
RAISING HEALTHY CHILDREN DURING VERY CHALLENGING TIMES

MIDDLESEX COUNTY VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOLS



DECEMBER 8, 2020

JANUARY 12, 2021

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

HOW DOES IT FEEL BEING YOU TODAY?



Take a moment, right now, and consider how you have personally been affected by COVID...on top of the STRESS you were already experiencing...on top of the social unrest to which we are all bearing witness.



LET'S BEGIN OUR UNDERSTANDING HERE...



A River and A Village

Before COVID, there was....

Before COVID, there was.... **STRESS!!**

Before COVID, there was.... **STRESS!!**

Wasn't there?

STRESS ABOUT...

✕ Jobs

STRESS ABOUT...

- ✗ Jobs
- ✗ Finances

STRESS ABOUT...

- ✗ Jobs
- ✗ Finances
- ✗ Health and wellness

STRESS ABOUT...

- ✗ Jobs
- ✗ Finances
- ✗ Health and wellness
- ✗ Family relationships

STRESS ABOUT...

- ✗ Jobs
- ✗ Finances
- ✗ Health and wellness
- ✗ Family relationships
- ✗ School performance

STRESS ABOUT...

- × Jobs
- × Finances
- × Health and wellness
- × Family relationships
- × School performance
- × _____

And on top of that stress, now there is this stress...

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN



WE MAKE THE EFFORT TO HAVE FUN...



WE LEARN NEW RULES...



AND PRACTICE SOME OLD RULES MORE



THERE ARE NEW ESSENTIALS...



AND A REPEAT OF THE SAME MESSAGE



BUT WE DON'T LET GO EASILY...



WE STILL LIKE BEING TOGETHER..



SOMETIMES TOGETHER IN NEW WAYS



FOR MANY THERE IS FEAR...



FOR SOME...LOT'S OF FEAR



Think about it. We have learned to accommodate
and adapt.

Think about it. We have learned to accommodate
and adapt.

That's what being human means. We adapt.

But what about the children; all of the children?



ALL OF THEM...



AS ADULTS WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE:



For all of the children!

THE ROLE OF ADULTS IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

When we have been traumatized, when we are terrified and scared, nothing calms us down like the reassuring voice or the firm (safe) embrace of someone we trust...

The Body Keeps the Score

Bessel Van der Kolk

How do caregivers, in school and at home, help
our children make the transition back to
school?

What are the considerations to be made, in advance of students returning to school, to allow a smoother transition, reduce fear, and encourage a more effective re-integration?

WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN NEED?

- ✗ Limited exposure to media news

WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN NEED?

- ✗ Limited exposure to media news
- ✗ Limited exposure to adult opinions

WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN NEED?

- ✗ Limited exposure to media news
- ✗ Limited exposure to adult opinions
- ✗ Routines and predictability

WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN NEED?

- ✗ Limited exposure to media news
- ✗ Limited exposure to adult opinions
- ✗ Routines and predictability
- ✗ Assurance and reassurance that the adults will look out for them

WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN NEED?

- ✗ Limited exposure to media news
- ✗ Limited exposure to adult opinions
- ✗ Routines and predictability
- ✗ Assurance and reassurance that the adults will look out for them
- ✗ Opportunity to express their worries and fears

WHAT DO OUR CHILDREN NEED?

- ✗ Limited exposure to media news
- ✗ Limited exposure to adult opinions
- ✗ Routines and predictability
- ✗ Assurance and reassurance that the adults will look out for them
- ✗ Opportunity to express their worries and fears
- ✗ Opportunity for fun, play and laughter

A story about a bear

Adopted from “The Deepest Well”

By Dr. Nadine Burke Harris



Not this BEAR...



But this BEAR

The story goes like this...



That's IF, you come across the BEAR
in the woods.

But what if the BEAR....lives in the child's HOME?









u74715286 fotosearch.com ©



BEFORE COVID...THERE WERE ACEs

(ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES)

What are the events in the lives of our children
that cause serious and lasting disruptions?

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

WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

OTHER ACES FACTORS:

- ▶ the death of a parent
- ▶ the death of a sibling
- ▶ poverty
- ▶ community violence
- ▶ Peer rejection and lack of healthy friends;
- ▶ Peer victimization

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR CHILDREN MAY BE SUFFERING?

- ✗ Unable to sleep
- ✗ Isolating from family and friends
- ✗ Showing more irritability, more worry, more tears
- ✗ Using self injury to calm the feeling in the body
- ✗ Vaping, smoking, using alcohol to numb the pain
- ✗ Using Social Media to avoid this reality

HAVING 4 ACES?

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

WHAT IMPACT DO ACEs HAVE?

MAKES THE JOURNEY MORE DIFFICULT



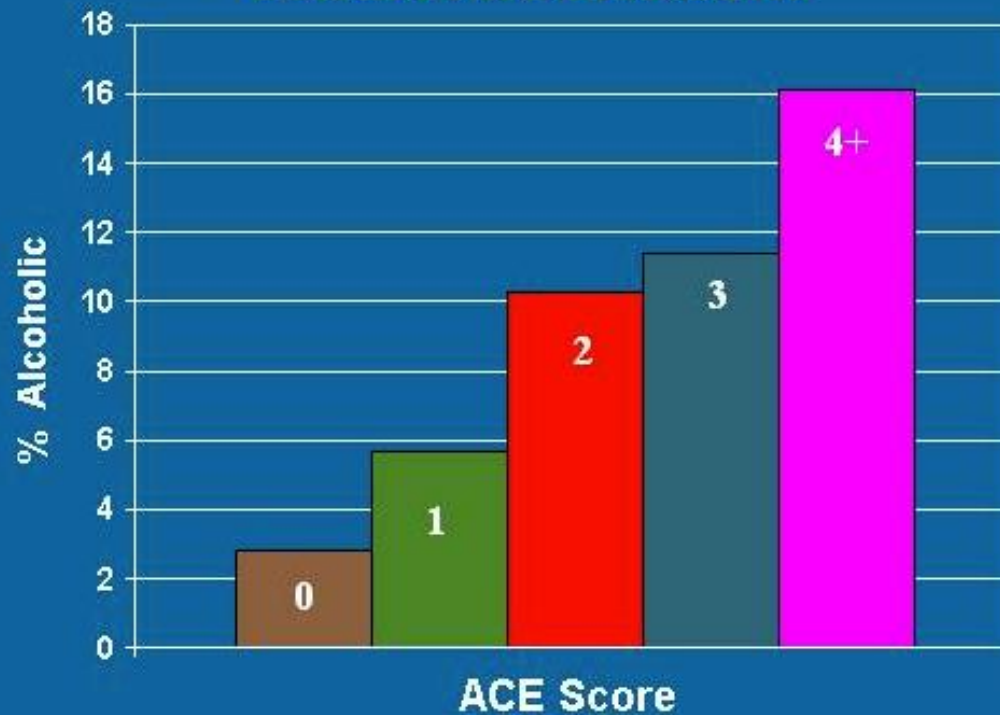
IN OUR LITTLE KIDS...



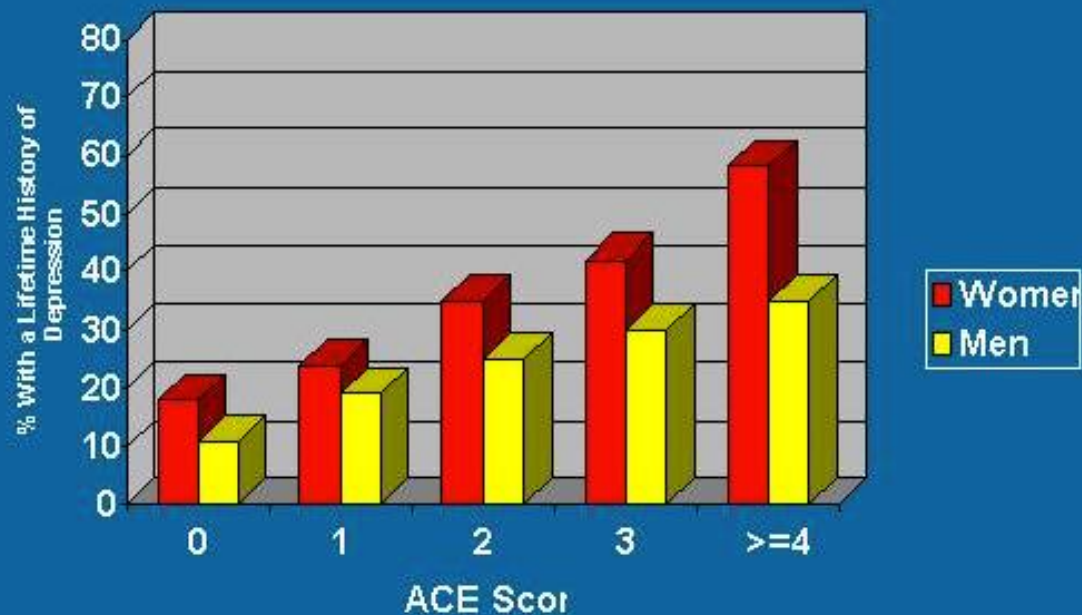
AND IN OUR BIG KIDS TOO



Childhood Experiences vs. Adult Alcoholism

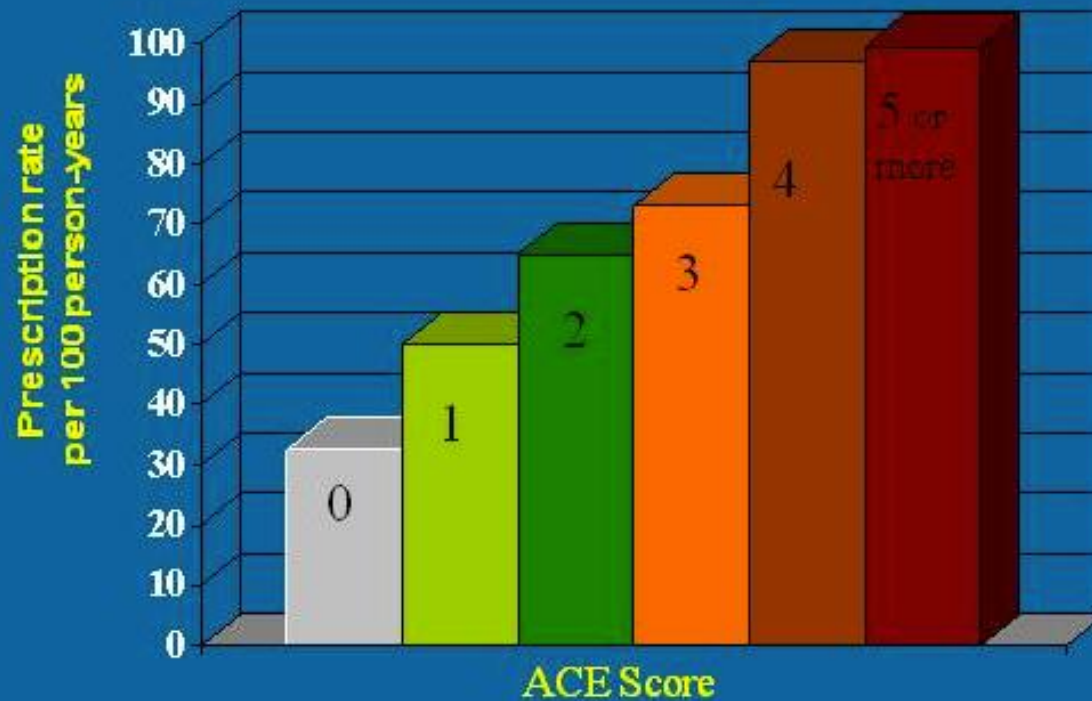


Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression

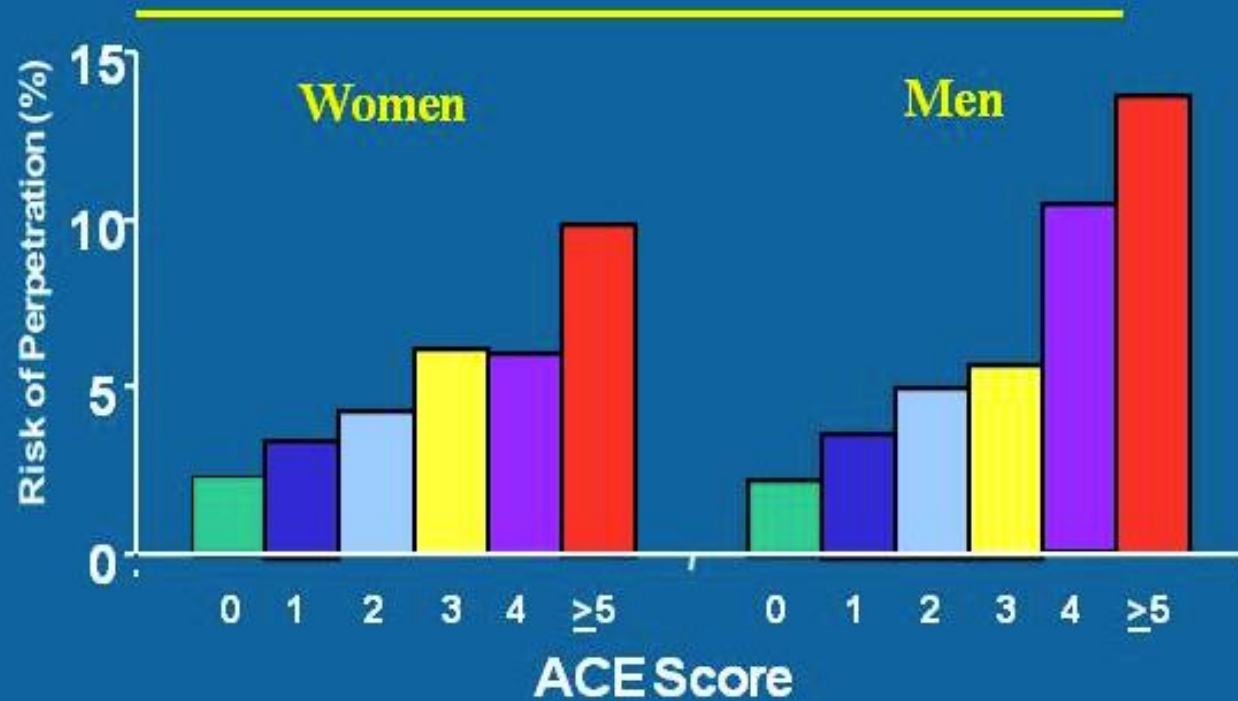


ACE Score and Rates of Antidepressant Prescriptions

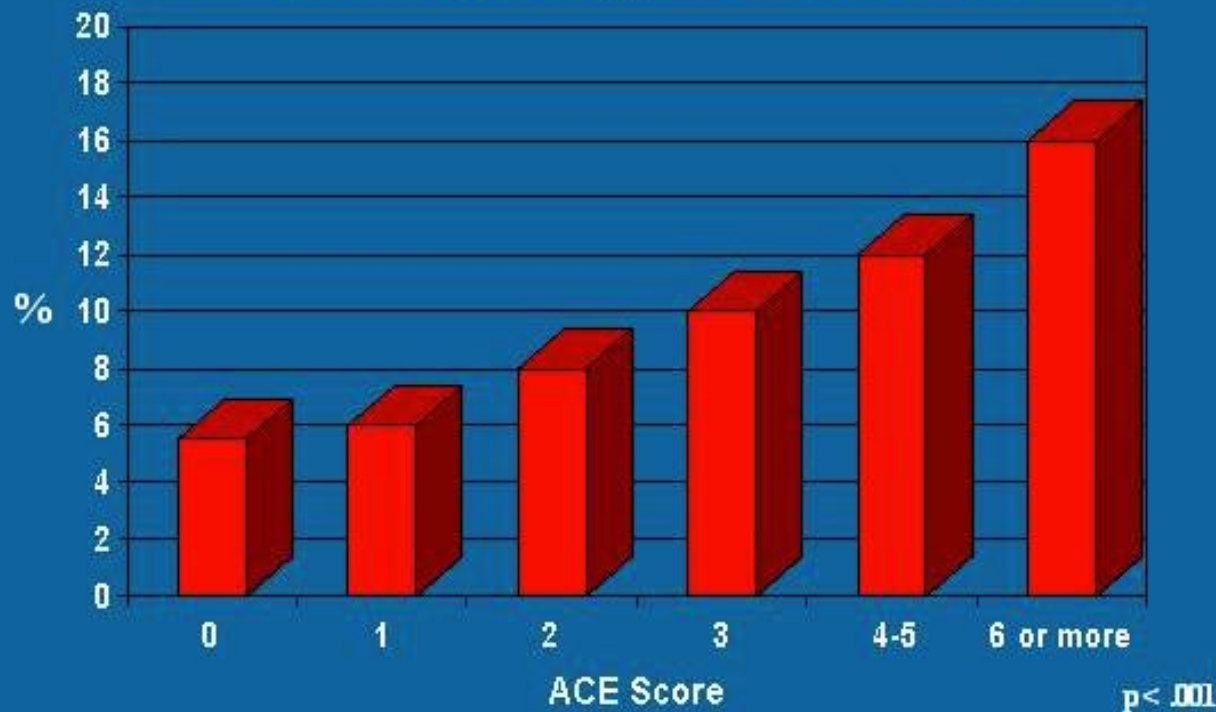
approximately 50 years later



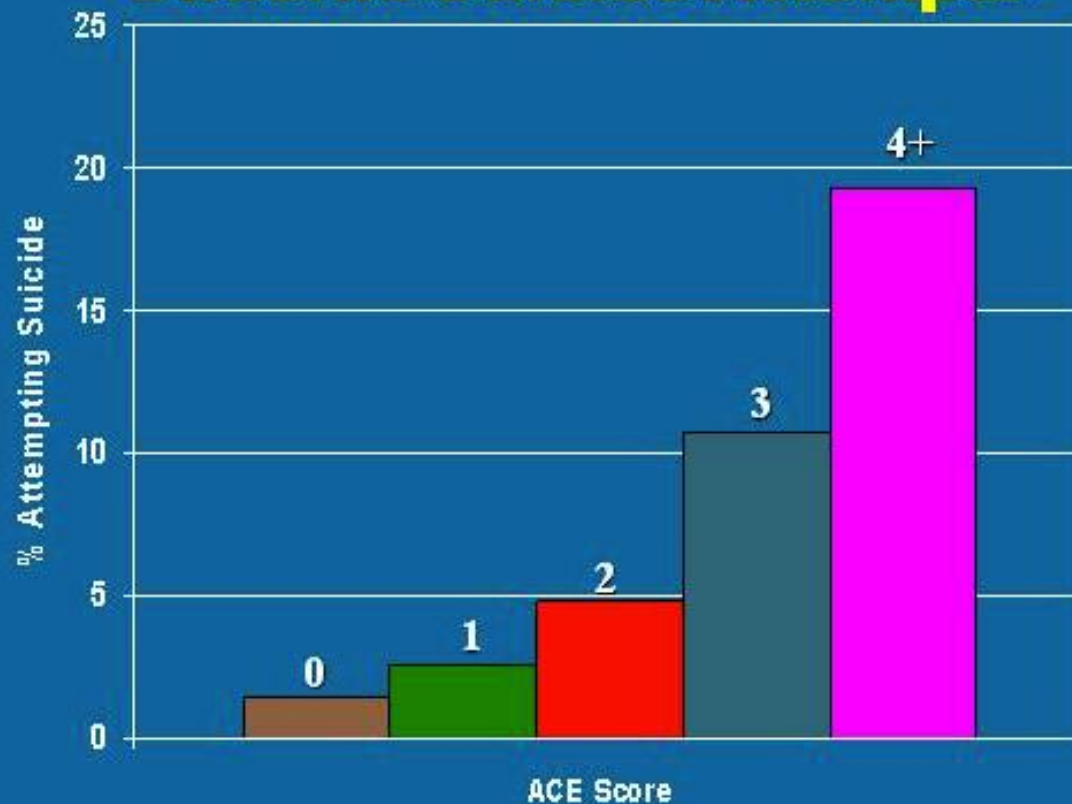
ACE Score and the Risk of *Perpetrating* Domestic Violence



Adverse Childhood Experiences vs. Smoking as an Adult

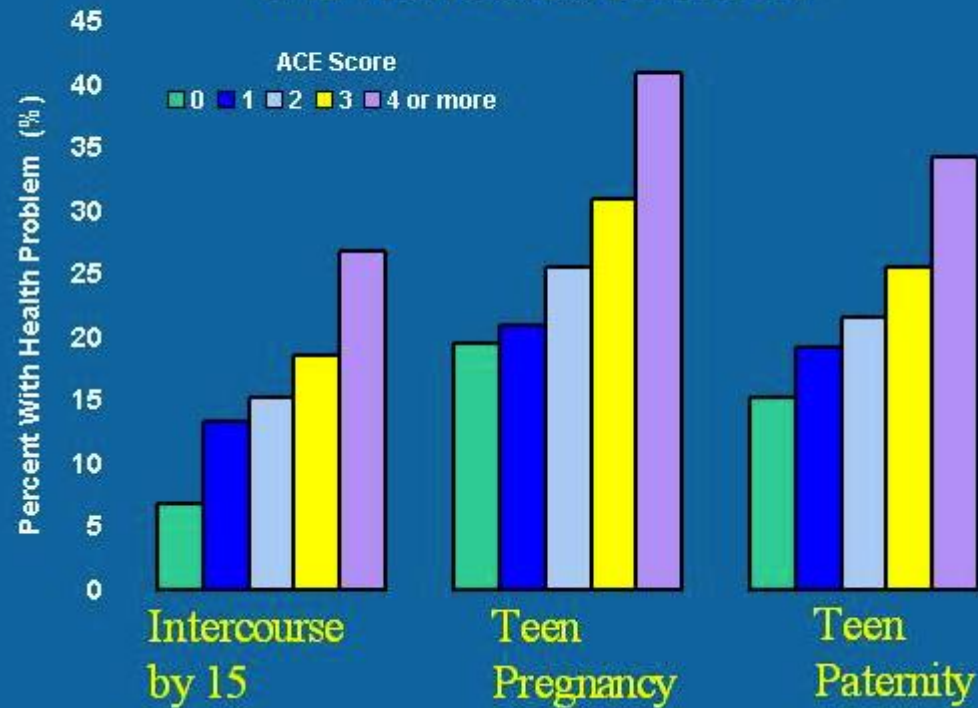


Childhood Experiences Underlie Suicide Attempts



Social function

ACE Score and Teen Sexual Behaviors



Are there things we can do OR NOT DO that would help prevent, and even heal, from ACEs?



DISCIPLINE DONE RIGHT

Discipline, properly practiced, uses a multifaceted approach, including models, rewards, choices, other chances and conversations that teach and reinforce desired behavior.

STOP LABELING YOUR KIDS

Lazy

Attention-seeking

Needy

Lost too many brain cells

Manipulative

Bi-polar

ADHD

Crazy

Weird

Loser

KINDNESS



What can we do as mom's and dad's, as grandparents, as foster parents, as adoptive parents, as aunts/uncles? What can we do as teachers, coaches, doctors, pastors?

1. Understand and change your discipline;

-
1. Understand and change your discipline;
 2. Avoid labels and name calling;

-
1. Understand and change your discipline;
 2. Avoid labels and name calling;
 3. Understand, teach and reinforce KINDNESS

WHEN YOU MAKE A CHILD FEEL ANXIOUS..

- ✗ You steal their ability to think...

WHEN YOU MAKE A CHILD FEEL ANXIOUS..

- ✗ You steal their ability to think...

When we are anxious, the prefrontal cortex of the brain (decision making), tells the amygdala (emergency response) that the person is in danger. It forces us to get to safety. We are prone to fight, flight, freeze.

We do not need to lecture kids until they feel small.

We do not need to lecture kids until they feel small.

We do not need to point out their poor choices in front of others.

We do not need to lecture kids until they feel small.

We do not need to point out their poor choices in front of others.

We do not need to use a voice tone we'd be ashamed to use in front of other adults.

We do not need to lecture kids until they feel small.

We do not need to point out their poor choices in front of others.

We do not need to use a voice tone we'd be ashamed to use in front of other adults.

We don't need to yell, scream, push, move, or punish kids.

We don't need to do any of those things at all BECAUSE, our children are quite capable of chasing what feels nice instead of running from what feels horrible to them.

SAFETY FOR OUR CHILDREN MEANS

1. Safe homes/classrooms, physically and emotionally
2. Nurturing attachments
3. Avoiding shame and embarrassment
4. Avoiding negative judgment and harsh language
5. Being predictable
6. Affirming the value of the children
7. Never giving up
8. Always believing change is possible

How between Kindergarten and now have our
children lost their way?

How between Kindergarten and now have our children lost their way?

Can they overcome their early, harsh and repetitive experiences?

Why are we losing the struggle for kindness to stressful homes that look like this.....



shutterstock.com • 271840220



AND THEN THERE IS YOU...

PRACTICE AND ROLE MODEL SELF-CARE

- ✗ Get plenty of rest.
- ✗ Maintain proper diet and nutrition.
- ✗ Drink plenty of water.
- ✗ Exercise.
- ✗ Use spiritual practices and/or relaxation skills.
- ✗ Seek out supportive people.
- ✗ Avoid use of alcohol, caffeine, and other substances.
- ✗ Ask for help.

Resources for you to consider...

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

CHILDHOOD DISRUPTED

How Your Biography
Becomes Your Biology,
and How You Can Heal



"A truly important gift
of understanding—
illuminates the
heartbreaking costs of
childhood trauma and,
like good medicine, offers
the promising science of
healing and prevention."
—JACK KORNFIELD, PhD, author
of *A Path with Heart*

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

BRAIN, MIND, AND BODY
IN THE HEALING OF TRAUMA



BESSEL VAN DER KOLK, M.D.

"A MASTERPIECE THAT COMBINES THE SCHOLARLY CURIOSITY
OF HIS SCHOLAR, THE EMOTION OF THE STORYTELLER, AND THE PASSION
OF THE TRUTH TELLER." —STEPHEN GORKIN, *NYC*

*"Creating Sanctuary is that rare, original, once-in-a-lifetime book
that could save lives." —Gloria Steinem*

CREATING SANCTUARY

TOWARD
AN
EVOLUTION
OF SANE
SOCIETIES

SANDRA BLOOM

International Bestseller
the
deepest well



NADINE BURKE HARRIS, M.D.

A wooden-framed chalkboard is mounted on a white brick wall. The chalkboard has a dark surface with white text. Above the main text, there is a blank rectangular area. To the right of the chalkboard, a portion of a wooden decorative object is visible. Below the chalkboard, a small wooden peg is attached to the wall.

Love begins at home, and it is not
how much we do, but how much love
we put in the action that we do.
If you want to bring happiness to the
whole world, go home and love your family.
MOTHER TERESA

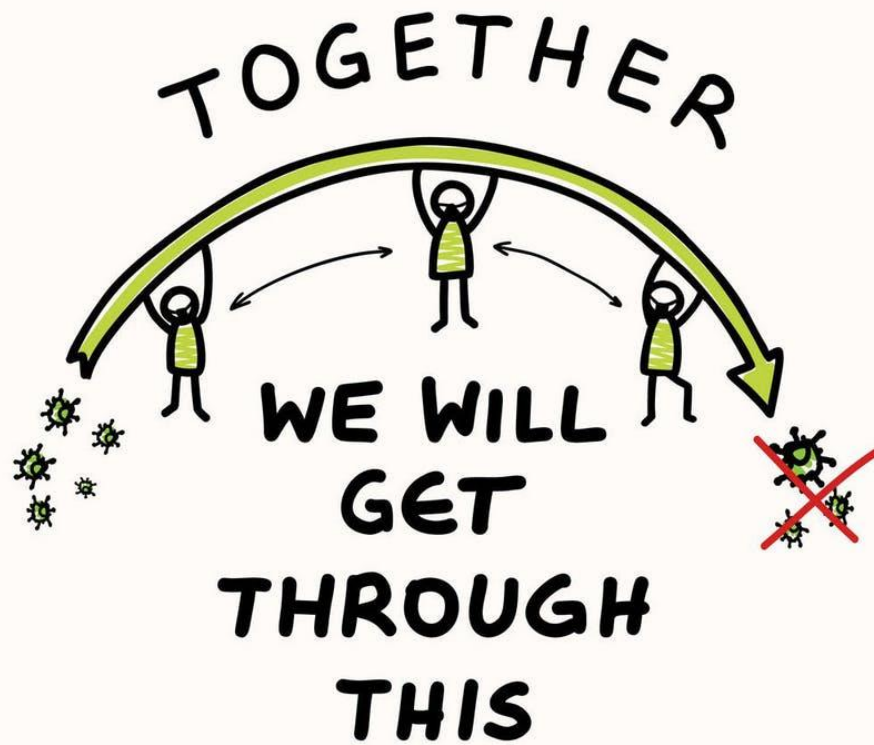
IT'S NOT THE END...

Bring KINDNESS back into your family.



REMEMBER

**Together, all of us are stronger
than some of us.**



THIS IS ONLY A BEGINNING.

We must help the
children find their
way.

If not us...
WHO???

