

# TOXIC STRESS AND YOUR FAMILY

## WHAT IS TOXIC STRESS?

“Toxic stress is stress that is damaging to our physical, emotional, and mental health. Toxic stress seeps under the skin and into our bodies causing pain and is contagious and unhealthy for our kids and families.”

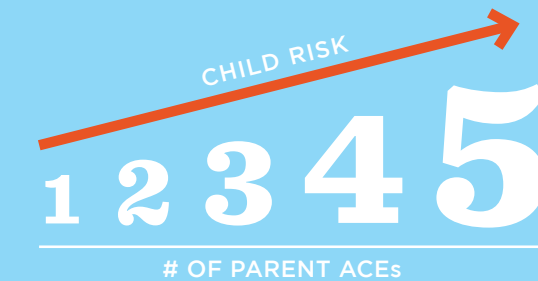
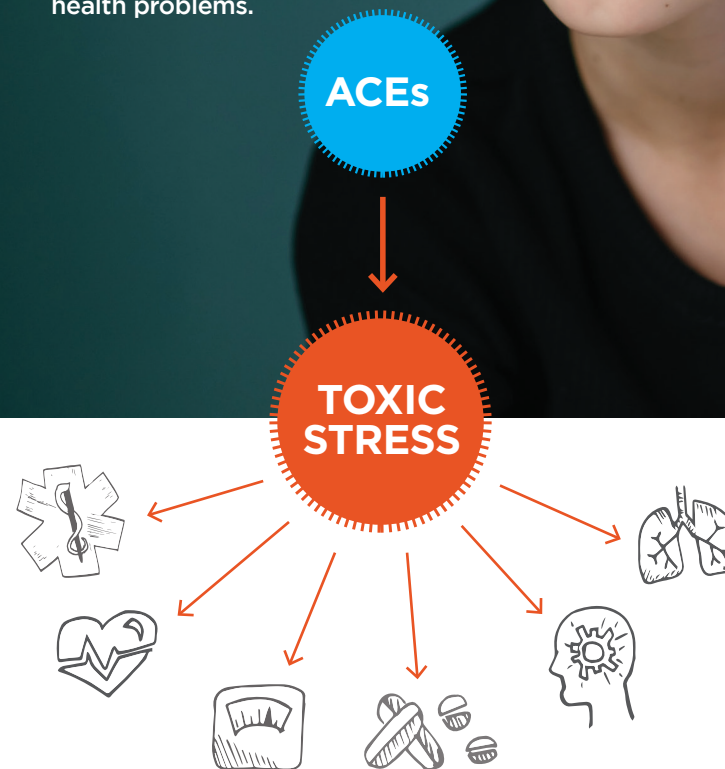
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Toxic stress can happen when people experience many adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction.



## WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT TOXIC STRESS?

Because too much stress over long periods of time can cause serious health problems.



## HOW IS THIS AFFECTING OUR COMMUNITY?

Toxic stress affects parents and children. An Operation Breakthrough survey showed that children of parents with more ACEs are at a greater risk of experiencing outcomes such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction.



**BOTTOM LINE:**

Toxic stress can travel from one generation to the next,

BUT IT DOESN'T  
HAVE TO.

**RESILIENCE**

Resilience is a continuous practice, not an endpoint. Resilience involves connecting to yourself and others in the face of adversity to find ways to adapt to internal and external stressors. Resilience looks different for each of us; sometimes we take a step back or stand still before moving forward.

# WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT TOXIC STRESS?

We are committed to breaking the cycle of toxic stress through providing comprehensive programs and supports.

1.

## Enhanced Classroom Support

Enhancing early childhood relationships between parents, teachers, and children can have a positive impact on learning. A child's social, emotional, and behavioral development is important to health and wellness. "Incredible Years" is one program that provides tools and strategies to help parents and teachers. Check for programs in your area.

2.

## Integrated Primary & Behavioral Health Care

Children and families need to be healthy in mind, body, and spirit: thriving, not just surviving. Today, medical practices are bringing together providers from primary care, behavioral health services, and social services. Together, care teams can work more effectively to help meet the needs of families affected by trauma. Make sure that both you and your children have a primary care provider. See your provider regularly for well care and ask your provider about resources that might benefit your behavioral health.

3.

## Parenting Skills & Support Groups

Parent Café is a parent-to-parent program that provides a safe space to build positive social connections and enhances understanding of protective factors related to parenting. Parent Cafés are physically and emotionally safe spaces where parents and caregivers talk about the challenges and victories of raising a family.

### What do we know about protective factors?

Protective factors are conditions or qualities in individuals, families, and communities that promote health and well-being. Examples of protective factors include emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, good schools and positive parenting.

4.

## Caregiver Wellness Groups & Activities

As a parent, YOU are the most important person in the world to your child. Parenting can be stressful. A regular practice of self-care can reduce stress and increase a sense of wellness so you can be the best parent you can be. Explore community centers, YMCA, faith-based, and Health Department resources in your area for programs aimed at individual or group stress reduction.

THE DANGERS  
OF TOXIC STRESS  
ARE REAL.  
BUT WE CAN  
BREAK THE CYCLE.

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