

# Adverse Childhood Experiences

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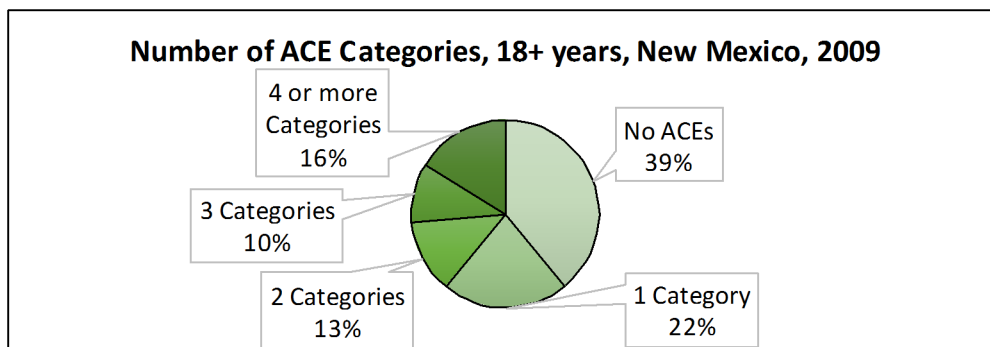
*Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences, including abuse, neglect and a range of household dysfunction such as witnessing domestic violence, or growing up with substance abuse, mental illness, parental discord, or crime in the home.  
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)*

## How do ACEs affect health?

- Children with adverse experiences have brain abnormalities that affect development
- A history of ACEs places adults at a higher risk for:
  - ◊ *Physical conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder*
  - ◊ *Behavioral conditions like depression, smoking, alcoholism, and drug use*
  - ◊ *Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts*

## How many adults in New Mexico have a history of ACEs?

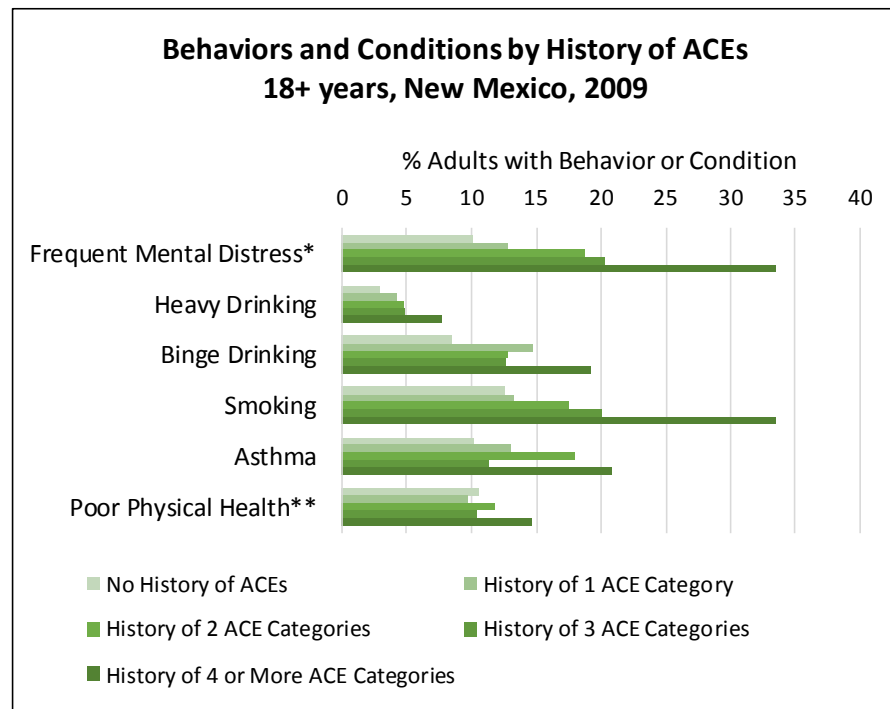
- In 2009, 61% of New Mexico adults had a history of at least one category of ACE (New Mexico Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009)
  - ◊ *28% experienced verbal abuse as a child*
  - ◊ *20% experienced physical abuse as a child*
  - ◊ *13% experienced sexual abuse as a child*
  - ◊ *30% lived with a household member who abused substances*
  - ◊ *24% lived with a parent who was separated or divorced*
  - ◊ *19% lived with a mentally ill household member*
  - ◊ *19% witnessed domestic violence in their household*
  - ◊ *7% lived with a household member who had been incarcerated*



**Who in New Mexico is more likely to have experienced ACEs?**

- Adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender are 38% more likely to have experienced ACEs
- Hispanic adults and American Indian adults are more than 10% more likely to have experienced ACEs than White adults

**How are New Mexico residents affected by ACEs in adulthood?**



Compared to adults with no history of ACEs, those with a history of 4 or more categories of ACEs were...

- ◇ 3 times as likely to have frequent mental distress
- ◇ 2 times as likely to abuse alcohol or tobacco
- ◇ 2 times as likely to have ever had asthma
- ◇ 1.4 times as likely to have poor physical health

\*Frequent mental distress: 6 or more days of poor mental health in the past 30 days

\*\*Poor physical health: 14 or more days of poor physical health in the past 30 days

**If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis or needs a treatment referral, please call the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line 24/7 at 1 (855) NMCRISIS (662-7474).**

For more information about mental health in New Mexico, please contact Jessica Reno, Mental Health Epidemiologist, Epidemiology & Response Division, New Mexico Department of Health, at [Jessica.Reno@state.nm.us](mailto:Jessica.Reno@state.nm.us).

Sources:

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