

WASHINGTON STATE ACES & RESILIENCE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

FALL 2020 CONVENING
HARVEST REPORT



FALL 2020

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BACKGROUND ON THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Essentials for Childhood partnership is working toward the vision that all children in Washington State thrive in safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments. Essentials recognizes that preventing ACEs and reducing the impacts of trauma happens at many levels: policy, systems, community, organizations, and individuals.

A few years ago, Essentials was looking for ways to support and lift up community-based work and help connect it to the state. We heard from many people working in communities that they felt isolated and wanted a space where they could connect with peers, learn together and from each other. They missed the coordination that in the past the former Family Policy Council and later the ACEs Public Private Initiative had provided.

Essentials has hosted four in-person Community of Practice gatherings around the state starting in Tacoma in 2018. The gatherings create an opportunity to learn from peers and deeply engaged in the work of building resilience and reducing ACEs, whether they've been to all the gatherings or just one. At each location, we have highlighted some local work to start conversation.

We have also hosted about a dozen webinars since summer 2019. Webinars provide supplemental learning on research and practice for people who have attended our in-person gatherings. They also stand alone and engage people in the network who are unable to attend all day events. Webinar topics have often been suggested by needs and interests that bubble up in our events. They also highlight successful practices in our communities.

Information about the Community of Practice is available on our [webpage](#). You can also find recordings of webinars and this event on our [YouTube playlist](#).



Essentials for Childhood's vision is that all children in Washington State thrive in safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments. For more information on the ACEs and Resilience Community of Practice, contact:

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ACKNOWLEDGING PRIVILEGE & HISTORICAL HARM: LEARNING TOGETHER TO DREAM TOGETHER

All models are wrong - some are useful.

- The ACEs model is useful, but still warrants critique and improvement.
- We need to center and acknowledge all sources of trauma, not just the ones that fit within our paradigm.

The Garden Analogy

- We acknowledge that all plants need certain universal things: soil, sunlight, and nutrients. But some plants flourish under slightly different conditions.
- The gardener makes decisions about where to put the plants, direct water, resources, and energy.
- “Every community is perfectly designed to maintain the status quo” - Laura Porter, ACE Interface Co-Founder
- When we see inequities, acknowledge that some plants are flourishing while others are struggling - we must know that our garden was designed this way. We need to get under the soil and get at the root causes of what we’re seeing.

Who is the Gardener?

- Government or leaders, people with the power to decide, the power to act, and control over resources. Some of us may be gardeners in our communities.
- It’s dangerous when the gardener prefers 1 group - if the gardener watches tomatoes struggle while tending to the green beans, ignoring the plight of the tomatoes and designing the whole garden around the green beans to make sure they’re okay

[Allegories on Race and Racism | Camara Jones](#)

How do we shift paradigms?

- Keep pointing out the anomalies and ways the old paradigm has failed
- Speak louder, with assurance from the new paradigm, integrating new ideas
- Work with the active change agents, the vast majority of people who are open-minded

[Download Kody's whole presentation here.](#)



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BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARIES

Clark Co. K12 Efforts - Cyndie Meyer, Shane Gardner, Hayley Pickus

- Structured presentation, covering the Handle with Care Program which is a way law enforcement can let schools know when students have been involved in a law enforcement action. This sends a response protocol to best support students while still maintaining confidentiality. Another topic covered was a survey being sent out to public schools to assess the degree to which their teaching is trauma-informed. Some concerns discussed were about how to support kids that aren't yet entering into pre-education. Learn more at www.acesactionalliance.org

Juvenile Court HELPS Program - Ruhi Tufts

- The Juvenile court HELPS program ensures that kids going through this program are developing skills including communication, empathy, and boundary setting by using community based practices while still maintaining a trauma based lens. This program needs people of color to facilitate. Some of the ideas that this group came up with is to get connected with grant opportunities, Our Gems, bringing in other local counties, talking to local colleges, incorporating nutrition into the program, and connecting with BLM groups.

Latino Youth Leadership and COVID Rapid Response - Clark County Latino Youth Leadership - Diana Avalos Leos

- Diana Avalos Leos went over the Latino Youth Health Campaign, for taking action during Covid-19. The information we use can be used within other communities. They spent this time identifying some gaps they could work on. They want to increase their knowledge on younger children. One of the big take-aways is there is a huge gap in support for non-English speakers and communities of color. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done. Be part of the work by learning more on our website: <https://clarkcountylatinoyouthconference.com/>

BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARIES CONTINUED

Black Community Mobilization Efforts - Blair Hervey

- The Black Community Mobilization efforts has taken action with Women of Color. Meeting every week they are discussing microaggressions, meaningful self expression, creating a healing space, working on wellness, as well as leaning into discomfort. Tools and resources are needed, it's hard to “pick up the sword and go to war” so offering these tools could be very beneficial. Learn more at <https://pdxwomenofcolor.com> or [join the 2020 Ain't Cancelled Series](#)

Nature That Nurtures: Urban Indigenous Health - Juliet McGraw

- Discussing the mental and physical health benefits of getting outside. Covid-19 has also pushed us all to be more innovative. Including bringing many activities outside because outside is a safer place. The discussion led to transportation, money, lack of knowledge, and education on the importance of being outside. These are all things that need to be more accessible.

Measuring Resilience - Kody Russell

- Discussion focused on the current efforts to capture information about the types of experiences, resources, and relationships that help people flourish and disrupt the intergenerational transmission of trauma. We explored existing data, opportunities to capture new data and ended with a fabulous conversation about how to facilitate community healing, and creating experiences and opportunities for neighbors to support one another.

Open Discussion: What aren't we talking about? - Delena Meyer

- Covered topics including, how do we engage people that don't value our work? How to get people to tune into these Sciences? How do we take care of ourselves when so many people don't empathize? One of the big pieces that stood out, was bringing the reality that not every community effort is connected and supported.

BREAKOUT SPEAKERS RESOURCES

Breakout Speakers

Clark Co. K12 Efforts - Cyndie Meyer, Shane Gardner, Hayley Pickus
ACEs Action Alliance | Clark County Public Health
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acesactionalliance.org

Juvenile Court HELPS Program - Ruhi Tufts
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<https://clark.wa.gov/juvenile-court/community-supervision-probation-philosophy>

Latino COVID Rapid Response - Clark County Latino Youth Leadership - Diana Avalos Leos
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Black Community Mobilization Efforts - Blair Hervey
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Nature That Nurtures: Urban Indigenous Health - Juliet McGraw
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WORKPLACE WELLBEING: INTERSECTIONAL PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP, TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE, AND ANTI-RACISM/JEDI

The core principles for DEI, Trauma-informed Practice, and Leadership overlap.

Everyone, whether you have ACEs, privilege, abilities, disparities...ALL of us need these elements in our relationships. We see these core principles play out across domains at home, work, community, and even romantic relationships.

- **Security & Belonging:** Adlerian Theory posits that all misbehavior is seeking significance or belonging - everybody needs this. In the workplace and work relationships, if you don't have security and belonging, you cannot build the rest of these principles very well. You can garner pieces, but not the whole pie.
- **Choice & Empowerment:** Once we have security and belonging, we can begin trusting the choices we are given. People must trust that you will honor the choices you give them in order to truly feel empowered. We commonly give false choices when we intend to help people, but this erodes Security and Belonging. Choices can be given based on developmental needs.
- **Collaboration & Co-Creation:** This is where we can perform at our best - we are so secure in our relationships that we are able to take risks, communicate, and trust that there are adequate supports to cushion any failures.
- **Engagement & Communication:** Change happens in the middle - the meat of relationships happen with the three middle triangles (Collaboration, Engagement, Trust). Aligning our message with our intention requires receiver-focused communication.
- **Trust & Empathy:** We must trust in our relationships to feel secure enough to fail, and give empathy to ourselves and others as we move to crisis, growth, or conflict.
- **Growth & Support:** We must share what we have to the next group of people coming through our work. We must hold ourselves accountable to our relationships and keep growing.



Join the conversation at the [Intersection Monthly Series](#) or learn more about our work:

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PANELIST DISCUSSION SUMMARY

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WAYS THAT YOU SEE HISTORICAL TRAUMA IMPACTING HOW PEOPLE ENGAGE/SEEK MENTAL HEALTHCARE?

- Juliet: What neighborhood you live in, access to healthcare, poverty level, let's assume these things we are all aware of. What does it mean to get medical help? We have had so many collective experiences that therapy has further scared us. It has made trauma worse. Anyone from dominant cultural practice or trauma-informed therapy forgets that they are inherently a part of the oppressor. If we are in this day and age, as a caretaker if you can not sit with that weight then maybe you should take a step back. White cis normative therapists do not tend to understand that living in contemporary culture is trauma. You have to understand that these practices were being used to hurt BIPOC populations. There is a meme going around that says "What you don't seem to understand is that Native people are already living post-apocalyptic" ... Understanding that these communities you are serving are a worldview different. You have to try to look at it from BIPOC perspectives. If you're going to help someone you can't go "my lens is the lens". It's much different when your community has an ACE score, the Native community has an ace score, the Latinx community has an ACE score, the Queer community has an ACE score and right now we can agree the Black communities ACE score is off the charts. Remember that these individuals have an ACE score but their communities also have an ACE score.
- Aaron: Making an Icon of individualism has f****d us up. That is the way we are raised for sure as white people. That idea of individual achievement and perfection is still something I could buy into. Understanding trauma is to understand this lie that is sold. Models that give privilege contain individualism, there will always be a dismissal of the collective trauma experience. One of the pieces that have to do with not being able to sit with the weight, is that there is just a small amount of resilience, and it is built on domination over. My friend Karen says "Talk to me again about why white people are afraid of not knowing something". Why am I not so uncomfortable? The concept of whiteness is built all-knowing which is absolute nonsense functioning like reality.
- Robin: I think we should recognize that white people got jumped out of their culture. That's what happened. That's what coming to America ended up with, you lost that and got distilled down to whiteness instead of the indigenous places that you come from. That you each have cultures that want you to look into them. One of the things you are looking for is connection. Remaining curious can bring a sense of compassion. This is a time to connect with people. What does it mean to feel something? In the time of Covid-19 when you are losing lives and people are going through this hard time and feeling that resonates within my body and my community.

PANELIST DISCUSSION CONTINUED

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO STAY MINDFUL OF YOUR REACTIONS SO THAT YOU STAY CURIOUS AND KIND?

- Ruhi: It takes a certain level of self-reflection to recognize in your body and step out of yourself as an outside entity and realize whatever is being said is not about you as an individual and it is not for you to decide if it is the truth. When there is a difference of opinion giving someone the room to be heard also opens up an opportunity for you to listen and be heard. Those of us that fall into the category of White, Cis, Heterosexual, Male. We have benefited from it for generations and generations and it is well overdue that we used it for our countries and communities.
- Rick: Aaron had talked about neurodiversity. Adverse circuitry expression, We are not always looking at something as diseases or disorders. Sometimes you are just different. There is trauma when people don't understand that, when people make their own opinions on what is typical and what is normal. Looking into other issues like the pandemic, they are known as Adverse Catastrophic Events. Adverse Community Environments is when you live in a community that is struggling, you have a whole community dealing with that stress, those are some other ACE categories to bring to the table without taking anything away.
- Kody: I have heard this play out in our community because there is this white supremacy paradigm that if you add something you have to take another away. For example, there have been amazing community efforts to acknowledge the experience of a Native American man who lost his life and the push for the BLM movement at the same time and there was this conversation asking if we should be tackling these simultaneously. We need to make space for both of these things at the table.
- Robin: When Rick was talking about that feeling of a hyper-arousal in moment of stress, I couldn't get into zoom and my first response was "how do I fit into this white normative that I have been taught to do". The other part of me knows I can't control everything. My trauma and intergenerational trauma makes me think, what can I control in these situations. So I am going to borrow some of Kody's trust. There are all of these things we want to get involved with, and I feel like my ancestors didn't get a chance to tell these stories, and I have to hold on to these stories and share them when I need too. I like to say there is a reason Native Women always have a lot of big and heavy jewelry on because for me carrying the weight of these stories is a lot. At the end of the day when I am tired, I can take my jewelry off. I have stories and indigenous wisdom nuzzled into these. It's a way of holding these truths, but holding truths is heavy.

PANELIST DISCUSSION CONTINUED

THE INTERSECTION OF DIFFERENT SOURCES OF TOXIC STRESS? THE COLLECTED TRAUMA OF COVID AND OTHER TRAUMAS. HOW MIGHT UNDERSTANDING NEUROSCIENCE HELP US UNDERSTAND THESE DIFFERENT KINDS OF TRAUMA?

- Rick: When your body perceives a threat it jumps to respond, firing millions of neurons, something is a threat. Your brain doesn't know the difference. It just knows there is a threat to the whole body. Understanding this is your brain's reactions are linked, it brings us to a common understanding and a new awareness. When it comes down to our brain being more predictive and not reactive. So when you start understanding that we are predicting a traumatic event and their bodies are just trying to keep them safe. Then you see it from that new perspective. Using terms like defensive instead of "trying to keep themselves safe. Brings a humanity into a situation.
- Robin: Remain curious about people, once you named something you dismiss it. Use the curiosity that we have, if we lend that to people as opposed to moving on. We are giving a more empathic outlook by staying curious.

PANELIST DISCUSSION - HOPE

PANELIST, PLEASE TAKE OFF ANY HATS, ROLES, OR RESPONSIBILITIES AND BE JUST A HUMAN AND SHARE IF YOU CAN. WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE?

- Rick: What gives me hope is my fourteen-year-old son who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three and now he is in a mainstream school. He is kicking ass, he has A's and B's. Even hard things can be overcome and so if he can do it. Then I can overcome all the things I am enduring.
- Juliet: I am an anthropologist and archeologist, I got the opportunity to hear Jane Goodall speak and I had this same conversation with her. She said because humans are tool-using primates. We are solution-oriented and are evolutionarily designed for community and to be solution-oriented. That's what makes us human. Knowing I was loved 7 generations back into existence and my daughter and I will love 7 generations forward. We are hardwired to be a community and to solve problems.
- Robin: I believe the tide will come in and out, that the moon will come up and stars will shine and my love has the capacity to be like that tide. It will keep coming back and keeping brings things in and bringing things on. Our capacity to love is so vast and so great and even in moments of sadness. I still have space to love.
- Ruhi: First I would just say moments like these, with people like all of you, people doing the work giving me hope and inspiration. My own children are badass kids and have been through so much adversity. They are biracial and my oldest is trans and they are badass they aren't afraid of anything. I look to them for inspiration everyday.
- Aaron: This conversation gives me hope. We are bodies and our brains are apart of our bodies and I have hope every day from the way people find connection through our overlaps and our divergences. I am weird, I also take hope from weirdness things considered not normal. Look around for beautiful things. Go and Seek them.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS HOPED TO LEARN AND WANT TO SEE IN THE FUTURE

What Participants Were Looking to Learn:

- How do we promote resilience and support staff anxiety in the workplace...outside of referring to Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?
- I want to build knowledge between historical and systemic racism and the effects on our mental health.
- Cultural awareness to historical traumas
- Have a deeper understanding COVID-19, Racism, & ACEs Prevention efforts
- Promising ways to integrate equity and inclusion into our ACEs awareness work
- How do I tune in better to people outside of my own circle?
- Self-care to sustain the uncertainty and need to adapt AND challenge broken systems
- What are some of the best ways to engage with others around a Trauma Informed Approach so they feel confident in continuing a Trauma Informed Practice?
- How I can help calm my school; especially the teachers?
- How do we help folks (like school districts) understand the importance of trauma informed practices?
- What's happening in our amazing Community of Practice? Especially in Clark
- How do you implement mandatory trauma informed trainings in the workplace--being mindful that these conversations/trainings may not feel safe to all?
- How do I help my clients with acceptance of their ACEs?
- Supporting children in foster care who are living in racially and culturally diverse families in this time
- How do we support discovery AND healing of trauma and avoid re-traumatization?
- How do we engage young students in conversations of being culturally aware/sensitive?

What conversations would you like to see in the future?

- More intersections between historical trauma and how dominant culture in medical/counseling compounds this trauma.
- Sharing from California's efforts to integrate ACEs screening in medical practice
- How to form and utilize the power of a Children's Council in local communities to influence policy change
- As you mentioned, persons who are able to work from home vs persons who are deemed essential.
- How do we change facilities to become Trauma informed and motivated for change?

RESOURCES FOR CONTINUED LEARNING

Acknowledging Privilege and Historical Harm: Learning Together to Dream Together: Intersections PPT

- FunRetro – Exploring the Intersections
- FunRetro – Burning Questions

Measuring Resilience: BRFSS Proposal – PPT

- BRFSS Proposal - DRAFT document with questions

Links to documents referenced in the training:

Racism Metaphors:

Allegories on race and racism | Camara Jones | TEDxEmory

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNhcY6fTyBM>

Racism: There's Something in the Water

<https://preemptivelove.org/blog/racism-theres-something-in-the-water/>

On a Plate – Comic by Toby Morris

Manifestation of White Supremacy in Child Welfare:

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/project-areas/parentrepresentation/manifestation-of-white-supremacy-in-the-i/

HOW DID PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBE THE DAY?



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