What are ACEs?

They are types of trauma individuals experience as children that can have long-term negative physical and behavioral health outcomes. Approximately 2 out of 3 adults in Delaware have experienced at least one ACE.

Gun Violence

In 2022, approximately 1 in 4 8th and 11th grade students in Delaware report that they have either been a victim or known a victim of gun violence in their lifetime.

ACEs among Delaware Youth

In 2022, 31% of 8th graders and 28% of 11th graders reported 3 or more ACEs.

Living with someone with a mental illness or substance use problem and being bullied were the most common ACEs.

Students who reported having an ACE were more likely to report substance use and symptoms of depression and anxiety.

When asked what changes would make their schools safer, more than one-third (37%) of 8th grade and nearly half (46%) of 11th grade students surveyed asked for additional mental health professionals at their schools. Conducting active shooter drills was the second most common answer.

ACEs Exposure and Health among Adults (%)

In 2019, adults who reported exposure to one ACE had slightly higher rates of depression, poor health, and cigarette use. Adults with two or more ACEs smoked and experienced symptoms of depression even more frequently.

*Over time, the concept of ACEs has evolved to more broadly capture adversities. Surveys vary in terms of what ACEs are measured, but generally, these may include: abuse, neglect, sexual assault, parental separation, homelessness, an incarcerated family member, and living with someone with a mental health or substance use disorder. Exposure to racism, poverty, and community violence are sometimes included. The 2022 Delaware Epidemiological Profile expands on these survey-specific indicators in the "Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Other Trauma" chapter.

This infographic references data reported in the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Other Trauma module of the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile, which draws upon the following sources: Delaware School Surveys and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

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