

# IN THE WORKPLACE

## Toxic Stress and ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) At a Glance

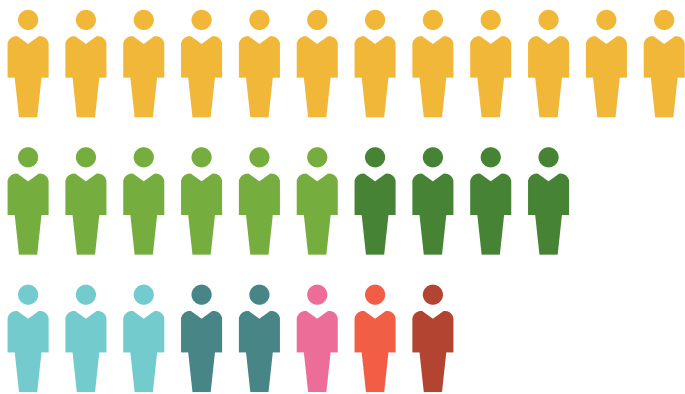
### TOXIC STRESS

Stress operates along a continuum. In small or moderate doses, stress can be beneficial. However, stressful experiences that are powerful, frequent, prolonged, and occur in unpredictable doses, especially in childhood, can be detrimental to life-long health. The body's physiological reactions to stress can change the way it heals itself and fights off sickness.<sup>1</sup>

### ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, are traumatic events or toxic stress that are now commonly acknowledged by the scientific community to be a major determinant of health outcomes. Iowa adults with 4 or more ACEs were two times more likely to report being diabetic, and four times more likely to report chronic obstructive pulmonary disease compared to those who reported no exposure to ACEs.

**5 OUT OF 30** EMPLOYEES HAVE EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT CHILDHOOD TRAUMA



**10 TYPES OF STUDIED ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

### ABUSE

- 1 Physical
- 2 Psychological
- 3 Sexual

### NEGLECT

- 4 Physical
- 5 Psychological

### HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION

- 6 Substance abuse in home
- 7 Family member with mental illness
- 8 Incarcerated family member
- 9 Separation/divorce
- 10 Domestic violence

ACCORDING TO RESEARCH FROM THE CDC AND IOWA ACEs, EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING **FOUR OR MORE ACEs** COMPARED TO THOSE WITH ZERO ARE:

**2.2x** more likely to have a heart attack

**2.3x** more likely to report serious financial problems

**2.5x** more likely to have absenteeism

**3.6x** more likely to have serious job problems

**6x** more likely to have clinical depression



## WHEN WE TALK ABOUT DEVELOPING BRAINS WE OFTEN ASSUME WE'RE TALKING ABOUT CHILDREN

- Childhood brain is the foundation of our adult brain
- The younger the brain, the more plasticity, HOWEVER: Adult brains still maintain plasticity to be shaped by experiences and environments



## RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AT ANY AGE

- In the absence of a caring relationship, trauma can disrupt healthy brain development
- Communities can promote healthy brain development through relationship building
- Promoting healthy brain development is essential to individual and community wellbeing

## POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE = STOCK PRICE GROWTH

From 1998 to 2011, the annualized returns of the *Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For* in the U.S. were **11%** compared to **3.83%** for the S&P 500.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE CONTAINER STORE** (link)

Putting employees first

### **GOOGLE** (link)

Researches what makes a good team

## TAKE ACTION

Healthy minds enable individuals to reach their full potential. Businesses can promote employee well-being by helping employees manage stress and build stronger connections within the workplace and the community.

### 1 EMPLOYERS

- Implement policies such as flex-time that create healthier families and more productive employees
- Train managers on trauma-informed care principles
- Use corporate-sponsored events to inform employees about community services that can support their well-being
- Focus on Training and Development

### 2 EMPLOYEES

- Take a 5-minute break to de-stress by walking outside or sitting quietly and being present
- Introduce yourself to someone you've seen before but haven't formally met
- Share a meal or grab coffee with a coworker



[preventchildabusenc.org/connections-matter-nc/](http://preventchildabusenc.org/connections-matter-nc/)



Yonatan, Reuben. "Toxic Stress: How Too Many Bad Days At Work Could Be Killing You." *The Huffington Post*. *TheHuffingtonPost.com*, 23 Dec. 2014.<sup>1</sup>

"What Are the Benefits of Great Workplaces?" *Great Place to Work Institute*, 2012. Web.<sup>2</sup>

RohmanGreat Place to Work® Institute., Jessica. "The Container Store, Culture Impact Brief." *With an "Employee-First" Mentality, Everyone Wins*. *Great Place to Work® Institute*, n.d. Web. 22 July 2016.<sup>3</sup>