

Adverse childhood experiences

and the lifelong consequences for lifestyle and health

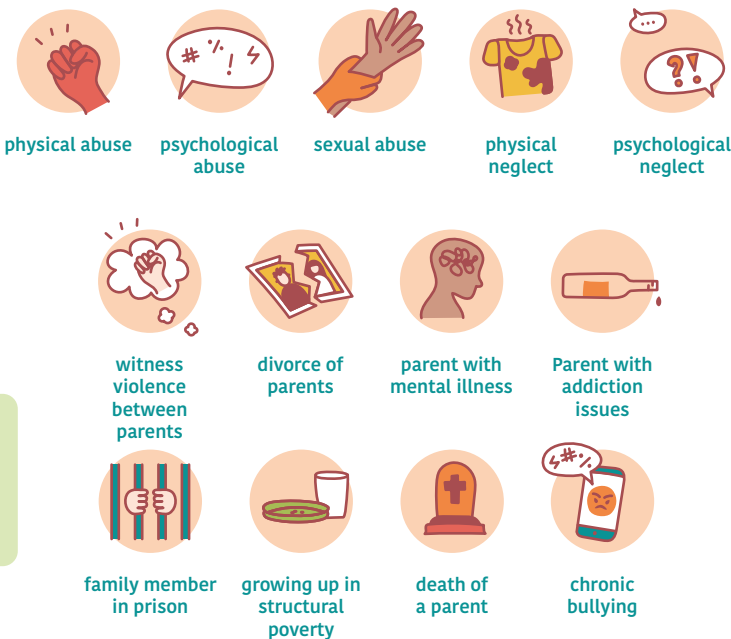
What are adverse childhood experiences?

If a child grows up with a lot of...



Adverse Childhood Experience = ACE

Most common adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)



How often do ACEs occur in the Netherlands?

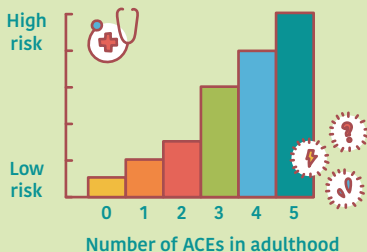
Number of ACEs per person

- Four or more: 11%
- Three: 6%
- Two: 9%
- One: 17%
- None: 56%



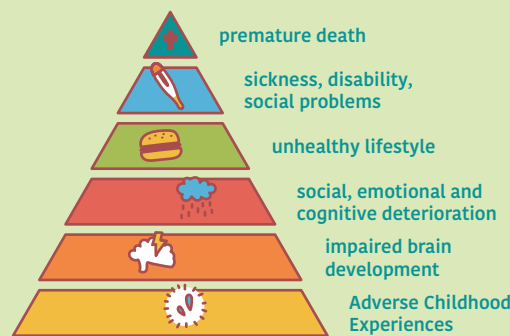
ACEs occur everywhere: in every street, neighbourhood, school and work place.

Impact on health



An accumulation of ACEs is dangerous. The more ACEs, the higher the risk is of a negative impact on health, unhealthy behaviour and lower life expectancy.

Impact on life expectancy



The impact of ACEs is lifelong. Those with 4 or more ACEs have an increased risk of dying 20 years earlier and of passing ACEs on to the next generation.

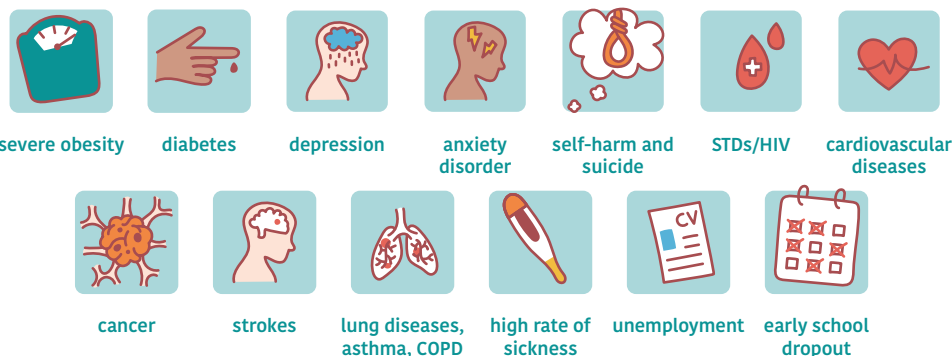
The impact of ACEs on high-risk behaviour and health

People with four or more ACEs run a much higher risk of an unhealthy lifestyle and various serious diseases and chronic disorders.

High-risk/unhealthy behaviour

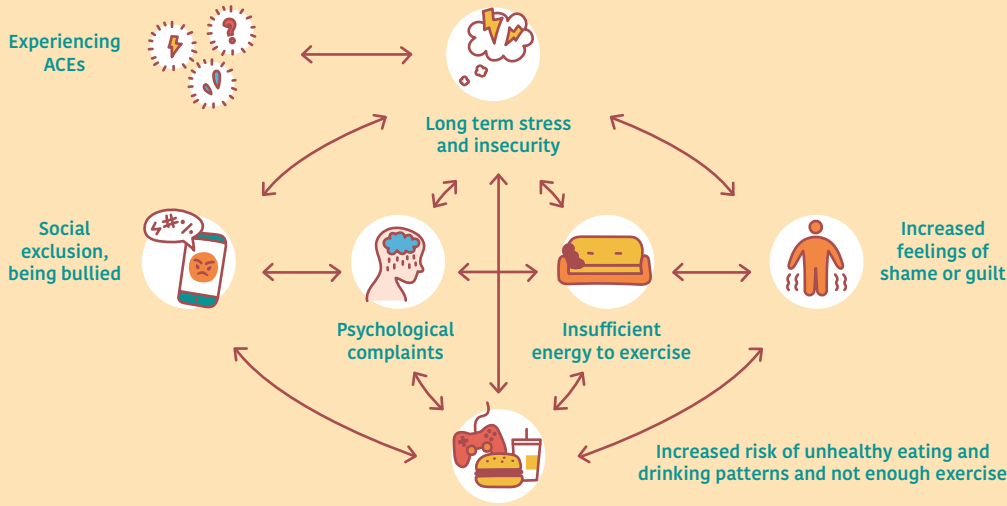


Negative physical, psychological and social health outcomes



Adverse childhood experiences and (un)healthy lifestyle

How ACEs can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle



Increased risk of obesity

Experiencing ACEs is linked to the increased risk of a child, youth or adult making unhealthy choices related to nutrition and exercise.

Somebody experiencing 4+ ACEs has:

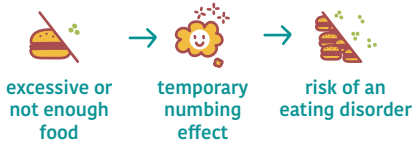
2x ... more likely to have **severe obesity** than somebody with no ACEs

A BMI of ≥ 35 is considered severe (or class II) obesity.

A diagnosed eating disorder is, for example, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa or binge eating disorder.

Eating as a form of coping

Too much or too little (nutritious) food can be a form of coping. Coping is a way to temporarily escape painful memories, stress or anxiety, a way to take control. For example:



ACEs and eating disorders

72% of those diagnosed with an eating disorder have experienced 1 or more ACEs whereas **44%** of the general population has experienced 1 or more ACEs.

People with an eating disorder:

1,5x ... more likely* to have experienced **parental divorce**

2x ... more likely* to have experienced **sexual abuse**

4x ... more likely* to have (had) a **parent with psychological problems**

*than the average general population

Resilience strengthens

All children benefit from a healthy lifestyle: this contributes to their natural resilience. For children with ACEs this is even more important. In particular, sport coaches, trainers and team mates can play an essential role in this respect. Resilience helps children recover from their experiences and reduces or even prevents damage to their health.



The importance of sport and exercise for people with ACEs



Recent research shows that teenagers and youth who have experienced ACEs and taken part in team sports have a significantly lower risk of suffering from (chronic) depression or an anxiety disorder in later life.