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SYNC seeks to reduce childhood trauma

June 3, 2022 Mount Airy News Top Stories 0

By Ryan Kelly ryan.kelly@mtairynews.com



STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS FOR NORTH CAROLINA CHILDREN

Strengthening Systems for North Carolina Children (SYNC) is being coordinated by the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center and the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.



The CDC reports that reducing adverse childhood experiences has a dramatic effect on health later in life.

Surry County has the honor of having been selected as the pilot for a new program that is designed to support communities in furthering an understanding of how public

WEATHER

Mount Airy, NC 27030

Weather	Wind	Rain	Sun	Moo
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79.5 °F
Decreasing Clouds

69 °F 94 °F

71 96 TUE	70 96 WED	68 93 THU
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9:38 AM Mon Jun 13 Willy

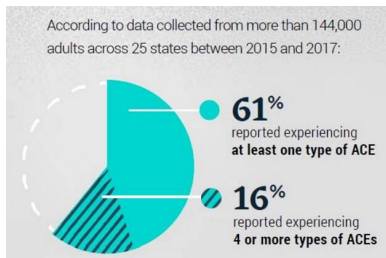
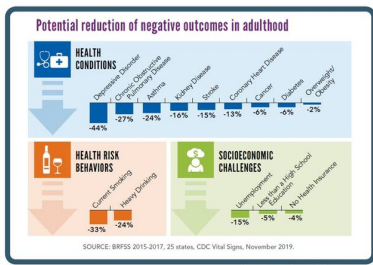
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Over 61% of those surveyed by the CDC reported having at least one adverse childhood experience like death in the family, domestic violence, poverty, neglect, or substance abuse issues.

systems and structures influence adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). This understanding is meant to help identify ways to strengthen systems and build community resilience to prevent such experiences.

Strengthening Systems for North Carolina Children (SYNC) is a training opportunity that is being coordinated by the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center and the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.

The idea was to bring into the same room people from around the area who would not traditionally be working on issues such as these. NCDHHS and UNC are facilitating along with stakeholders from Surry County to find ways to change outcomes in lives of children and families.

There were three main categories under which adverse childhood experiences fell abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. SYNC team members are trying to find ways to intervene in repeating cycles like substance abuse, financial insecurity, and incarceration that can have long term negative impact on children.

The pilot team representing Surry County is made up of a mixture of health professionals, county employees, representatives from local organizations with a vested interest in like Surry Friends of Youth or Shepherd's House and members of the community at large.

Community teams participated in workshops during which they learned how to use a tool called causal loop diagramming to create a map of systems that may influence ACEs in their community. The causal loop looks at the relationship between reinforcing patterns versus ones that try to bring balance to systems.

They used this map to begin identifying key points of the system they will target to build resistance to and mitigation of ACEs. The purpose of this diagram is to help think through ways to strengthen systems that contribute to protective factors against these childhood experiences and disrupt systems that contribute to risk factors for experiencing such trauma.

The map can help guide questions like: what are the common factors that continue to drive people to substance abuse? Are there flaws in the systems

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Date	Race/Location	Winner
Jun.05	Enjoy Illinois 300 presented by TicketSmarter / World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway	Joey Logano
Jun.12	Toyota / Save Mart 350 / Sonoma Raceway	Daniel Suarez
Jun.26	Ally 400 / Nashville Superspeedway	NBC
Jul.03	Kwik Trip 250 presented by JOCKEY Made	USA

that perpetuate the repeating of outcomes across generations? The systems model would look at the justice system and whether there needs to be a new approach like drug courts and juvenile courts to lower the population in the jails, for example.

After completion of the workshops, teams will have the skills needed to update their map and keep their prevention work moving forward. Teams will also receive one year of technical assistance after completion of the workshops so that when the training session is over, the action plan is not lost into the wind.

One of the main goals is to create a shared language for this community to approach ACEs and their mitigation. By using the “systems lens” to see how dynamic and complex systems like criminal justice or education can impact childhood experiences, SYNC participants will be able to identify common root causes in Surry County. Furthermore, those root causes will then need to be prioritized to see where the most impact can be made.

The Surry County group chose a variety of root causes with the most votes going to substance abuse, access to healthcare (including mental health), and economic factors. Knowing what the root cause was may allow them to find weak spots, places where a little effort from a third party could alter someone’s trajectory.

Food insecurity, for example, may be one of the root causes leading to Shelly not doing well in school. Her empty stomach makes paying attention in class hard and her grades have now suffered. Her grades were so poor, she got held back a year which led to frustration, and she dropped out.

If there had been in intervention along the way, if a third-party community group, church group or county agency had given her family some food assistance, she would have paid better attention, stayed in school, and from there she would be on a new path.

Groups with higher risk for the adverse childhood experiences include multi-racial, Black and Hispanic; those with less than a high school education; or who are below the poverty line; are unemployed; and those who identify as LGBT.

SYNC cites a Harvard study that “toxic stress weakens the architecture of the developing brain leading to long term consequences for learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.”

“The consequences of ACEs can be passed down from one generation to the next if children don’t have protective buffers like positive childhood experiences or a caring adult in their lives,” a CDC report concurred.

The CDC also said preventing ACEs can help children and adults thrive and potentially lower conditions like depression while improving education and

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