

Note to researchers and Service Providers:

PACES (Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey) is a brief questionnaire designed as an alternative to the ACE Survey. It includes questions about protective factors. These protective-factor questions are interspersed with the items from the ACE Survey in a way that can help to decrease the potential for re-traumatization, maintain a balance between activating and calming questions, and help provide a richer understanding of early childhood experiences.

PACES was developed to highlight the importance of understanding positive as well as adverse events in shaping a variety of outcomes and also to demonstrate how questionnaire construction can be used in a way that reduces the likelihood of re-traumatization and help maintain the research individual in a “Zone of Resilience” and not of dysregulation when answering questions. PACES has two key components that differentiate it from the ACE Survey: 1. Questions that collect positive childhood events in addition to adverse events and 2) the interspersing of protective questions that allow for a rhythm of questioning that moves between activating and calming questions in a way that mirrors the rhythm of the Autonomic Nervous System when it is in the Resilient Zone. In this zone of functioning individuals are more likely to have a clear memory and thought processes.

Is PACES, then, an intervention rather than a research tool? I would argue that all research tools are interventions in that they have an impact, even if only temporarily, on the well-being or lack of well-being of research participants. If there is to be an effect, shouldn't we want it to be a neutral or positive effect and one that raises the likelihood of more accurate recall of information?

PACES is not a standardized questionnaire currently, although a large-scale study is planned late 2019 to test its validity. Currently, there is one published study that has used PACES.

For Service Providers: Introducing PACES to a client at intake:

To the Individuals in Our Practice Seeking _____ Care:

The families that each of us grows up in as well as our early childhood experiences can have an effect on our parenting/behaviors/health/well being. Most of us have some memories of our early life that are positive...people who cared about us, positive experiences that made us confident, etc. But there are also childhood experiences that are harmful to children and can continue to affect us even as adults.

Here at _____ it helps us understand how to better support you during our work with you to know some of the positive experiences and also the hard things you experienced during childhood. For example, parents who didn't have enough to eat as children tell us that it is hard to know how much their own child should eat at any given age.

9. Were there groups you belonged to outside your family that made you feel good about yourself? Y N circle any that made you feel good: school club team, gang church other
10. Did you often or very often feel you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or were left alone or with other young children without an adult in the house? Y N
11. Did any adults that lived with you use drugs or get drunk in front of you so much that they couldn't care for your needs? Y N
12. Did you experience death of a parent, abandonment, or divorce? Y N
13. If hard things were happening in your life did you have positive ways to help yourself feel safe or better? Y N
14. Was there violence in your house such as hitting, throwing things, kicking, threatening with a weapon such as gun or knife? Y N
15. Did anyone in your home get arrested or go to jail/prison? Y N
16. Did your family have things they liked to do together? Y N
17. Was anyone in your home depressed, mentally ill or suicidal? Y N
18. Was there someone in your home who gave you guidance or good advice? Y N
19. Was there someone at home who paid attention to how you were doing in school? Y N
20. Did you have physical activities that you regularly did? Y N