

Monterey County Behavioral Health Quality Improvement

RE:	Adverse Childhood Experiences
FORM REFERENCE	Adverse Childhood Experiences ACES PEARLS Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events
REFERENCES	QI Memo: Documentation Reform: CalAIM Assessment (Specialty Mental Health Services)
INITIAL RELEASE DATE	5/5/2023
EFFECTIVE	5/22/2023
REVISIONS	6/1/2023

Policy

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), in partnership with the California Office of the Surgeon General, is creating a first in the nation statewide effort to screen for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This questionnaire has been in use by Monterey County Behavioral Health for a few years already. Moving forward, the ACEs will continue to be required and effective May 22, 2023 the Pediatric ACEs and Related Life-events Screener (PEARLS) will be implemented. The purpose of this memo is to provide instructions clarifying training requirements and which specific screening tool to administer dependent on the age of the beneficiary.

Background

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that children experience before the age of 18 that can have lasting impacts on their mental health, physical health, and general well-being. By screening for ACEs, providers can better determine the likelihood a beneficiary is at increased health risk due to a toxic stress response, which can inform patient treatment and encourage the use of trauma-informed care. Detecting ACEs early and connecting beneficiaries to interventions, resources, and other supports can improve the health and well-being of individuals and families.

Training

Prior to the administration and interpretation of these tools, staff may complete the following 3-hour training.

- View "[Becoming ACEs Aware in California](#)" training
 - Back Out Codes: 823/3350
 - ESS (Timesheet) Code: 81440
 - Continuing Education (CE) Credits available (up to 2 CEs)
- You will be asked to supply your NPI number, if you do not know this number, visit this website (all that is needed is your full name): <https://npi-lookup.org/>
- Upon completion of this training you will be asked to complete an "Attestation", you can disregard this direction

Procedures

- Effective: May 22, 2023
- All applicable forms are available in Avatar, search for:
 - Both the ACEs and PEARLS may be completed collaboratively but shall NOT be completed without the beneficiary and/or their parent/caregiver
 - **Reference the QI Website to print the form appropriate to the age and recipient(s), provide to caregiver and/or child/youth (reference the multiple PEARLS form options below), and transcribe the results into Avatar.**
 - “Adverse Childhood Experiences ACEs”
 - Completed for those Ages: 18+
 - Completed by the beneficiary
 - Frequency
 - At least once as part of the initial assessment for all beneficiaries
 - In the case the beneficiary refuses to complete the questionnaire, document refusal in a progress note and attempt at a later date
 - By definition, ACEs occur in childhood and therefore do not change, however, beneficiary comfort with disclosure may change over time, so re-screening may be considered upon clinical discretion
 - At the annual update after beneficiary’s 18th birthday, administer the ACEs (see instructions above)
 - “PEARLS Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events”
 - Completed for those Ages: 0-17
 - Ages: 0-11 - Completed by the parent/caregiver on behalf of beneficiary
 - Ages: 12-17 - Completed by either the parent/caregiver AND/OR beneficiary
 - This version contains two additional questions in Part 2
 - Best practice for BOTH parent/caregiver and beneficiary to complete
 - When these yield different scores, the higher score should be used
 - Frequency
 - At least once as part of the initial assessment for all beneficiaries
 - Periodic re-screening as appropriate and medically necessary

	ACES	PEARLS
Who <i>(Beneficiary)</i>	18 years and older	0-17 years old
How	Completed by beneficiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-11: Completed by the parent/caregiver • 12-17: Completed by either the parent/caregiver AND/OR beneficiary
What <i>(Form)</i>	“Adverse Childhood Experiences ACEs”	“PEARLS Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events”
When <i>(Frequency)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least once as part of the initial assessment for all person’s in care OR upon beneficiary turning 18 while in care • Periodic re-screening as appropriate, as beneficiary comfort with disclosure may change over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least once as part of the initial assessment for all beneficiaries • Periodic re-screening as appropriate and medically necessary