

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Questionnaire: Finding Your ACE Score (10 questions)

Name: _____ Date: _____

This questionnaire helps adults record ten types of adversity experienced before age 18. It is a screening aid for discussing childhood experiences, not a diagnosis or a prediction of your health. A clinician interprets your answers alongside your history, current concerns and sources of support.

INSTRUCTIONS

Think about your first 18 years of life and mark Yes or No for each question, following its wording about how often an experience occurred. Where a question gives alternatives joined by 'or', answer Yes if either applies. You may pause or leave a question unanswered if you do not wish to respond.

	QUESTION	YES	NO
1	Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? Or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?	☐ Yes	☐ No
2	Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?	☐ Yes	☐ No
3	Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?	☐ Yes	☐ No
4	Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? Or your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?	☐ Yes	☐ No
5	Did you often or very often feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Or your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?	☐ Yes	☐ No
6	Were your parents ever separated or divorced?	☐ Yes	☐ No
7	Was your mother or stepmother often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? Or sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? Or ever repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?	☐ Yes	☐ No
8	Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?	☐ Yes	☐ No

	QUESTION	YES	NO
9	Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?	☐ Yes	☐ No
10	Did a household member go to prison?	☐ Yes	☐ No

ACE Score: _____ Add up your Yes answers. Each question counts once.

SCORING

1. Give each Yes answer 1 point and each No answer 0 points. Count each numbered question once, even if several experiences within it apply.
2. Add the ten question scores to obtain an ACE score from 0 to 10. This counts categories of experience, not the number of incidents. There are no separate diagnostic subscale cutoffs.
3. If an answer is missing or uncertain, leave the score incomplete and discuss it with a clinician; do not count that answer as No. This missing-answer safeguard is an editorial instruction, not a validated replacement scoring rule.

WHAT THE SCORE MEANS

A score of 0 means none of these ten categories was reported. Scores of 1 to 3 mean one to three categories were reported; scores of 4 to 10 mean four to ten categories were reported.

Research has associated higher ACE counts with higher rates of some health problems across groups of people, often comparing four or more ACEs with none. Four is not a diagnostic cutoff, and there are no official mild, moderate or severe diagnoses attached to these ranges. The score does not establish the severity of an experience or predict an individual's future. A clinician considers what happened, how it affects you now and what support you have; concerns deserve attention at any score.

Source: CDC and Kaiser Permanente, Adverse Childhood Experiences Study questionnaires. Questionnaire content is in the public domain. Use of these materials by Psychology.com does not imply endorsement of Psychology.com, its products or services by CDC, ATSDR, HHS or the United States Government. Source questionnaires are also available free at <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/communication-resources/index.html>.

Foundational citation: Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, Williamson DF, Spitz AM, Edwards V, Koss MP, Marks JS. Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 1998;14(4):245-258. doi:10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8.

Ten-category study: Dong M, Anda RF, Felitti VJ, et al. The interrelatedness of multiple forms of childhood abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 2004;28(7):771-784. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.01.008.

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Free online version with instant scoring: <https://psychology.com/tests/ace>. This sheet is a screening aid, not a diagnosis. In the US, call or text 988 in a crisis.