

What Now?

Do not feel embarrassed to ask for help. Think about how ACEs affect you and your parenting. If ACEs are causing problems in your home, talk to family members, trusted friends, or a professional. Your doctor or health care provider can review your individual situation and recommend resources, as needed.



The **Mental Health Foundation** website has a useful A-Z of key mental health topics: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z>

Mind have a whole range of information and support information for children and parents on their website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/>

Young Minds provide useful information for young people and their parents about mental health, seeking treatment and the mental health system:
<https://youngminds.org.uk/shop/publications/c-23/c-70>

The **NHS** website is a useful place to find out about all kinds of illnesses, including mental health problems: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health/Pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx>

Mind Ed for Families is a site developed by Health Education England and the Department of Education to help families understand and support their children, from parenting tips to getting help in a crisis:
<https://www.minded.org.uk/families/index.html>

Headspace has some useful audio and video clips about different conditions and people's experiences, as well as some mindfulness resources.

Child Protection at The Rowans - Important contacts

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Miss Johnson: Executive Head Teacher
Caron.johnson@therowansap.co.uk

Mrs May: Head Teacher
fiona.may@therowansap.co.uk

Miss Webb: SENCO
gwen.webb@therowansap.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Miss Jones: Welfare and Attendance Lead
rebecca.jones@therowansap.co.uk

Jo Skinner: Inclusions, Interventions & Mental Health Lead
joanne.skinner@therowansap.co.uk

Mrs Bowley: Lead Teacher Primary SEN
Tracey.bowley@therowansap.co.uk

Mr May: 2nd In Charge Primary SEN
lan.may@therowansap.co.uk

Trustee for Safeguarding

Karen Price
Karen.price@therowansap.co.uk

The school's safeguarding and child protection policy is available on our website:
<https://www.therowans.org/policies and info/policies>



The Rowans AP Academy

ACES

Adverse Childhood Experiences





Please take a leaflet and seek support from us

Silverbank, Churchill Avenue
Chatham, Kent ME5 0LB
01634 33 8803

Email – office@therowansap.co.uk

www.therowans.org














 @TherowansAP

 The Rowans AP Academy

What are ACEs?

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful events occurring in childhood including

- domestic violence
- parental abandonment through separation or divorce
- a parent with a mental health condition
- being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)
- being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)
- a member of the household being in prison
- growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems

Abuse & neglect at home	Living in care or being homeless	Parent & carer problems
 Sexual abuse	 Living in care	 Domestic violence
 Verbal abuse	 Homeless	 Incarceration
 Physical abuse		 Alcohol abuse
 Neglect		 Drug use
		 Mental illness
		 Parental separation
		 Death

Parenting with ACEs

As an adult, you may still feel the effects of your own Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). What does this mean for your own health? This depends on how many ACEs you experienced as a child. It *also* depends on whether you've had certain positive experiences that help reduce the effects of stress. These positive experiences are known as "protective factors." Did a friend, family member, or a professional provide support during your childhood? Do you have a good support system in place now? These experiences help reduce the effects of ACEs. The impact of ACEs also depends on factors such as how you personally manage stress.

The Stress response

Your body's stress response is designed to help you survive. When you sense danger or any kind of threat, your body's natural reaction is to increase blood pressure and heart rate so you have the energy to run or fight back. Another reaction is to freeze and shut down. These reactions are your body's way of trying to keep you safe. When used from time to time, these stress responses work well. However, when you experience frequent or severe stress during childhood, your body may learn to respond to small problems as if they were big ones. This could be why little things, even a toddler's tantrum or spilled milk, can feel overwhelming,

It can also explain why you may sometimes feel anxious and threatened even when in a safe and calm place. When you're only a little stressed, you may feel alert, aware, and able to cope well. But when you become overly stressed, you may feel panicked and anxious. You may also feel numb, exhausted, or emotionally drained.

Parenting is demanding, and it can easily trigger this stress response. Very simply, because of how brains and bodies react to stress, it is harder to process information when stress levels are too high. You may experience feelings of *stress overload* such as:

- difficulty calming down
- a quicker-than-normal temper and feelings of impatience
- difficulty thinking logically
- a limited ability to "read" others and judge the needs of your children
- difficulty modelling good skills and behaviour for your children.

The good news!

Although people with ACEs may be at higher risk for many health issues, it's never too late to get support! Because bodies and brains are constantly growing and changing, thing you do to improve your health today can make a big difference over time! Learning healthy ways to cope with stress and build resilience can help. This skill-building means developing healthy habits for stress management now that improve your ability to handle difficult situations in the future. Also, learning about what's age-appropriate for your child can give perspective when their behavior is challenging.



How to reduce the effects of ACEs

Many lifestyle changes can help reduce the effects of ACEs. Relationships with other supportive adults can help your brain and body turn down the stress response and build resilience. Making time to relax, engage in a hobby, or participate in a fun activity can help a lot, too! Good sleep habits, healthy eating, and regular exercise are other important tools to manage stress. Mindfulness practices can also help. Some parents find it helpful to seek out mental health professionals for their own exposure to ACEs and trauma. Together, these protective factors can help improve the health and well-being of your whole family!