

ACE Informed Housing

Ambassador Programme – Workshop B



Tuesday, 9th February 2021

ANGEL LANE ASSOCIATES, SANCTUARY HOUSING and KENT HOUSING GROUP
VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT, KENT & MEDWAY



“Innovating and collaborating to keep communities safe”

The ACE Informed Housing project is a partnership between Angel Lane CIC, Sanctuary Group and Kent Housing Group and is funded by the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

By March 2021 we will be assisting providers and local authorities to form deeper, ACE-informed connections with communities and households leading to greater understanding of childhood adversity as a cause of violence.

We hope that during this session and beyond participants will be:

- **Building relationships** between different parts of the system;
- **Valuing** and using the **existing capacity**, skills, knowledge and connections from across our communities (an **asset-based approach**)
- **Recognising the importance of context**, including local history and experiences
- **Encouraging local ownership of the change process.**



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing



People with 6+ ACEs can die

20 yrs

earlier than those who have none



1/8 of the population have more than 4 ACEs

4 or more ACEs

3x the levels of lung disease and adult smoking 

11x the level of intravenous drug abuse 

14x the number of suicide attempts 

4x as likely to have begun intercourse by age 15 

4.5x more likely to develop depression 

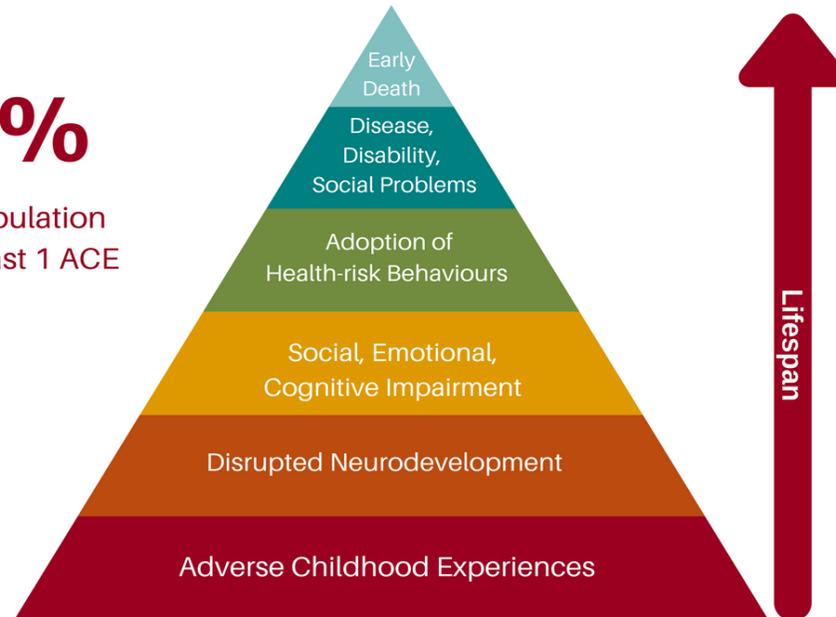
2x the level of liver disease 

“ Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today ”

Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics

67%

of the population have at least 1 ACE



Trauma-informed...

“An organisational transformation model that improves awareness of trauma and its impact, supports services to consider and put in place appropriate support, and prevents re-traumatising those accessing or working in services.” (Sweeney and Taggart, 2018)

The **RELATE framework** supports organisations to reflect on and consider further ways to embed trauma informed approaches in their work, including being sensitive to the impacts of trauma, supporting recovery and seeking to prevent (re)traumatisation within services.

Realise

Awareness of the impact of adverse childhood events and the importance of a trauma informed approach.

Empower

Strengths based, empowering and collaborative approaches to care.

Link up

Collaborative working with partner organisations.

(Be) **A**ware

Understanding signs/symptoms through caring centred support.

Transform

A trauma informed approach becomes part of organisational culture.

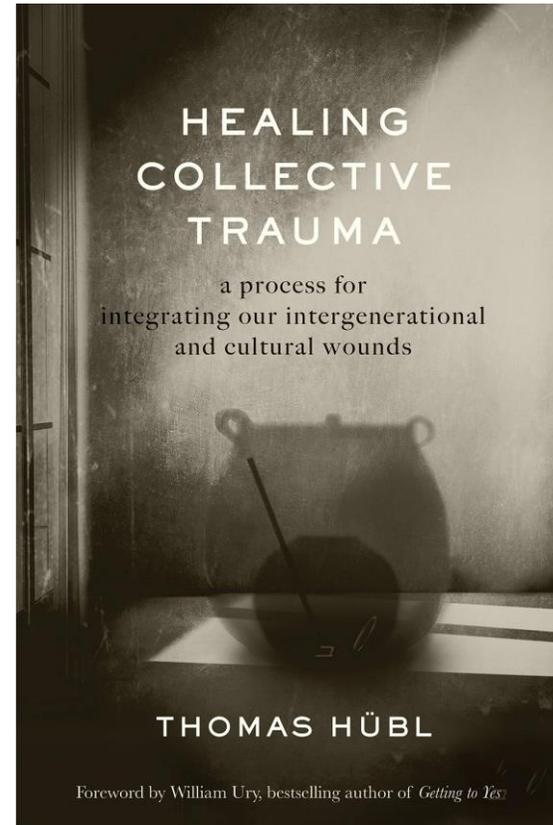
EMBED safety

A physically and psychologically safe space for practitioners and people using the service.



A healing-centred approach...

"When we come together, willing to witness and receive one another's pain **without judgment**, without turning away, without minimising or attempting to vanquish, **we discover trust, connection, and healing.**"



ACEs & Housing- What is the link?

Housing have a unique perspective:

*“Seeing people in their own home, understanding family connections, responding to emotional cues and recognising issues around mental health, addictions and abuse can provide a **unique opportunity** to understand the **support needs of individuals and families.**”*

NHS Scotland/National Federation of Social Housing, Scotland- 2019.

Part of a bigger picture:

Healthy homes are part of forming safe, successful and thriving communities.

Data and study surrounding ACEs uses data from the Minister of Housing (England) to pinpoint **areas of deprivation** with issues such as **homelessness** in mind. It goes without saying that social housing forms part of our most deprived communities and our influence can make **positive change**.

The ACE Index: mapping childhood adversity in England - D Lewer et al. *Journal of Public Health*, Volume 42, Issue 4, December 2020, Pages e487–e495

Tenancy Sustainment:

“The Housing sector already plays a strong role in supporting vulnerable tenants with the aim of sustaining the tenancies and preventing crises occurring, and linking in with support services and other agencies when need is identified”

Public Health Wales- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Housing Vulnerability – Report and Evaluation of ACE-informed Training for Housing 2019

The work we already do with our clients, tenants, customers to **sustain tenancies** already involves supporting them in the context of wider support services and **cooperative work between agencies**. An ACE aware approach and a shared language can lead to **positive outcomes for residents and landlords**.

Sanctuary Housing - a case study

Policy and Procedure- Our Scottish counterparts have now included trauma informed approaches into our housing management policies and England is not far behind. There are key points in time during a tenancy that ACEs and Trauma can be brought to the forefront and making this part of policy and procedure means it is not just an 'ideal' way of working, but the way the organisation does work. Key points adopted by Sanctuary;

- Initial Engagement (Application, referral, signing new tenancy)- Encouraging staff to have 'active' conversations about the customer's life, history and journey based on any disclosures made on the application. Supporting tenancy management from the first interaction with Sanctuary.
- Anti-Social Behaviour- Using the vulnerability and proportionality assessments required for any court/enforcement action to look at alternative action. Seeing behaviour as potential trauma manifesting and making support referrals alongside notices & warnings to prevent eviction. In addition, favouring pre-court mediation services and injunction action over possession proceedings.
- Rent Arrears- Identifying trauma as a debt risk factor and looking to provide a support service in the first instance, using pre-action protocol required for rent arrears action, as an investigation into possible support referrals. Established a closer link with DWP and Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Scotland are also looking at restructuring the housing services teams to have a dedicated staff member, who is trauma informed and ACE aware, to work with tenants purely to sustain tenancies and improve overall wellbeing.

Sanctuary Housing - a case study

Awareness- Internal training now rolled out to all housing front line staff, providing an introduction to the topic of ACEs. Our plan is to extend this to all of our staff including lettings officers, income officers, maintenance operatives and call centre staff to create a shared language throughout the business.

Development- Taking awareness into communities and engaging with other housing professionals has been a key part of developing this work further, for example in Kent we can access our fellow housing providers via the Kent Housing Group and were provided funding by Kent Police for this programme.

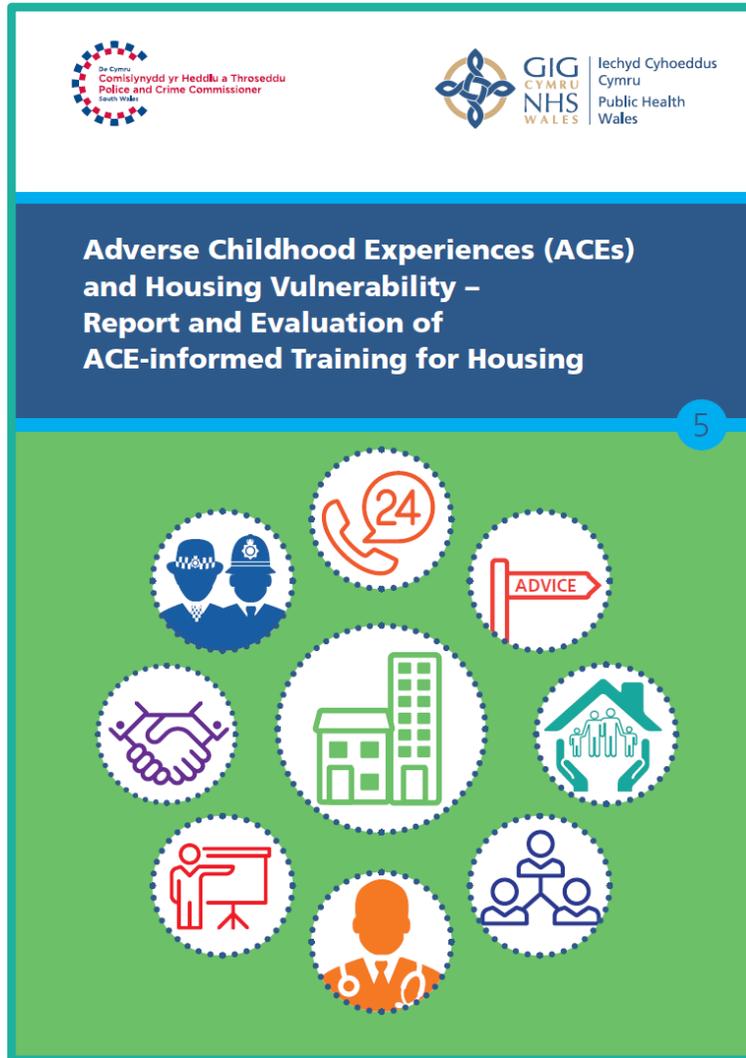
Internally, focus groups are now in place to discuss ACEs related work, meeting monthly and supporting projects. In addition, following the awareness training, regional 'ACE Champions' have been selected so staff have a dedicated point of contact to discuss trauma related work and issues faced. The Champions will be further trained by Resilience Learning Partnership to gain in depth knowledge.

Resilience Learning Partnership

-Dedicated to ACE learning and awareness and working with Sanctuary Housing to produce learning materials for housing staff.

<https://vimeo.com/448449780/fb4cec486d>

ACE Informed Housing



- **ACEs can lead to vulnerability** in adults, impact health and life chances, and contribute to **adverse housing outcomes**;
- Good quality housing is fundamental to good **health and wellbeing**;
- The housing sector is **uniquely situated** to identify vulnerability and ACEs at an early stage, and be **a strong, enabling link** between support services, agencies, and vulnerable tenants;
- The sector already plays a strong role in supporting vulnerable tenants to **sustain tenancies and prevent crises** occurring;
- A **preventative** ACE-informed approach to vulnerable tenants has the potential to prevent evictions and homelessness, through **greater understanding of trauma and its impacts**.