

# Fact Sheet 2 (Part 2): New LENS



We need a new lens through which to view the impact of violence and trauma so that new perspectives and emerging evidence-based or evidence-informed practices may be integrated and incorporated into our work.



It is important for those implementing trauma-informed care to understand the impact violence and trauma has on the brain and lifespan development, particularly when coupled with early adverse childhood experiences.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Traumatic life experiences in the first 18 years of life can lead to serious impacts on later well-being, social function, health risks, disease burden, health care costs, and life expectancy. Adverse childhood experiences are common and powerfully influence health and well-being outcomes as adults.

## Generational Cycles

Behavior patterns and risk for violence and trauma can be “passed down” from parent to child through **powerful and intense role modeling**. When a child is terrified, or in a heightened state of arousal during an adverse event, “learning” how to stay safe and what is expected comes quickly.

## Trauma and Brain Development

According to Dr. Bruce Perry when trauma occurs in a very young child, there are significant and lasting changes in their brain development. As a result, the child’s understanding of what is normal becomes distorted. Chronic exposure to violence and trauma can result in the following changes in one’s brain functioning: (1) Frontal lobes shut down or decrease activity leading to instinctive responding; (2) high levels of irritability with increased sensitivity to “triggers”; and (3) ability to perceive new information decreases.

## Reducing the impact of Violence and Trauma

Fortunately, biology is not destiny. Despite adverse childhood experiences, generational cycles, and changes in brain development brought on by trauma, wholeness, health, and peace are still very much possible. The impact of violence and trauma may be overcome by applying a trauma informed approach.