



# HHSA NEWS

## Understanding the Impact of Childhood Adversity and the Importance of Self-Care

By: Tony Kildare

If you are working for Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency, it is more likely than not that this is “more than a job for you,” but is actually an extension of a personal commitment to dedicate your life to serving others. Within this context, it is absolutely vital that we all understand the significance and lasting impact of **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** that can impact the work of social workers, therapists, nurses and other professionals – many of whom faced adversity in their early years.



I’m choosing this topic because of my own personal journey of discovery about the impact of ACEs which has become increasingly profound over the past few years. The pandemic changed my entire world in many ways, including my relationship *with myself*. Sometimes life will tap, tap, tap you on the shoulder and cause you to question who you are and why you are the way you are, which is why understanding is everything.

### Understanding ACEs

ACEs encompass a wide range of stressful or traumatic events experienced during childhood, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, household dysfunction, and more. The [Adverse Childhood Experiences Study](#), conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente, has demonstrated a strong link between the number of ACEs a person experiences and their risk for numerous physical, mental, and behavioral health issues in adulthood. These can include chronic illnesses, mental health disorders, substance abuse, and even early mortality.

It's important to note that childhood adversity does not only affect the individual experiencing it; it ripples through families, communities, and [generations](#). Understanding ACEs helps us appreciate the root causes of many societal challenges and underscores the need for early intervention and support.

### The Helping Professions and ACEs

Professionals in the helping fields often find themselves working with individuals who have experienced ACEs. It is crucial for these professionals to be informed about ACEs and their implications, as it can significantly affect how they approach their work.

1. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Professionals can adopt [trauma-informed care](#) approaches, which emphasize safety, trust, and empowerment. Recognizing the impact of trauma and creating a supportive environment is key to helping individuals heal.
2. **Early Intervention:** Identifying ACEs early and providing appropriate interventions can mitigate their long-term effects. This includes intentional adaptations of the physical environment to minimize the potential for traumatic triggers and the utilization of trauma-informed modalities.
3. **Compassion and Empathy:** Understanding the effects of ACEs can help professionals approach their clients or students with greater compassion and empathy. Recognizing the signs of trauma can lead to more effective support and care.

### The Crucial Role of Self-Care

While the helping professions can be deeply rewarding, they can also be emotionally and mentally taxing. Professionals often place the well-being of their clients or students above their own, which can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. To provide the best care, self-care is not an option but a necessity. Here's why self-care is crucial for those in the helping professions:

1. **Preventing Burnout:** Self-care helps professionals manage stress and prevent burnout, ensuring they can continue to support others effectively.
2. **Maintaining Emotional Resilience:** Regular self-care activities, such as mindfulness, exercise, and hobbies, are essential for maintaining emotional resilience.
3. **Setting Boundaries:** Establishing healthy boundaries is vital to protect personal well-being and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
4. **Seeking Support:** Professionals should not hesitate to seek support themselves, whether through therapy, peer support, or supervision.
5. **Renewing Passion:** Self-care reignites passion for the helping professions and helps professionals remain enthusiastic about their work.

### What is your ACEs Score?

There are a number of online resources that can help you to identify your ACEs score, if you are interested, including [numberstory.org](#) – please be advised that this could create emotional discomfort or distress for you, and you should consider whether or not you are ready before completing the scoring activity. This website has a great deal of resources, including [crisis resources](#), if you need them. There is also a great deal of information about ACEs, what they mean, and how to begin the journey towards healing and recovery.

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## IMPORTANT UPDATES

### Yolo County Opioid Settlement Funds: Use of Funds Proposal

Yolo County will be receiving Opioid Settlement Funds for 6-18 years, depending on the settlement type. As explained in the guiding document ([LINK](#)) released by Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), allowable expenditures must include activities tied to the ending, reduction or lessening the effects of the opioid epidemic in communities and include prevention, intervention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. HHSA developed a use of funds proposal that prioritizes maintaining and expanding substance use abatement and treatment services. The amount of OSF received will vary each year; items in the FY 23/24 plan include partial funding of an Access Clinician, the Crisis Now Receiving Chairs and Sobering Center, Postmortem Xylazine Testing, expanded residential treatment services, as well as a small amount allocated to transport clients to and from treatment facilities. Planned expenditures for 23/24 were reported to DHCS in September and actual expenditures will be reported in September 2024.

## CALM APP CORNER

We might not fully know what everyone is going through but we can support those who are going through depression by educating ourselves to reduce stigma. If you are personally experiencing depression, remember that you aren't alone. The resources below can support you on your mental health journey. Here are some recommendations from Calm, our mental wellness partner, that you can do in a few minutes anytime, anywhere:



### Rethinking Depression Masterclass

- Learn the six science-backed strategies for overcoming the toxic elements of modern living so you can start living a more vibrant and joyful life.

### Distortions

- This 10-minute session on cognitive distortions will help you strengthen your relationship with yourself and challenge your negative thoughts.

### Limiting Identities

- This guided meditation includes a visualization exercise that'll help you be more compassionate to the different parts of who you are and the ebb and flow of your emotions.

Join one of the [Calm App Webinars](#) to learn how to get the most out of your Calm experience and bolster your overall well-being.

**Important Note:** If you require further assistance, please reach out to the Yolo County Employee Assistance Program at <https://insideyolo2.yolocounty.org/eap> or your doctor for the appropriate medical resources and support. You can also tap into Calm's depression resources [here](#).

## QUARTERLY RECAP: NEW OR REVISED AGENCY-WIDE POLICIES

HHSA continues to work on developing agency-wide policies and procedures to support the important work you all do. Here is a recap of the agency-wide policies and procedures implemented during the July – September 2023 quarter:



- [HHSA HR Support Requests and Tracking](#) – New policy developed to inform supervisors, managers, and directors how to request support from the HHSA HR team using a standardized form and process.

As a reminder, you can find ALL of HHSA's agency-wide policies and procedures on the [Policies and Procedures page](#), and the [Table of Contents](#) can help you quickly locate the policy you need. Thank you to all who contributed to the work on these policies and procedures! Keep an eye out for more HHSA policy and procedure implementation announcements in the upcoming quarter.

## LEAVE BALANCE REMINDER

As we approach the end of the calendar year, please be sure to check your leave balances for carryover accruals. If you have carryover accruals, please map out a plan with your manager to use them by December 31, 2023 and ensure ample coverage. Thank you in advance.

## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL MILK DRIVE

In honor of November's Prematurity Awareness Month and November 17 as World Prematurity Day, the Yolo County Breastfeeding Coalition organized its annual Human Milk Drive from [November 29 to 30 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.](#) Thank you to the Welcome Baby Program and Sutter Davis Hospital for agreeing to host the milk drive benefiting the San Jose Mothers Milk Bank this year.

We hope you and the community will support our efforts to help premature babies. The event aims to raise awareness about the need for human milk donations and the importance of human milk banks for sick or premature infants. In the United States, 1 of every 8 babies is born prematurely. Feeding preemies breast milk has become a standard of care; studies have proven that premature babies fed breast milk have several neurological and developmental advantages. While mother's milk is always the best and preferred feeding option for all infants, there are cases in which a mother struggles to produce enough milk. This is especially true for mothers of premature babies. These moms often have an insufficient volume of milk. Donor milk is the next best option. For more information about the donation process, please visit <https://mothersmilk.org/donate-milk/> or call 1-877-375-6645. **Staff Contact:** Lizeth Betancourt, IBCLC, Breastfeeding Coordinator, [Lizeth.betancourt@yolocounty.org](mailto:Lizeth.betancourt@yolocounty.org)



PERFORMANCE & PROCESS MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHT

**PLEASE** Rescue Me from this Meeting!: *How the Unsung Heroes of Office Productivity Save Us from the "Titanic" of all Meetings*

In the agency jungle, two silent warriors champion productivity, deflect chaos, and ensure communication continuity – the uncelebrated **meeting agenda** and its trusty sidekick, the **meeting minutes**. Often overlooked, they're the **unsung heroes** maintaining order in the wilderness of back-to-back-to-back meetings and ominous deadlines.

Imagine, if you will, an office meeting without an agenda. It's akin to a ship without a compass, meandering through the waves of unstructured conversation, crashing into icebergs of tangential topics (think Titanic), and getting ensnared in the seaweed of unnecessary details. The agenda, that beacon of hope, shines its light, guiding discussions along a clear, concise path, ensuring every precious moment is a step towards the destination of decision-making and problem-solving. It's the superhero cape that empowers meeting facilitators to soar, keeping dialogues aloft and on course, with the strength of bullet points and the speed of succinctness.

However, what's a hero without its reliable partner? Enter meeting minutes, the Robin to every agenda's Batman. If the agenda forecasts the journey, the minutes are the cartographers, mapping the terrain traversed, marking X's where decisions were unearthed, and sketching the route to future action items. In the aftermath of the meeting battlefield, amidst fallen paper stacks and exhausted whiteboards, the minutes emerge as the scribe of triumphs, the chronicler of challenges, and the harbinger of follow-ups. Minutes are your portal to the past and ensure continuity and accountability when memory falters.

Meeting agendas and minutes in their humble, text-laden glory, are the guardians of productivity and purposeful dialogue. In an era where time is a scarce commodity, their role in maximizing it is not just administrative, but heroic. So, at your next meeting, as you glance at the agenda or scribble those minutes, give a silent nod to these caped crusaders of the office environment. They might just save your day, one bullet point at a time.

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.wildapricot.com/blog/how-to-write-meeting-minutes>
- <https://ipo.info.yorku.ca/tool-and-tips/tip-sheet-12-minute-taking-tips-and-techniques/>
- <https://helpjuice.com/blog/meeting-agenda>
- <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-a-meeting-agenda>



"Starting here, each person whisper to your neighbor the purpose of this meeting and we'll see what we end up with."

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WORD OF THE MONTH



Quality Improvement  
Word of the Month

Gantt Chart

DEFINITION

A Gantt chart is a project management tool used to outline the project's tasks, schedule, and dependencies. Gantt charts are useful for mapping out the complete timeline of your project, tracking and reporting its progress, and keeping in mind all the moving parts if delays or rescheduling needs to happen.

IN A SENTENCE

"Our vendor let us know that their data report will be delayed this month. I'll change the finish date for this task on our **Gantt chart** and then check if any other project tasks need to be rescheduled. "

WOTM IN ACTION

How to Use It:

1. Using a spreadsheet program, list your project tasks on the leftmost column.
2. Use the next columns to input your Start Date, End Date, and Duration for each task.
3. Use additional columns to visually represent the timeline for each task. Each cell should equal one time unit, such as one day, one week, or one month.
4. If desired, use arrows to link tasks that depend on each other, such as when one task cannot start until another one finishes. This way, if a predecessor task gets delayed or rescheduled, you will know that you need to delay or reschedule the linked tasks as well.



Smartsheet is an easy web-based app for creating Gantt charts, but Excel or even paper and pen work great too!