

#Out4MentalHealth

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

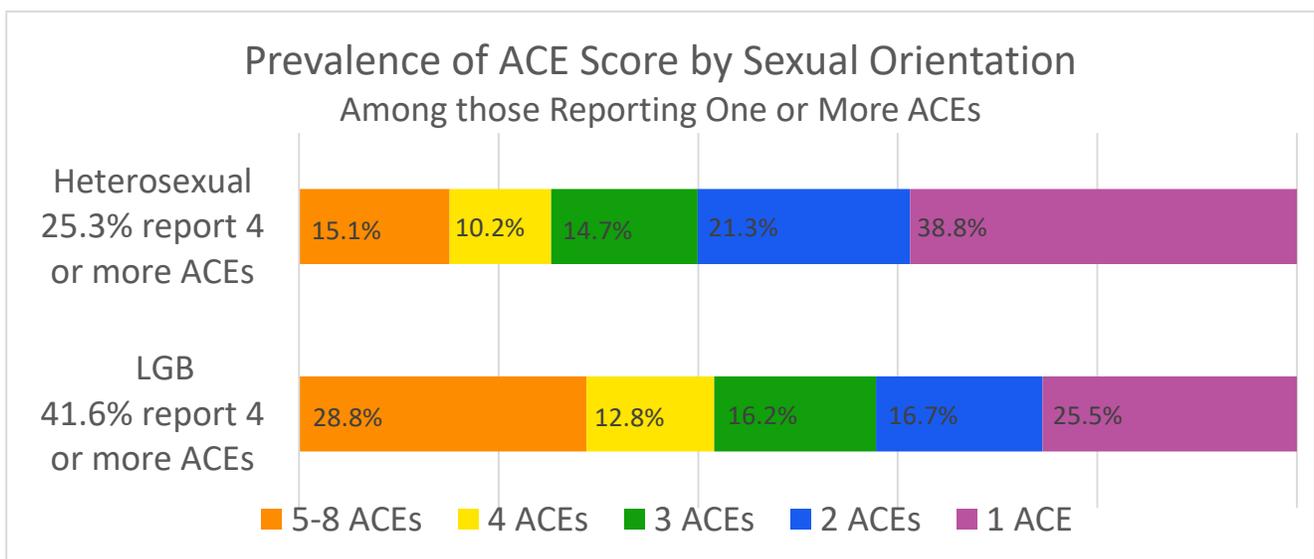
Compared to straight counterparts, LGB individuals report:

- Disproportionately higher prevalence of ACEs
- They are more likely to experience patterns of abuse
- High rates of abuse and poly-victimization by parents
- They are more likely to have experiences of poly-victimization and psychological and/or physical abuse

LGB, Transgender, and questioning adolescents were more likely to have experienced poly-victimization and psychological and/or physical abuse when compared with their straight or cisgender adolescent counterparts.

- Experiences of victimization are common among transgender adolescents and those with high levels of gender nonconformity.
- *Research has revealed that the more gender nonconforming an individual is the more abuse they experience.*

Research shows those identifying as Black or Latino and those with less than a high school education or an annual income below \$15,000 were more likely to have more ACEs, with multiracial and gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals carrying the greatest burden.



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What are ACES?

ACES are Adverse Childhood Experiences of traumatic or stressful life events before the age of eighteen. These include **childhood abuse and neglect** (Physical abuse; Sexual abuse; Emotional abuse) and **household dysfunction** (Household member with depression, mental illness, or suicide attempts; Alcohol or drug abuse in household; Incarcerated household member; Violence between adults in the household; Parental divorce or separation).

How do ACES impact adult health?

A person's cumulative adverse childhood experiences have a strong relationship to numerous health, social, and behavioral problems throughout their lifespan, including substance use disorders, more frequent **depressive symptoms, anxiety, and tobacco use**. Greater levels of adversity are also associated with poorer self-rated health and life satisfaction, heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes and many autoimmune diseases, as well as depression, violence, being a victim of violence, and suicide. **The more ACES a person has, the higher the cumulative risk of negative health consequences.**

ACEs are strongly related to the development and prevalence of a wide range of health problems throughout a person's lifespan, including those associated with **substance misuse**. Research has demonstrated a strong relationship between ACEs, substance use disorders, and behavioral problems. When children are exposed to chronic stressful events, their brain development can be disrupted. As a result, the child's cognitive **functioning or ability to cope** with negative or disruptive emotions may be impaired. Over time, and often during adolescence, the child may **adopt negative coping mechanisms**, such as substance use or self-harm. Eventually, these unhealthy coping mechanisms can contribute to disease, disability, and social problems, as well as premature mortality.

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ⁱ **Polyvictimization** refers to having experienced multiple victimizations such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, bullying, and exposure to family violence. The definition emphasizes experiencing different kinds of victimization, rather than multiple episodes of the same kind of victimization <http://polyvictimization.org/about-polyvictimization/>

ⁱⁱ Mersky, J. P., Topitzes, J., & Reynolds, A. J. (2013). Impacts of adverse childhood experiences on health, mental health, and substance use in early adulthood: a cohort study of an urban, minority sample in the U.S. *Child abuse & neglect*, 37(11), 917-25.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/trauma#ACE_Trauma_PTSD_Resources

^{iv} Center for Disease Control's Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html>

^v Andersen, J. P., & Blossnich, J. (2013). Disparities in adverse childhood experiences among sexual minority and heterosexual adults: results from a multi-state probability-based sample. *PLoS one*, 8(1), e54691.

^{vi} <https://www.contemporarypediatrics.com/adolescent-medicine/toll-adverse-events-lgbtq-teens>

^{vii} Disparities for LGBTQ and Gender Nonconforming Adolescents, doi: [10.1542/peds.2017-3004](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-3004)

^{viii} <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/09/17/648710859/childhood-trauma-and-its-lifelong-health-effects-more-prevalent-among-minorities>

^{ix} <https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/>

^x [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667\(17\)30118-4.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpub/PIIS2468-2667(17)30118-4.pdf)

^{xi} https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Brief-adverse-childhood-experiences_FINAL.pdf

^{xii} Sterzing, Paul, and Jeffrey L. Edleson. SpeakOut: Polyvictimization Prevalence Rates for Sexual and Gender Minority Adolescents - Online, 2015 [United States]. ICPSR36774-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2018-02-02. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36774.v1>

