

## Dr Felitti ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Roundtable Summary June 16, 2010

Morning Session Present: Merrill Featherstone, Kristy Kelly, Kathy Maes, Joan Reynolds, Jane MacLean, Toni Jordan, Tom Jordan, Gloria Flaherty, Laura Solis, Helaine Christenson, Helaine Moore, Susan Jen

Dr. Felitti opened the Roundtable discussion with a powerpoint presentation of findings from his ACE research. Slides were presented indicating the stair-step increase in health issues that follow from an increasing number of ACEs. For instance, the likelihood of smoking, alcoholism, use of street drugs, IV use, and depression increase with the number of ACEs. Child molest was found in 55% of patients with obesity.

### Key points:

- Taking the ACE questionnaire is an educational tool that enables an individual to begin linking the impact of their early adverse experiences to current unhealthy habits and medical conditions. Doctor office visits (DOV) decreased by 33% the year following taking the ACE questionnaire. By the end of the second year, DOV returned to previous rates. Providing an opportunity for individuals to take the questionnaire and discuss it with someone is therapeutic in itself.
- What we regard as negative and/or addictive behaviors may be functional solutions for adverse childhood experiences.
- Consideration should be given to the fact that these negative behaviors are “normal” coping strategies in response to adverse experiences.

### Recommendations:

- It was recommended that the ACE questionnaire be embedded in the service continuum and that opportunity be built into the service system for patients to have at least an annual follow-up to discuss how they are doing after taking the ACE questionnaire
- The North American Health Index was recommended as a tool to collect and organize many levels of patient information useful to office visit discussions and treatment designed to address and improve chronic conditions
- It was recommended that the long form questionnaires be given by mail prior to initial health assessments/appointments, or that patients be provided a quiet room to take the questionnaire when coming for their office visit or beginning a program
- When addressing results from ACE questions, it is useful to open discussion on the results by stating, I noted \_\_\_\_\_, how has this affected you later in life....
- The opportunity to talk through these adverse life experiences with a respected individual or in support groups is highly beneficial
- Autobiographical writing is highly beneficial, with the opportunity to discuss what is written with a respected individual
- Videotaping in all service settings is an optimal way to document ACE impact on individual lives
- Theatrical productions/soap operas/plays would be possible venues to discuss or portray ACE impacts thereby increasing community awareness and prevention

Next Steps:

- Develop prevention strategy
- Determine ways to survey targeted demographics as a means to increase ACE respondents across all population sectors in Lake County
- Develop a policy for ACE screening and follow-up

The next Children's Council meeting in October will agendaize continued discussion on these issues. The HLN Policy Cabinet may also assist in the process as needed.