

## **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES SUMMARY** **May 2017 – November 2018**

After hearing some common comments from inmates, especially the frequency of childhood abuse/neglect, the facilitators of Anderson County Recovery believed there was a direct connection between childhood trauma and life-controlling/negative behaviors.

Anderson County Recovery introduced the Adverse Childhood Experiences (“ACE”) questionnaire. The questionnaire is the product of Kaiser Permanente, an HMO group based in California. Kaiser created the questionnaire in the late 1990’s to project future health care experiences, but the questionnaire became known as the traumatic event questionnaire.

The ACE questionnaire includes ten types of childhood trauma – physical, verbal, and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect, and five other things that are related to family members, e.g., alcoholic parent, domestic violence, mental illness, the absence of a parent through death, divorce, abandonment, incarceration, etc. Certainly, there are many other events, e.g., homelessness, death of close family member, hurricane, fire, etc., that may be considered as traumatic events for children under the age of 18 years. Nevertheless, so as to maintain continuity and not to overwhelm our participants, we intentionally decided to mirror the Kaiser ACE questionnaire.

Our focus group, included the inmates in Blackburn, North Point, Woodford, Shelby, and Boyle detention centers. We also provided the questionnaire to those individuals who participate in Parenting and SIF classes at the direction of the court in Anderson County.

The questionnaire was presented to each person who walked into the class, but was completed **strictly completed on a voluntary basis.**

Anderson County Recovery collected data from May 2017 through November 2018. A summary of the results is as follows:

**PARTICIPANTS:**           399 (148 women, 248 men, 3 not identified)

### **THE AVERAGE ACE SCORE: 4.56**

- 205, or 51.38% of the participants were often insulted, humiliated, put down, or were afraid that they may be physically injured.
- 177, or 44.36% of the participants were pushed, grabbed, slapped or hit so hard that marks were left or resulted in other injuries.
- 135, or 33.83% of the participants were touched or fondled in a sexual way or forced to have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse.
- 194, or 48.62% of the participants felt that no one in their family loved them or thought they were important or felt close to family members.

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- 91, or 22.81% of the participants often did not have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes and had no one to protect them due to parents being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- 295, or 73.93% of the participants came from divorced or separated homes.
- 154, or 38.6% of the participants were often pushed, grabbed, slapped by their mother or grandmother, or were kicked, bitten, hit with fist or threatened with a gun or knife.
- 259, or 64.91% of the participants lived with a problem drinker or street drug user.
- 166, or 41.60% of the participants lived with a household member who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide.
- 143, or 35.84% of the participants had a household member to go to prison.

Other interesting information include the following:

Of the 399 participants, collectively they have:

- 990 children
- incurred over 2,700 arrests with 1,427 convictions (types unknown).

Marital Status:

Participants	%	Status
66	16.5%	Married
92	23.0%	Divorced
43	11.0%	Single
20	5.0%	Widowed
117	29.3%	Never Married
58	14.5%	Never Married, Living w/ Someone
3	>1%	No info provided
399		TOTAL

Race:

Participants	%	Race
8	2.0%	American Indian
52	13.0%	Black
316	79.19%	Caucasian
5	1.25%	Hispanic
10	2.5%	Mixed
3	>1%	Other
5	1.25%	No Info provided
399		TOTAL

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Education:

Participants	%	
49	12.3%	College graduate or some college
12	3.0%	Trade School completed
133	33.33%	High School Graduate
67	16.7%	Some high school (did not graduate)
108	27.07%	GED Completed
22	5.6%	Middle School
8	2.0%	No info provided
399		TOTAL

SUMMARY

While the above data are simply facts pulled from the ACE questionnaires, the facts are extraordinary!

It is clear to see that the breakdown of the family unit is a major contributing factor. Out of 399 participants, only 66 individuals are currently married. It is not surprising that 23% are divorced, but it is very telling that 175 or 43.8% have never married or are not married but living with someone. This does not include those who classified themselves as Single. The lack or fear of commitment contributes to this situation, but I also feel that government programs entice or reward those who are not married but have children.

The education preparation is very troubling – 197 did not complete high school initially-- and goes hand-in-hand with the breakdown of the family unit. The children suffer from lack of support, hunger, homelessness, illness, etc., and education is not a priority often because the single parent is struggling to make ends meet or is caught up in a life of addiction.

However, it is also troubling that 61 participants, or 15.2% completed education above high school yet still entered into a life of crime. Perhaps my expectations of educated/trained individuals is at a higher level than realistic.

What do we do moving forward?

I don't have all of the answers, but I am fully convinced that we are working with history or after-the-fact rather than being proactive. Dealing with severe childhood trauma must take place soon after the event and the failure to receive such help is a real threat to the future of our children. In addition, we must allow our children to experience consequences for their actions, help them with decision-making skills, money/budgeting skills, etc., and some of these can be addressed in parenting classes. However, strengthening the family unit must be addressed in our churches, our community, our government programs, etc. There is no magic bullet or a government program that can solve this matter. It will take divine intervention by our Lord and supported by Christians throughout the country.

Respectfully,  
Bonnie Perry

## Adverse Childhood Experiences – “ACE”

**Anderson County Recovery (“ACR”)** has long believed there is a direct connection between childhood trauma and life-controlling matters/negative behaviors. However, it was not until recently that we were introduced to the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Study that was conducted by Kaiser Permanente in the late 1990’s.

The ACE questionnaire includes 10 types of childhood trauma – physical, verbal, and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; and five other things that are related to family members, e.g., alcoholic parent, domestic violence, mental illness, the absence of a parent through divorce, death, or abandonment and a parent’s incarceration.

Certainly, there are many other events, e.g., homelessness, death of close family member, surviving a neighborhood shooting, etc., that may be considered as traumatic events in childhood. Nevertheless, so as to maintain continuity and not to overwhelm our participants, we intentionally decided to mirror Kaiser Permanente’s 10 ACE questions.

**NOTE: This questionnaire is absolutely voluntary – you are not required to complete the questionnaire in order to participate in an ACR class.**

From the point of view of Anderson County Recovery (“ACR”) the purpose of this questionnaire is twofold:

1. To make you aware of certain adverse childhood events that you may have suffered and how those events may have contributed to your life-controlling matter/negative behaviors, and
2. To aid the staff of **ACR** in developing classes and resources to better address and improve the programs offered by **ACR**.

The questions on this page are simply to provide some background information. NOTE: This questionnaire is **CONFIDENTIAL**. You are **NOT** required to provide your name.

What is today’s date?	Where were you born (City, State)?	
If you were not born in the USA, what is the country of your birth?	How old are you?	Gender: Female      Male
What is your race? a) Caucasian (white) b) Black c) American Indian d) Hispanic (Mexican, Latino, Hispanic origin) e) Mixed f) Other	What is the highest level of school that you completed? a) Middle School b) High school Graduate c) GED d) Some high school e) 4 year College graduate Trade School _____	
What is your current marital status? a) Married b) Not married, but living with someone c) Widowed d) Separated e) Divorced f) Never married	How many times have you been married? a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) Never married	
How many children do you have?	How many times have you been arrested?	
How many convictions have you had?	How long have you been in jail now?	

## Adverse Childhood Experiences – “ACE”

<b><u>Please mark an “X” for Yes or No to the following questions:</u></b>		<b><u>NO</u></b>	<b><u>YES</u></b>
<b><u>Prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday:</u></b>			
1	Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?		
2	Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?		
3	Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?		
4	Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?		
5	Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?		
6	Were your parents ever separated or divorced?		
7	Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?		
8	Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?		
9	Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?		
10	Did a household member go to prison?		

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_