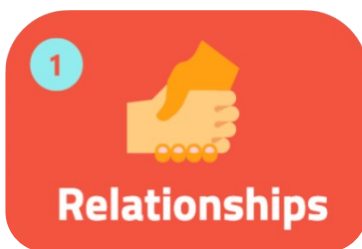


HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) centers around key Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) that buffer against the negative lifelong health effects caused by Adverse Childhood Experiences. In this handout, we go over these key PCEs, the 4 Building Blocks of HOPE.

**Being in nurturing, supportive relationships** are critical for children to develop into healthy, resilient adults. What types of relationships are we talking about?



- Having key foundational relationships: parents/caregivers who respond to a child's needs and have warm, responsive interactions.
- Having adults outside of the family that take a genuine interest in a child and support their growth and development.
- Having healthy, close, and positive relationships with peers.

Individuals that recall having these types of relationships during childhood experience significantly lower rates of depression and poor mental and physical health during adulthood. When working with families, especially vulnerable families affected by trauma, it is important to ask about the types of positive relationships a parent may recall from their childhood. This information can then be celebrated and used to help create opportunities for their children to experience the types of relationships encompassed by this HOPE Building Block.

**Children who live, learn, and play in safe, stable, and equitable environments** are less likely to experience poor mental and physical health as adults. What do we mean by safe, stable, and equitable environments?



- A safe, stable environment, secure in meeting a child's basic needs, including adequate food, shelter, and healthcare.
- A nurturing home where a child is emotionally secure.
- A stable school environment where children feel valued and receive high-quality education.
- A community environment to play and interact with other children safely and equitably.

It is crucial to ask caregivers about the types of environments their children are experiencing. Celebrate the positive and work with families to help ensure their child has the opportunity to live, learn and play in safe and nurturing environments.

[Children need opportunities for social engagement and to develop a sense of connectedness.](#) Developing a connection to and sense of belonging in a community, as well as a sense that you matter to your community, describes the essence of the third of the 4 Building Blocks of HOPE. What are some examples of social and community engagement?



## Engagement

- Being involved in projects, peer-mentoring, or community service through one's school or religious organization.
- Partaking in family cultural traditions.
- Participating in organized music, art, or sports.

Children need to feel connected to their communities, loved, and appreciated. Having this type of engagement (involvement in social institutions and environments, awareness of cultural customs and traditions, and a cultivated “sense of mattering” and belonging) helps children develop into secure and resilient adults.

[Children need opportunities for social and emotional development.](#) What do we mean by social and emotional competencies?



- Developing a sense of emotional and behavioral self-regulation
- Having the ability to respond to challenges in a productive manner
- Developing key socially and culturally appropriate communication and interpersonal skills

Children need to have ample opportunity to develop their sense of self-awareness and social cognition, learn how to self-regulate emotions and behaviors, and acquire skills needed to respond functionally and productively to challenges. Many of these skills arise during child-centered play. Some children will naturally pick up these skills, others may need adults to help them name and understand their own feelings. Either way, these skills are critical for children to be able to become resilient, emotionally healthy adults.

Information in this handout is sourced from research done by Dr. Robert Sege from the Center for Community-Engaged Medicine at Tufts Medical Center and Dr. Charlyn Harper Browne from the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The Building Blocks were first published in the following paper:

Sege and Browne. Responding to ACEs with HOPE: Health Outcomes from Positive Experiences. *Academic Pediatrics* 2017; 17:S79-S85

To learn more about HOPE, the 4 Building Blocks, and more, visit [positiveexperience.org](http://positiveexperience.org) or email [HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org](mailto:HOPE@tuftsmedicalcenter.org).