

## Traumatic/Adverse Childhood Experiences

All of the traumatic experiences /adverse childhood event items are static indicators. In other words, these items indicate whether or not a child experienced the particular trauma. **If s/he has ever had one of these experiences it would always be rated in this section, even if the experience were not currently causing problems or distress in the child's life.** Thus these items are not expected to change except in the case that the child has a new trauma experience or a historical trauma is identified that was not previously known.

**These ratings are made based on LIFETIME exposure of trauma or adverse childhood experiences. The following categories and action levels are used:**

0 = No evidence of any trauma of this type.

1= A single incident of trauma occurred, or suspicion exists of this trauma type.

2 = The child has experienced multiple incidents or moderate degree of this trauma type.

3 = Repeated and severe incidents of trauma with medical/physical consequences.

**Question to Consider for this Domain:** Has the child experienced adverse life events that may impact his/her behavior? **Please rate within the Child's lifetime.**

**38. SEXUAL ABUSE\*** - This item rates the severity and frequency of sexual abuse.

### Questions to Consider

- Has the caregiver or Child disclosed sexual abuse?
- How often did the abuse occur?
- What was the Child's relationship to the perpetrator?
- Did the abuse result in physical injury

### Ratings & Definitions

- 0** There is no evidence that Child has experienced sexual abuse.
- 1** Child has experienced one episode of sexual abuse or there is a suspicion that Child has experienced sexual abuse but no confirming evidence.
- 2** Child has experienced repeated sexual abuse.
- 3** Child has experienced severe and repeated.

\*A rating of 1, 2 or 3 on this item will trigger the **Sexual Abuse Sub-Module located in the Trauma Module.**

**39. PHYSICAL ABUSE** - This item rates the severity and frequency of experiences of physical abuse.

### Questions to Consider

- Has the child or caregiver disclosed a history of physical abuse?
- Is physical discipline used in the home? What forms?
- Has the child every received bruises, marks, or injury from physical discipline?

### Ratings & Definitions

- 0** There is no evidence that child has experienced physical abuse.
- 1** Child has experienced one episode of physical abuse or there is a suspicion that child has experienced physical abuse but no confirming evidence.
- 2** Child has experienced repeated physical abuse.
- 3** Child has experienced severe and repeated physical abuse that causes sufficient physical harm to necessitate hospital treatment.

**40. NEGLECT** - This rating describes the degree of severity of neglect a child has experienced. Neglect can refer to a lack of food, shelter or supervision (physical neglect) or lack of access to needed medical care (medical neglect), or failure to receive an academic instruction (educational neglect).

**Questions to Consider**

- Is the child getting adequate supervision?
- Are the child’s basic needs for food and shelter being met?
- Is the child allowed access to necessary medical care by caregivers?
- Do the caregivers prevent the child from accessing education?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has experienced neglect.  
Child has experienced minor occasional neglect. Child may have been left home alone for a short period of time with no adult supervision or there may be occasional failure to provide adequate supervision of child
- 1** Child has experienced a moderate level of neglect. Child may have been left home alone overnight or there may be occasional failure to provide adequate food, shelter, or clothing with corrective action.
- 2** Child has experienced a severe level of neglect including multiple and/or prolonged absences by adults, with minimal supervision, and failure to provide basic necessities of life on a regular basis.
- 3**

**41. EMOTIONAL ABUSE** - This item rates the severity and intensity of experiences of emotional abuse, including belittling, shaming, and humiliating an child, calling names, making negative comparisons to others, or telling an child that he or she is, “no good.”

**Questions to Consider**

- How does the caregiver talk to/ interact with the child?
- Is there name calling or shaming in the home?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has experienced emotional abuse.
- 1** Child has experienced mild emotional abuse.  
Child has experienced emotional abuse over an extended period of time (at least one year).
- 2** Child has experienced severe and repeated emotional abuse over an extended period of time (at least one year).
- 3**

**42. MEDICAL TRAUMA** - This item rates the severity of medically related trauma, including inpatient hospitalizations, outpatient procedures, and significant injuries.

**Questions to Consider**

- Has the child broken any bones?
- Has the child had to go to the emergency room or stay overnight in the hospital?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has experienced any medical trauma.
- 1** Child has experienced mild medical trauma including minor surgery (e.g. stitches, bone setting).
- 2** Child has experienced moderate medical trauma including major surgery or injuries requiring hospitalization.
- 3** Child has experienced life threatening medical trauma.

**43. NATURAL DISASTER** - This rating describes the severity of exposure to either natural or man-made disasters.

**Questions to Consider**

- Has the child been present during a natural or man-made disaster? These could include but are not limited to earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, fires, car accidents, plane crashes and bombings?
- Does the child watch television shows containing these themes or overhear adults talking about these kinds of disasters?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has been exposed to natural or man-made disasters.

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- 1** Child has been exposed to disasters second-hand (i.e. on television, hearing others discuss disasters). This would include second-hand exposure to natural disasters such as a fire or earthquake or manmade disaster, including car accident, plane crashes, or bombings.

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- 2** Child has been directly exposed to a disaster or witnessed the impact of a disaster on a family or friend. For instance, an child may observe a caregiver who has been injured in a car accident or fire or watch his neighbor’s house burn down).

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- 3** Child has been directly exposed to multiple and severe natural or manmade disasters and/or a disaster that caused significant harm or death to a loved one or there is an ongoing impact or life disruption due to the disaster (e.g. house burns down, caregiver or child loses job).

**44. WITNESS TO FAMILY VIOLENCE** -This item rates the severity and frequency of violence within the child’s home or family.

**Questions to Consider**

- Is there frequent fighting in the child’s family?
- Does the fighting ever become physical?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has witnessed family violence.

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- 1** Child has witnessed one episode of family violence or suspicion of exposure to family violence.

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- 2** Child has witnessed repeated episodes of family violence but no significant injuries (i.e. requiring emergency medical attention) have been witnessed.

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- 3** Child has witnessed repeated and severe episodes of family violence. Significant injuries have occurred as a direct result of the violence.

**45. WITNESS TO COMMUNITY VIOLENCE** - This item rates the severity and frequency of incidents of violence the child has witnessed in his/her community.

**Questions to Consider**

- Does the child live in a neighborhood with frequent violence?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has witnessed violence in the community.

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- 1** Child has witnessed fighting or other forms of violence in the community.

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- 2** Child has witnessed the significant injury of others in his/her community).

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- 3** Child has witnessed the death of another person in his/her community.

**46. SCHOOL VIOLENCE** - This item rates the child's exposure to school based violence.

**Questions to Consider**

- Are there frequent fights or other acts of violence at the child's school?
- Are weapons involved?
- Has the child witness or directly experienced violence at the school?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has witnessed violence in the school setting.  
Child has witnessed occasional fighting or other forms of violence in the school setting. Child has not been directly impacted by the violence (i.e., violence not directed at self or close friends) and exposure has been limited.
- 1** Child has witnessed multiple instances of school violence and/or the significant injury of others in his/her school setting, or has had friends injured as a result of violence or criminal activity in the school setting, or has directly experienced violence in the school setting leading to minor injury.
- 2** Child has witnessed repeated and severe instances of school violence and/or the death of another person in his/her school, or has been seriously injured or has had friends who were seriously injured as a result of violence or criminal activity in the school setting.
- 3**

**47. WAR AFFECTED** - This rating describes the degree of severity of exposure to war, political violence or torture. Violence or trauma related to Terrorism is not included here.

**Questions to Consider**

- Has the child or his/her family lived in a war torn region?
- How close was s/he to violence?
- Was the family displaced?
- What acts of war did the child or family witness or experience directly?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has been exposed to war, political violence, or torture.  
Child did not live in war-affected region or refugee camp, but family was affected by war. Family members directly related to the child may have been exposed to war, political violence or torture; family may have been forcibly displaced due to the war, or both. This does not include child who have lost one or both parents during a war.
- 1** Child has been affected by war or political violence. He or she may have witnessed others being injured in the war, may have family members who were hurt or killed in the war, and may have lived in an area where bombings or fighting took place. Child may have lost one or both parents during the war or parents may suffer physical or psychological effects. Child may have spent extended time in refugee camp.
- 2** Child has experienced the direct effects of war. Child may have feared for his/her own life. He/ She may have been injured, tortured, kidnapped or forced to become a child soldier.
- 3**

**48. TERRORISM AFFECTED** - This rating describes the degree to which a child has been affected by terrorism. Terrorism is defined as “the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.” Terrorism includes attacks by individuals acting in isolation (e.g. sniper attacks).

**Questions to Consider**

- Has the child witnessed an act of terrorism?
- Was his/her community targeted in an act of terrorism?
- Does the child know people injured or killed in an act of terrorism?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has been affected by terrorism.  
Child’s community has experienced an act of terrorism, but the child was not directly impacted by the violence. Exposure has been limited to pictures on television terrorist activities.
- 1** Child has been affected by terrorism within his/her community, but did not directly witness the attack. Child may live near the area where attack occurred and be accustomed to visiting regularly in the past, infrastructure of child’s daily life may be disrupted due to attack (e.g. utilities or school), and child may see signs of the attack in neighborhood (e.g. destroyed building). Child may know people who were injured in the attack.
- 2** Child has witnessed the death of another person in a terrorist attack; or has had friends; or has family members seriously injured as a result of terrorism; or has directly been injured by terrorism leading to significant injury or lasting impact.
- 3**

**49. WITNESS/VICTIM OF CRIMINAL ACTS** - This item rates the child’s proximity to criminal acts.

**Questions to Consider**

- Has the child ever been the victim of a crime?
- Has the child seen criminal activity in his/her community or home?
- Has someone in the child’s family been the victim of a crime? Did the child witness this?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child has been victimized or witness significant criminal activity.
- 1** Child is a witness of significant criminal activity.
- 2** Child is a direct victim of criminal activity or witnessed the victimization of a family or friend.
- 3** Child is a victim of criminal activity that was life threatening or caused significant physical harm or child witnessed the death of a loved one.

**50. PARENTAL CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR (birth parents & legal guardians only)** - This item rates the criminal behavior of both biological and stepparents, and other legal guardians, not foster parents.

**Questions to Consider**

- Do the child’s parents engage in criminal acts?
- Is either of the parents in jail? If so, do they have contact with the child?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that child's parents have ever engaged in criminal behavior.
- 1** One of child's parents has history of criminal behavior but child has not been in contact with this parent for at least one year.
- 2** One of child's parents has history of criminal behavior and child has been in contact with this parent in the past year.
- 3** Both of child's parents have history of criminal behavior.

**51. DISRUPTION IN CAREGIVING/ ATTACHMENT LOSSES** - This rating describes the extent to which the child has been exposed to disruptions in caregiving involving separation from primary attachment figure(s) and/or attachment losses. Childs who have experienced the death of a primary attachment figure, had placement changes, including stays in foster care, residential treatment facilities or juvenile justice settings can be rated here. Short-term hospital stays or brief juvenile detention stays, during which the child's caregiver remains the same, would not be rated on this item.

**Questions to Consider**

- Has the child ever been placed in foster care?
- Has the child lost contact with a caregiver or had limited access to the caregiver?

**Ratings & Definitions**

- 0** There is no evidence that the Child has experienced disruptions in caregiving and/or attachment losses.  
 Child may have experienced one disruption in caregiving but was placed with a familiar alternative caregiver, such as a relative (i.e., child's care shifted from biological mother to paternal grandmother). Child may or may not have had ongoing contact with primary attachment figure(s) during this disruption. Shift in caregiving may be temporary or permanent.
- 1** Child has been exposed to 2 or more disruptions in caregiving with known alternate caregivers, or the child has had at least one disruption involving placement with an unknown caregiver. Childs who have been placed in foster or other out-of-home care such as residential care facilities would be rated here.
- 2** Child has been exposed to multiple/repeated placement changes (i.e., 3+ placements with a known caregiver or 2+ with unknown caregiver) resulting in caregiving disruptions in a way that has negatively impacted various domains of a child's life (i.e., loss of community, school placement, peer group). Examples would include an child in several short-term unknown placements (i.e., moved from emergency foster care to additional foster care placements and/or multiple transitions in and out of the family-of-origin (i.e., several cycles of removal and reunification).
- 3**