

WEEK

12

# Adverse Childhood Experiences



*“Understanding why a kid is challenging is the first and most important part of helping them.” – Dr. Ross Greene*

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are traumatic events that occur during childhood (ages 0-17). ACEs may impact a person’s brain development and can have a lasting effect on their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing into adulthood. According to the CDC, about 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.

ACEs may also result from challenges related to systemic violence including discrimination, racism, poverty, mental illness, and incarceration. We have seen how policies and systems that reinforce structural racism also produce community environments that lack equity. This lack of equity, and the policies that produce it, are the direct cause of higher instances of ACEs for children of color, compared with White children. An analysis by The Child & Adolescent Health Initiative shows that 6 in 10 Black children have ACEs, representing 17.4% of all children in the U.S. It is important that we keep in mind the central role of policies and systems in this racial disparity. As you’ll explore in this week’s activities, policies producing concentrated poverty, inequitable education, and less access to affordable housing for communities of color are central to the disparate level of ACEs by race; in other words, this inequity is by design.

Take the quiz in Activity 1 to learn your own ACE score. A deeper understanding of the longstanding impacts of ACEs, as well as their intersection with issues of structural racism and systemic oppression, can help us to develop meaningful strategies for care, strength, and resiliency, as well as reducing the overall prevalence of ACEs. Activity 2 will dive into how structural impediments underlie ACEs for communities of color.



## ACTIVITY ONE

**READ :** [Take The ACE Quiz — Learn What It Does And Doesn't Mean](#)



## ACTIVITY TWO

**WATCH :** [Trauma and Equity](#)

Share your reflections and any resources that help further the discussion on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag [#UWLIEquityChallenge](#)