

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: DEFINITION, DIMENSIONS, AND LONG-TERM EFFECT

Pengalaman Buruk Zaman Kanak-kanak: Definisi, Dimensi, dan Kesan Jangka Panjang

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Abstract

This article discusses the concept of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), dimensions, and long-term impacts experienced by survivors of adverse childhood experiences. ACEs as traumatic and potentially dangerous experiences that occur intensively and frequently in the 0-17 years or before age 18 years. Traumatic experiences or stressful experiences that are classified under ACE include (but are not limited to) abuse (emotional, physical, sexual abuse); abandonment (emotional, physical neglect); and growing up in a dysfunctional household. These dysfunctions include being a witness to violence in another household, a family member engaging in alcohol or drug abuse, the family suffering from mental illness or being involved in suicide, there being relational stress (such as separation or divorce), or a family member exhibiting criminal behavior. Studies have proven that ACEs have long-lasting impacts on survivors. Among these impacts are emotional, social-behavioral, cognitive, neurodevelopmental, mental health, and disease. A basic understanding of the definition, dimensions, and long-term impact of ACEs has the potential to open up broader research and exploration in various fields as a main step in making prevention policies in the future.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experience, Dimension of ACEs, Dimension of ACEs, Long-Term Effect of ACEs

INTRODUCTION

Each of us expects good growth and development. Unfortunately, some of us go through childhood with sad memories and disappointing experiences. Even some of us deal with complicated trauma growing up. Many terms refer to trauma experienced in childhood. Among them are early life stress (Smith & Pollak, 2020), childhood adversity or early adversity (Pearce et al., 2019), traumatic childhood experience (Greeson et al., 2014b), abused child syndrome or battered child syndrome (Kempe, 1962), childhood trauma (Spalletta et al., 2020), childhood trauma experience (CTE) (Huang et al., 2012a, 2012b), childhood trauma exposures (CTEs) (Berhe et al., 2023), and Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs (CDC, 2021b; Felitti et al., 1998; Greeson et al., 2014a; SAMHSA, 2018; WHO, 2020). Currently, the term ACEs is more widely used to refer to childhood trauma experiences because it is supported by extensive research.

METHODOLOGY

The approach used in writing this article is a narrative review. Narrative review is the most common type of approach to understanding a topic or issue (Demiris et al., 2019). The purpose of a narrative review is to identify previous research or get an over-view related to the issue of interest (Demiris et al., 2019; Hempel, 2020), which provides data that is interesting to follow up on. Narrative reviews are not structured systematically, so they do not have predetermined research questions or specific

search strategies (Demiris et al., 2019). However, narrative reviews only stick to topics of interest that are formulated through free search keywords. What differentiates narrative review from SLR and Meta-analysis, is the absence of systematic rules and the absence of certain established protocols. In other words, there is no particular standard or protocol that guides this review. Although a narrative review will study existing problems, it will not arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the state of science related to these problems (Demiris et al., 2019).

DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTIC OF ACEs

We can also draw several characteristics of ACEs based on existing definitions, namely (1) ACEs are experiences of trauma or stressful events and potentially harmful, (2) these experiences occur in the range of 0-17 years or before the age of 18 years, (3) occur intensively and frequently. To harmonize these definitions, we can define ACEs as traumatic and potentially dangerous experiences that occur intensively and frequently in the 0-17 years or before age 18. A summary of definitions based on characteristic features is depicted in table 1.

TYPE AND DIMENSION OF ACEs

WHO has taken on a role by developing a questionnaire to assess ACE from a global perspective. This effort was made to expand research on ACE and as an effort to understand ACE in the context of various cultures. This instrument is the Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ) (WHO, 2020). The ACE-IQ includes nine of the ten original ACEs dimensions developed by the CDC-Kaiser. Nonetheless, dimensions of childhood adversity and emotional neglect were assessed limitedly (Asmundson & Afifi, 2019). ACE-IQ has also expanded the dimensions by adding dimensions of peer violence or bullying, witnessing community violence, and exposure to war or collective violence. In addition, the item that asks about the death of a parent(s) has been added under the household dysfunction dimension. Meanwhile, questions about marriage have been added as preliminary (Asmundson & Afifi, 2019). Consequently, diction has also changed from the original ACE questionnaire form. Interestingly, ACE-IQ has been briefly developed. However, it has received recommendations for integration into more health surveys around the world (Asmundson & Afifi, 2019; WHO, 2020). The development and evolution of the ACEs dimensions are described in table 2.

LONG-TERM EFFECT OF ACEs

As a traumatic experience, ACEs tremendously impact survivors' lives (Asmundson & Afifi, 2019; Brewer-Smyth, 2022). In summary, it has been documented that there is a significant relationship between ACE exposure and impaired physical, emotional and cognitive development of individuals during adolescence (Flaherty et al., 2013; Gajos et al., 2022). Moreover, these adverse impacts can persist into adulthood, leading to an increased risk of mental and physical illness later in life (Hughes et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2021, 2022). The following pyramid depicts A summary of ACEs' long-term effects. A summary of the impacts of ACEs on life is depicted in table 3.

CONCLUSION

To follow up on broader ACEs exploration efforts, whether in the research process, developing policies to prevent or overcome the impacts that arise, an understanding of ACEs is necessary. A basic understanding of the definition, dimensions, and long-term impact of ACEs as recognition of ACEs is an important key. Understanding these three aspects can potentially open broader research and exploration in various fields as a main step in making prevention policies in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The first author wishes to thank the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) Malaysia for funding Ph.D. program through the Malaysia International Scholarship (MIS) and supporting the publication of this article.