

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and resilience: risk and protective factors for mental illness throughout life

Resilience is the ability to overcome serious hardship. Factors that support resilience include personal skills, positive relationships, community support and cultural connections. The Welsh ACE and Resilience Survey asked adults about a range of such resilience resources as children and adults, their exposure to 11 ACEs and their physical and mental health.

How many adults reported each ACE in 2017?

Child maltreatment



Verbal abuse
20%



Physical abuse
16%



Sexual abuse
7%

Household ACEs



Parental separation
25%



Mental illness
18%



Domestic violence
17%

Neglect was measured for the first time in 2017. Most people who reported neglect had multiple ACEs.



Emotional neglect
7%



Physical neglect
4%



Alcohol abuse
13%

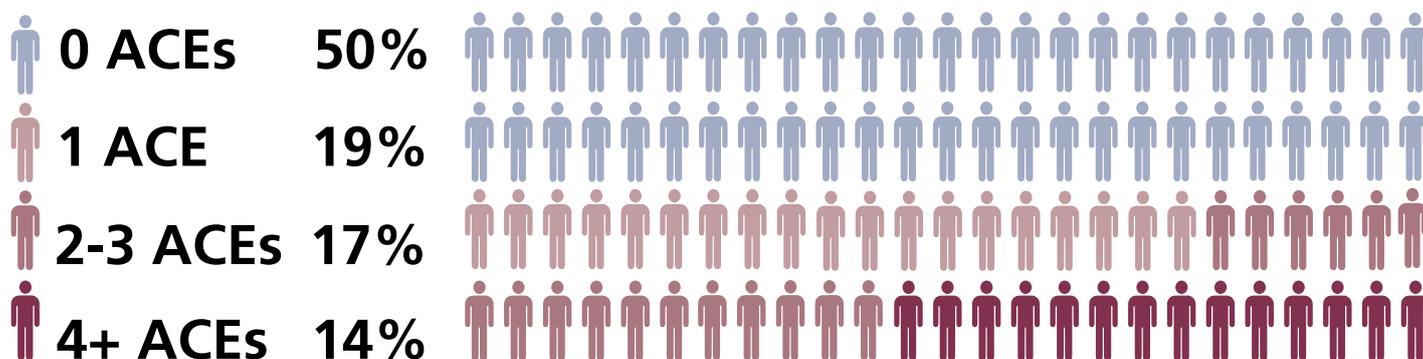


Drug abuse
6%



Incarceration
4%

For every 100 adults in Wales, 50 had at least one ACE and 14 had four or more



ACEs substantially increased risks of mental illness

1 in 3 adults reported having ever been treated for a mental illness

3.7

times more likely to **currently be receiving treatment for mental illness**

6.1

times more likely to **have ever received treatment for mental illness**

9.5

times more likely to **have ever felt suicidal or self-harmed**

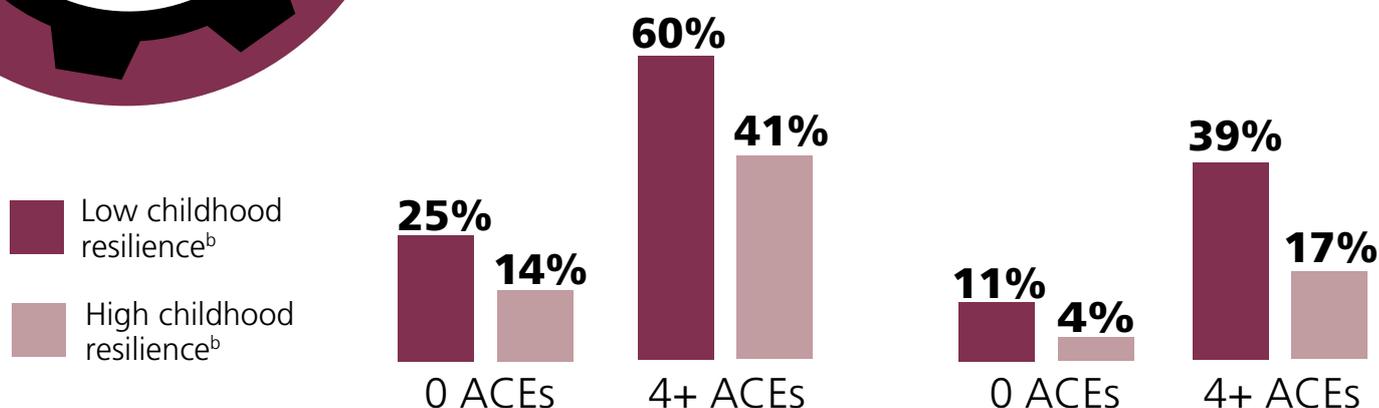
Compared with people with no ACEs, those with four or more were:

Those with more ACEs had fewer resilience resources as children and adults

Childhood resilience was associated with less mental illness across the life course in those both with and without ACEs

Percent^a ever treated for a mental illness

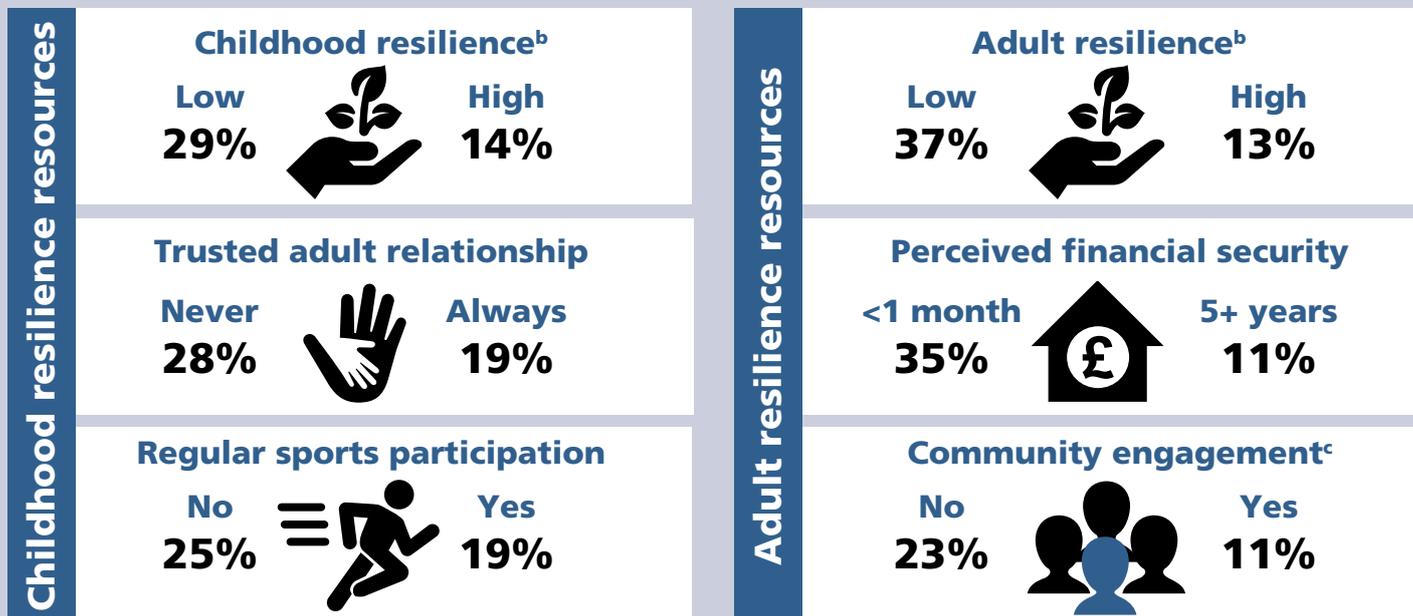
Percent^a having ever felt suicidal or self-harmed



Having some resilience resources more than halved risks of current mental illness in those with 4+ ACEs

Percent with current mental illness

Percent with current mental illness



The Welsh Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and Resilience Study interviewed approximately 2,500 adults (aged 18-69 years) across Wales in 2017. We are grateful to all those who voluntarily gave their time to participate. The information in this infographic is taken from *Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences: Report 1 - Mental illness*.

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^aAdjusted to sample demographics; ^bOverall resilience was measured using child and adult scales including personal, relationship, community and cultural resilience factors; ^cRegular participation in community groups or social clubs



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