Childhood Experiences and Sources of Support

Optional personal reflection

ACE Questionnaire Questions 1 to 5

Hope Chaplain guidance: This personal reflection is optional. You may skip questions, pause, or stop, and you do not need to share answers. These questions may be upsetting. Choose a manageable time and setting, with support if wanted.

A score does not define you

An ACE score is not a diagnosis or a prediction of your future. It cannot capture every adversity or your strengths. If you skip items, do not interpret the total as a complete ACE score.

Your ACE score

Prior to your 18th birthday:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often … Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? OR Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household 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?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

3. Did an adult or person at least five years older than you ever … Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? OR Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

4. Did you often or very 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?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

5. Did you often or very often feel that … You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? OR Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

ACE Questionnaire Questions 6 to 10

Prior to your 18th birthday:

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

7. Was your mother or stepmother ... 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 threatened with a gun or knife?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

No ____ If Yes, enter 1 ____

Now add up your 'Yes' answers: _____ is your ACE score.

Hope Chaplain reflection

You do not need a particular score to deserve care. The score counts types of experiences; it does not measure their intensity, explain all their effects, or define you.

If this brings up distress, pause and notice your surroundings. Consider reaching out to someone you trust, a chaplain, or a mental health professional. The next pages invite reflection on sources of support.

One source of support I can reach out to now: _____

This instrument and additional resources are available at acestoohigh.com.

Resilience Questionnaire Items 1 to 7

Hope Chaplain guidance: These statements invite reflection on protective experiences. They are not a test of character or a clinical measure of your present resilience. You may skip any item. Sources of support can also develop later in life.

Your resilience score

For each item, use the blank to write in the appropriate number according to the following scale:

+2 Definitely true | +1 Probably true | 0 Not sure | -1 Probably not true | -2 Definitely not true

1. I believe that my mother loved me when I was little.

How true? _____

2. I believe that my father loved me when I was little.

How true? _____

3. When I was little, other people helped my mother and father take care of me, and they seemed to love me.

How true? _____

4. I've heard that when I was an infant someone in my family enjoyed playing with me, and I enjoyed it, too.

How true? _____

5. When I was a child, there were relatives in my family who made me feel better if I was sad or worried.

How true? _____

6. When I was a child, neighbors or my friends' parents seemed to like me.

How true? _____

7. When I was a child, teachers, coaches, youth leaders, or ministers were there to help me.

How true? _____

For more information about the questionnaire, visit acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score.

Resilience Questionnaire Items 8 to 14

For each item, use the blank to write in the appropriate number according to the following scale:

+2 Definitely true | +1 Probably true | 0 Not sure | -1 Probably not true | -2 Definitely not true

8. Someone in my family cared about how I was doing in school.

How true? _____

9. My family, neighbors, and friends talked often about making our lives better.

How true? _____

10. We had rules in our house and were expected to keep them.

How true? _____

11. When I felt really bad, I could almost always find someone I trusted to talk to.

How true? _____

12. As a youth, people noticed that I was capable and could get things done.

How true? _____

13. I was independent and a go-getter.

How true? _____

14. I believed that life is what you make it.

How true? _____

How many of these 14 protective factors did I have as a child and youth? _____

(How many of the 14 were 'Definitely True' or 'Probably True'?)

Of these, how many are still true for me? _____

Hope Chaplain reflection

The original scoring prompts above count supportive factors; they do not ask you to add all the +2 to -2 response values. A low count does not mean you cannot grow or receive support.

One supportive person, practice or place I want to strengthen now: _____

Questionnaire source: acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score.

Questionnaires credited to ACEs Too High. Introduction, support guidance and layout by Hope Chaplain.

Sources ACEs Too High: questionnaire source credited in the original | CDC: About Adverse Childhood Experiences | Baldwin et al. (2021): Population vs Individual Prediction of Poor Health From ACE Screening