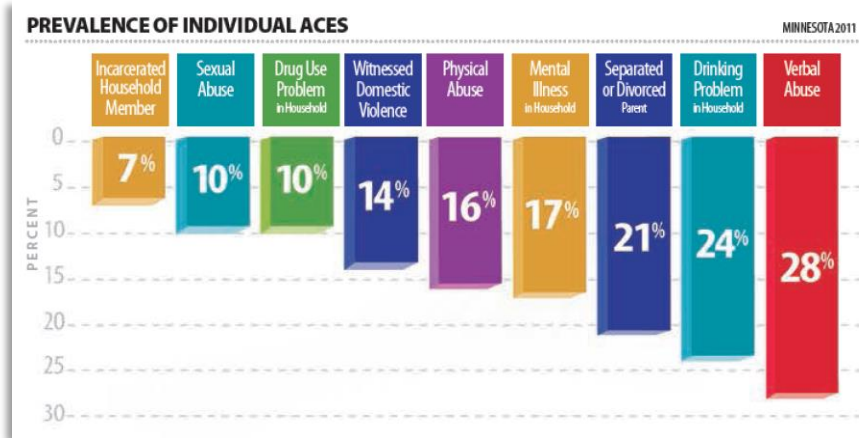


There is an observable increase in the challenging behavior of children and adolescents

as reported by teachers, medical and mental health professionals, and there are reasons why.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) report states that 28% of respondents report experienced verbal abuse while 16% report physical abuse and 10% sexual abuse.



The majority of children and youth in our public schools live in poverty where they are likely to experience:

- Greater exposure to health risks and poor health care
- Less opportunity for proper nutrition and sleep,
- Reduced exposure to pre-academic activities

In 2000, the Surgeon General reported that 1 in 5 children and youth in the U.S. has a diagnosable mental health disorder. The national comorbidity study stated in 2005 that the average age on onset for mental health disorders was 11 years.

A look at these three indicators, along with general adolescent development and now significant medical and social learning issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, helps professionals recognize that behavioral instability is on the rise.

Our children and adolescents are anxious and afraid, and our response to their fears and concerns will greatly influence the safety that they experience as well as the behaviors that they exhibit. When caregivers:

- Understand the complex nature of the situation
- Recognize their own role in the process, and
- Have and use consistent strategies for de-escalation

The potential for creating safety for the individual and in the environment increases dramatically.

Pro-ACT, Inc. offers several training options for foster parents, most notably:

- 1-day/7-hour workshop with 2 follow-up sessions for review and skill development
- Series of 8, 90-minute-2-hour enhancement sessions on various specific topics

Following is an outline for a proposed 1-day / 7-hour workshop that provides an overview of the Pro-ACT de-escalation strategies. The intent of this workshop is to provide participants with insight and information that will help them to:

- increase the overall safety in their home and work environments;
- better understand and manager their behavior and influence in a potentially dangerous situation;
- improve planning and observation;
- recognize the impact of trauma on behavior;
- develop a personal plan for self-control;
- establish a clear understanding of the assault cycle; and
- promote and use identified strategies for reducing escalation behavior.

Workshop Outline

Welcome and objective identification. This introduction will identify Pro-ACT as a Principle-based program an explain what that means from a practical perspective. Because Pro-ACT teaches a problem-solving framework linked with a process of continuous assessment, the combination of assessment and problem-solving expands response options beyond the limitations of specific techniques. This process allows foster parents and other responsible individuals to address the foster child’s needs as well as the circumstance of the crisis.

Pro-ACT de-escalation training summary and review. Pro-ACT de-escalation training is contained in the first day of the larger Pro-ACT certification training. Pro-ACT Principle are presented in chapters of the Pro-ACT curriculum. Each chapter identifies key questions which create the problem-solving framework that follows. The Principles and Chapters below make up the de-escalation workshop.

Introduction: Foundation Principles

- Is the behavior dangerous?

Chapter 1: Purpose

- What is the purpose of my work and the needs of my clients?

Chapter 2: Professionalism

- Am I suited for the demands of this job?

Chapter 3: Preparation

- Can I reduce avoidable risks considering attire, mobility, trauma history, observational strategies and my own self-control?

Chapter 4: Stress and the Assault Cycle

- Can I recognize when the behaviors I observe indicate movement into the assault cycle?

Chapter 5: Identifying Triggers & Alternatives

- Can I identify possible triggers for violence and offer alternative responses that reduce risk?

The Foster Parent Enhancement series is an 8-session series is scheduled in coordination with an agency. Each discussion is a stand-alone session, allowing participants to attend as their schedules, needs, and interests allow. Following is a list of topics that may be included in the series.

- **Patience Pays.** A review of strategies for helping caregivers practice patience and reduce conflict.
- **Understanding Trauma-informed Care.** This discussion will help caregivers connect the dots between the trauma and care, illustrating the ways in which Pro-ACT Principles can create better, safer, and more respectful interactions between foster parents and foster children. Participants will learn how understanding trauma histories can result in interactions that are less trauma-inducing or triggering.
- **The Impact of Implicit Bias.** it's important to care about everyone, equally. That's why acknowledging biases feels wrong; it feels unprofessional and uncaring. However, this discussion looks at bias differently, taking the position that we all have biases, and that identifying and managing our preconceptions, not denying them, is what allows us to be compassionate caregivers.
- **Understanding the Fight and Flight Response.** The concept of fight and flight gets talked about a lot, but we want to do more than talk, we want to really understand the impact of this physiological process on our thinking, our behavior, and our safety.
- **Practicing Assertive Communication.** The idea that thoughtful professionals communicate assertively sounds easy enough, but in the moment, at the time of a crisis, or under pressure it's not so easy to manage. Have you ever said something and watched as the situation got worse? Pro-ACT offers some clear and straightforward strategies for communicating assertively and effectively when it matters most.
- **Keeping Calm through the Holidays.** Pro-ACT principles can make a difference everyday, and during the holidays they play an even more important role. This discussion offers strategies for using Pro-ACT principles to manage the stress of the season...yours and those you care for.
- **Special Considerations for Children with Autism.** If you are working with a child, adolescent, or adult with autism, do you feel that a lot of the typical practices don't apply? If so, join in this discussion for thoughts and ideas about relevant practices and interactions when working with an individual with autism
- **The Impact of Fear on Behavior.** We know that trauma impacts the lives of many of our clients and that trauma has left many with a generalized fear of interactions, environment, and the unknown. This discussion provides strategies for communication and action that reduce a person's fear and create the security that reduces risk.