



# Mental Health Awareness for Educators: Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

2023/2024

[mimtsstac.org](http://mimtsstac.org)



# Acknowledgments

The content for this training day was developed based on the work of:

- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

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# Group Agreements

## We are Responsible

- Return on time from breaks
- Take care of our needs

## We are Engaged

- Share “air time”
- Plan to participate in multiple ways
  - Chat, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, unmute
  - Ask questions

# Training Effectiveness

- At the end of the session, you will be asked to provide feedback on today's training
- Results will be used to make improvements to professional learning and for reporting to TA Center stakeholders
- One of the feedback questions you will see is related to promoting and positively portraying diversity among educators and learners (e.g., focus on asset-based language, positive representation of multiple identities)

# Purpose

- This session is part of the Mental Health (MH) Awareness for Educators Series designed to increase educators' exposure to and knowledge of various aspects of mental health and well-being.
- This session aims to help participants understand what Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are, how they can impact students, and how schools can support individuals impacted by them.

# Intended Outcomes

- Understand what Adverse Childhood Experiences are
- Understand the negative impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Begin to consider ways that schools can support individuals impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Build educator capacity to become Mental Health Aware





# MH Awareness Topics and Goals of this Series

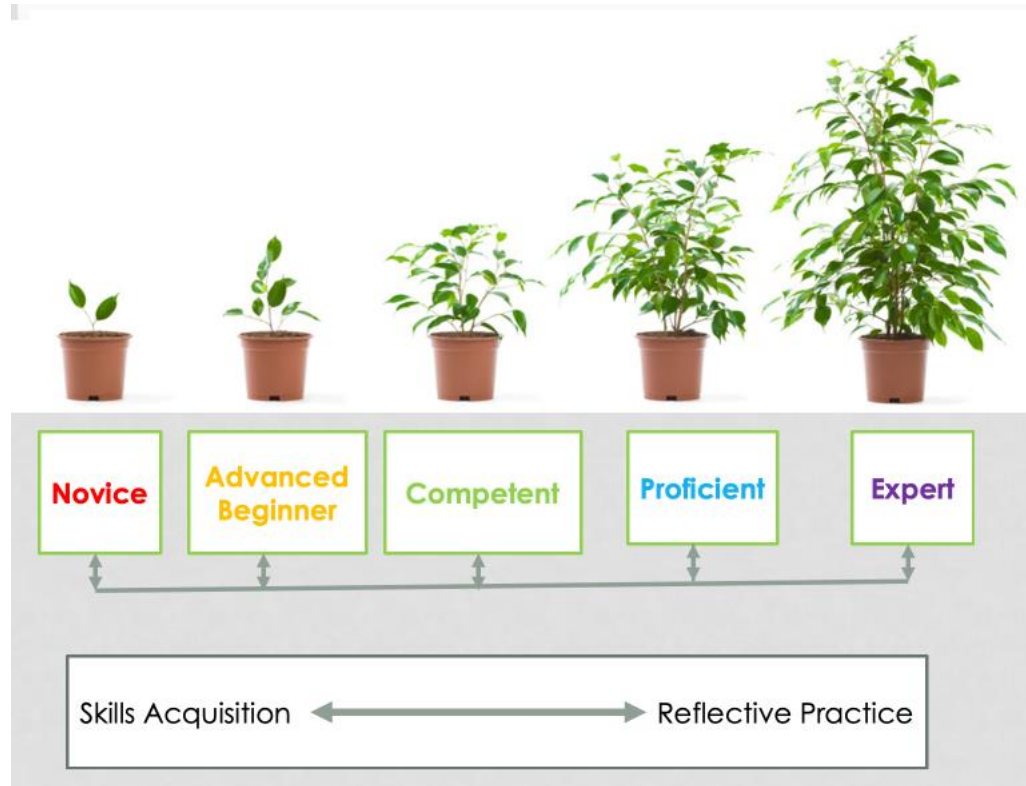
- **Understanding ACEs**
- Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors
- Anxiety Disorders 101
- Depressive Disorders 101
- Trauma Responses in the Classroom

- Reducing the knowledge gap
- Increasing educator capacity to support student MH and well-being
- Promote positive SEB skills for students and staff
- Reduce the stigma around MH
- Support positive school climate and student/staff well-being

# Agenda

- 1.0 Understanding ACEs
- 2.0 The Impact of ACEs
- 3.0 Supporting Students
- 4.0 Wrap Up and Next Steps

# Activity 0.1



- Self-reflect on your current knowledge and skills related to Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Where do you currently rate your level of knowledge and skills related to Adverse Childhood Experiences?
- You do not have to share your responses!

# 1.0 Understanding ACEs

# What are ACEs?



- Potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years)
  - Experiencing or witnessing violence, abuse, or neglect
- Environmental factors that undermine a child's sense of safety, stability, or bonding
  - Experiencing marginalization, familial substance misuse, MH concerns, or parental separation

CDC, 2023

# The CDC-Kaiser ACE Study

- One of the largest investigations of childhood abuse, neglect, household challenges, and the impact on later life health and well-being
- The original study was conducted from 1995 to 1997 with two waves of data collection
- Over 17,000 people participated in the study
- This study and its findings have greatly influenced the way that we understand childhood experiences and their lasting impact on individuals

CDC, 2021



# Activity 1.1

Consider how ACEs are defined (potentially traumatic events and environmental factors that undermine a child's sense of safety) and respond to the following poll questions:

1. What percentage of U.S. adults do you think have reported experiencing at least one type of ACE before the age of 18?
2. What percentage of U.S. children ages 6-17 do you think have reported experiencing at least one type of ACE?

## How Common Are ACEs?

- About 64% of U.S. adults reported that they have experienced at least one type of ACE before the age of 18
- Nearly 1 in 6 of those adults reported experiencing 4 or more types of ACEs
- Almost 50% of youth ages 6-17 report at least one ACE
- 23% of youth ages 6-17 report 2 or more ACEs

CDC, 2021 and Feldman Hertz, 2020



# MI ACE Data Dashboard

- 63% of high school students in Michigan reported one or more ACEs
- 68% of Michigan adults reported one or more ACEs



# Activity 1.2

## Scavenger Hunt

- Access the MI ACE Data Dashboard at [www.miacedata.org](http://www.miacedata.org)
- Try to answer the following prompts
  - What percentage of MI high school students reported one or more ACEs?
  - ACEs have the potential to significantly affect \_\_\_\_\_, mental, and \_\_\_\_\_ health.
  - Even struggling families have many inherent \_\_\_\_\_ that help kids overcome \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Navigate to the School Environment Section
    - Can you locate your county's most recent YRBS or MiPHY Data?

## 2.0 The Impact of ACEs

# The Consequences

- 5 out of 10 of the leading causes of death are associated with ACEs
- They are negatively related to many social determinants of health
- Individuals impacted by ACEs are more likely to experience financial stressors and reside in under-resourced communities
- Can cause toxic stress

# Toxic Stress

- Toxic stress is extended or prolonged stress.
- It is severe and chronic.
- It can negatively impact an individual's physical and mental health and well-being.



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# Stress and Adversity in Children



CDC, 2022

# ACEs and Mental Health

- Students who have experienced ACEs are at higher risk for experiencing Depression
  - 72% of MI HS students with four or more ACEs reported feelings of being sad/hopeless for 2+ weeks in the past month in the 2019 YRBS study vs. 17% who reported No ACEs
  - 46% of MI HS students with four or more ACEs considered suicide in the past year compared to 14% who had fewer than 4 ACEs
  - 21% of MI HS students with four or more ACEs engaged in suicidal behavior compared to 6% who had fewer than 4 ACEs

# ACEs and Educational Experiences

- Students who have experienced ACEs report higher rates of experiencing bullying and an increased risk of having lower grades
  - 52% of MI HS students with four or more ACEs reported being bullied, compared to 23% who reported fewer than 4 ACEs
  - 11% of MI HS students with four or more ACEs reported mainly Ds and Fs on their report card in the past year compared to 5% who reported fewer than 4 ACEs
- ACEs can harm educational success, job opportunities, and earning potential for individuals who have experienced them



## Activity 2.1

- 60-Second Reflection
- Are ACEs more or less common than you thought they were?
- What is something new you learned about ACEs?
- What is something you want to learn more about?
- Be prepared to share your responses



## 3.0 Supporting Students

# Positive School Climate

- Critically assess your school climate and culture
  - Examine school climate data, School Climate Surveys, or conduct informal walk-throughs and observations
- Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity
  - Equitable learning environments
  - School-wide behavior expectations that promote safe and positive learning conditions
- Positive school, student, and family connections
  - Positive adult interactions
  - Mentoring or after-school programs

# Teaching Skills

- Embed Social, Emotional, and Behavioral (SEB) skills across your tiers of support in your schools
- Offer professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their understanding of SEB needs and skills
- Consider family engagement, i.e., special student or family workshops that address healthy skills
  - Relationship skills
  - Caregiving strategies
  - Communication

# Trauma-Informed Practices

- A school-wide system that recognizes the prevalence of adverse and traumatic childhood experiences.
- Provides staff with the skills and strategies needed to respond to the behavioral, emotional, relational, and academic impact on those within the school system
- Manages traumatic stress reactions to help foster a more positive school climate for students and staff
- Benefits everyone, not just those directly impacted by trauma

# Leverage the Supports Already In Place



- MTSS
- PBIS
- SEL
- Mental Health Support
- Community Support

## Activity 3.1

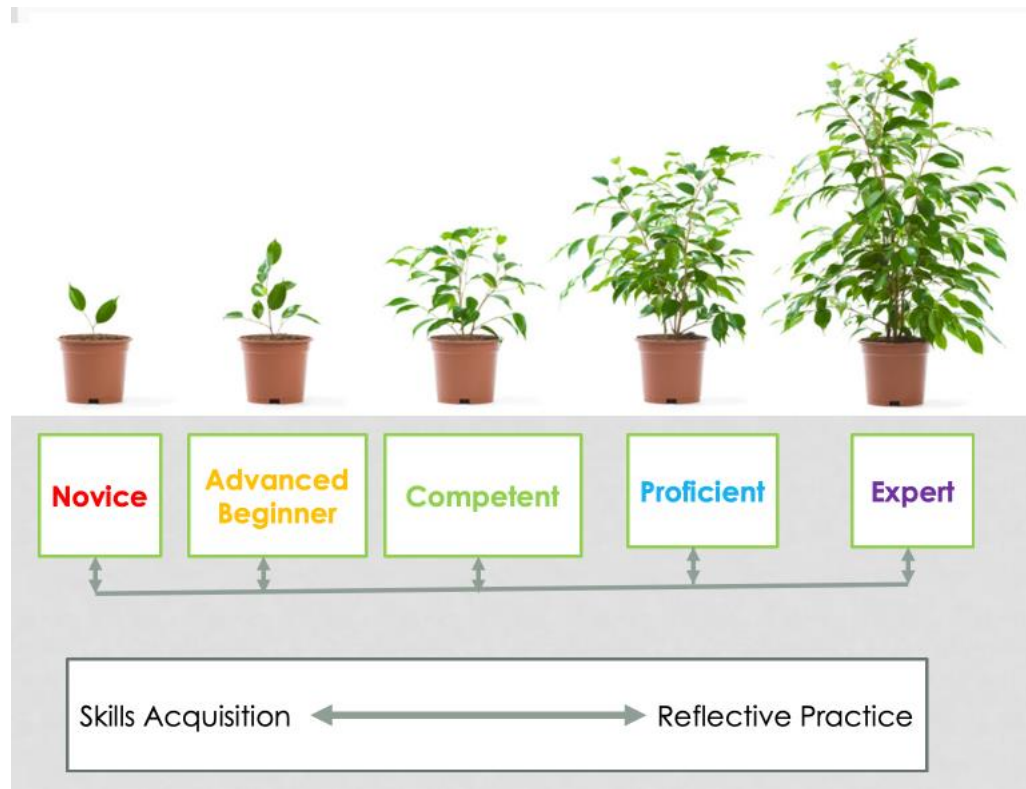
- 60-Second Reflection
- Identify one thing you can do to support a positive school climate or to support teaching skills that can support students
- What is something you want to learn more about?
- Be prepared to share your responses



## 4.0 Wrap Up and Next Steps



# Activity 4.1



- Self-reflect on your current knowledge and skills related to Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Where do you currently rate your level of knowledge and skills related to Adverse Childhood Experiences?
- You do not have to share your responses!

# Closing Review

- ACEs are prevalent
- ACEs can have life-long negative impacts on individuals
- ACEs impact many students in your schools
- ACEs impact many adults in your schools
- Safe and supportive schools can reduce the negative impacts of ACEs on staff and students

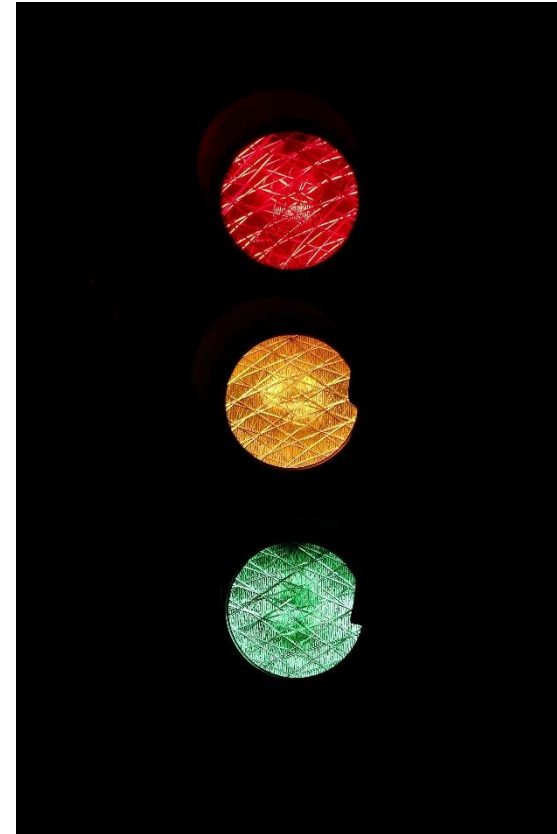
## Next Steps

- Consider what items or resources piqued your interest in learning more today
  - Do you want to explore more learning around Trauma-Informed Practices and Trauma-Informed Schools?
  - Do you want to explore more information on the MI ACE Dashboard?
- Do you want to assess your current school climate and culture?
- Do you want to consider ways to leverage the supports already in place at your school to support students and staff impacted by ACEs?

## Activity 4.2

Share in the chat:

- One thing to **STOP**
- One thing to **CONTINUE**
- One thing to **START**



# Under the Surface



# References

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