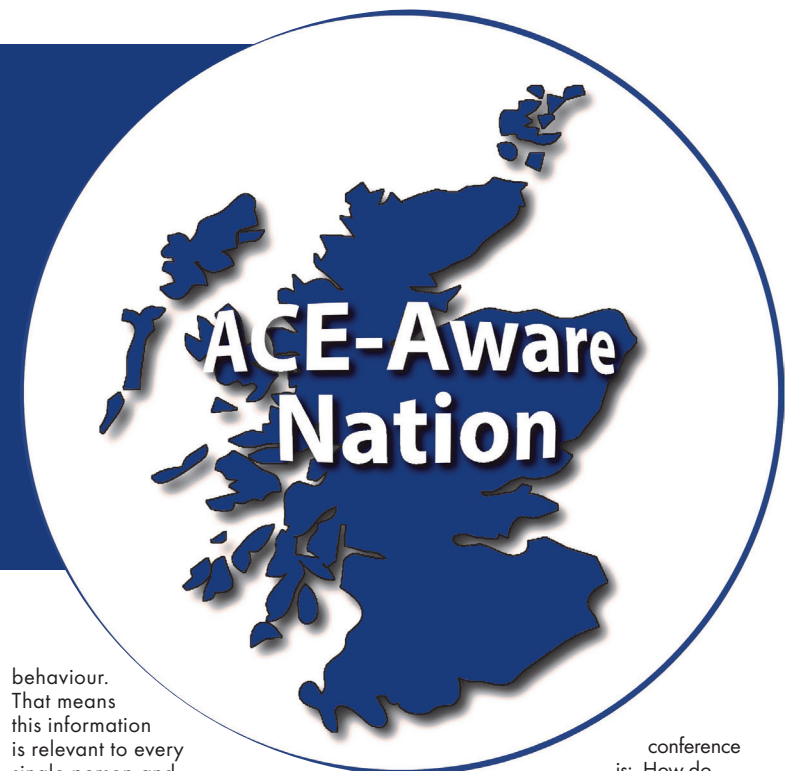


Making Scotland the World's First ACE-Aware Nation



A major two-day conference exploring the impact of adverse childhood experiences is being held in Glasgow this year on 25 and 26 September.

'Making Scotland the World's First ACE-Aware Nation', is unusual in that it is not targeted at academics or professionals, but at the general public. Everyone interested in the importance of relationships, for children and adults alike, will find the conference of interest, from parents to teachers to social workers to medical staff to criminal justice to business owners.

This national event comes out of the grassroots movement surrounding adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that has sprung up across Scotland in the last year.

The Scottish Government has been developing policy to address ACEs for the past several years, but it is only in the last year that a dynamic public following has emerged on the issue.

That excitement is largely due to screenings of the documentary film *Resilience*:



Dr Burke Harris

The biology of stress and the science of hope, which has engaged tens of thousands of Scots in a discussion about childhood trauma and how it creates biological changes that last over the long term.

Childhood distress increases the risk of heart disease, liver disease, cancer and diabetes – as well as smoking, drinking and drug use, among many other health issues. This was the discovery of the ground-breaking Adverse Childhood Experiences Study in 1998. That work is now prompting striking new ideas about how to tackle many Scotland's obstinate social



Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

challenges, including obesity, diabetes, drug use, violence and struggling academic attainment.

The origins of the conference reflect this grassroots energy. It is being co-hosted by two independent Scottish organisations: TIGERS and *connected baby*.

TIGERS whole organisation has been transformed by their understanding of the ways in which biology underpins behaviour. They have used this knowledge to improve the lives of their employees, altered the content of the training delivery to trainees and apprentices, and worked to help their extensive partners including the construction, early years, digital



Pauline Scott

marketing and business sector industries to appreciate their potential.

TIGERS Operations Director Pauline Scott said, "Our organisation has transformed over the last three years, because we realised that if we could put this knowledge into action, it would change the lives of our employees, the young people we serve in our training and apprenticeships and our business partners. The impact has been greater than we could have hoped. We think others deserve to share in such insights. That's why we took the step of hosting an event of this magnitude. We want everyone to have the chance to understand how central relationships are to human health and happiness."

In partnership with Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk, one of the country's leading campaigners on ACEs, and also the founder of *connected baby*, the two organisations decided to team up to create a unique two-day event to spread this knowledge.

Dr Zeedyk explains, "We have learned so much about how distress affects children, and the adults they become. Distress undermines the biology that enables a person to manage their emotions and

behaviour. That means this information is relevant to every single person and organisation in the country. That's why we wanted to do our best to get the information out to the public. We are delighted to have the Herald assisting us in doing that over the coming weeks."

Together they have attracted some of the most inspiring speakers in the country. Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, paediatrician and leading global campaigner for ACEs, will serve as the international keynote speaker. The organisers recognise the shift that has happened across the country, with many individuals and organisations working to make changes in their communities and professional sectors.

The response to the conference has been unprecedented with over 1,500 attendees expected to date, some of whom are out with Scotland. The organisers have put their vision into the title of the conference: Making Scotland the World's First ACE-Aware Nation. The question at the centre of the

conference is: How do we reach every single citizen in Scotland with knowledge of Adverse Childhood Experiences? Information about the conference, full programme of speakers and how to book can be found on <http://www.aceawarescotland.com>.

