

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES RESPONSE TEAM

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ACERT

BRAIN ARCHITECTURE:

SHAPED BY EARLY EXPERIENCES

SIMPLE SKILLS COME FIRST; COMPLEX SKILLS BUILD ON THEM

STRONG FOUNDATION IMPROVES ODDS FOR POSITIVE

OUTCOMES; A WEAK FOUNDATION INCREASES THE ODDS OF PROBLEMS LATER IN LIFE

TOXIC STRESS:

UNLIKE MILD, SHORT-LIVED STRESS THAT CAN BE GOOD FOR GROWTH, CERTAIN TYPES OF STRESS CAN WEAKEN THE BRAIN'S ARCHITECTURE.

EXPERIENCES SUCH AS ABUSE, NEGLECT OR EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE CAN CAUSE TOXIC STRESS RESPONSES IN THE BRAIN, WITH LIFELONG CONSEQUENCES IN HEALTH, LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR.



THE TRUTH ABOUT ACEs

WHAT ARE THEY?

ACEs *are*
ADVERSE
CHILDHOOD
EXPERIENCES

The three types of ACEs include

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

HOW PREVALENT ARE ACEs?

The ACE study* revealed the following estimates:

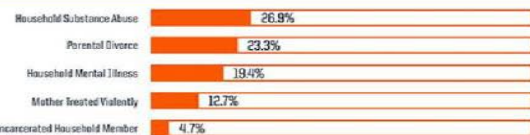
ABUSE



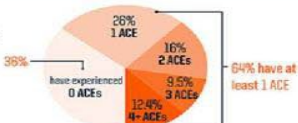
NEGLECT



HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Of 17,000 ACE study participants:



WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes



Possible Risk Outcomes:

BEHAVIOR



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD



Broken bones

ACEs: All types of abuse, neglect, & other potentially traumatic experiences that occur under age 18

- Linked to risky behaviors, chronic health conditions, decreased life potential and early death
- The more ACEs a child experiences the more likely they are to experience negative effects
- ACE study: 64% had 1 ACE; 12.4% had 4 or more
- Some possible risk outcomes are exhibited in behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol use, drug use, promiscuity and lack of physical activity; and affecting physical and mental health, such as obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones

WHAT WE WERE SEEING

- Laconia police responding to incident calls like a domestic violence situation or drug overdose, had few, if any, options to help children present in such situations.
- Police Officers not educated in trauma, unaware of resources to connect children to.
- Bulk of calls Laconia Police respond to are domestic violence related.
- Laconia Schools were seeing a high percentage of students entering Kindergarten and preschool with 4+ ACEs.
- According to a two-year survey conducted and released last year by the Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health, 23.4 percent of New Hampshire children have been impacted by one traumatic event and 18.5 percent of children statewide have been affected by two ACEs.

Research provides compelling evidence—suggesting urgent action needed—that such traumatic experiences for children can have significant long-term negative impacts. Children experiencing such trauma are vastly more likely to model similar behavior, to themselves become abusive, use drugs, and in a range of other ways, become significantly less healthy over time. Research even shows a strong link to a broad range of physical health effects, including cancer and heart conditions.

Early intervention is absolutely vital to ensure children's physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. ACERT is a comprehensive and coordinated system of supports focused specifically on affected children.

MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

- The key to forming strong brain architecture is the “serve and return” relationships young children have with supportive adults in their lives.
- When children reach out for connections and communications with adults, and adults reciprocate, this back-and-forth process continues, literally wiring the brain with the connections needed for healthy development.





Prevention and Promotion

- Highly specialized interventions with families as early as possible for children can decrease the effects of long-term toxic stress
- Put developmental and behavioral health at the forefront when talking about children
- Ensure safe, supportive environments and programs for children to develop and learn
- Mitigate toxic stress and health disparities by creating a shared vision and plan among community members and sectors



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- A group of children and adults are gathered around a long white table outdoors, carving pumpkins. The children are focused on their work, using tools to hollow out the pumpkins. A woman is standing behind the table, supervising. The background shows a large house and trees with autumn foliage.

MANCHESTER'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Levers

- Agency Partnerships
- Systems
- Professional Development



Strategies

- Respond to family crises
- Link families to services & opportunities

Protective Factors

- Parental Resilience
- Concrete Supports in Times of Need
(+social connections, knowledge of parenting & child development, social/emotional competence of children)

Be a resilient parent



Trees are known for their ability to bend without breaking. They are strong and flexible, which is what you need to be to deal with everyday stresses.

Results

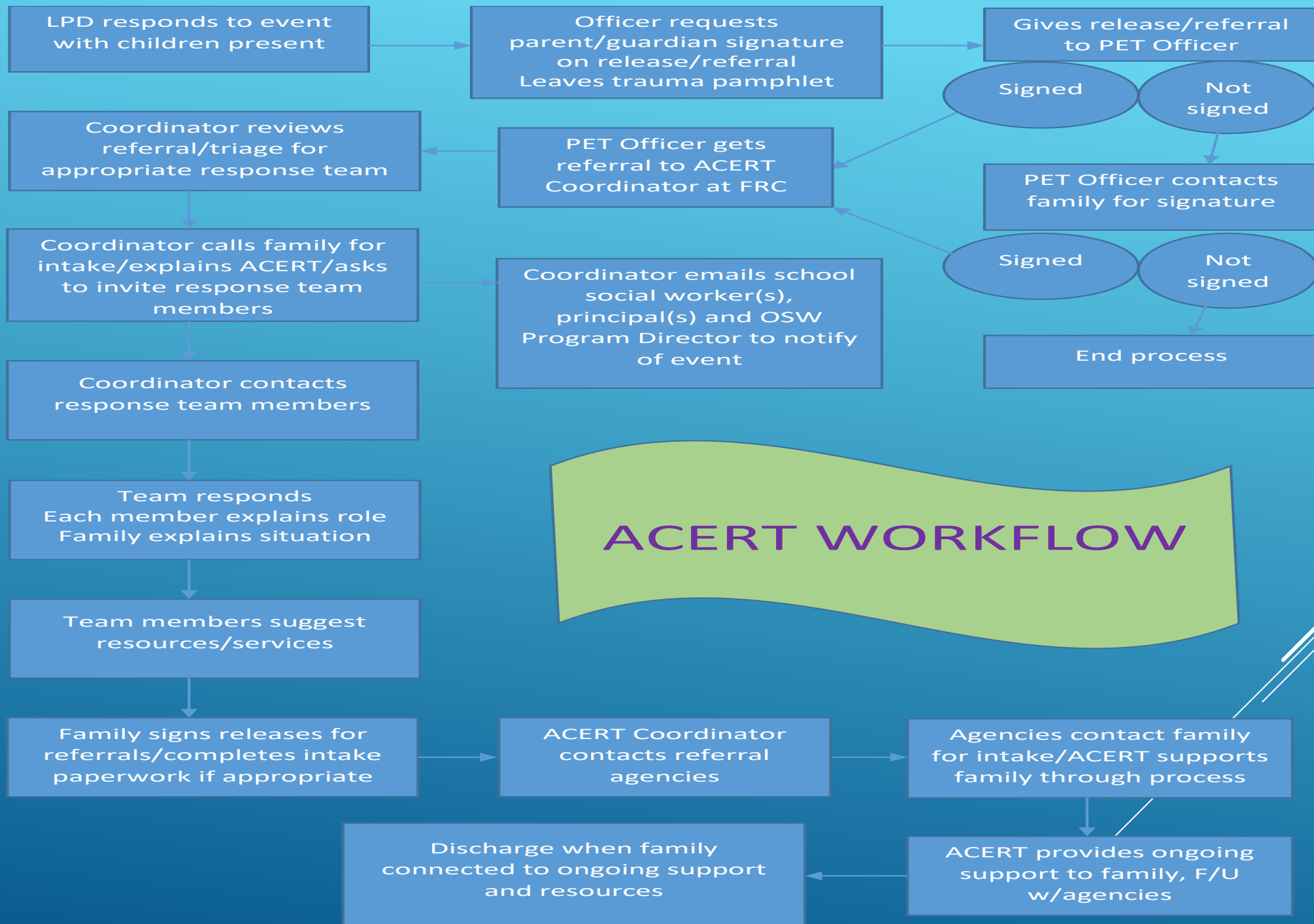
- Strong, resilient families
- Mitigate effects of ACEs



WHAT DID WE DO?

- November 2018: Presentation to Laconia service providers by Manchester ACERT on ACEs and success of their program
- Created a Steering Committee
- Family Resource Center agreed to pilot the program
- Release created between LPD, FRC and Laconia Schools
- Coordinator hired
- Police trained in promoting program, getting release signed
- Program launched September 3, 2019
- First referral received September 26, 2019
- 6 referrals received so far; 5 of 6 families engaging with ACERT program
- 14 children affected by program; referred to 31 programs; connected with 21 programs
- Trauma training for entire police force in January 2020
- Continue to create a trauma-informed system of supports





ACERT WORKFLOW

STEERING COMMITTEE/RESPONSE TEAM

- Laconia Police
- Laconia Schools
- New Beginnings
- Navigating Recovery
- DCYF
- Child Advocacy Center
- Lakes Region Mental Health
- HealthFirst
- Boys & Girls Club/LRCCS
- Family Resource Center

REFERRAL PROGRAMS (NOT ALL INCLUSIVE)

- Boys & Girls Club/LRCCS
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- School Social Workers/LADC
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- New Beginnings
- Navigating Recovery
- Community Action Program (Fuel Assistance, WIC, Family Planning, Food pantry, Security deposit loan fund)
- HealthFirst (Primary care, mental health services, MAT, health insurance navigator)
- Lakes Region Mental Health Center
- Early Supports & Services
- Area Agency DD & ABD Services
- Comprehensive Family Supports (Step Ahead)
- Parent Education
- Laconia Welfare
- Belknap House
- Carey House
- DHHS (Food stamps, Medicaid, TANF, Caregiver grant)
- Prescott Farm
- Veteran services
- Servicelink

ANTICIPATED RESULTS:

- Increased awareness of and improved access to available services/resources
- Identifying and implementing needed services to better address the needs of children and families (equity & access)
- Greater efficiency and less duplication of services
- Enhanced relationships and ability to share information among providers, agencies, and partners
- Increased positive interactions with families and creation of natural support systems
- Informed and proactive agencies eager to work collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and families

HOW WILL WE EVALUATE?

- Steering Committee meets once a month to review process, make changes as needed
- MOU's between steering committee members will be reviewed as needed for applicability and comprehensiveness
- Ongoing data tracking regarding # of referrals to ACERT, families connected, # of referrals to programs, engagement with those programs
- Review what gaps still exist and create plan to address them
- Track how many 1st responders and other service providers are trained in ACEs

References

Center on the Developing Child (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

National Alliance of Children's Trust & prevention Funds. Ctfalliance.org

Manchester ACERT Program

The Truth About ACEs. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. www.rwjf.org/aces.