

Adverse Childhood Experiences

I was recently asked, and delighted, to return to the MANCEP (Partnership of Manchester's Catholic High schools and Sixth Form Colleges) conference to deliver a workshop, this time on ACES.

The delivery was focused on understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences and what schools can do to improve outcomes for children with ACES. The workshop considered the research on Adverse Childhood Experiences, the long-term impact of these on children and what school staff can do to support children who have had, or are dealing with ACES currently.

We included techniques and tools that hopefully schools could take away, including an ACES register which seemed to be the big hit of the session.

The two key themes throughout this important workshop were how to build resilience in young people and the impact of the trusted adult, which was highlighted in last year's update to Keeping Children Safe in Education. We explored the ways in which we already build resilience through the '7 R's of Resilience' and how we, as school staff, could implement them in our every day practice. The discussions we had around this were amazing – people shared the subtle but impactful things they already do and we explored ways in which we could build resilience particularly in teenagers.

Additionally, we focused on what research tells us about the impact of having one trusted adult in a child's life. It found that building a relationship with a trusted adult during childhood can reduce the impact of ACES on mental and physical health long term. A child's proximity to a trusted adult is critical and can be the one fundamental component to changing a child's outcomes when they have ACES. This significant role is one that most school staff already fulfil but don't always realise the incredible impact they are having.

Whilst reflecting on the impact ACES can have on children and subsequently, adults, we made sure to remind ourselves that just because a child has ACES in their life it doesn't mean they are always destined for poor outcomes. There was plenty of discussion around the incredible children we work with, who display an enormous amount of resilience and with support, can and do reach their full potential.

The conference was an enjoyable and informative day – it was lovely to see some familiar faces, meet new ones and have positive, engaging and child-focused discussions.

To hear more about how to book a workshop on Adverse Childhood Experiences for your school, or for further information on our range of workshops on safeguarding topics, please contact us at info@oneeducation.co.uk

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