



How past Trauma influences your adult life



Trees are powerful helpers, when it comes to mitigate suffering from past trauma.

Are you suffering from psychological, physical, or mental ailments for which there is currently no apparent explanation?

A trauma experienced during your childhood—possibly even while you were in the womb, or (as research now suggests) even inherited from your ancestors—could be the underlying cause. The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Questionnaire [1], developed by Felitti et al. in 1998, identifies potential events occurring before the age of 18 as possible causes for the development of trauma, using a set of 10 questions. You can score it yourself.

<p>1. Did a parent or other adult living in your home: Often or very often swear at you, insult you, or put you down? or Often or very often act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?</p>	<p>6. Were your parents ever divorced or separated?</p>
<p>2. Did a parent or other adult living in your home: 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?</p>	<p>7. Was your mother or stepmother: Sometimes, 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 over at least a few minutes? or Ever threatened with or hurt by a knife or gun?</p>
<p>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 Ever attempt to or successfully have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?</p>	<p>8. Was a household member a problem drinker or alcoholic or use street drugs?</p>
<p>4. Did you 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?</p>	<p>9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or attempt suicide?</p>
<p>5. Did you often feel that: You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to take care of you, protect you, or take you to the hospital if you needed it? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you?</p>	<p>10. Did a household member go to prison?</p>

The so-called "ACE score" is determined by the sum of the "yes" responses. Each "yes" answer corresponds to one point.

0 points: None of the queried adverse childhood experiences are present.

1–3 points: There were some stressful events in your childhood that may disrupt your life, your health, and your well-being.

4 or more points: Your risk for health and mental health problems in adulthood may—though does not necessarily—be elevated [2].

What determines whether or not you will experience lasting effects as an adult?

When babies, toddlers, and children receive what every mammal is "programmed" to expect (food, attention, protection, security, consistency, love, and affection), this creates the best resilience to cope later with traumatic experiences of all kinds unscathed. If these essential factors were lacking, the

necessary hormonal and neural foundations were not established to enable a resilient response to life's adversities or unpleasant surprises later on.

What can you do if, based on your results from the questionnaire, you identify a potential issue and are also suffering from symptoms?

* Keep a journal in which you write down your own thoughts regarding the negative aspects of your childhood that come to your mind. Indeed, it is not uncommon for patients to try to avoid taking a close look—by escaping or distracting themselves (through drug use, work, or excessive engagement in hobbies). But it is worth the effort!

* Write letters to the individuals responsible for your traumatic experiences. You do not have to send them. It is sufficient simply to write them and then ceremonially burn them, thereby dissolving the emotional bond to the experience involving that person.

* Write down the beautiful and positive things you currently have in your life—the things for which you can be grateful.

Research has demonstrated that this form of writing, in addition to boosting one's mood, also has physical effects—such as lowering blood pressure, improving lung and liver function, and reducing susceptibility to inflammation [4].

* Any form of artistic activity is beneficial, whether you write poetry, paint pictures, or sew garments of your own design.

* Since trauma is stored within the body's cells—particularly in the fascia—movement, yoga, or massage can bring forgotten memories to light, allowing them to be resolved.

* The childhood sensation that your safety is under threat can sometimes be triggered in your current life by specific events or people, leading to unexpected, self-sabotaging behavior [5]. The more aware you become of these triggers, the less likely you are—as an adult—to fall into this "threat trap." This trap can manifest as an exaggerated need for control; for whenever something appears unknown or uncontrollable, your sense of safety feels compromised. This can lead you to stop trusting people who are, in fact, trustworthy, and to sabotage valuable relationships.

* Across various cultures, there exist breathing therapies designed to calm the mind and consistently guide you back to the "here and now" whenever you find yourself trapped in a negative emotion rooted in the past.

* Spend time in nature as often as possible and forge a bond with it—whether by swimming, climbing, gardening, walking barefoot, utilizing medicinal plants, or hugging a tree.

Take care of yourself, treat yourself with compassion, and—if necessary—seek professional help to process your underlying issues and mitigate the long-term effects of these past experiences.

Learn more:

[1] <https://aceshub.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/ACE-Questionnaire.pdf>

[2] <https://di.aerzteblatt.de/int/archive/article/236520>

[3] Gabor Maté: In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: The award-winning guide to the causes of addiction – and how to heal it

[4] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231337110_Emotional_and_physical_benefits_of_expressive_writing

[5] Stephen W. Porges: The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe

