

Testimony - 10/12/17

Thank you so much for this opportunity. I wish to dedicate my testimony to my friend Richard and my mother, who were both casualties of Adverse Childhood Events.

My name is Ryan Lane, and I have an ACEs score of 5.

I wish to present to you a brief history of my trauma, and my recovery.

My trauma:

In my adult life, about 3 years ago, I began to have resurfacing memories of my early trauma. The moment I was remembering was of my father in a rage, physically abusing me. In my memory, I am perhaps 3 or 4 years old. I then lived with him until the age of 16 when he left my mother. In that time, my relationship with my father was punctuated with unmet desires to be close to and accepted **by** him, and a terror **of** him. In my ongoing relationship with him, he continued his emotional and physical abuse, usually in a rage. This led me to become small, unseen, and frozen; ie, a target for bullying in my junior high and high school years.

I was suicidal, off and on, in 6th and 7th grade. No one knew as I had no one to tell, nor was I led to believe that, for the most part, I would be worth saving. I was not able to advocate for myself. In high school, after my parents divorce, I put a knife in my arm in a fit of sorrow. I told my mother, who took the knife away. No further action was taken, or discussion had.

My mother was good hearted, but wrought with grief at the suicide of her own father when I was 5, and struggling with her own lifelong depression and addiction issues. When I was 16, she unsuccessfully attempted suicide. She lived until her addiction issues caught up with her in the form of a heart attack. She was 52. I was 23.

Since the traumatic memories of my childhood have resurfaced, my ongoing symptoms I've had **since** childhood have grown tenfold. I experience weekly, sometimes daily panic attacks. I suffer from crippling depression and dissociation, and an almost constant low grade paranoia and hyperarousal. This has caused issues with my abilities to perform at my top capacity with my work, and has caused tremendous strife in my own home. My wife is simply amazing in her ability to love me through this. And, based on my knowledge of trauma and adverse childhood events, I anticipate health problems as I approach middle age.

So, given all of this: why am I still here? **How** am I still here?

## My Recovery:

My resources as a child were my mother, who, amongst her own confusion, openly loved, nurtured, and cherished me and the things I loved. My loves: karate, which introduced me to meditation, controlled violence, and exercise. Music, which allowed me to express these emotions I couldn't begin to understand as a child. Comic books, which showed me how victims can become heroes. And my friends, a group of people who loved me no matter what.

I also started therapy at the age of 17, mostly around resolving my parents' divorce. This stoked my desire towards becoming a counselor, which opened up into a 17 year stint as a mental health practitioner in a wide variety of settings.

About 6 months ago, I would say I officially entered into mental health recovery after checking myself in the emergency room during a mental health crisis, and spending some time in an inpatient facility. This led to clarity around the intensity of my trauma, and the profundity of my recovery.

## My Current Recovery:

In the midst of my current symptomatology, and based on my experience as a clinician, I have formed my own community of care. I found a trauma therapist whom I see weekly. I also attend a weekly treatment group which she facilitates, and a biweekly checkin and meditation group. I am an avid practitioner of martial arts and meditation, and exercise intensely 3 times a week. I eat well, get 8 hours of sleep, and take my meds. I have found sharing my story healing, including using my experiences as a survivor and clinician, as well as my love of superheroes, and presenting a talk based on the heroic journey of recovery at comic book conventions. I have reached out and made new friends and connections who understand my journey. I have informed my own primary care physician of my ACEs score and what that means. I have severed ties with negative individuals in my life, including my father. I take my time, one day at a time, sometimes one **moment** at a time.

I have been able to do this for myself because of my training. With a decade and a half of experience with addictions and mental health, I was able to see what someone like me would need. It doesn't have to be this way.

I know that I need to remain physically active for my brain chemistry, as well as my ability to remain in the present. I know meditation supports my brain, as well. I know the types of therapy and therapeutic relationships that are conducive to trauma recovery. I know that one of the foremost mitigating factors for ACEs, is two or more trusting relationships. Everyone else should know these things, too.

Also, trauma propagates itself. My parents were trauma survivors. Looking at my family genogram, their parents were survivors. It is a generational issue. I am doing everything I can to keep my daughters ACEs score as low as possible.

With my unique perspective as a clinician of 17 years, a trauma survivor, and currently as a mid-level bureaucrat in state government, I can't advocate enough for what I have heard regarding this Act. Given the complexity of this issue and how many diseases, both physical and mental, it touches, I would also advocate for a high level coordinator for this issue.

I advocate for these things for two reasons:

1. It's the right thing to do. It is the moral and ethical choice, everytime, to support a child in need.
2. From my experience in state government; it is cost effective. If a teacher, family member, community member, clergy member, etc...would have intervened in my family at an early age, the potentiality of my own suffering and the intensity of my treatment would be greatly reduced.

The fact that I am standing up here today, giving my story and perspective, is a testament to so many different people in my life, and I thank you for the opportunity to share.

