



Key Terms

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE): is a stressful or traumatic event, including abuse or neglect. It may also include experiencing household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence or growing up with family members who have [substance use disorders](#). ACEs are strongly correlated with the development and prevalence of a wide range of health problems throughout a person's life, including those associated with substance misuse.

Complex Trauma: The experience of facing multiple adversities over the course of a lifetime (Souers, K. & Hall, P., 2016).

Fixed Mind-set: The belief that one's intelligence and abilities cannot change. The position that a person is either good or not good at something based on inherent nature.

Grit: Courage and resolve; strength of character. The ability to persevere and show passion for long-term goals.

Growth Mind-set: The belief that one's intelligence and abilities can change and develop. The ability to perceive a challenge as an opportunity to learn, rather than an obstacle to overcome.

Positive Stress: A normal and essential part of healthy development, characterized by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Examples of positive stress include the first day of school or receiving an immunization shot.

Resilience: The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Stress: A physical and emotional response to a stimulus. There are different types of stress. The brain triggers an alarm response to situations perceived as possible threats and the body reacts by releasing hormones. Stress can look different depending on the individual; however, physical symptoms of stress can include headaches, back or chest pain, heart palpitations, sleep problems or upset stomach. Emotional symptoms can include sadness, anger, irritability, anxiety or lack of focus.

Tolerable Stress: The response to severe, long-lasting events like the loss of a loved one or natural disaster. The body's biological systems (brain, organs and hormones) are activated to a greater degree. If the time is limited and protected by relationships with adults who help the child, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

Toxic Stress: Prolonged activation of the stress response system, likely from strong, frequent, and/or long-lasting difficult events or traumas like physical or emotional abuse, exposure to violence, caregiver substance abuse or acrimonious divorce. There will be little support from the caregiver during these instances. Toxic stress can disrupt brain building and other organ systems, and increase the risk for stress-related disease and intellectual impairment throughout adult years.

Trauma: An event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury to a child or others, or a threat to the psychological or physical integrity of a child or others (Peterson, K. L., 2014). Trauma is the emotional, psychological, and physiological impact of experiences of danger, violence, significant loss, or life-threatening events.

