

How to support youth impacted by ACEs and trauma

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or potentially traumatic experiences that happen to us before we turn 18. Although ACEs and other trauma may cause lasting wear and tear on our bodies and brains, Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) can counteract the effects of ACEs. PCEs include: having supportive relationships, learning skills for coping with challenges, and participating in cultural traditions. PCEs can be life-changing for a young person — and educators, coaches, and other supportive adults can help nurture them.

How can I create PCEs to support young people in my life?

These little things can go a long way:

- **Promote safe, stable, and supportive relationships** — within the family, with other children and teens, and with other adults in the community.
- **Spend time together.** Walk, listen to music, prepare a meal, read, play a game, watch a movie, be silly! It doesn't have to be a big activity. Just be sure to make time for regular positive interactions.
- **Create safe and calm spaces** that provide refuge for young people, where they can feel secure and regulate their emotions. This can be a cozy “calming corner” or “book nook” away from other stimulation. The Live Beyond campaign has a curated list of helpful books for all ages.
- **Support cultural connections and traditions.** Find ways to honor young people's unique identities and backgrounds. Support feelings of belonging and connection to their cultures.
- **Make them feel that they matter** by giving them responsibility — like helping out in the classroom or community room, planning a group activity, and providing other age-appropriate activities that give them a sense of ownership.

Learn more at livebeyondCA.org and visit the Stories page to hear tips from parents, caregivers, and youth across California.

Remember: You can be that safe, stable, nurturing adult, and leave a lasting impact on their healing.



It takes a community to heal and live beyond ACEs

Our village of adults — at school and in the community — can all create PCEs for kids, teens, and young adults. Learn how behaviors may be rooted in trauma and how we can build skills and practices to help young people thrive.



Resources for youth and caregivers:

Soluna app ↩

Built for 13- to 25-year-olds in California, Soluna provides 1-on-1 chatting with professional coaches. Plus: free-writing journals, de-stressing tools, and forums where young people can get and give advice (or vent).

Free and confidential. solunaapp.com

📺 **BrightLife app**

For parents, caregivers, and kids up to age 12 in California, BrightLife offers coaching and mental health support in English and Spanish.

Video or chat. Free and confidential. hellobrightline.com/brightlifekids

Live Beyond campaign ~~~~~

A community-created campaign to help youth and caregivers heal from the impacts of ACEs and toxic stress, with stories, videos, resources, and more.

livebeyondCA.org

Trainings for adults who care about youth:

Safe Spaces: trauma-informed training

Free self-paced online training to help individuals working with youth — such as coaches, teachers, administrators, and mentors — recognize and respond to trauma and stress. Available in English and Spanish.

Available at osg.ca.gov/safespaces

[Open Doors: supporting youth]

Free (online and in-person) training for adults supporting youth ages 12–26 who may have substance use or other behavioral health issues.

Available at opendoorstraining.org

ACEs Aware Learning Center !!

Free self-paced online training and webinars — primarily for clinical staff — about ACEs screenings and strategies for mitigating toxic stress. Includes spotlights on California organizations and practical tips.

Available at acesaware.org/training