

# Making Scotland an ACE-Aware Nation: Why the media has a responsibility to help our society in rethinking emotional distress



**Scotland's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Conference takes place on the 25th and 26th of September in Glasgow.**

**In the first of our Glasgow Evening Times articles on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Gary Robison, Director of GRC Media looks at the role the media can play to promote the ACEs movement in Scotland.**

I've been working in the media now for 25 years and it was only in my 24th year that I heard the term 'Adverse Childhood Experiences'. That fact makes me reflect on my working practices and that of the media industry as a whole.

Certain parts of the media, knowingly or not, exploit ACEs.

Many stories of violence, drug use, and broken relationships involve people who have suffered trauma at some point in their lives. But we never stop to really think about that trauma.

In the media, we tend not to ask, 'what has happened to this person?' We focus on the aftermath.

It makes inexpensive television, it sells newspapers, magazines and as a nation, we like to consume it.

I've interviewed dozens of guests on the 'Stories of Resilience' podcast series. They reveal the impact of trauma in lives, and the struggle that our systems and support services often have in paying real attention to trauma. In these interviews, I've discovered the link between trauma and ill-health later in life.

The honesty and openness of the interviewees have made me look at my childhood.

I was brought-up in the seventies when a 'good hiding' made you stronger and the phrase 'I'll give you something to cry about' was the norm. I remember getting into a fight with a boy down the road and came off the worse, only for my father to send me out to 'finish the job'. I came off the worse again.

My parents divorced. That's now classed as an ACE.

Today, my health isn't the best; high blood pressure, diabetes and I never give a straight answer when the Doctor asks about 'how many units a week?'

Does that sound familiar?

I didn't think about my past or my future. I didn't know of ACEs. I do now.

We know some areas of the media use distress and pain for financial gain. I believe we sometimes forget how the media can shape and influence modern culture.

However, imagine making small changes to our reporting approaches and having more caring, compassionate production values in our programmes, for example, creatively weaving ACEs into the back-stories of popular soap characters.

My industry has a massive part to play in the ACEs movement, in shaping an ACE-Aware Nation.

Which of my colleagues will join me? See you at the Conference.

**Find out more about making Scotland an ACE Aware Nation at [www.aceawarescotland.com](http://www.aceawarescotland.com)**



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