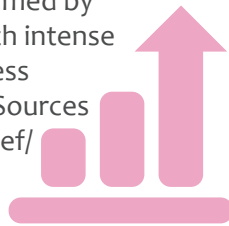


## ACEs, Toxic Stress & Trauma

**ACEs are Adverse Childhood Experiences.** A medical study showed that high exposure to ACEs – including abuse, neglect and household dysfunction – increases risk for heart disease, diabetes, and other serious health conditions. Measured on a scale of one to ten, the higher a person’s “dose” of adversity, the higher their risk for poor health.

**Toxic stress** is a chronic activation of the physiological response to stressors when there is no buffering protection, or support.

**Trauma** occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and responds with intense fear, alarm and helplessness. Extreme stress overwhelms a person’s capacity to cope. Sources of trauma include: ACEs, war, violence, grief/loss, accidents, natural disasters, medical interventions, cultural/historical trauma.



## Resilience

**Resilience** is the ability to thrive, adapt and cope despite tough and stressful times. Resilience is a natural counter-weight to ACEs. Resilience is not an innate characteristic, but rather is a skill that can be taught, learned and practiced. Everybody has the ability to become resilient when surrounded by the right environments and people.

**Safe, nurturing environments** protect children from adversity, toxic stress and trauma, while building their resilience. In these environments, adults create secure attachments with children, and possess knowledge of child development, coping and parenting skills, formal and informal support, and the ability to model and nurture emotional regulation.



**Pro Action** works to build a community of **resilient** individuals and families who can meet their basic needs, **overcome adversity**, and prosper.

## Did You Know...

- Toxic stress associated with high doses of trauma and adversity during childhood causes changes in the brain, making it more easily signaled to go into a “fight or flight,” survival mode
- A child with an ACE score of 4+ is 37 times more likely than a child with an ACE score of zero to develop behavior problems in school
- Some studies are now linking high ACE scores with high school incompleteness, unemployment and poverty
- Trauma is a risk factor in nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders
- Research is now showing that the presence of supportive relationships is more critical than the absence of ACEs in promoting well-being



# FACT SHEET

## Trauma Informed Organization

**VISION: Pro Action is a safe space.  
Here you are heard, valued and not alone.**



## FAQs

### What is trauma?

Trauma occurs when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and responds with intense fear, alarm and helplessness. Extreme stress overwhelms a person's capacity to cope.

### What is a trauma-informed organization?

Adopting a trauma-informed approach means all people at all levels of an organization:

- Realize the prevalence and impact of trauma on youth, families, communities, and systems.
- Recognize the signs of trauma in those they serve.
- Respond by integrating knowledge of trauma into policies, procedures and practices.
- Resist re-traumatizing.

### Why is Pro Action becoming a trauma-informed organization?

Our mission calls on us to support people as they build resilience, overcome adversity and prosper. Living in the crisis of poverty creates adverse circumstances that often lead to trauma. Becoming more knowledgeable about trauma will help us serve our customers more effectively and learn how best to take care of ourselves.

### What is expected of me?

Please engage whole-heartedly in this effort. You may be invited to answer surveys, sit on a work group, or attend a learning session. The process is likely to result in changes to the way we do our jobs. Please embrace these changes as important steps toward the vision of a **safe space where everyone is heard, valued and not alone.**

## Stress Health Basics

Healthy Relationships

Sleep

Nutrition

Exercise

Mental Health

Mindfulness

Learn more at  
[www.stresshealth.org](http://www.stresshealth.org)