Adverse Childhood Experiences among Parenting Women in New Haven

Definitions and Data Sources

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences occurring before the age of 18 that an individual remembers as an adult. ACEs include three categories: abuse (emotional, physical, and sexual), neglect (emotional and physical), and household dysfunction (the mother being treated violently, substance use, mental illness, separation or divorce of parents, and incarceration). The New Haven Mental Health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership® has been conducting a needs assessment with New Haven parenting women since January of 2011. This assessment aims to better understand the needs of low-income parenting and pregnant women in New Haven, Connecticut. As of July 8th, 2015, 1,541 parenting women have completed the needs assessment and are the source of the data used to generate this report.

Demographic Characteristics of Parenting Women in New Haven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Group*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 years</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>Black or African American, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 years</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>White, Hispanic</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54 years</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>Black or African-American, Hispanic</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Own</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/Vocational School</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>Rent from public housing</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Graduate</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Live with family/friends</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Live in shelter/homeless</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There were 207 missing observations for this question
** There were 31 missing observations for this question
*** There were 894 missing observations for this question
**** There were 889 missing observations for this question
Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
Types of ACEs among Parenting Women in New Haven

The prevalence of the most commonly reported ACEs among parenting women in New Haven are:
- Emotional abuse, which was reported by 19.9% of women;
- An incarcerated family member, which was reported by 17.4% of women; and
- Substance use in the family, which was reported by 16.5% of women.

The overall prevalence of abuse in this sample is 26.9%, while the overall prevalence of household dysfunction is 39.3%.

Number of ACEs among Parenting Women in New Haven

Of parenting women in New Haven, Connecticut, **44.0% reported experiencing at least one ACE during childhood.**

Additionally, 7.2% of parenting women in New Haven reported experiencing 5-8 ACEs during childhood.

The experience of ACEs among parenting women in New Haven (44.0%) is lower than the experience of ACEs in Connecticut’s mixed gender sample (61.0%)³.

This difference is in keeping with current literature, which finds that women are less likely to experience traumatic events⁴. Although, when women do have these experiences, they are more likely to develop PTSD and other impairing symptoms of trauma, and have more enduring symptoms than men.⁴
Number of ACES and Health Outcomes/Risk Behaviors

Compared to parenting women in New Haven with no ACEs, parenting women with 3-8 ACEs are:
- 2.6 times more likely to report poor overall health;
- 2.8 times more likely to report poor emotional health;
- 3.4 times more likely to report struggling with quitting or cutting down on cigarettes;
- 2.6 times more likely to report not getting enough exercise.

Promising Practices

- The creation of trauma-informed systems, potentially created by targeting agencies for training that have regular contact with children who may have experienced an ACE.
- The development of trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive schools, which create a supportive environment for all students, and where trauma and its impact on students is acknowledged and addressed.
- The development of interventions to reduce maternal depression. For more information on this and the work of the MOMS Partnership®, please visit www.newhavenmomspartnership.org.
References