

## 3. Preparing to be an ACEs & Resilience Champion

### Anticipate your ACEs & Resilience Champion Journey

Being an ACEs & Resilience Champion may be challenging. You may encounter resistance to your efforts, or an idea may fail. However, your persistence can lead to important changes in your community, and may be a rewarding personal and professional experience for you. The ACEs Coalition of Guelph and Wellington will provide support and encouragement along the journey. As you begin, take some time to consider your intentions and goals to help you remain committed if or when challenges arise.

The change you seek will sometimes be hard to attain. People may not listen to you. Even if they do, behaviours and even systems may not shift.

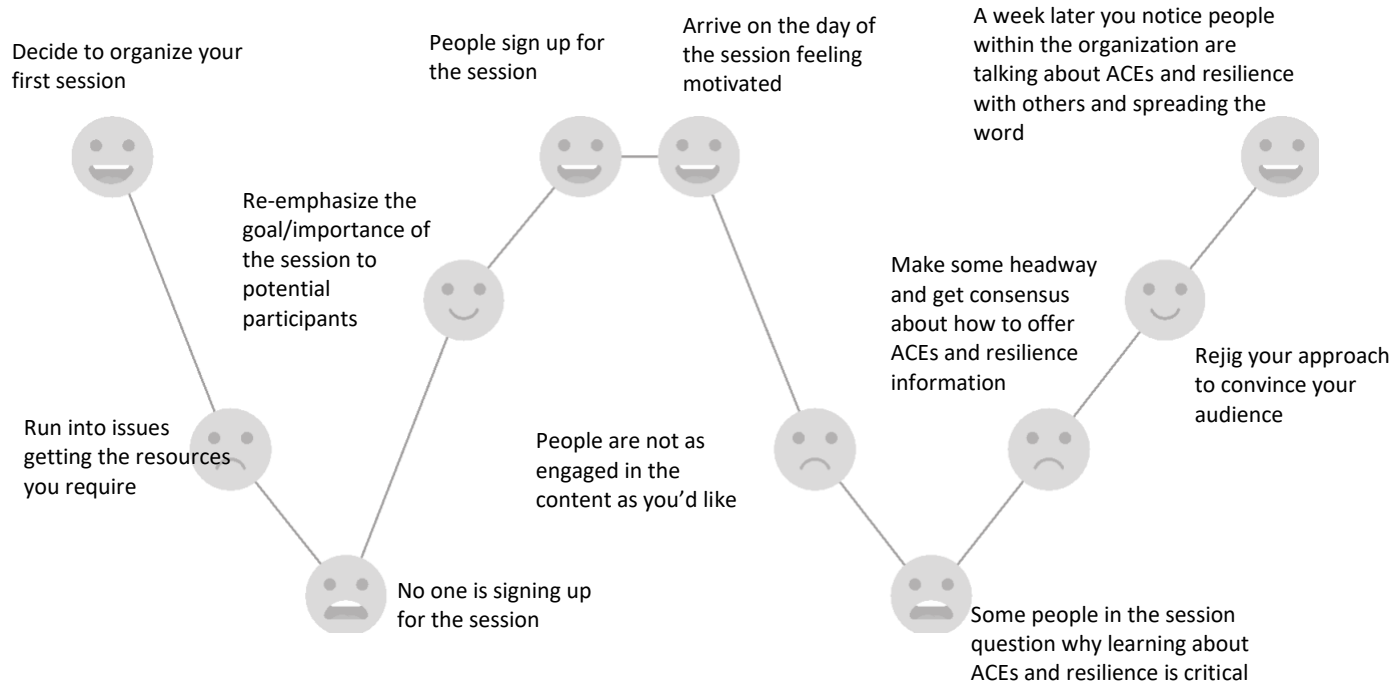
Other times, you'll feel energized that you made a difference. Seeing subtle signs of change will be extremely rewarding.

#### Example touchpoints

These run on a 5-point scale:

-  happy
-  above neutral
-  neutral
-  below neutral
-  dissapointed







## Key Steps of Your ACEs & Resilience Champion Journey

Being an ACEs & Resilience Champion requires being strategic, setting goals to evoke small changes, and sticking with them. These five steps will help you start.<sup>2</sup>

### Step 1: Start with WHY

Evoking change often requires making the status quo unacceptable. Activating others in your organization to prevent and reduce the effects of ACEs and build resilience will require showing them in a compelling way WHY taking action to address ACEs and build resilience is critical.

Articulating a specific and compelling narrative is always the best way to evoke change.

#### Take Action

*Take some time to think about WHY your organization needs to take action related to ACEs and building resilience.*

*Start with thinking about the impact of ACEs on a specific person, and how you can build resilience. What will change for them if your organization has a better understanding of ACEs and their effects? What negative effects could they experience if your organization does not “get on board”?*

*At the organizational level, reviewing the vision, mission, and values of the organization may be a good place to start. Incorporating an understanding of ACEs and resilience into your strategic plan may help you to articulate why giving attention to ACEs and resilience is critical to fulfilling your organization’s mandate.*

*Take action by asking yourself the following questions:*

<sup>2</sup> This model comes from London, 2009 and is consistent with generic motivational, goal-performance models of behavior (Steel and Konig, 2006).

**WHO** will be negatively affected if ACEs and resilience knowledge/understanding does **NOT** permeate your organization?

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**WHAT** is happening that shouldn't happen?

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**WHAT** is not happening that should happen?

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Exactly **WHY** does this gap matter (to the person affected, to your organization and to its success at achieving its vision)?

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## Step 2: Set specific and challenging goals to evoke change

Change does not happen in a straight line. It is more likely to happen if you form a clear and realistic sense of what you're trying to achieve within the organization. Develop clearly articulated, time-linked, and measurable goals to achieve as an ACEs & Resilience Champion.

### Highly effective goals:

- Are specific and targeted
- Are measurable
- Are realistic and achievable
- Are time-linked
- Contribute in a meaningful way to the ACEs and resilience “big picture” within the organization

### Take Action

*Look at your organization and what you most need to achieve with respect to ACEs and building resilience. Start with some small, easily achievable goals, and also set yourself some stretch goals that may take a bit longer. As you articulate your goals, make sure they can be observed or measured so you can gauge your success.*

#### **A Bad Example**

*Increase awareness about ACEs in my organization*

#### **A Good Example**

- Ensure people in my organization understand what ACEs are at the end of the month so that we are on our way to becoming ACEs-aware.*
- Every week, I will send out an email with ACEs related facts and ideas for building resilience, and I will track the open rate for the email. If there are any departments that are disengaged, I will reach out to the head of the department to add another push.*
- At the organizational meeting at the end of the month, I will test colleagues' understanding and offer further insight through a quick presentation.*









## Step 3: Know yourself and how you see other people

Your implicit beliefs about how people behave will impact the way you interact with others and the strategies you use to present information about ACEs and resilience to inspire behaviour, program, policy change. People have general beliefs about whether others are:

- Able to change their attitude and behaviour;
- Sensitive to gains and losses; and/or
- Risk tolerant or risk averse

Being an effective ACEs & Resilience Champion requires first knowing who you are, and then understanding your beliefs about people in general. Consider these questions reflectively:

### Take Action

Know yourself

What motivates you to be an ACEs & Resilience Champion?

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Why do you believe that understanding ACEs and building resilience are important topics?

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What unique skills or understanding do you bring to the ACEs and resilience discussion?

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What are your beliefs, biases, and assumptions about other people?

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What assumptions do you have about people (their behavior, motivation, ability to change etc.)?

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What types of behaviours might challenge you as an ACEs & Resilience Champion (for example, criticism makes you defensive)?

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What other biases do you carry with you?

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What have you seen as the most effective way to shift how other people think?

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## Step 4: Tailor your approach to distinct individuals

Evoking change in your organization will require a range of different persuasive approaches. People can be resistant to shifting for different reasons, so you will need to tailor your messaging and your approach to each person's unique needs.

### Take Action

*Think about the people that you're trying to shift within your organization and about the avenues that will be most helpful to motivating them to shift. Keep in mind that throughout this process, it is important to give everyone the full picture. Some things you'll want to cover:*

- *What are ACEs?*
- *What are their effects?*
- *What is resilience and what can you do about it?*

*Consider the following perspectives that you might encounter:*

***Give Me the Facts and Figures (Cognitive)*** – *Some people like rational arguments and are looking for hard numbers before they will commit to change. For these people, for example, statistics about some of the negative effects of ACEs may be powerful.*

***Help Me Empathize (Emotional)*** – *Other people may be turned off by facts and figures, but could be easily encouraged to think about the deep negative effects of ACEs. These people could be easily inspired by the resilience that people exposed to ACEs often show. Showing the real-world emotional stories of ACEs and resilience (both positive and negative) is critical to evoking change.*

***Show Me What I Need to Do (Behavioural)*** – *People vary in their ability to jump from concepts and principles to action. This inability can look like resistance to change when it's not. As you're working to evoke change, make sure to provide clear direction about what ACEs and resilience-informed practice looks like. For some people it will be helpful to offer concrete examples of actions they can take.*



## Examples of Using this Approach

What you do	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural
<p><b>Screen current policies and procedures to identify those that don't reflect an understanding of ACEs and resilience</b></p>	<p><i>Use information to express the need to change current policies and procedures</i></p> <p><i>Hold a meeting with colleagues where facts and information are used to facilitate the discussion</i></p>	<p><i>Use a personal story of an individual who experienced ACEs to warn of the dangers of adhering to current procedures</i></p> <p><i>Hold a meeting and create an emotional case for how new policies and procedures will influence positive change</i></p>	<p><i>Hold a focus group meeting to identify procedures that need to change</i></p> <p><i>Provide replacement policies and procedures</i></p> <p><i>Put plan into place to change procedures that don't adhere</i></p>
<p><b>Take public action</b></p>	<p><i>Hold a public meeting and use information to express viewpoint</i></p> <p><i>During the meeting, repeat key messages to help audience understand and remember the most critical information</i></p>	<p><i>Hold a public meeting and use persistence to get point across</i></p> <p><i>Don't take no for an answer</i></p> <p><i>Warn audience about potential consequences of not helping people with ACEs</i></p>	<p><i>Hold regular public meetings</i></p> <p><i>Participate in consultations, write letters and advocate to ensure an understanding of ACEs and resilience is embedded in policies, funding and resource decisions</i></p> <p><i>Upset the status quo; take people out of their comfort zone</i></p>
<p><b>Organize a ½ day long training session to raise awareness about ACEs and resilience and inspire behaviour change among staff</b></p>	<p><i>Use facts and data during session to show the percentage of people who have experienced ACEs and describe the research about the impacts of ACEs and the importance of resilience</i></p>	<p><i>During the session, use emotional narratives to warn of the pitfalls associated with being misinformed</i></p> <p><i>Express the positive effects their actions could have on individuals who have experienced ACEs</i></p>	<p><i>Organize the session with agency staff in mind</i></p> <p><i>Hold the session multiple times to ensure high level of participation</i></p> <p><i>During session, clearly identify actions to take</i></p>



What you do	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioural



## Step 5. Don't forget about the power of the situation

As you make your way through the planning steps, it's important to keep the situational information in the back of your mind. Each step will be dependent on the situational factors you encounter.

Great champions understand that evoking behavioural change is only one part of the equation. Many contextual factors will dictate the nature of advocacy and will influence the ability and motivation of people to direct change within their organizations. Some critical situational factors to consider:

- Is there access to the necessary resources to support the change?
- What is the organization's openness to change?
- Are there opportunities for having your voice heard?
- Are you finding yourself in situations that are supportive and clear or constraining and disorganized?

Supportive and clear situations will promote ambitious goals, strategies, and persistent effort until goals are reached. Low support and disorganized situations are likely to lead to less ambitious goals, limited strategies, and less effort.

### Take Action

*Think of your goal(s) from Step 2.*

**What are some possible situational factors you could encounter?**

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**How will these either facilitate or hinder your goal achievement?**

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## Do's and Don'ts of Being an Effective ACEs & Resilience Champion

The success of your work to address ACEs and build resilience will be influenced by how well you stay aligned with the path of a great champion. Reflect on the following Do's and Don'ts before you set off on your ACEs and resilience journey.

### Do

- Facilitate ACEs understanding and the importance of building resilience among other professionals
- Have a clear purpose and strategy
- Become succinct, articulate, thorough and offer alternative ways of thinking
- Show empathy for the people/systems you're trying to shift
- Respectfully push for accountability
- Supportively push for even small changes
- Show openness to learn and change
- Provide the necessary tools and support to promote informed ACEs decision-making
- Talk about resilience whenever you talk about ACEs
- Stay open to feedback from your colleagues

### Don't

- Lose patience, persistence and perseverance
- Overlook new ideas
- Belittle people with a different view
- Plant your feet – find consensus instead
- Make promises you can't deliver
- Underestimate the power of a motivated person to evoke change

