USING THE ACES RESEARCH TO
REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

In 1998, the CDC and Kaiser Permanente, published a study that showed a link between 10 types of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and lifelong health. Subsequent research found that high levels of stress (toxic stress) during childhood change how the brain and body develop. While some stress is necessary for children to learn new skills and coping strategies, exposure to prolonged stress can adversely affect brain development and cause the body to release harmful levels of stress hormones.

▶ POSITIVE
Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

- Meeting a New Caregiver
- Receiving an Immunization
- Taking a Test
- Learning a New Skill

▶ TOLERABLE
Serious temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

- Natural Disasters
- Death of a Loved One
- Frightening Injury

▶ TOXIC
Prolonged activation of stress response systems in absence of protective relationships.

- Physical or Emotional Abuse
- Chronic Neglect
- Parental Addiction
- Parental Mental Illness

HOW TO HELP
BECOMING A PROTECTIVE FACTOR

"Every child who winds up doing well has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult."

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard, 2015

We know that one caring adult can help a child heal from past abuse. Being a buffer for a child can calm an overactive stress response system, lowering amounts of stress hormones present in their bodies. Providing a Safe, Stable, and Nurturing environment will help your children's brain develop better too!

TIPS TO BEGIN
THE HEALING PROCESS

- Supply predictable schedules and routines
- Educate parents of best parenting practices and good role modeling
- Teach children to identify their emotions and reactions to upsetting situations so they can learn and practice appropriate responses
- Provide nonpunitive, solution-focused discipline
- Focus on resilience; discuss strategies for overcoming obstacles, praise effort, and allow them to practice decision-making skills

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