What is trauma?

Individuals and families living in poverty, such as the Medi-Cal patients you are serving, are more likely to experience multiple forms of trauma. Trauma can include, but is not limited to:

- **Abuse**: physical, emotional, and sexual
- **Neglect**: physical and emotional
- **Household dysfunction**: parental incarceration, mental illness, substance dependence, parental separation or divorce, and intimate partner violence

Why is screening and assessing for trauma symptoms important?

Determining how trauma affects healthy functioning is essential in understanding an individual's overall social and emotional well-being. Frequent visits to emergency rooms, provider offices, and other health and welfare entities could be a result of a specific incident of trauma that has occurred in their life. Trauma is a risk factor for numerous medical problems, including depression, PTSD, and other mental illnesses.

What can your clinical practice do?

Health care providers, especially those serving patients with complex needs, often have trouble engaging with their patients and have high no-show rates. Patients may not consistently take their medications or follow through with recommended lifestyle changes or treatment interventions. Considering the impact of trauma on physical and emotional health may help you empathize with your patients and understand their behaviors. Encouraging more effective communication and relationship-building may lead to better health outcomes.

### Trauma screening coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>CPT</th>
<th>Telehealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma screening - positive with patient score of 4 or greater</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>G9919</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma screening - negative with patient score of 0-3</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>G9920</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**


ACEs training: [https://www.acesaware.org/](https://www.acesaware.org/)

Telehealth guidelines: [https://www.scfhp.com/link/reimbursement-telehealth](https://www.scfhp.com/link/reimbursement-telehealth)

**Sign up for training**

The state of California created trainings to educate Medi-Cal providers about the importance of implementing and conducting adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) trauma screenings into their clinical practices. All providers are encouraged to attend training on screening patients for ACEs.

By screening for ACEs, you can better determine the likelihood a patient 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 patients to interventions, resources, and other supports can improve the overall health and well-being of individuals and families. (Department of Health Care Services, 2020)

Free training can be found at the ACEs Aware website: [https://www.acesaware.org/](https://www.acesaware.org/)

**Proposition 56 supplemental funds**

When the ACEs training and attestation have been completed, you will be eligible to receive $29 for completed trauma screenings.