- Policy - Policies that create opportunities for success
- Healthcare - Access to affordable healthcare
- Services - Adequate community services and supports to provide stability and help to families in crisis
- Opportunity for involvement - Youth development programs

Maintaining at least one positive, healthy relationship with an encouraging adult is important for developing resilience.

IMPACT OF PACES

A child’s “life scale” tilts towards negative outcomes when it holds more negative experiences than positive experiences.

The direction of the tilt is also affected by the position of the fulcrum, which represents resilience.

Developing resilience shifts the fulcrum’s position, making it easier to achieve positive life outcomes.
The Pulse is a product of Vital Signs; Oklahoma’s only broad-based community evaluation with more than two decades of trend data in five key areas important to our quality of life.

Interested in printed copies of our research publications or a presentation? Contact United Way of Central Oklahoma’s Community Impact Department at research@unitedwayokc.org or 405.236.8441.

NOTES AND CITATIONS


