

Development of a Childhood Adversity Questionnaire

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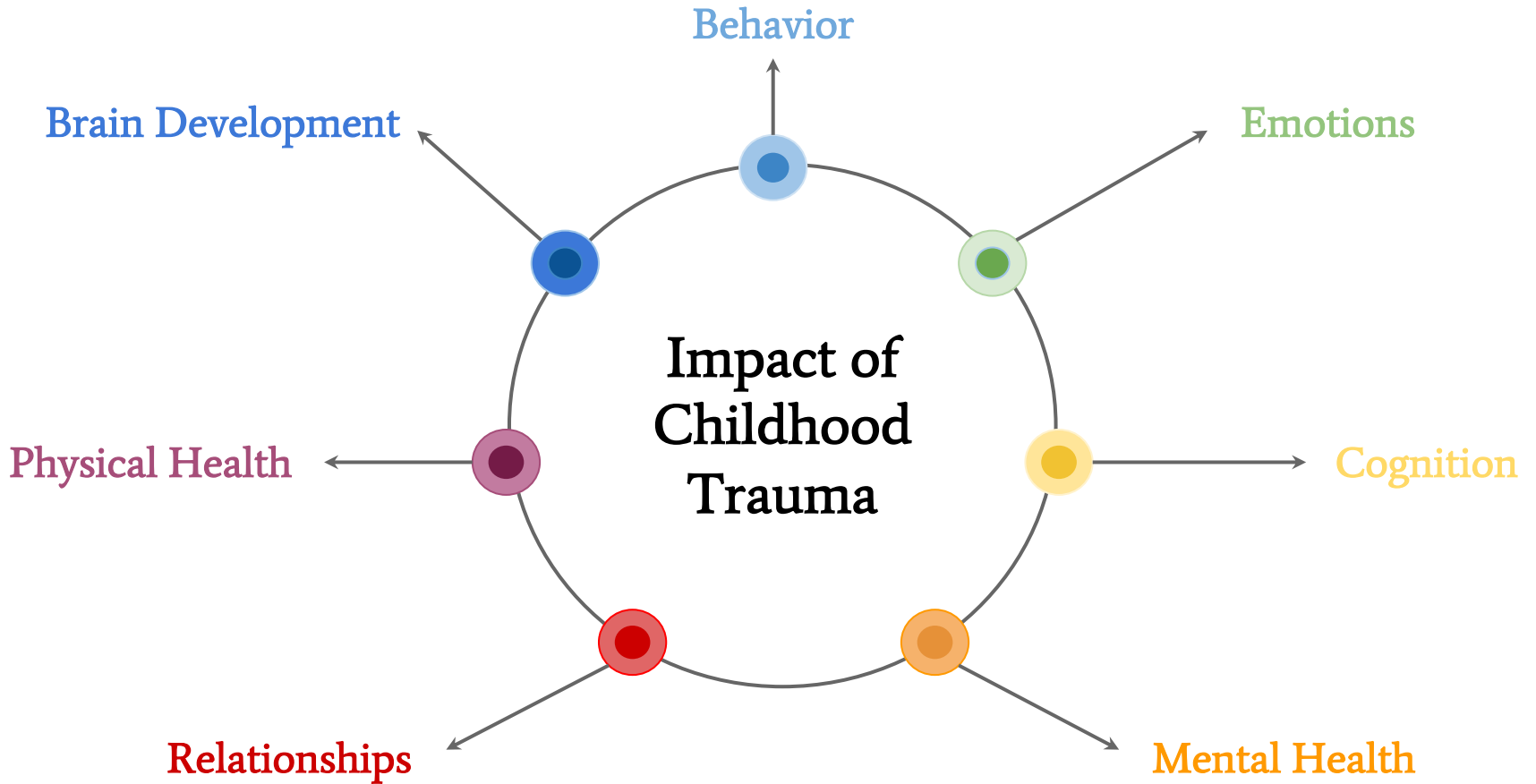
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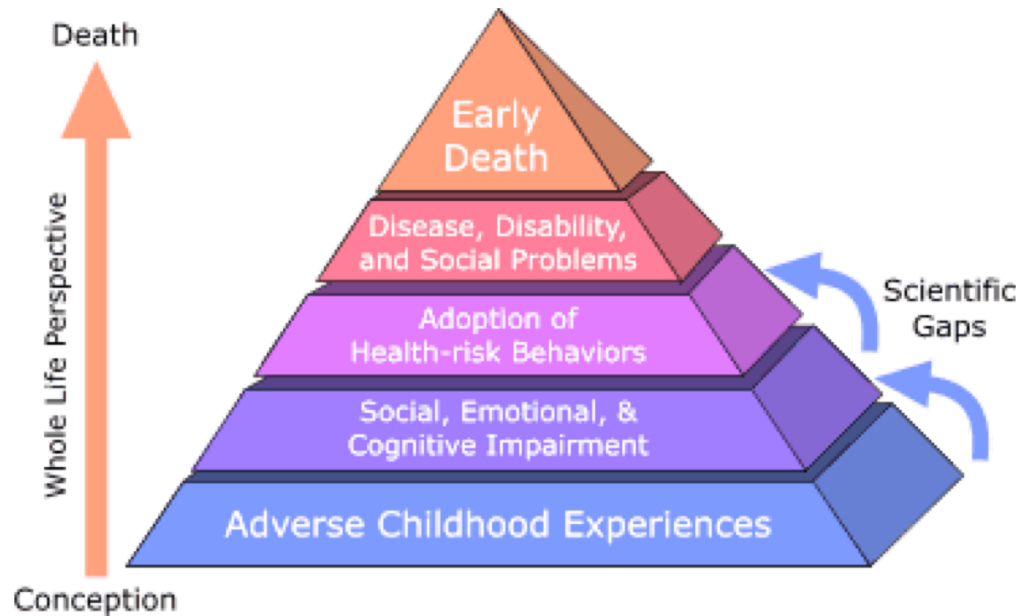
What is
childhood adversity?



Childhood Adversity

- Childhood stressors negatively impact the health and well-being of children
- **The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (1998)**
 - Landmark study by the CDC & Kaiser Permanente that showed that childhood stressors are associated with mental, behavioral, and physical health outcomes
 - Over 17,000 respondents in a cross-sectional study
 - 54% female
 - Mean age: 56 y.o
 - 75% white
 - upper-middle income
- Since then, many studies have shown the association between various negative health outcomes and early life stressors





What can we do about ACEs?

- Decrease exposure to adverse childhood experiences
- Implement programs that mitigate their effects
- Build in more trauma-informed practices of care

To do this, we need a way to assess ACEs and those at risk for ACE exposure.

Why is assessing ACEs important?

- ACE assessment allows social service and health organizations use evidence-based interventions to:
 - decrease exposure to ACEs
 - mitigate negative health outcomes if they have been already exposed
- Programs include:
 - Parental education
 - Home-visiting programs
 - Parent-child interaction therapy
 - Foster care interventions
 - And others.

Why do we need a new ACE measure?

Categories in original ACE Study:

- Childhood abuse
 - Psychological abuse
 - Physical abuse
 - Contact sexual abuse
- Household Dysfunction
 - Exposure to substance abuse
 - Mental illness
 - Violent treatment of mother/stepmother
 - Criminal behavior
- Neglect

What adverse childhood experiences are missing from this list, especially when thinking about diverse populations?

Racism

Poverty

Gun violence

Fear of Deportation

**Religious
Discrimination**

Philadelphia ACEs Study

- To better understand impact of community-level adversities, that the original ACE measurement did not cover
 - Surveyed 1,784 Philadelphians with the original ACE measurement and their expanded version which included:
 - witnessing violence
 - living in foster care
 - bullying
 - experiencing racism or discrimination
 - and feeling unsafe in your neighborhood
- Found that **40 percent of Philadelphians had experienced four or more of these expanded, community-level ACEs.**
- Shows that original ACE measurement is limited in diversity and scope



ACEs of Low–Income Urban Youth Study

- To identify and characterize the range of ACEs faced by young adults who grow up in a low-income urban area
 - Focus groups with young adults in Philadelphia were conducted to identify the most stressful ACEs
- Found that some experiences were not included in the original ACE study:
 - Single-parent homes
 - Exposure to violence
 - Criminal behavior
 - Bullying
 - Economic hardships
 - Discrimination
- **Shows importance of youth-informed processes in ACE questionnaires**

Current Issues in ACE Assessment

- Current measures do not effectively capture **community-specific traumas**
- Current measures do not capture **complexity of adversity**
 - Most do not measure **frequency**
- Current measures are **not youth-informed**

Project Overview



Camelot Services

- Camelot Services is a Tennessee-based organization that incorporates trauma-informed practices in the services they provide
- Camelot also felt that the ACE measurement was limited in scope and context so they asked Dr. Wade's team at CHOP to develop a new ACE as a tool for assessment

Our Goal: To develop an ACE measure that is representative of the clients they serve to better target interventions



Our Project Aims

1. To develop novel questions for childhood adversity for economically distressed youth and adults from urban and rural communities
2. To develop more sensitive childhood adversity questions that capture:
 - a. Frequency of traumatic experiences
 - b. Assess broad range of experiences
 - c. Capture voices of children and youth
 - d. Incorporates perspectives of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds

Methods

1

Develop Conceptual Framework for Adversity

- Camelot Services conducted adult and child focus groups in six TN locations
- Top-5 adverse experiences were identified by each participant
- The identified experiences were sorted into larger buckets called “domains”

2

Build Novel Questionnaire

- Literature review of previous ACE measures was conducted
- Using the domains and the literature review, a framework and questionnaire draft was created

Focus Groups



CAMELOT
SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1972

Nominal Group Technique

- Used Nominal Group Technique for both adult and child focus groups
- **Nominal Group Technique:**
 - 1) The proctor facilitates a discussion to generate a list of adverse experiences
 - 2) Participants each prioritize the 5 most stressful experiences
 - Not determined if they prioritized based on frequency or intensity of the experience
- Analyze the ranked listed for **common themes = “domains”**
- The method has been effective in youth-informed approaches

Identifying Top-5 Items from Focus Groups

Focus Group Proctor: *Out of our list, what are the 5 most stressful experiences?*

Participant A:

1. Sexual abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Poverty
4. Homelessness
5. Bullying

Participant B:

1. Peer pressure
2. Bullying
3. Physical abuse
4. Racism
5. Suicide

Participant C:

1. Racism
2. Abandonment
3. Poverty
4. Sexual abuse
5. Bullying

ITEMS

Sorting Items into Domains

ITEMS

Sexual abuse Bullying Poverty
Physical abuse Homelessness

THEMES/DOMAINS

Personal Victimization

Economic Hardships

Peer Relationships

Sexual abuse

Poverty

Bullying

Physical abuse

Homelessness

Identified Domains

Personal
Stressors

Family/Household
Stressors

Peer
Stressors

Community
Stressors

DOMAINS

Personal Victimization
Physical Health*

Economic Hardship
Family Relationships
Household Environment
Substance Abuse

Discrimination
Peer Relationships
Relationships (Overall)
School*

Child Welfare/Justice System
Community Stressors
Media/Technology**
Religion
Terrorism*

*Child focus groups only; **Adult focus groups only

Focus Group Demographics

Adult Participants (n = 34)	
Sex	
Female	91.2%
Age	
Mean	26-40
Race/Ethnicity	
White	67.6%
Black	26.4%
Hispanic	0
Asian	2.9%
Other	2.9%
Education	
Not HS graduate	2.9%
HS graduate	11.8%
Some college	32.4%
College graduate or higher	47.1%

Child Participants (n = 36)	
Sex	
Female	55.6%
Age	
Mean	10-14
Race/Ethnicity	
White	69.7%
Black	24.2%
Hispanic	3.03%
Asian	3.03%
Other	3.03%
Education	
5 th grade	2.9%
6 th grade	8.8%
7 th grade	36.4%
8 th grade	20.6%
9 th grade	14.7%
10 th grade	5.9%
11 th grade	8.8%
12 th grade	2.9%

Comparing Demographics

	CDC- Kaiser ACE Study	Our Study (Adults)
Sex		
Female	54.0%	91.2%
Age		
Mean	56	26-40
Race/Ethnicity		
White	74.8%	67.6%
Black	4.6%	26.4%
Hispanic	11.2%	0
Asian	7.2%	2.9%
Other	1.9%	2.9%
Education		
Not HS graduate	7.2%	2.9%
HS graduate	17.6%	11.8%
Some college	35.9%	32.4%
College graduate or higher	39.3%	47.1%

Domains of Most Stressful Experiences

Adult Participants

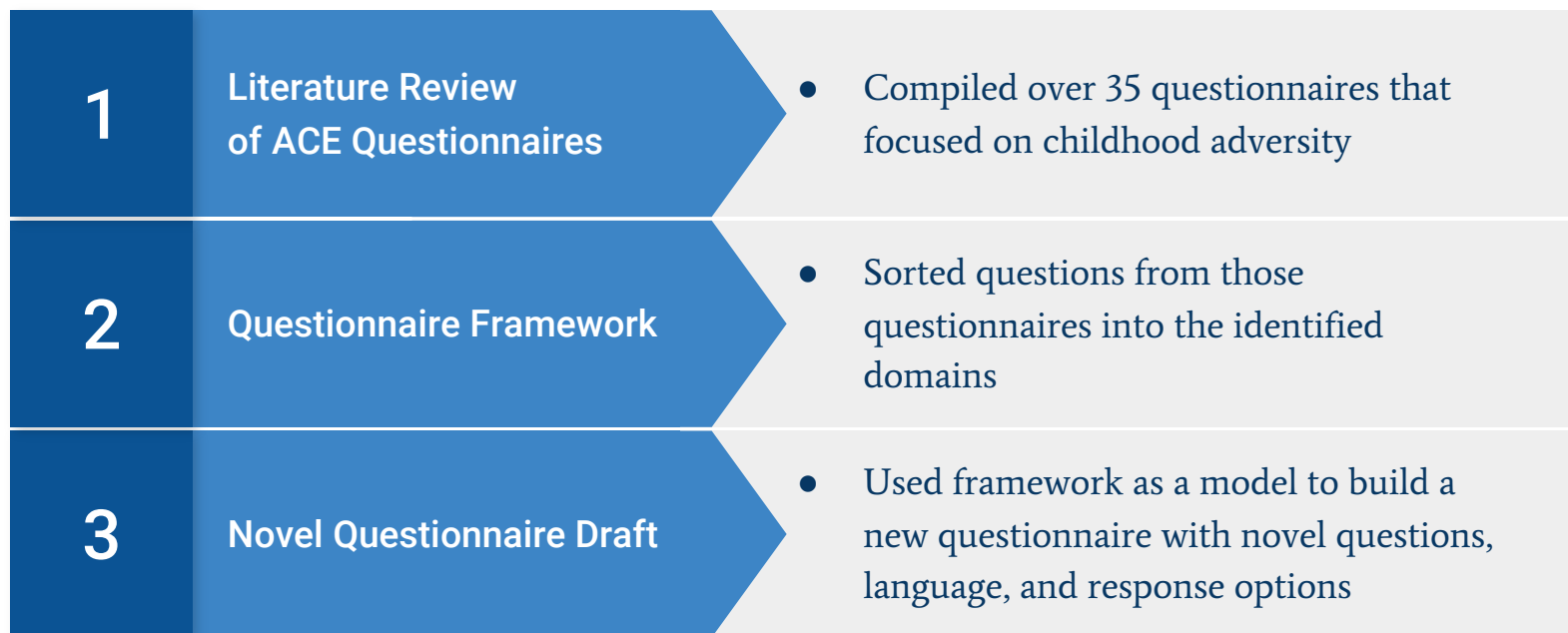
Domain	Number of Responses
Personal Victimization	79
Substance Abuse	32
Family Relationships	25
Mental Health	24
Economic Hardship	21
Household Environment	15
Peer Relationships	12
Relationships (Overall)	10
Community Stressors	7
Discrimination	7
Media/Technology	2
Child Welfare/Justice System	1

Domains of Most Stressful Experiences

Child Participants

Domain	Number of Responses
Personal Victimization	59
Peer Relationships	24
Community Stressors	16
Mental Health	15
Family Relationships	14
Relationships (Overall)	13
School	11
Child Welfare/Justice System	9
Discrimination	9
Economic Hardships	9
Physical Health	9
Substance Abuse	9
Household Environment	6
Terrorism	2

Developing the Questionnaire



Developing a Novel Questionnaire

A. CHILD WELFARE/JUSTICE SYSTEM

		Many times	A few times	Once	Never	Refused
A1	Has a parent or caregiver (someone you lived with at least 30% of the time) ever been arrested by police?					
A2	Has a parent or caregiver ever been held in jail for 72 hours or less?					
A3	Has a parent or caregiver ever been incarcerated or sentenced to time in prison?					
A3.1	If a parent or caregiver has ever been sent to prison, how long was their sentence? (How long was their longest sentence if they were sent to prison more than once?)					
A4	Have you ever been arrested by police?					
A5	Have you ever been held in jail for 48 hours or less?					
A6	Have you ever been sent to a juvenile detention center?					
A6.1	If sent to a juvenile detention center before, how long were you there for? (How long was your longest sentence if you were sent to juvenile detention more than once?)					
A7	Has a government or local agency, like Child Protective Services, ever take you away from your family?					
A8	How long were you in their custody? (How long was the longest time you spent away if taken away more than once?)					
A9	Have you ever lived with a foster family, or in a group home?					

CDC-Kaiser ACE Study

Verbatim Questions	Responses
Were you a foster child?	1 = yes 2= no
Did you ever run away from home for more than one day?	1 = yes 2= no
Did your brothers or sisters run away from home for more than one day?	1 = yes 2= no
Did anyone in your household go to prison?	1 = yes 2= no
Did anyone in your household ever commit a serious crime?	1 = yes 2= no

Adapted from Felitti, V. J. et al, 1998

Our Study

<i>When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life:</i>	Many times	A few times	Once	Never
Was a parent or caregiver (someone you lived with at least 30% of the time) ever arrested by police?				
Was a parent or caregiver ever held in jail for 72 hours or less?				
Was a parent or caregiver ever incarcerated or sentenced to time in prison?				
If a parent or caregiver was sent to prison, how long was their sentence? (How long was their longest sentence if they were sent to prison more than once?)				
Were you ever arrested by police?				
Were you ever held in jail for 48 hours or less?				
Were you ever sent to a juvenile detention center?				
If sent to a juvenile detention center, how long were you there for? (How long was your longest sentence if you were sent to juvenile detention more than once?)				
Did a government or local agency, like Child Protective Services, ever take you away from your family?				
How long were you in their custody? (How long was the longest time you spent away if taken away more than once?)				
Did you live ever with a foster family, or in a group home?				

Next Steps

Revision by Camelot & TN Focus Groups

Our ACE Questionnaire will be evaluated internally by Camelot Services.

Expert Revision

Our ACE Questionnaire will be revised by Child Welfare expert and members of various bodies within the state.

Cognitively Testing

Our revised ACE Questionnaire will then be cognitively tested which allows us to understand if the concepts being elicited and comprehension of questions will be understood by participants.

Validated ACE Questionnaire

Once cognitively tested, our ACE Questionnaire will be administered to a representative sample to demonstrate adequate reliability and validity.

Project Goal

A validated ACE questionnaire that is more comprehensive of childhood adversity and diverse backgrounds that can be administered throughout Tennessee and rest of the United States.

SUMR Reflection



My Role in the Project

- Conducted literature of over 35 questionnaires focused on childhood adversity
- Transcribed focus group findings into word documents
- Compiled all focus group demographics
- Analyzed all focus group responses
- Developed a conceptual framework from previous questionnaires
- Drafted a novel questionnaire from the focus group input and conceptual framework
- Presented my work to Camelot Services leadership

Lessons Learned

- Embracing personal accountability and responsibility
- Take advantage of the knowledge of others
- Embodying patience, enthusiasm, and persistence

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Thank you!