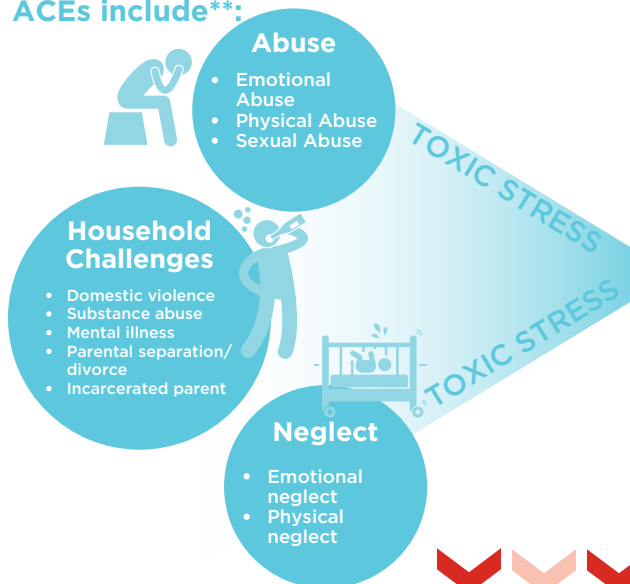


THE IMPACT OF ACEs & Toxic Stress IN CHILDREN

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Toxic Stress

Difficult circumstances that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing

ACEs include**:



Stress Response*:

The stress response is our body's natural reaction to stressful events. Our stress response is there to protect us from potential danger.



Toxic Stress Response*:

In response to this prolonged exposure to toxic events (ACEs), the child's body produces a severe stress response that lasts for an extended period of time.

Over time, the stress hormones begin to tear down the body's organs and immune system in such a way that a child may develop severe, chronic health problems as an adult.

Consequences of Toxic Stress*



- Causes fear centers of the brain to significantly increase in size
- Child can develop symptoms very similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Decreases size and impairs functioning of regions of the brain responsible for learning, memory, and executive functioning
- Child at risk for having learning and behavior problems
- Immune system suppressed
- Child at risk for developing chronic, lifelong health conditions
- DNA is changed
- Gene expression affects bodily functions and can potentially be passed on



What will happen when the child grows up?



FOR ADULTS WITH 4 OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)**:

3X the levels of lung disease and adult smoking



11X the level of intravenous drug abuse



14X the number of suicide attempts



4X as likely to have begun intercourse by age 15



4.5X more likely to develop depression



2X the level of liver disease



"Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today."

Dr. Robert Block, former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Using a Resilience-Focused Approach to Help Children Overcome the Effects of Toxic Stress

Children can heal from the effects of toxic stress if they develop healthy relationships with caring, reliable, safe, compassionate adults who guide them through the healing process.

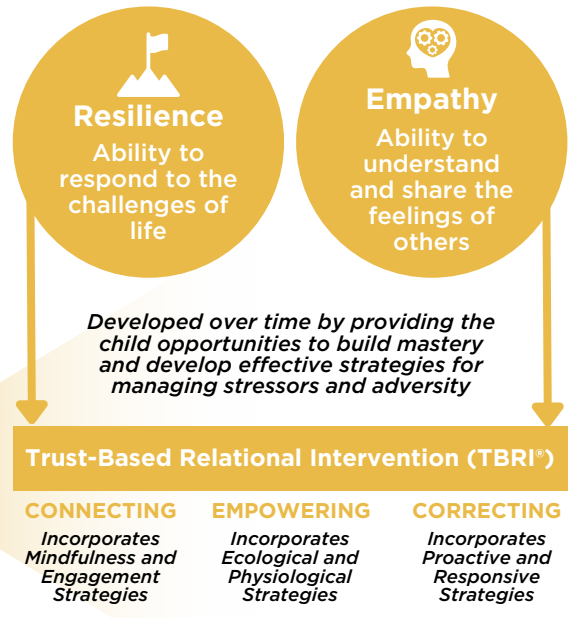
Protective Factors**:

The presence of PROTECTIVE FACTORS can often mitigate the consequences of ACEs/toxic stress.



Developing Resilience and Empathy**:

Adults can help children heal from their adverse experiences by helping children build...



Supportive Care:

A holistic approach that recognizes the widespread impact of toxic stress on individuals and systems, aiming to create safe, supportive, and empowering environments that promote healing and resilience.

How Child Advocates of Montgomery County is Making a Difference



- Volunteer Advocates (court-appointed Guardian ad Litem) perform ACEs assessments for every child; include assessments in the court report for the judge and others involved in the case
- First Child Advocates staff member completed TBRI® Practitioner Training in 2016; formed Child Advocates TBRI® Team with six Practitioners on staff in 2018; now seventeen TBRI® Practitioners on staff at Child Advocates
- Recognized as a TBRI® Ambassador Program in 2024 by the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University

Child Advocates Training and TBRI® Community Education Division:

- Offers on-site or virtual TBRI® coaching to eligible parents of origin and/or caregivers/foster placements
- Provides *The Connected Child* and *The Connected Parent* to caregivers/parents
- Shares cultivated TBRI® YouTube video playlist with caregivers/parents
- Presents invaluable education and training to additional community groups/agencies encountering children who have experienced ACEs and toxic stress but have not been removed from their homes—teachers/schools, law enforcement, attorneys, judges, healthcare workers, etc.—to help them understand how to interact in a resilience-focused way

UNDERSTANDING ACEs



SCAN ME

TOXIC STRESS & THE BRAIN



SCAN ME

TBRI® OVERVIEW



SCAN ME

IDEAL RESPONSE®



SCAN ME

* Source: Texas Children's Hospital Blog, "The Impact of Toxic Stress in Children"

** Source: 70/30 Campaign, "Empowering Communities to Protect our Children" handout