

What Does an **ACE SCORE** Mean?

An ACE score is not a diagnosis, but rather a tool to help understand childhood adversity and its potential effects. While higher scores indicate higher risk, resilience, positive relationships, and support systems can help mitigate negative outcomes. Trauma-informed care and awareness can empower individuals to break cycles of adversity and improve well-being.

0:

A low-risk childhood. Likely had a stable, supportive environment with minimal exposure to adversity. Lower risk for chronic health issues and mental health concerns.

1-2:

Some exposure to adversity, but with strong protective factors (such as supportive caregivers), long-term negative effects may be minimal.

3-4:

Moderate risk for negative health outcomes, including increased likelihood of mental health struggles, substance use, and chronic conditions. Protective factors like strong relationships and resilience-building support are crucial.

5-6:

High risk for long-term physical and mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, heart disease, and substance abuse. Early intervention and trauma-informed support can improve outcomes.

7-8:

Very high risk of serious mental and physical health challenges, including complex trauma, high stress-related illnesses, and potential difficulty forming secure relationships. Trauma-informed care and support are critical.

9-10:

Very high risk for severe lifelong impacts, including chronic disease, mental illness, substance use disorders, and difficulty with relationships and stability. However, resilience-building support, therapy, and positive interventions can improve outcomes.

FOR THOSE WITH LOW SCORES:

Practice Gratitude and Awareness

- Recognize and appreciate the stability and support you had growing up.
- Reflect on the protective factors in your life, such as supportive caregivers and having a safe environment.

Build Emotional Intelligence and Resilience

- Even with a low ACE score, life can still bring stress and challenges. Strengthen coping skills through mindfulness, self-reflection, and emotional regulation.
- Develop strong, supportive relationships and maintain social connections.

Support Others Who May Have High ACE Scores

- Understand that not everyone had the same childhood experiences.
- Be a compassionate listener and offer support to friends, family, or colleagues who may have experienced adversity.
- Learn about trauma-informed care and resilience-building strategies.

Advocate for Safe and Supportive Environments

- Support policies and programs that help children and families thrive, such as mental health initiatives, early childhood education, and child abuse prevention efforts.
- Volunteer or contribute to organizations that help children facing adversity, such as BraveBe

Continue Learning About ACEs and Resilience

- Even if you have a low ACE score, being aware of how adversity impacts others can make you a stronger advocate, leader, or friend.
- Educate yourself on how to foster resilience in children and communities.

FOR THOSE WITH MODERATE TO HIGH SCORES:

Recognize and Validate Your Experiences

- Understand that your ACE score is not your destiny—it reflects past experiences, not future outcomes.
- Acknowledge the impact of childhood adversity on mental and physical health without shame or self-blame.

Seek Support and Healing

- Therapy or counseling can help process trauma, build coping skills, and develop resilience. Look for trauma-informed therapists.
- Support groups (in-person or online) can provide connection with others who have similar experiences.
- Contact BraveBe for help or to find trauma-informed resources.

Focus on Physical and Mental Well-Being

- Mindfulness and stress management: Practices like meditation, journaling, and deep breathing can help regulate emotions.
- Healthy lifestyle choices: Exercise, balanced nutrition, and sleep can improve physical and emotional well-being.
- Limit harmful coping mechanisms: Be mindful of substance use, self-isolation, or risky behaviors as responses to stress.

Build and Strengthen Support Systems

- Surround yourself with positive, supportive people—friends, mentors, community groups, or faith-based organizations.
- If family relationships are unhealthy, create “chosen family” with trusted friends and supporters.

Develop Resilience and Protective Factors

- Work on self-compassion—be kind to yourself as you heal.
- Learn about ACEs and resilience to break cycles of adversity for yourself and future generations.
- Advocate for trauma-informed care in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Seek Concrete Support When Needed

- If struggling with housing, food, healthcare, or safety, seek local support services that provide assistance. If you do not know of resources, contact BraveBe for assistance.
- Call 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) if experiencing a mental health crisis.

