





# The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children



# Implications of Children Raised in Violent Homes

- Often imitate behavior they witness
  - 85% of batterers witnessed violence as children
  - 50% of victims were raised in violent homes
  - Many children feel they are responsible or partly to blame for the battering
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# Affects on Children

1/3 of children who witness their mothers being battered demonstrate significant behavioral and/or emotional problems including:

- Stuttering
- Anxiety and fears
- psychosomatic disorders
- Loneliness
- Powerlessness
- Terror
- School problems
- Excessive crying
- Sleep disruption
- Shame
- Anger
- Humiliation




# Affects on Children

- Children do not have to be physical harm to suffer the effects of violence
  - Children who see or hear violence in the home live in fear
  - Some symptoms displayed by children who witness violence are the same as seen in children diagnosed with ADHD and/or ADD
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# Other Effects on Children

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- Death by homicide
  - Death by suicide
  - Emotional injuries (low self esteem)
  - Depression
  - Aggressive behavior toward others
  - Delinquency
  - Poor school adjustment



# Other Effects on Children

- Modeling behavior - Learned victim/aggressor roles
  - Runaway episodes
  - Alcohol/drug experimentation
  - Early marriage
  - Continuation of violence in adult relationships
  - Expansion of violence in the community
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# Red Flag Behaviors of Children



- **Aggressive**

- attacking others,
- destroying property,
- cruelty to animals,
- verbal attacks,



- **Passive/withdrawn**

- avoids conflict,
- becomes the perfect child,




# Red Flag Behaviors of Children

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- Manipulative
    - extreme jealousy,
    - sulking,
  - Rebellious/acts out
    - challenges authority,
    - skips school, steals,
    - runs away,
    - smokes/drinks,
    - experiments with drugs,





# Red Flag Behaviors of Children

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- Suicidal ideations
    - self mutilation,
    - phobias,
    - eating disorders,
    - nightmares




# Red Flag Behaviors of Children

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- Health Problems
    - headaches,
    - stomach aches,
    - irritable bowels,
    - bedwetting,
    - backaches,
    - skin rashes,
    - mouth ulcers/cold sores,
    - earaches.



# How to Help



*when a child tells you they are living  
in a violent home*

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- Let the child know you believe them
  - Reassure the child it is not their fault
  - Let the child talk about what is worrying them
  - Help the child learn other ways of dealing with anger/frustration



# How to Help

*when a child tells you they are living  
in a violent home*

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- Help the child work out a safety plan for an emergency
  - Help the child to feel good about him/herself
  - Reassure the child that you will help as much as you can, or you will talk to someone who can
  - Reassure the child that they are not alone
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# FACTSHEET

- Domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities (U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect)
- Studies suggest that 3.3 - 10 million children witness domestic violence annually (Murray Straus, 1992)
- 50 percent of men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently abuse their children (Murray Straus, Richard Gelles, & Christine Smith 1990)



# FACTSHEET

- Slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under age 12 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998)
- Men who witness their parent's domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own wives than sons of nonviolent parents (Murray Straus, Richard Gelles, & Christine Smith 1990)




# Domestic Violence and Youth

- 8% of high school girls said “yes” when asked if “a boyfriend or date has ever forced sex against your will” (Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls, 1997)
- 40% of teenage girls age 14-17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend (Children Now/Kaiser Permanente Poll, 1995)



# Pregnancy and Domestic Violence

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- Each year, at least 6% of all pregnant women, about 240,000, are battered by the men in their lives (CDC, 1994)
  - Complications of pregnancy are significantly higher for abused women (Parker, B. McFarlane, J., & Soeken, K. 1994)