

# Adverse Childhood Experiences Screening in a Student Health Setting: Mitigating Poor Health Outcomes

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## BACKGROUND

- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) - forms of child abuse and/or neglect, lead to poor health outcomes:
  - increased risk for emotion and behavior dysregulation
  - maladaptive coping mechanisms (i.e. alcohol, tobacco, and drugs)
  - chronic health conditions
- College students surveyed in MN and CA report >50% had one or more exposure to ACEs
- ACE screening properly identifies exposed individuals leading to targeted intervention opportunities
- There remains a gap in specific guidance for campus clinicians on how to mitigate ACE-associated poor health outcomes

\*References available upon request

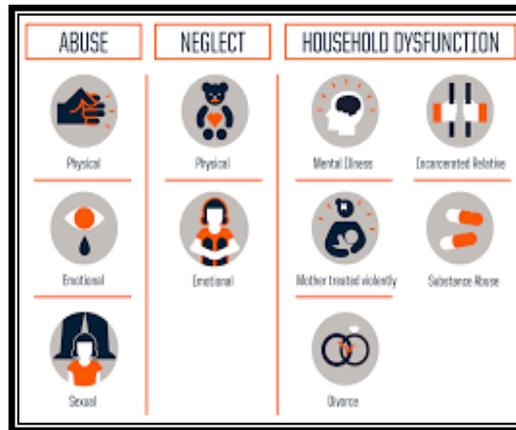
## PROBLEM

Despite unequivocal evidence supporting the prevalence of ACEs and the associated maladaptive behavior among college students, ACE-related practices are under-utilized in the student health setting.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Assess clinician knowledge, experience, and attitudes surrounding ACEs, current ACE-related practices, and feasibility of ACE screening in the student health setting through a survey of clinicians by September 2020
- Develop an informational guide describing ACEs and best-practice recommendations combined with clinician survey responses for the implementation of ACE screening and distribute to NDSU SHS clinicians by September 2020
- Evaluate clinician responses to informational guide and feasibility of ACE screening in the student health setting through clinician interviews October 2020
- Develop recommendations for ACE-related practices specific to the student health setting and disseminate to NDSU SHS clinic staff by December 2020

## ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- The Constructivist Self Development Theory (CSDT)**
  - Provides a supporting guide for clinicians on how to help an individual heal from their trauma
  - Key components provide an understanding of the impact childhood abuse and neglect have on an individual's self-capacities which include connection, affect regulation, and self-worth
- Psychological and Behavioral Sequelae**
  - Connection*
    - Loneliness
    - Dysfunctional relationships
    - Feelings of shame, self-loathing, or despair
  - Affect regulation*
    - Destructive behaviors (e.g. cutting, burning, or punching)
    - Engaging in risk-taking behavior
    - Inability to experience or name feelings
  - Self-worth*
    - Feeling "less than" or inadequate
    - Struggle to accept or feel good about themselves
    - Feel as though they're not entitled to exist
- Intervention Strategies**
  - Develop a therapeutic relationship, explore trauma history and meanings, and conduct exploratory work

## PROJECT DESIGN

- Setting**
  - NDSU Student Health Services (SHS) clinic
- Participants**
  - NDSU SHS clinicians
  - Total of 7 clinicians employed by NDSU SHS clinic
- Methods**
  - Quantitative electronic survey
  - One-time clinician interviews assisted by a semi-structured interview guide
  - Voluntary participation
  - Convenience sampling
- Analysis**
  - Recommendations for ACE-related practices specific to the student health setting will be developed based on data gathered from survey responses, clinician interviews, and a recent review of literature,

## EVALUATION

- Clinician survey responses will be assessed to determine NDSU SHS clinician knowledge, experience, and attitudes surrounding ACEs by September 2020
- An informational guide will be developed based on clinician survey responses and a recent review of literature describing ACEs and best-practice recommendations by October 2020
- A one-time interview with NDSU SHS clinicians will determine feasibility of ACE screening the student health setting by October 2020
- Recommendations regarding ACE-related practices will be developed based on data gathered from survey responses, recent review of literature, and clinician interviews by December 2020

## TIMELINE

- Literature Review & Proposal Development**
  - Proposal Meeting June 2020
  - IRB approval July 2020
- Project Implementation & Data Collection**
  - August 2020 - October 2020
- Data Analysis**
  - October 2020 - December 2020
- Final Dissertation Defense**
  - January 2020