Adverse Childhood Experiences
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Stressful events occurring during childhood that directly affect a child or affect the environment in which they live.
ACEs – The Life Course

Developed from Felitti et al. 1998
How Many Adults In England Have ACEs?

Child maltreatment

- Verbal abuse: 18%
- Physical abuse: 14%
- Sexual abuse: 6%

Childhood household included

- Separation*: 24%
- Domestic abuse: 12%
- Mental illness: 12%
- Alcohol abuse: 9%
- Drug use: 4%
- Incarceration: 4%

For every 100 adults in England
48 suffered at least one ACE, 9 suffered four or more

* Parental. England: representative household sample 2013 (n=3,885, aged 18-69); Bellis et al, 2014
Increased Risk In Those With 4+ ACEs vs. 0 ACEs:

Controlling for age, gender, ethnicity & residential deprivation

Chronic disease (e.g. cancer, heart disease) & early death

Bellis et al, 2014
Prevention & Response

Prevent exposure to trauma & chronic stress in early life

Address social inequalities & poverty

Strengthen early life support

Build resilient children, families & communities

Develop trauma informed professionals (& the public)

Organisationally ready services / enabling policy frameworks

Co-designed with children, families & professionals
Liverpool ACE Perception Survey

• Understand perceptions of ACEs across children & young people’s workforce
• Enable partners to take an informed approach to ensuring ACE & childhood trauma are identified & understood
• 300 participants
  • E.g. Teachers, social/youth workers, mental health
• Summary of:
  • Awareness & understanding
  • Identifying ACEs
  • Resources & support
  • What's needed
Understanding & Awareness

- Good awareness of the impact of ACEs on behaviours (e.g. violence) & education/employment, but not on physical health (e.g. cancer, heart disease)
- 55%* not familiar with the term “Trauma-Informed Approaches”

* Of those whose job specifically related to the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people
Identifying ACEs

- 60% do not use any tools or resources to identify if children/young people have ACEs
- 55% would be confident asking an adult about their ACEs

"National 10 step ACE checklist is used in the organisation but only for the purpose of training staff to recognise ACEs. It is not used to identify actual cases."

"We do an initial assessment following referral. This can then lead to the young person disclosing ACEs - however, we do actually ask direct, and we are at times taken back by the level of ACEs. We are resourced to be able to offer immediate support if required."

"We assess pupils emotional development using Thrive online. During time spent with pupils, they may also indicate some adverse experiences which we then have signpost i.e. social services, CAHMS etc."
Know Where To Signpost For Support

**Child maltreatment**
- Verbal abuse 69%
- Physical abuse 82%
- Sexual abuse 83%

**Childhood household include/parent/carer**
- Separation 36%
- Domestic abuse 75%
- Mental illness 63%
- Alcohol/drug abuse 70%
- Incarceration 45%

*parental. n=300; Liverpool CAMHS/Merseyside Youth Association, 2019*
Resilience Building

48% would like more support to help them self-care when dealing with young people's distress.
What’s Needed?

**Training:**
- ACE awareness
  - Workshops (83%)
  - Online materials (76%)
- Building children & young people's resilience (86%)

**Commissioners & providers:**
- Support for schools
- Awareness-raising
- Multi-agency
- Training & development

### Approaches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma-informed approaches in substance misuse</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedding a trauma-informed approach in the community and voluntary sector</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support throughout the life course (their life) for those who have been affected by ACEs</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing REACH approaches for children, young people and adults</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and alternative approaches</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-led approaches to tackling adversity</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist and liaison ACE services</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing intensive support to young people who are NEET and who may have been impacted by ACEs</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring services are more trauma-informed</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring the city is more ACE aware</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence family-based interventions which can work in tackling ACE</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

City-wide ACE / trauma-informed strategy & action plan

Awareness raising
- Support & resources
- ACE-aware
- Resilience
- Young people’s voices

Joint commissioning
- Multi-agency
- Targeted towards at-risk groups
  E.g. looked after children, children whose carers are incarcerated

Training
- All professionals working with children & young people
- ACE-informed, identify & support appropriately
- Self-care & resilience building

Improved access to services
- Consider referral/access pathways
- Raise awareness of support
- Central ACE platform, e.g. CAMHS website
ACEs may be contagious......

BUT.....

healing can occur & the cycle can be broken

Thank you

With thanks to all survey participants, Liverpool’s ACE steering group, CAMHS, Merseyside Youth Association & Professor Mark A Bellis

For more information on ACEs visit Liverpool CAMHS:

www.liverpoolcamhs.com/resources/adverse-childhood-conditions-ace/

Zara Quigg z.a.quigg@ljmu.ac.uk @zeequigg https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/research/centres-and-institutes/public-health-institute