

CONNECTED CONGREGATIONS CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

A Children's Sabbath Celebration

Talking Points

Learn how science, connection and faith can work together to reduce the effects of trauma, build resilience and provide protective factors that are essential in reducing occurrences of child abuse and neglect.

The ways we connect – big or small – to the children, families and adults in our lives improves individual well-being and our community overall.

WHAT ARE TRAUMA, TOXIC STRESS AND ACES?

Did you know that trauma in childhood can affect how we grow, develop, work, play, parent and connect with one another and can have lasting effects on our health?

- Trauma that occurs in childhood is referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs.
- Trauma that is chronically activated over time without the buffer of positive caring relationships is referred to as toxic stress. Toxic stress in children can affect their developing brains and their physical and social outcomes.
- Ten ACEs have been identified and researched, and some include: child abuse and neglect, violence in the home, substance misuse, mental health problems, instability due to parental separation and incarceration of a family member.
- ACEs are common, yet preventable. In the US 61% of adults have reported at least one ACE. Positive childhood experiences, such as supportive family interactions, caring relationships with friends and connections in the community, are known to buffer against the stresses of trauma.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE AND HOW DO WE GET IT?

Resilience can be defined as the ability to thrive, adapt and cope despite difficult and stressful times.

- Resilience is not something one is born with; it gets built over time. It can be built through positive connections with others and spiritually.
- Fostering resilience is changing our mindsets from "What's wrong with you?," to, "What has happened to you?"
- When we respond with compassion to those who have experienced or are experiencing trauma and help them locate necessary resources required to raise healthy children, we can help people thrive.
- Parental resilience is a key protective factor in reducing the effects of ACEs and keeping child maltreatment from happening in the first place.

CONNECTIONS THAT MATTER—YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Supportive, Nurturing Relationships for both children and families are at the heart of prevention.

- You Can Make A Difference: Your acts of love, fostering community and the power of spiritual practice can literally rewire brain circuitry and promote healing.
- You can take action: Listen to someone's story, spend quality time with a child, welcome a new neighbor or help a stressed parent.
- Use your unique resources, perspectives and faith traditions to make caring connections.
- The connections you make don't have to be a large time commitment. It is possible to do the things you love – like cooking, reading, creating, exercising – and at the same time, help families and your communities thrive.