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Reflection #5

After watching the TED Talk video, "**How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across A Lifetime**" by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, the discussion of how Adverse Childhood Experience Study, (ACES) reveals that childhood trauma is rooted to many physical and mental health problems that we see today.

Dr. Burke Harris stated that ACE scores reveal causes of developmental and behavioral problems from childhood trauma and how they correlated the ACE scores against health outcomes the results was profound. First, Dr. Harris stated that ACES are incredibly common about 67% of the population that they surveyed had about 1 ACE, and 12.6% had 4 or more ACES. Dr. Harris stated that they found that a dose response relationships between ACES and health outcomes. The higher the ACES score, the worse the health outcomes.

Dr. Harris goes on to say that how exposure to early adversity affects the brains and bodies of children. It affects the nucleus accumbens (the pleasure and reward center of the brain); implicated in substance dependence. It inhibits the pre-frontal cortex; necessary for impulse control and executive functions, a critical area for learning, and the amygdala , which is the fear response center. She continued saying that people that are exposed to high dosage of adversity are most likely to engage in high-risk behaviors. But if there's no risky behaviors, they are prone to severe illness such as heart disease or cancer. Dr. Harris explained that toxic stress

is high dose of adversity causes the response system in the part of the brain, hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (the part that governs the fight of flight response) to overly react. With children that are still developing, the fight of flight response constantly being triggered can affect the development of the immune system because of high levels of adrenaline. High doses of adversity not only affect the brain structure and body function it also affects the hormonal system and even the DNA read transcribes.

Some of the best practice that Dr. Harris mentioned to intervene with children and families impacted by adversity and toxic stress, Dr. Harris stated that routine screening, working with a multidisciplinary team to reduce the dose of adversity and treat the symptoms with best practices including, home visits, care coordination, mental health care, nutrition, holistic intervention, and medication when necessary, but mostly education about ACES. Dr. Harris stated that ACE, the single greatest public health threat facing our nation, and it is not to be marginalized because it affects about 70% of Caucasians and 70% college educated. She ended by saying that it would take a movement and the right framework by addressing it. It starts will all of us.