Childhood trauma or mental health disorder?

The traumatic effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and symptoms of mental health disorders can often look alike.

### Mental Health Diagnosis
- **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**
- **Oppositional Defiant Disorder**
- **Anxiety Disorder** (Social Anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder or phobia)
- **Major Depressive Disorder**

### Overlapping Symptoms
- **Disorganized and/or agitated activity; difficulty sleeping, poor concentration, hypervigilant and impulsive behavior.**
- **Angry and irritable outbursts; argumentative with adults; refusal to comply with rules; reckless/spiteful/vindictive behavior.**
- **Feeling on-edge; sleep disturbance; intrusive thoughts; irritability; Avoidance of feared stimuli, repetitive behaviors.**
- **Decreased energy levels and interest in activities; withdrawn; sleep disturbance.**

### Childhood Trauma
- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**
  - Physical, emotional or sexual abuse
  - Separation from/loss of parent
  - Physical or emotional neglect
  - Witnessing violence
  - Living with a parent with untreated mental health disorder(s) or who abuses substances

### Mitigating Factors
- Nurturing, protective caregivers
- Early detection and intervention

### What can you do?
Provide screening for ACEs: [https://uwm.edu/icfw/tools-and-resources](https://uwm.edu/icfw/tools-and-resources)