

A Philanthropic Perspective from United Way of East Central Iowa on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

United Way of East Central Iowa staff has attended two of Dr. Anda's presentations that have resulted in ongoing conversations with partnering agencies and staff to identify the impact of ACEs within United Way's six-county service area. In addition, United Way staff has completed research in the areas of Education, Financial Stability, and Health to understand the potential impacts of the ACEs indicators.

Philanthropic Perspective

- Based on the ACEs Study, an estimated 32,000 children have at least two or more ACEs within United Way's six-county service area of Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Jones Linn and Washington counties.
- A United Way Volunteer Health Solutions Team identified ACEs as a "Breakthrough Area" that crosses all areas of our work within Education, Financial Stability and Health and is considered a root cause for many social conditions that United Way is trying to impact with its community investments;
 - An estimated 30% or \$1,811,382 is currently invested in health and human services that directly address ACEs indicators.
 - United Way is beginning to ask, "How do our current investments work together to create a thriving and resilient community?"
 - Have completed an initial Resource Map (modeled from Washington State's model of "Alignment for a Thriving Community").
- Researched best practice models from other communities on how to address ACEs.
- Conducted 10 presentations reaching over 100 service providers educating them on ACEs and the long-term effects;
 - Recognizes the key connection of Trauma Informed Care (TIC) in understanding and responding to the indicators of ACEs.
 - Starting to change service provider language of, "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?"

Observations

- Through the ACEs community presentations, more education is needed among schools and physicians about ACEs.
- Issues related to ACEs are being addressed separately by different community groups, although a lot of the same people attend multiple planning committees.
- There is a lack of vision on how to impact ACEs collectively.
- United Way has the ability to pull service providers and community stakeholders across a variety of service areas together to talk about how we can address ACEs collectively.

Next Steps

- Increase awareness of ACEs and their impact on health and wellbeing using a cross-system integration and community collaborative approach.
 - Hold Community Conversations - with service providers, community coalitions, and local/state government to educate and discuss system and policy strategies needed to address ACEs.
 - Build Cross-System Relationships – with schools, corrections, community health clinics, and public health to assess the issues of ACEs and how we can collectively find solutions.
 - Address ACEs across a lifespan – have conversations on the impact of Children, Adolescence, Families, Adults and Older Adults.
 - *Prevention and Early Intervention* - younger children who have a high ACE score highlights the need for increased support to vulnerable families to try and correct the path they are headed towards.
 - *Treatment and Management* - adults and older persons who have experienced trauma need to become more self-aware of how the experiences have shaped their life choices and behaviors. Increasing people's knowledge of their ACEs score empowers them to make better choices for their own health and the health of their children.