

# Creating Safe and Supportive Schools for ALL Students

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**2023 OSEP LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE**





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## *DISCLAIMER:*

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*(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3 and 3474)*

# TNSTEP Mission

Serve families of children and youth and young adults with disabilities

Focus on Special Education Rights

**MISSION: POSSIBLE**



Offer accurate, timely, and relevant information and training

Ensure a brighter future for children and youth in Tennessee



# What we'll explore today

- Challenges for our kids in today's schools
- Ways we can help: Open and effective communication among stakeholders
- The impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Understanding and identifying trauma
- Shifting the conversation
- Behavior supports through IDEA
- Developing an effective safety plan
- The benefits of One-Page Profiles
- Developing positive relationships with School Resource Officers
- Expanding your child's "team"



# A note before we begin

- We will be talking about some difficult stuff, and we wanted you to know that in advance.
- We will be discussing the role of ACEs in understanding student behaviors. ACEs stands for Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- These are traumatizing experiences that happen in childhood that can impact the way children and adults behave and react to things. ACEs can have a lifelong impact.
- We understand that some of you may have had some of these experiences. You are not alone. There are TNSTEP staff members who have had some of these experiences.
- So, let's talk if you are triggered or bothered by what we present, and if you need to take a break at a certain point, that's ok too.
- Please take care of yourself.



# Challenges for our "kids" in today's schools

- School violence
- Peer pressure
- Social media
- Isolation
- Overwhelm
- Mental health issues
- Inadequate staffing/staff with incomplete training
- Extreme weather



It is important to think about these challenges through the lens of students with disabilities.



# Maybe there are ways we can help



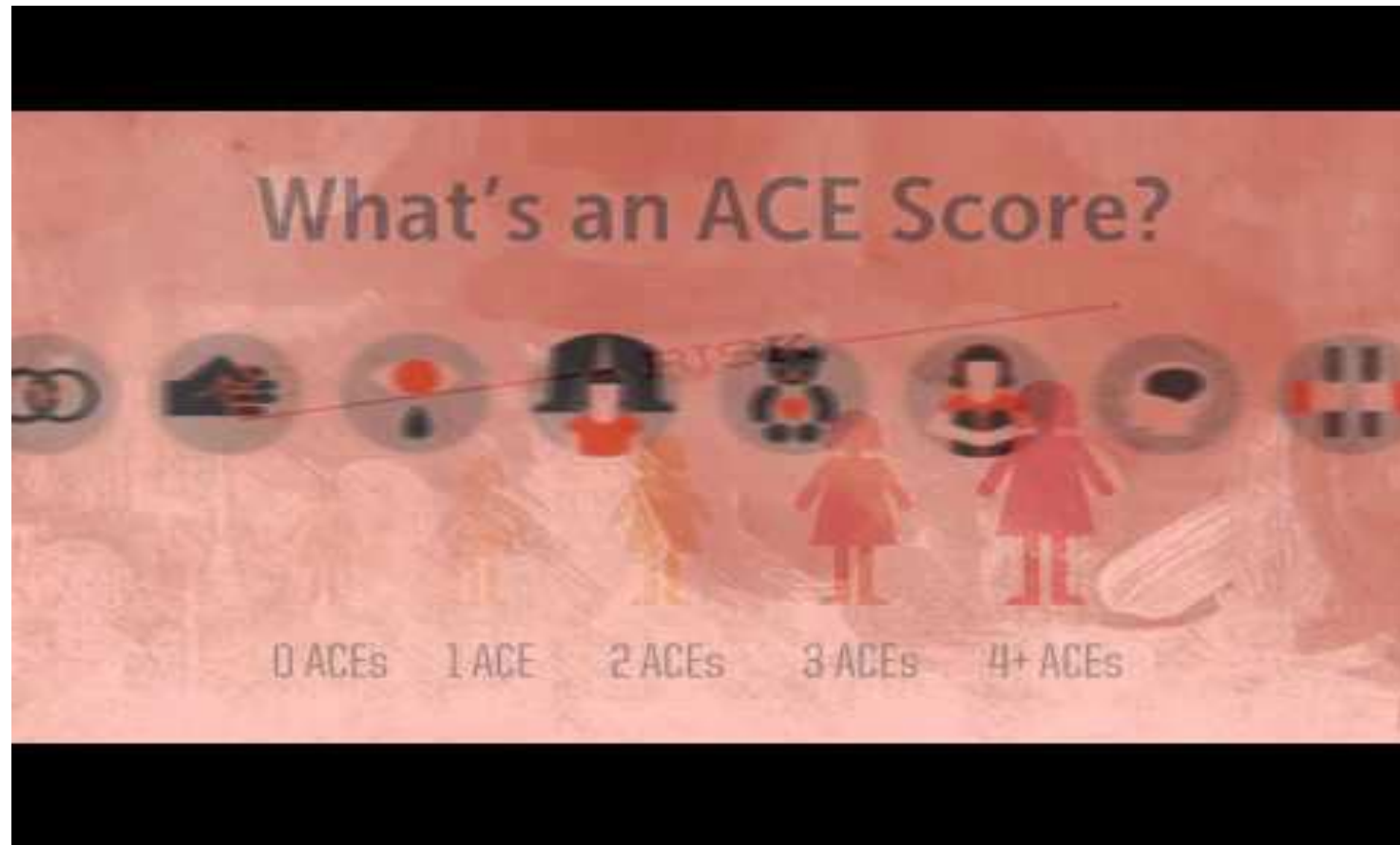


# Open and effective communication among stakeholders

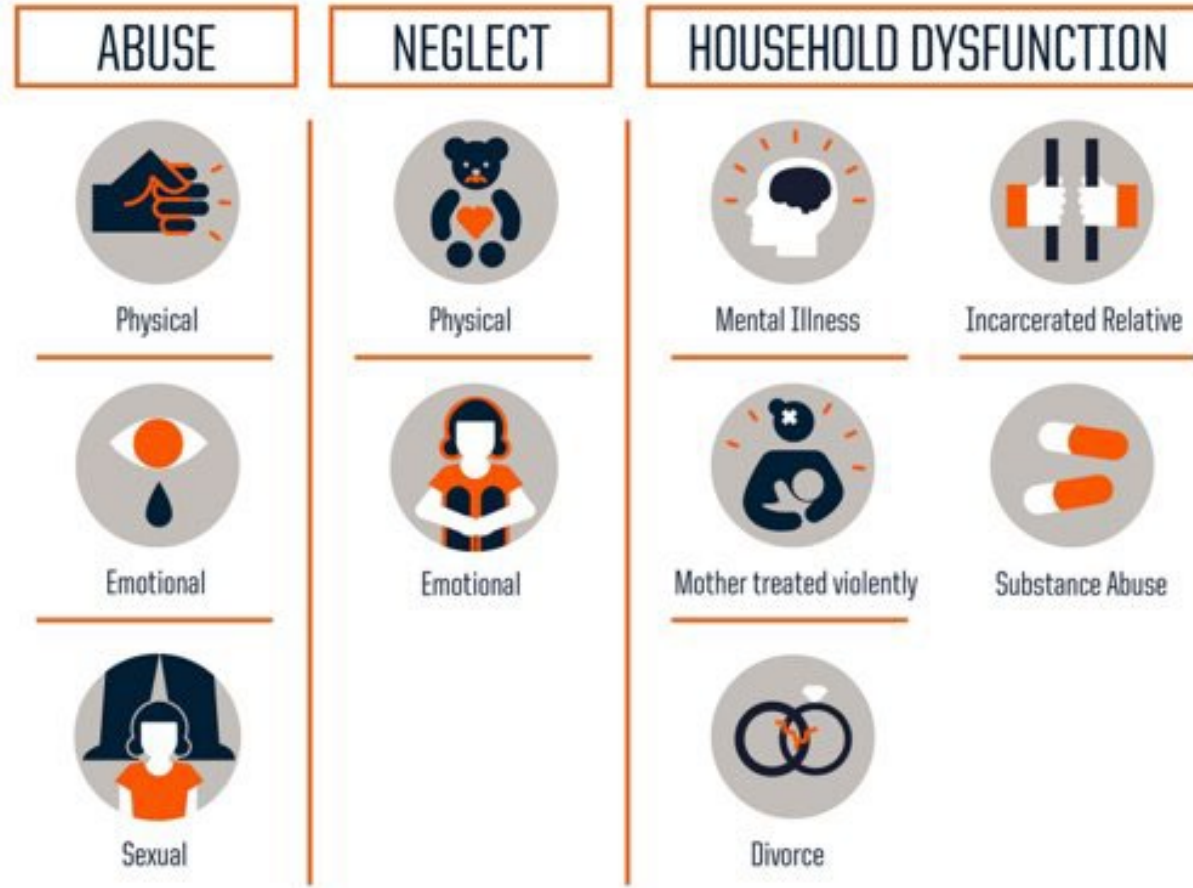




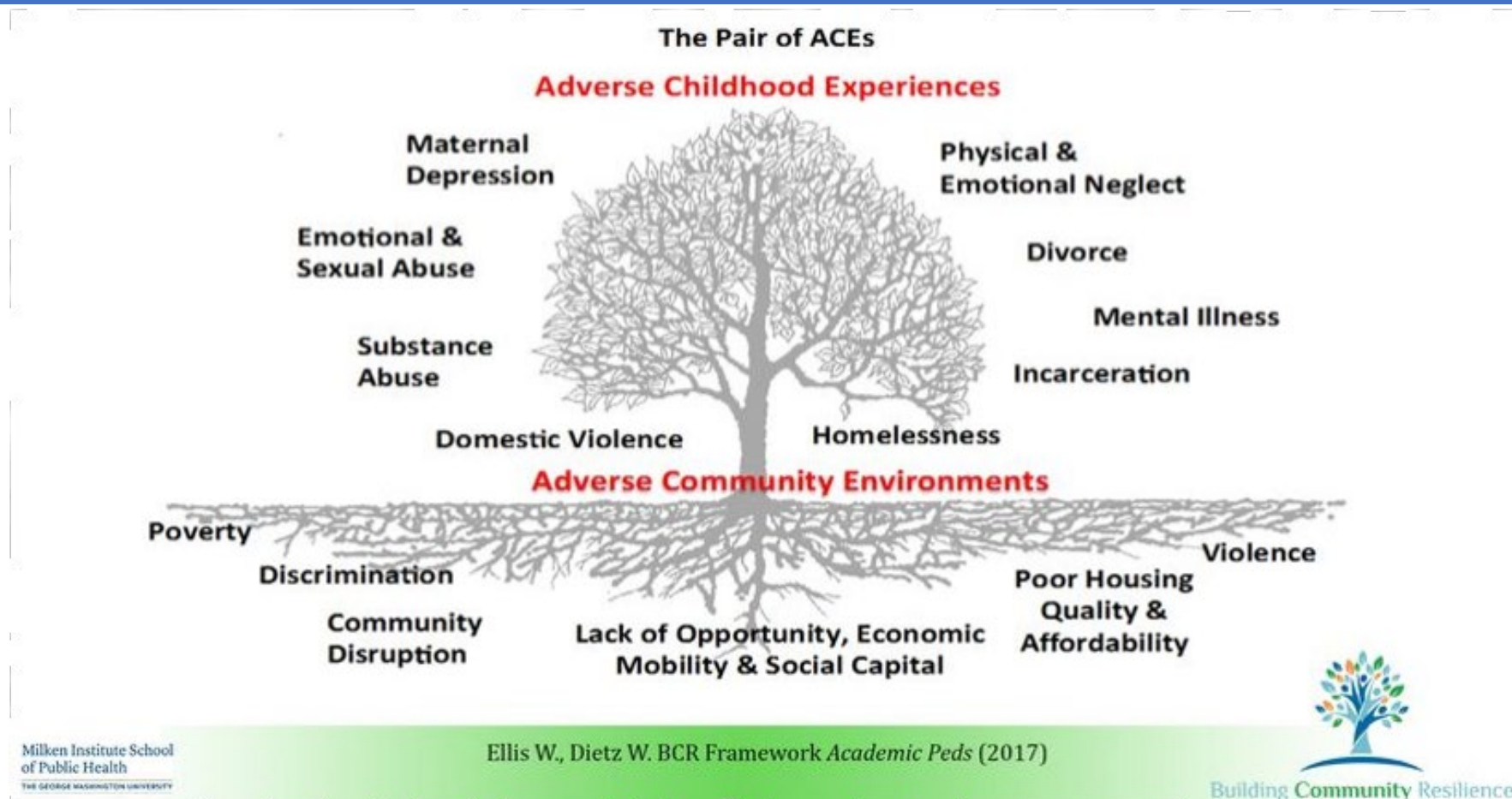
# Understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences



# Most common ACEs are:



# The Pair of ACEs Tree



# Fact, not fate

- It's important to know that an ACE score is a set of facts, not fate.
- It doesn't take into consideration lifestyle, genetics, and positive experiences that can build resilience, such as having a long-term relationship with one caring adult.



# Understanding and identifying trauma



# Understanding and identifying trauma

*“Trauma is the emotional response someone has to an extremely negative event.*

*The effects can be so severe that they interfere with an individual’s ability to live a normal life.”*

- the American Psychological Association (APA)

[Trauma-Informed Practices: Considerations for the IEP Meeting | Kennedy Krieger Institute](#)



# Sources of trauma for families

- Grief and Loss
- Generational Poverty
- Witnessing Acts of Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Toxic Stress
- School Situations (truancy)
- IEP & 504 Meetings
- Kids' Challenging Behaviors
- Child Abuse or Neglect
- Parents' Inadequate Literacy Skills
- Accidents and Natural Disasters
- Substance Abuse
- Language Barriers
- Immigration Challenges
- Disability
- Human Trafficking
- Foster Youth Challenges
- Homelessness
- All Types of Discrimination
- Justice Systems
- Court Involvement
- Child Welfare Systems
- Doctor Appointments
- Medical Expenses





# Recognizing signs of trauma

- Extreme shyness and difficulty engaging with others
- Intense reactions to setbacks and unexpected changes
- Trouble managing strong emotions (extreme anger, excessive crying, etc.)
- Clinginess
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty focusing
- Lack of safety awareness
- Missed deadlines
- Poor academic performance
- Apathy and lack of effort
- Perfectionist tendencies
- Frequent complaints of feeling sick
- Physical and/or verbal aggression
- Anxiety



# Shifting the conversation

Moving from

*“What's wrong with you?”*

to

*“What happened to you?”*



# Sam's Story



# Behavior Supports through IDEA

Individualized Education Program (IEP) /  
Section 504 Plan

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)



# Developing an effective safety plan

- ✓ Get it down in writing so everybody knows
- ✓ Incorporate into the student's IEP
- ✓ Preparation and practice
- ✓ Open and good communication between stakeholders
- ✓ Engage local first responders in the process
- ✓ Include ALL students in safety drills
- ✓ Identify necessary technology, materials
- ✓ Consider the need for specialized transportation
- ✓ Medications and other personal student equipment
- ✓ Identify the need for additional trained and informed adults



# The benefits of One-Page Profiles

*My One-Page profile*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

*What people appreciate about me*

*What is important to me*

*How to support me*

- Excellent, easy tool for sharing vital information
- Can show student's strengths, abilities, challenges, and needs for support
- Completely adaptable and up-date-able
- Formatting can be personalized
- As a "One-Page Profile" it provides information in a brief, at-a-glance format





# SROs Can Have a Positive Impact for Students with Disabilities





# New ACEs Toolkit on TNSTEP website!



- Up-to-Date information on ACEs and Trauma
- Statistical information about the prevalence of ACEs in Tennessee
- Information about Tennessee-based initiatives like Building Strong Brains and Resilient Tennessee
- Information in a variety of formats, including PowerPoint presentations, videos, webinars, and links to national resources

[www.tnstep.org/aces-toolkit/](http://www.tnstep.org/aces-toolkit/)



# Expanding your child's team

- This is what it's all about
- Shared knowledge
- More people who understand the student's strengths, challenges, limitations, and needs
- Team "ownership" in the student's personal safety



# It's a wrap!

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Take-aways?
- One idea to try first?



# Let's Connect

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**[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)**

Find Event Calendar, Archived Webinars, Virtual Trainings,  
TNSTEP's Parent Manual, and more!



# Resource Spotlight

- **ACEs Quiz**
  - If you're interested in taking the ACEs Quiz to determine **YOUR** ACE score, follow this link <http://adversechildhoodexperiences.net/quiz.html>
- **Trauma-Informed Practices: Considerations for the IEP Meeting**
  - An article from the Kennedy Krieger Institute <http://bit.ly/3lZf58l>
  - Trauma Sensitivity During the IEP Process fact sheet from the Federation for Children with Special Needs (fcsn.org) <https://fcsn.org/trauma-sensitivity-during-the-iep-process>
- **Developing a Plan that has Adult Driven Strategies**
  - Example sheet with an adult driven behavior plan <https://bit.ly/adult-driven-strategies>
- **One-Page Profile**
  - Provides information in a brief, at-a-glance format <https://bit.ly/3Lq7wR6>
  - More one-page profile examples can be found here <http://bit.ly/2BxXb2Z>
- **ACEs Toolkit and Additional Resources**
  - <https://tnstep.org/aces-toolkit/>



# Resource Spotlight

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website**
  - Brings together IDEA information and resources from the Department and its grantees. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
- **IDEAS That Work**
  - For information from research to practice initiatives funded by OSEP that address the provisions of IDEA and ESSA. This website includes resources, links, and other important information relevant to OSEP's research to practice efforts. <https://osepideasthatwork.org/>

