

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences that happen in a person's life before the age of 18. These experiences can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being.

## ACES MAY INCLUDE:

- Abuse (physical, emotional or sexual)
- Neglect (physical or emotional)
- Household dysfunction (mental illness, relative in jail, mother treated violently, substance abuse, divorce)

**Resilience** is being able to deal with or bounce back from difficult times. Resilience can help reduce the negative impact of ACEs and other stress. It's possible to become more resilient at any stage of life, but it's easiest to build the basis of resilience in early childhood.

## WAYS TO BUILD YOUR OWN RESILIENCE

- Learn about ACEs so you can be part of breaking the cycle
- Develop supportive, healthy relationships with people you can count on
- Practise mindfulness (being in the moment)
- Take care of yourself - sleep, healthy food and exercise are really important

## WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN KIDS

- Spend quality time together: eat dinner, play a game, go for a bike ride or read
- Get to know your kid's friends
- Give your child safe opportunities to try new things
- Ask your child to help you prepare a snack or meal
- Assign your child a chore that matches their age and stage
- Model and teach your child calming exercises such as colouring, art, reading, deep breathing and listening to music
- Get to know your neighbours or other parents so you and your kids have people in your life that you can rely on

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT HELP CHILDREN DO WELL

- Supportive, nurturing relationships with caregivers and other adults (such as neighbours)
- Networks (positive relationships with extended family members and others)
- Support to develop healthy coping skills
- Strong cultural identity
- Healthy and supportive caregivers
- Safe and connected communities
- Role models and mentors
- Positive school environment

## STRUGGLING? NEED HELP?

Contact your family physician or call:

Here 24/7 Waterloo Wellington 1-844-437-3247

24/7 Crisis Support Peel Dufferin 1-888-811-2222



**ACEs Coalition**

Guelph & Wellington

We are a group of community stakeholders taking action on ACEs in our community.  
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