



UNIVERSITY of
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ADVERSITY: GENDER, POWER AND AGENCY

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BE THE DIFFERENCE

WHAT ARE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)? (ANDA AND FELLITI)

Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Emotional abuse	Physical neglect	Emotional neglect
Mother treated violently	Household substance abuse	Household mental illness	Single Parent home	Household member goes to prison

Conception

ACEs occur

Disrupted neural development

**Cognitive, social & emotional
impact**

**Adoption of risky
behaviours**

**Disease,
disability,
social issues**

**Early
death**

Death

**THE
ACES
MODEL**

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF ACES?

- Recognises the importance of trauma and adversity in children's lives, health and mental health outcomes.
- Emphasises prevention

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH ACES?

The measure

Medicalisation
and
individualisation

Resilience,
resistance,
recovery

Obscures
meaning making

agency and
capacity for
recovery

Risk and
consequences

Obscures the
material / spatia

Inconsistent with a
rights based
approach to
childhood



NEURODEVELOPMENT

Neurological system is extremely plastic

Special windows of sensitivity very early

Hardwired for contact, exchange

**Brain development as use-dependent
Impact of trauma on brain development as time dependent**

Cortisol impact on developing brain

Impact on neurogenesis

How might abusive and controlling behaviour impact this?

ACES AND GENDER?

Growing up in a single parent household is an ACE
Most single parents are women

BUT

This model was developed in 1999
Control for poverty...
Five years later
Better than staying in conflict

EXAMPLE - ACES AND DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Gender analysis neutralised – failure to engage with an analytic of power in abusive dynamics

Emphasis on impact on victim and children

Implications for adult and child victims, and for perpetrators

The return of the amazing invisible perpetrator...!

THE VOICE OF THE CHILD?

<http://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/overview-of-aces>

WHY IS THE MODEL GAINING POPULARITY NOW?

Certainty in
uncertain
times

Risk
management

Early
intervention

Troubled
families /
family assets

ADVERSITY IS NOT GENDER NEUTRAL...

Alcala (et al 2017)
ACEs and risk of
cancer



Girls' childhood ACEs
were associated with
higher odds of
cancer.



Boys - only emotional
abuse was associated
increased risk

Zettler et al
2017 ACEs
and residential
placement



ACEs
significantly
increased the
odds of
residential
placement



Race played a
significant role
in predicting
residential
placement,
intersected
with gender



ACEs were
Stronger
predictor for
boys



Stronger
predictor for
black boys
and girls (not
for white girls)

DOES THE 'PAIR OF ACES' FIX THESE ISSUES?

The Pair of ACES

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



ADVERSE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS



What about
POWER?
Exerted and resisted



SILENCE

VIOLENCE IS A LESSON IN LEARNING TO BE QUIET

Lucy: I'd always hesitate of what I would say...even if I said "Hello", I'd always think before like, is he just going to shut me out? Is he going to respond in a nice way, or be angry or anything like that? I'd always think ahead of what I was saying

I have worries about my daughter now he's taken me to court for contact. He's emotionally and psychologically abusive and treats women appallingly. He's not interested in our daughter it's all about control over me still. He's demonstrated that by reluctantly paying cms and her birthday was 3 weeks ago she was 2 he never even got her a card after kicking up a stink in court about being able to at the contact centre.



Graham Goulden 27 Aug 2018

At heart of this a mans inability to deal with losing. Violence becomes the tool. Florida shooting: Video gamer kills two at tournament bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-... I wonder where the ghosts from the nursery will feature @suzannezeedyk



Video gamer kills two at Florida event

The participant at a tournament in Jacksonville opens fire before shooting himself. bbc.co.uk

2 4 3

Follow

Replying to [redacted]

If the stories are true, and this was about losing, then violence was his inner teddy bear's solution. Lashing out will have made him feel better for a short while. That solution, though, consumed not only other people's lives, but ultimately his own.

9:26 AM - 27 Aug 2018

1



Is oxytocin an 'inner teddy'?

DETERMINISM – CHILDREN AS PASSIVE RECIPIENTS OF INEVITABLE DAMAGE

Early Action Together [Follow](#)

Domestic abuse is one of the **#AdverseChildhoodExperiences #ACEs** that can have devastating impacts on children's lives. In this BBC film, 4 children speak about the **#DomesticAbuse** they have witnessed and experienced and the ongoing effects this has on them

Behind Closed Doors: Through the Eyes of the Child
A film looking at children adjusting to life in the aftermath of domestic violence.
bbc.co.uk

3:26 PM - 20 Feb 2019

Midlands ACEs Hub [Follow](#)

Children who have lived with domestic abuse may experience depression, severe anxiety, poor concentration levels and focus. They may have difficulty learning and limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behaviour. **#ACEs #traumainformed**

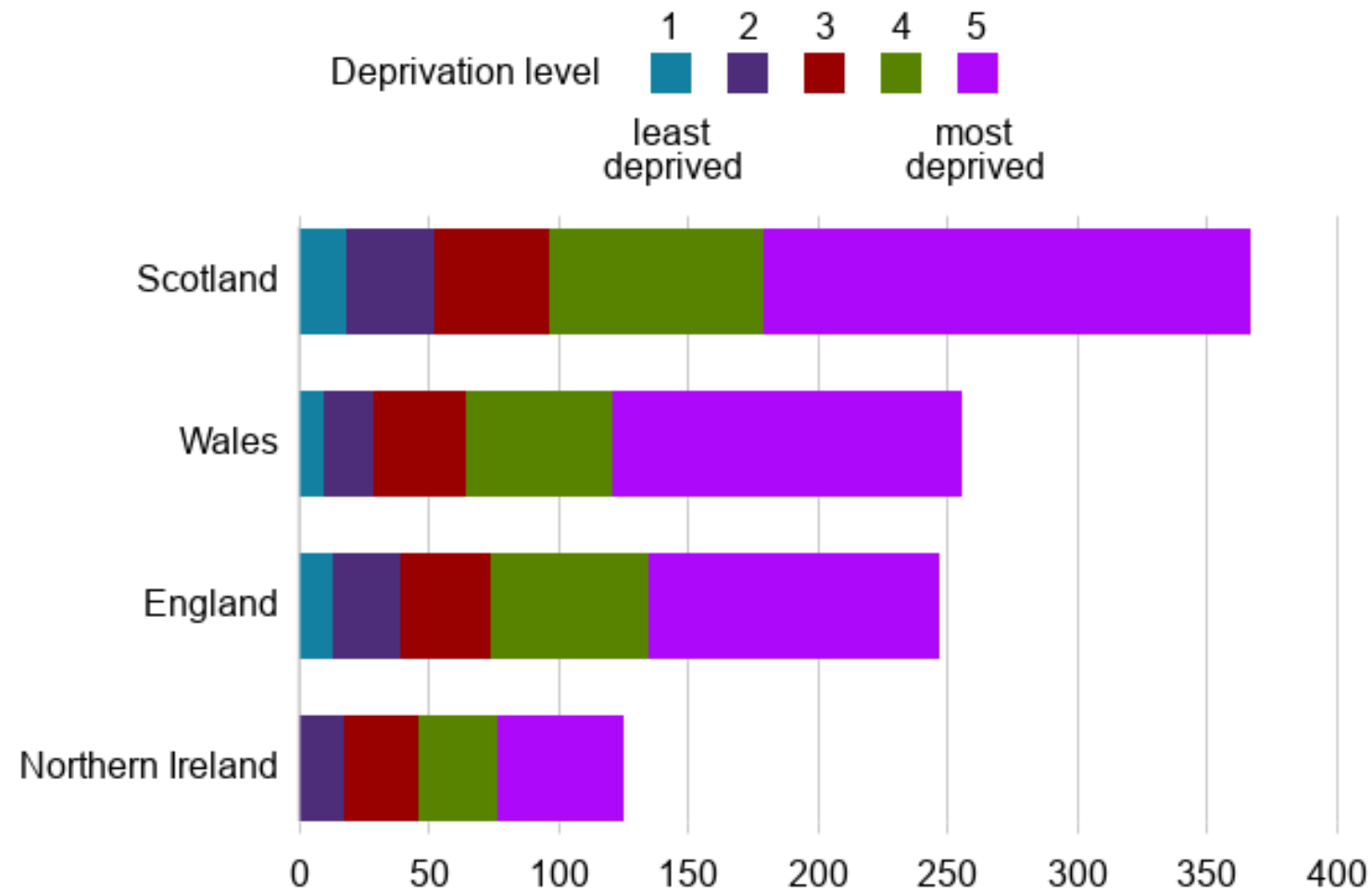
For a child, domestic violence lasts a LIFETIME

7:41 PM - 8 Feb 2019

Children's agency, participation, voice?

The UK's most-deprived areas have higher levels of children in care

Rate of children in care per 10,000 children by UK nation



Source: Child Welfare Inequalities Project

BBC

1 in 60 children in most deprived areas are in care.

1 in 660 in the wealthiest areas

Bywaters et al. 2017

MEANING MAKING

The person who forced me to expose myself to others when I was a child was less than 5 years older than me so apparently it doesn't count as abuse, & I don't know if my experiences count as emotional abuse because I don't know what counts as "often or very often". So my ACE score is 1, maybe 2 or 3? Definitely not above the "4 or more" cut off. But I've been totally batshit for years. So what does that make me? Unjustifiably fragile? Just a fuck up? Spoilt snowflake who can't cope with the real world?

Epistemic injustices (Fricker)

ROUTINE ENQUIRY... SKILLS AND SERVICES?

If professionals asked people routinely about adversity & abuse it would be an invitation many would take and support could be made available. Professionals have a duty to protect & support people they see & that includes taking about the difficult stuff. You deserve to be heard!

Yes all of my children are still deeply affected and eldest has PTSD from the dv
We all have hyper vigilance too.
They struggle with emotions and many other things and are now all under a CIN plan but again they have no clue how to help them as apparently there are no speacilists for children of dv with counselling under ten

Yes. He is traumatised. I asked for counselling and nothing's available. I'm told government cut backs are to blame. So, despite my limited financial resources, I've had to pay for some private therapy myself.



A TRAUMA FOCUSED APPROACH

The importance of emotion and
relationship in context

Complexity of lived experience

Belonging

Meaning-making

Children's rights – agency and
capacity

Capacity for resistance and resilience,
not **just** damage

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