



Relias Spotlight Series

June 2020

Greetings Providers,

Welcome to the first summer edition of the Optum Idaho **Relias Spotlight Series**— a series devoted to providing you with access to **free, easily accessible, and CEU-eligible** online education about topics that are of most importance to behavioral health providers, like you, across the state.

What distinguishes a thriving, healthy adult with adaptive behaviors and thinking patterns from one with maladaptive behaviors and thinking patterns who struggles to keep a roof over their head and who struggles to keep their head high and their health up?

Though there are a variety of factors that may explain these differences, arguably the most important is an individual's childhood experiences. More specifically, we might say it's the extent of **Adverse Childhood Experiences** or ACEs in that person's life.

Let's break it down.

ADVERSE— meaning negative, rough, stressful, difficult, traumatic. These adverse events range from more personal events like physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect to more familial kinds of experiences like having a family member in jail, a family member diagnosed with a mental illness, a parent who’s an alcoholic, the absence of a parent due to death, divorce, or abandonment, or living in a household in which domestic violence occurs.

CHILDHOOD— meaning the adverse event took place before the child turned 18.

EXPERIENCES— meaning it is something the child faced. Witnessing violence towards siblings or parents may be as harmful as the experience of being the victim itself.

The fact of the matter is that childhood experiences matter.

The ACEs study— arguably one of the most important research studies in the public health field— revealed an astonishing link between childhood trauma and the development of adult social and emotional problems and chronic diseases. The more a person’s ACEs score increased, the more their risk for depression, violence, heart disease, lung cancer, autoimmune and other physical conditions did too.

If we can do even a little bit to prevent, assess, and treat ACEs, we can we can play a part in reducing the extent of negative experiences that youth experience and expand on the positive.

THE GOOD NEWS

As a provider, by understanding risk and protective factors (like friendships, role models, and social support) for ACEs, we can better understand why some things may trigger our clients and how others can serve as a mechanism of healing and self-care.

By understanding childhood trauma and how it affects the body and brain, we can begin to more deeply understand why our clients may not feel safe or comfortable or why they may exhibit challenging behaviors at certain times, and we can take steps to create a safe environment and relationship in which trauma can begin to heal.

Better yet, by equipping ourselves with the tools and awareness that inspires a trauma-informed perspective, we can learn ways to help our clients build resiliency, mitigate the impact of ACEs, and reduce the risk that our clients will grow into maladjusted, unhealthy older adults.

In [your Relias dashboard](#) is an array of courses (outlined below) designed to help you build your own skills in understanding, recognizing, preventing, and treating ACEs so that you can most effectively support clients in your practice. All courses are available completely for free and can be taken at your leisure during the month of June. Best of all— **many of these courses qualify for CEUs!**

Simply click on any of the links below to get started.

- [Attachment Disorders: Attachment and Trauma](#)
- [Attachment Disorders: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment](#)
- [Traumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents](#)
- [EBP Series: Adolescent Trauma Webinar](#)
- [EBP Series: Child Trauma Webinar](#)
- [EBP Series: Early Childhood Trauma Assessment](#)
- [EBP Series: Early Childhood Trauma Treatment](#)
- [EBP Series: Early Childhood Trauma Webinar](#)
- [Identifying and Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

Together, let's dive into what really matters... Let's use our knowledge, skills, and compassion to help one another. From all of us at Optum Idaho, thank you for all that you do for our members!

We wish you and your loved ones a safe and warm month of June,

The Optum Idaho Education and Training Team

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