

AI acknowledgement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Notes

Introduce myself, I am here to talk about the experiences that children in poverty experience during adolescence and the adverse childhood experiences that they may be exposed to. If at any point that you find this triggering, you can leave the room and I'll be available to talk after the session should anyone need it.

Contents:

1. Adolescence and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
2. Reasons why children in poverty were my chosen group of young people to explore further
3. The risk factors children in poverty are exposed during adolescence.
4. Interventions.
5. How Youth Workers respond
6. Additional theories and policies that support.

Slide 1:

Starting with adolescence. Adolescence is the phase between childhood and adulthood, on average this can start between the ages of 10 and end at 19, however, for some this can start earlier and end later. This is a “unique stage of human development” (World Health Organisation, 2024, np) as it’s during this stage that young people go through the transitions of adolescence. The 3 main transitions of adolescence are the physical, cognitive and social changes which affects how they feel, think, act and interact with the world around them. (World Health organisation, 2024)

Slide 2:

Adverse Childhood Experiences, Also known as ACEs are stressful traumatic events that occur during a person’s childhood that can impact their health and well-being (Hendry and Kleop, 1999; Coleman and Hendry, 2012). Beginning in 1994, the "adverse childhood experiences" (ACE) Study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente, they assessed the relationship between adult health risk behaviors, childhood abuse and household dysfunction. The study found that adults who reported experiencing more ACEs in their childhoods had worse physical and mental health outcomes. The results of the study led to the term ACEs to describe a range of adversities, there are three types of ACEs – Abuse, Neglect and household challenges, within these there are 10 adversities such as: refer to image.

Slide 3:

Why is this important? Youth workers can:

- Receive training to become trauma informed.
- Respond with appropriate tools and resources to provide better support.
- Identify the young people who may need support. For example, recognising the effects that ACEs has on their behaviour.

(ACE Aware, 2025)

Note: Young people may experience Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs). For example:

- Feeling safe and protected by an adult in the home.
- The ability to talk to family about feelings.
- Feeling a sense of belonging at school.
- Supported by friends.

(PineTree Institute, 2025)

However, for the purpose of this assessment, I'll be focused on aces in relation to trauma that I mentioned on the previous slide.

Slide 4:

Chosen group: base this session around young people in poverty. After undertaking a NAOMIE Needs Assessment (Ingram and Harris, 2001) the need was established for a focus on young people in poverty in relation to the risk factors they are exposed to during adolescence and interventions that are in place for them. Poverty – the lack of income and productive resources to meet the basic needs such as food, clothes and shelter (Alcock, 2006).

Slide 5:

Additionally, following on from the last slide. I discovered further statistics emphasising the importance of the need for interventions:

- 1) 4.3 million children live in poverty in the UK
- 2) 44% of children living in lone-parent families are in poverty.
- 3) 900,000 children in poverty in England alone miss out on free school meals.
- 4) 30% of children in the average classroom are in poverty (9 children in a classroom of 30 children)

(End Child Poverty 2024; Child Poverty Action Group, 2024)

Slide 6:

Risk Factors: Note: Children in poverty does not necessarily mean an unhappy childhood, but it can make life a lot harder. I will share some risk factors

Education – exposed to during adolescence

May have to work a part time job alongside school, less time focused on education and homework.

Not being able to afford school materials/supplies.

Feeling left out as they are unable to afford to go on educational school trips.

(The Children's Society, 2024)

Slide 7:

Health and well-being - Adolescence

Physical – Household income influences the quality of housing, families in poverty may be exposed to diseases related to damp and cold temperatures. Also, they may be unable to afford to eat healthy foods. All of these increases the risk of children developing health conditions such as asthma or obesity.

Hygiene poverty – not being able to afford products needed for basic care and cleanliness, such as soap, laundry detergent and female sanitary products.

(Blackburn 1991; NHS Wales, 2023)

Mental Health:

They may experience being bullied by wearing second hand uniform or uniform that is too small. Comparing themselves to others can make these struggles even harder - young people in poverty may not understand why their lives are different to other young people. For example, they may not understand why they don't get the same gifts or why they can't go on school trips. Each of these experiences can cause a young person to have lower self-esteem or struggle with mental health conditions like depression or anxiety (Corcoran, 2024; The Children's Society, 2024).

Slide 8:

Parents unable to afford rent or other bills can result in homelessness - Adolescence

Homelessness doesn't always look the same, it doesn't only mean sleeping on the street.

Some young people have no choice but to crash on other people's sofas, live in temporary

accommodation provided by the council and some are in overcrowded spaces. These all have one thing in common - they are not a stable environment for young people.

The impacts of homelessness on young people:

- 1) Exercise and hobbies are lower on their priority list, impacting their emotional wellbeing.
- 2) Not knowing where they're going after school, increase anxiety.
- 3) It's difficult to find a quiet place to do homework.
- 4) They can feel more self-conscious and judged. Not only is this distressing in the moment, but it has a huge impact on their social development.

Without a safe and stable home environment, young people can't do simple things that every young person should enjoy, like inviting their friends over. This feeling of isolation may seem like a small issue at the time, however, it can put young people at risk of exploitation. For example, criminal groups groom children by making them feel heard and less alone.

(The Children's Society, 2024)

Slide 9:

Domestic Violence - ACEs

“Living in poverty, increases risk of childhood trauma” (Simpson, 2020, np)

Young people may be exposed to domestic violence due to the stress that poverty causes between parents and families, stress increasing anger. Also the lack of economic

resources may force a parent to stay in an unhealthy or violent relationship (Safeguarding network, 2024; Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform, 2024)

Slide 10:

Neglect - ACEs

For young people, this can result in:

- Impairment of growth and intellectual development.
- Long-term difficulties with building relationships.
- Experience low self-esteem.
- Extreme cases, death.

(HM Government, 2010)

Slide 11:

Substance misuse - ACEs.

Young people in poverty may be exposed to a parent who uses substances such as alcohol or drugs. Parents who use substances at high risk levels can have an impact on young people.

Substance misuse consumes a great deal of time, money and emotional energy, which can affect how well a parent can raise a child. This behaviour also puts the child at an increased risk of neglect and emotional, physical or sexual abuse either by the parent or because the child becomes more vulnerable to abuse by others.

Additional impacts on young people include:

- Being a carer for parents and siblings
- Blaming themselves for their parents' substance misuse
- Unsafe home with the exposure to toxic substances and criminal activities
- separation from parents due to intervention from children's services, imprisonment or hospitalisation.
- Increased risk of developing drug or alcohol problems or offending behaviour themselves.

(Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, 2025)

Slide 12:

Interventions:

1) Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024

The Welsh Government is committed to tackling child poverty, making it one of their highest priorities.

Based on 5 objectives:

- 1) Reduce costs and maximise family incomes.
- 2) Create pathways out of poverty for young people and their families.
- 3) Support the wellbeing of those living in poverty.
- 4) Ensure those impacted by poverty are treated with dignity, and challenge poverty stigma.
- 5) Ensure effective cross-government working and strong collaboration regionally.

(Welsh Government, 2024; Child Poverty Action Group, 2024)

Slide 13:

A direct result of the child poverty strategy.

Free School Meals Campaign. The Education Act 1996 required schools to provide free school meals disadvantaged children aged 5-16 if eligible (Department of Education, 2024)

Step forward to 2025. As of 2024, all primary school children in Wales can access free school meals (Welsh Government 2024).

Slide 14:

Cognitive processing therapy (CPT) - Cognitive processing therapy (CPT) is a specific type of cognitive behavioral therapy that has been effective in reducing symptoms of PTSD. This has been developed for those that have experienced traumatic events such as child abuse, rape and natural disasters.

Helps people learn how to challenge and modify unhelpful beliefs related to their trauma.

As a result, they create a new understanding of that traumatic event so that it reduces the current ongoing, negative effects that their trauma has given them.

(American Psychological Association, 2024).

We as youth workers can refer young people to a counsellor to receive cognitive processing therapy.

Slide 15:

Shelter Cymru is a charity “We exist to defend the right to a safe home” (Shelter Cymru, 2024, np).

Not only does Shelter Cymru provide housing advice and legal support for all ages but also education. For example, they provide resources to schools, colleges and youth clubs to help young people understand housing, homelessness and what to do if they find themselves in that situation. (Shelter Cymru, 2024)

Slide 16:

The most powerful intervention – Youth Work

There are personal, structural and environmental factors that youth workers can protect young people against adverse outcomes show in the protection wheel (Young Minds 2025).

Slide 17::

Looking at the protection wheel a bit closer: Sharing 2 examples from my experience:

Compassionate, attuned and supportive responses from professionals:

Youth club: tackle period poverty, young people don’t need to pay for sanitary products, they are available at club. Young people are also offered a warm environment, have opportunities to use facilities such as showers or toilets and they are offered free food.

Ability to regulate emotions and manage emotional stress:

School: one-to-one session focused on anger and emotions. We focused on this young person’s triggers, how he reacts and the coping mechanisms he could use.

Slide 18: - Response and policies

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2024) outlines 54 articles which are 54 rights that children have. Many Articles support this but here's an example of 4:

Article 6 – Life, survival and development. Every child has the right to life, and to survive and develop to their full potential

Article 20 – Children unable to live with their family. If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them protection and assistance. For example, making sure the child is provided with alternative care that meets their needs and provides respect to the child's culture, language and religion.

Article 33 – Drug Abuse. Government must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs

Article 39 – Recovery from trauma - Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation or torture must receive special support to help them recover. For example, this can include support surrounding their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

(UNICEF, 2024)

Slide 19:

5 pillars of Youth Work (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022)

Educative – “Education is the pathway out of poverty” (Montecel, 2013, np). For example, in my experience, I've delivered workshops around skill building and CV writing.

Empowerment – believing in young people who are in poverty, advocating for them because referring to one of my previous slides. Article 12 of the UNCRC state “every child has a voice” (UNICEF, 2024, np).

Slide 20:

Youth Work National Occupational Standards (CLD Standards, Council Scotland, 2019, p.5) values. For example:

- 1) “Equity Diversity and inclusion” – Treating young people with respect, valuing each individual and their differences, and promoting the acceptance and understanding of others. Under no circumstances would any of us youth workers discriminate a young person, especially those in poverty. Instead, we would support them to believe in themselves, to grow and develop in a supportive environment.
- 2) “Partnership with young people and others” – We as youth workers will collaborate with other services who are beneficial for the needs of young people, particularly those in poverty. For example, well-being teams, housing organisations, social services, the police or like previously mentioned we can refer young people to counsellors. In my experience I have worked with schools and substance misuse teams.

Slide 21:

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

Basic needs must be met first before a higher need can be fulfilled (McLeod, 2024)

Basic needs are needed to survive. Young people in poverty may have difficulty in getting the basic needs. For example, a youth worker who is aware that young people in poverty may be hungry will provide a comfortable environment with refreshments in recognition of these basic needs (Maslow 1943 cited in Sapin, 2013).

Slide 22:

5 ways to well-being.

- 1) Take Notice: How those young people in poverty are affected and what we can do about it.
 - 2) Keep Learning: Offering young people workshops around budgeting finance or an opportunity for youth workers to receive training on how to help young people mitigate the effects of their experiences in poverty or ACEs.
 - 3) Give: Giving young people a sense of purpose and belonging whatever their background by providing them with opportunities to grow and develop or giving them a safe space to talk about their feelings, fostering their emotional well-being.
- (Mind, 2025)

Slide 23:

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Purpose – to improve social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. Introduced 7 well-being goals. Displayed in the photo.

Requires public bodies in Wales to:

- Think about the long-term impact of their decisions.
- To work better with people, communities and each other.
- To prevent persistent problems such as health inequalities, climate change and poverty.

(Welsh Government 2024; Future generations commissioner for Wales, 2024)

Slide 24:

Summary:

Provided:

A definition on adolescence and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Examples of risk factors those in poverty face

Examples of interventions proven to enhance well-being and mitigate the effects of poverty

Examples of youth workers respond

Additional policies to support

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