

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Among Public High School Students in Oklahoma

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2021 and continuing in 2023, Oklahoma added questions regarding adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and positive childhood experiences (PCEs) to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Thirteen ACEs questions* covered the areas of:

- Physical and emotional abuse
- Physical neglect
- Witnessing intimate partner violence
- Challenges at home
- Experiencing discrimination
- Witnessing community violence.

Three PCEs questions* covered the areas of:

- Having a caring or supportive adult in their life
- Having a caring or supportive friend in their life
- Having a sense of belonging at school

Composite scores were developed for both ACEs and PCEs. The total possible score for ACEs was 11. An ACE score was only calculated for respondents who answered 5 or more ACEs questions. ACEs score categories are: 0 ACEs; 1 ACE; 2-3 ACEs; and 4 or more ACEs. The total possible score for PCEs was three. A PCE score was only calculated for respondents who answered all three PCEs questions. PCEs score categories are: 0 PCEs; 1 PCE; 2 PCEs; and 3 PCEs. No records were excluded based on age.

See page 2 for exact question wording and exposure coding.

RESULTS

ACEs and PCEs Composite Score: Oklahoma YRBS 2021 and 2023

ACEs Score	2021	2023
0 ACEs	14.4	14.0
1 ACE	17.5	17.1
2-3 ACEs	32.1	31.6
4+ ACEs	36.0	37.2

PCE Score	2021	2023
0 PCEs	22.3	25.0
1 PCE	30.4	28.2
2 PCEs	26.3	26.4
3 PCEs	21.0	20.3

ACEs and PCEs Composite Score by Gender: Oklahoma YRBS 2023

ACEs Score	Female	Male
0 ACEs	11.0	17.3
1 ACE	15.3	19.2
2-3 ACEs	29.9	33.4
4+ ACEs	43.8	30.1

PCE Score	Female	Male
0 PCEs	26.8	22.9
1 PCE	26.5	29.9
2 PCEs	28.9	23.9
3 PCEs	17.8	23.3

ACEs and PCEs Questions and Exposure Coding

CORE ACEs	Question	Adverse Exposure	Positive Exposure
Lifetime Emotional Abuse	During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home sworn at you, insulted you, or put you down?	Ever*	Never
Recent Emotional Abuse	During the past 12 months, how often has a parent or other adult in your home sworn at you, insulted you, or put you down?	1 or more times**	0 times
Lifetime Physical Abuse	During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?	Ever*	Never
Recent Physical Abuse	During the past 12 months, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?	1 or more times**	0 times
Lifetime Neglect	How often has there been an adult in your household who tried hard to make sure your basic needs were met, such as looking after your safety and making sure you had clean clothes and enough to eat?	Never or rarely	Sometimes, most of the time, or always
Witnessed IPV	During your life, how often have your parents or other adults in your home slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?	Ever*	Never
Sexual Abuse	Has an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever forced you to do sexual things that you did not want to do?	Yes	No
Drug Use in Household	Have you ever lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drug use?	Yes	No
Mental Illness in Household	Have you ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?	Yes	No
Incarcerated Family	Have you ever been separated from a parent or guardian because they went to jail or prison?	Yes	No
EXPANDED ACEs		Adverse Exposure	Positive Exposure
Racial Discrimination	During your life, how often have you felt that you were treated badly or unfairly because of your race or ethnicity?	Ever*	Never
Sexual Orientation Discrimination	During your life, how often have you felt that you were treated badly or unfairly because you are or people think you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning?***	Ever*	Never
Community Violence	Have you ever seen or heard someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in your neighborhood in real life?	Yes	No
PCEs		Adverse Exposure	Positive Exposure
Trusted Adult	During your life, how often have you felt that you were able to talk to an adult in your family or another caring adult about your feelings?	Never, rarely, or sometimes	Most of the time or always
Trusted Friend	During your life, how often have you felt that you were able to talk to a friend about your feelings?	Never, rarely, or sometimes	Most of the time or always
Supportive School	Do you agree or disagree that you feel close to people at your school?	Not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree	Agree or strongly agree

*Rarely, sometimes, most of the time, or always

**1 time, 2 or 3 times, 4 or 5 times, or 6 or more times

***Question wording changed from 2021 to 2023

For more information contact the Maternal and Child Health Service, MCH Assessment at (405) 426-8092 or visit oklahoma.gov/health/yrbs



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