



NEW MEXICO FIRST
People. Ideas. Progress.

New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter

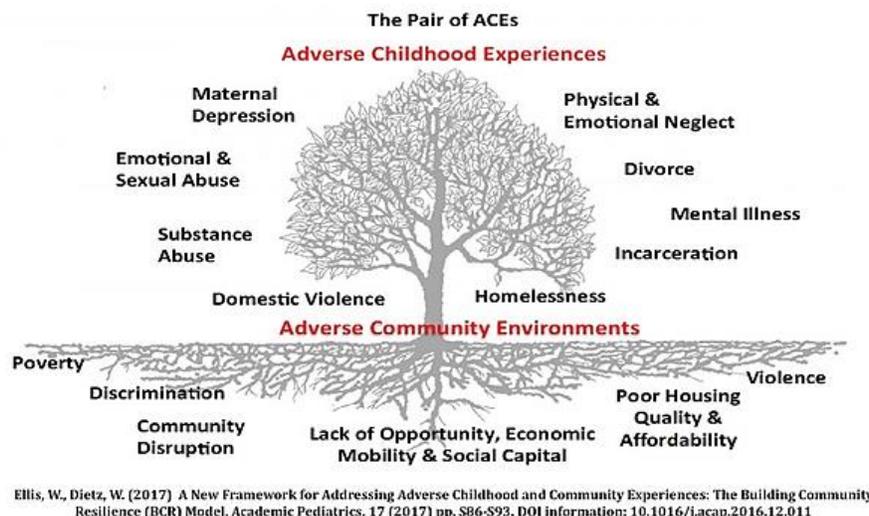
Stay Informed and Engaged

August 24, 2020



New COVID-19 Resource Page

Grant County residents have access to a new website, the [Grant County Coronavirus Update](#), to help find and give help during the COVID-19 pandemic. The page has links to a broad range of resources and updates, including a link to a weekly podcast from the [Gila/Mimbres Community Radio](#). Check it out and [let us know](#) how your county or community is helping to keep residents up to date with timely and helpful news.



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur during the first 18 years of life. [The original ACE study](#), conducted among adults from 1995 to 1997, and [decades of research](#) since have linked negative childhood experiences to lifelong negative health and social outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has raised concerns about ACEs because it has dramatically transformed life for children and their families, creating new stressors or exacerbating preexisting ones.

ACEs can include neglect; physical, emotional and sexual abuse; parental separation, substance misuse, incarceration, violence and mental illness; and social factors such as economic hardship, homelessness and discrimination. The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely he or she is [to develop](#) chronic health conditions and risky behaviors. These often lead to negative outcomes later in life, such as reduced educational and occupational achievement, heart disease, obesity, depression, substance misuse and suicide.

Yet ACEs can be prevented or their effect on a child's future can be ameliorated by the presence of **protective factors**. Supporting families or individuals during times of stress is a key protective factor. Programs like home visiting and support groups that for new parents or grandparents who suddenly take on the care of grandchildren are providing this kind of support across the state. Directly addressing the causes of familial stress is also necessary. Stable and safe housing, family-friendly and family-wage employment, high quality childcare, schools and after school programs that bring supportive adults into children's lives, and access to other health and social services can also prevent and protect against ACEs.

Adverse Community Experiences

Adverse community experiences provide the context for adverse childhood experiences. The [Building Community Resilience Model](#) reminds us of this connection. "When families live in communities in which food insecurity, unaffordable housing, unsafe neighborhoods, unemployment, inadequate educational systems, and social justice issues are common, the result is an environment in which ACEs abound, needed social supports are scarce, and toxic stress results." The solutions to ACEs lie in building strong, resilient communities.

Building Community Resilience identifies four community essentials for resilience: (1) sustainable economic development that benefits the entire community; (2) strong social networks that include and support community members; (3) effective communication and exchange of information between residents and the organizations that are designed to serve them; (4) effective community support for civic engagement and individual and collective empowerment. "Ultimately, children can become resilient when the communities in which they live are home to resilient adults." [Learn more](#) about the Building Community Resilience

Collaborative.

In New Mexico, community networks of support have been emerging across the state for some time. Often, however, these are pilot projects that are only now beginning to gain statewide attention and support. These include the [Pathways Program](#), supported by UNM's Office for Community Health and Bernalillo County, the [Connect Network](#) supported by Santa Fe County, and the persistent efforts of the chronically underfunded [county and tribal health councils](#). Most recently, the NM legislature awarded a \$1 million grant to fund the [Anna Age 8 Institute](#), which now has the financial and political support to scale these efforts statewide.



Addressing Historical Trauma and Resilience

Effectively addressing trauma and resilience cannot happen without an understanding of our national and state histories of community trauma and

resilience. Historical trauma refers to a collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance. In the past several decades, the term has been applied to numerous colonized indigenous groups, African Americans, Japanese American survivors of internment camps, Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and other communities that share a history of oppression, victimization, or massive group trauma. Research on [epigenetics](#) has demonstrated that the effects of the trauma on the parents can be passed down to subsequent generations, beginning in utero and reinforced by continuing expressions and reminders of oppression and trauma.

Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, a professor at UNM, applied the concept of historical trauma to indigenous communities in the 1980s and continues to help communities understand and heal from historical trauma. Her website, Healing Collective Trauma, provides a process for [healing collective trauma](#). First, confront the historical trauma. Second, understand the trauma, Third, release the pain of historical trauma. Fourth, transcend the trauma. It's important to understand that this is an effort that must be undertaken by the entire community, including those who were wounded by the historical trauma, and those who are learning from the wounded.

Storytelling through public narratives is a powerful way of implementing this four-fold approach. Stories tell us who we are, where we came from, and how we can move forward. A [substantial body of research](#) shows a connection between public narratives of trauma and individual and community health. The most effective stories are those that encompass oppression and resistance, wounding and resilience.

*History, despite its wrenching pain
Cannot be unlived, but if faced with
Courage, need not be lived again.*

Dr. Maya Angelou, [On the Pulse of Morning](#)



Update on Food

Interest in gardening has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic as we seem both more focused on ensuring access to nourishing food, and ways to direct our energy. Some of us find time at home both more available and often more stressful. Gardening can have positive impacts on body, mind and spirit.

To help provide information and to answer questions of gardeners, several county Extension agents and state specialists will present a free webinar “Ready, Set ...Grow: Online Gardening Series.” The twice-monthly webinar will be held at 3:00 PM the first and third Wednesday of each month beginning on September 2. For more information, and to register for the webinar series, visit the [NMSU Extension website](#).

Food Desert or Food Apartheid?

“Issues of economic inequality and systemic racism permeate our national food system.” Karen Washington, founder of [Black Urban Growers](#), has been fighting for food justice for three decades, bringing her healthcare experience as a physical therapist to bear. [In this interview](#), she explains why she is opposed to the expression “food deserts,” which she says is an “outsider term” that evokes images of desolate places rather than places with enormous potential. “Food apartheid looks at the whole food system, along with race, geography, faith and economics ... If you bring a supermarket in, it’s not going to change the problem. When we say ‘food apartheid,’ the real conversation can begin.”



Update on Family

Our children in the foster care system come burdened with the traumas that resulted in foster care placement, which, in itself, is an adverse childhood experience. When placed into foster care, children leave behind their family, friends, neighbors, teachers and other familiar supports and surroundings. A vast body of research documents the adverse, long-term effects of foster care placement.

If children are removed from their homes, relatives are the preferred placement, because this at least maintains the children's connections with their families and their culture. This option does, however, place new and unfamiliar responsibilities on the relatives who assume responsibility for the children's physical and emotional health, education, housing, and safety. Often these relatives lack clear legal standing to parent.

[Southwest Family Guidance Center and Institute](#), in collaboration with CYFD, is providing a coordinated and comprehensive array of services for kinship caregivers in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Rio Arriba Counties. The goals are to increase family stability, keep children connected to family and culture, and reduce the long-term effects of childhood trauma. The program also provides access to a range of legal support services for caregivers in these families.

[Learn More](#)

Help New Mexico Get Counted!

Tools for Census Ambassadors



Thank you for being a Census Ambassador with us.

Right now, New Mexico is at risk of an under-count, but we have an opportunity to change that today. And there really is no time to spare — the Census Bureau changed the deadline to **September 30** (a full month earlier than planned).

Click here to get a checklist of the simple actions we're asking all Census Ambassadors to do. *Count all New Mexicans, because all New Mexicans count!*

Voting Countdown

36

First Presidential Debate
September 29, 2020

54

First Day of Early Voting
At Various Locations
October 17, 2020

43

Early Voting Available ONLY at
County Clerk's Offices Around NM
October 6, 2020

57

Last Day to Apply for Absentee Ballot
Applications Available NOW
October 20, 2020

43

Deadline to Register to Vote
October 6, 2020

71

ELECTION DAY
November 3, 2020

[Watch the Debates](#)

[Register to Vote](#)

Debate Watch Party

As we approach the Presidential Election, 4 debates will be held at the national level: 3 Presidential Debates and 1 Vice Presidential Debate. Our organization will be hosting the New Mexico First: Debate Watch Party, a facilitated cross-partisan virtual discussion series dedicated to sharing perspectives and observations of the debates! Be a part of these important statewide discussions and register here: <https://nmfdebatewatch.eventbrite.com>

Please help us to spread the word and share our posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter! All New Mexicans are welcome to join these discussions!

Tip for Civic Engagement

When communities vigorously embrace civic engagement in an inclusive way, not only are we able to co-create relationships, communities, and systems that are more healthy and just, we are also better able to create repair when harm occurs. A healthy democracy isn't the absence of conflict, and competing needs and interests. Rather, democracy is a shared commitment to non-violent approaches to working through these differences, finding common ground, and recognizing the value of dissent. A

healthy democracy provides a mechanism to advance ideas to better meet individual and community needs. In the absence of inclusion, people may not understand how a decision hurts a community that was not engaged in the decision-making process. Moreover, in the absence of inclusion and relationship-

based approaches, someone could be hurt by a decision, and the need to make it right wouldn't be considered, unless a conflict escalated. In the same way, we need to build resilience, and reduce toxic stress and trauma at the individual, family, and systemic levels. The best place to start is by making sure that a broad group of stakeholders with diverse interests and those most impacted by a policy are part of the problem-solving and decision-making.

This section is authored by Lilly Irvin-Vitela, President and Executive Director of New Mexico First. She invites you to connect! Email her at lilly@nmfirst.org.

[Click Here to Download Previous Newsletters](#)

Our Mission. Our Values.

Our Mission

To be a catalyst for positive change by engaging citizens in policy and enabling action.

Our Core Values

Meaningfully engaging New Mexicans in public policy; Striving for and respecting consensus; Pursuing and respecting diverse points of views; Ensuring inclusion and transparency; Rising above partisan politics; Changing policy to improve people's lives; Creating an informed citizenry that is powerfully motivated; Reaching out statewide including rural and tribal communities; Partnering with others; Promoting civility and Democracy at its best!

[Donate to New Mexico First](#)

Did this email get forwarded to you and you want to join our mailing list? [Click here](#) to join our mailing list.



[Share](#)



[Tweet](#)



[Website](#)

Copyright © 2020 New Mexico First, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

P.O. Box 56549, Albuquerque, New Mexico, United States, 87187

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [unsubscribe from this list](#).