

## Tips for Working with Kids from a Violent Home

**Set clear limits.** Let them know the rules.

**Be honest.** Make sure they know that you want to help and let them know what you can and cannot do to help them.

**Help Reduce Stress.** Try to keep your interactions as stress-free as possible.

**Encourage active play.** Break the boundaries of isolation to spend time with peers.

**Promote healthy self expression.** Teach the child to write, draw and listen to music to mirror their feelings.

**Enforce a model of self control.** Teach strategies like counting to 10 when angry and taking timeouts.

**Build up the child's self esteem whenever possible.** Have them make accomplishable goals, write encouraging notes, talk about their positive qualities.

**Locate and suggest counseling.** School administration or professional counselors may be good resources.

**Promote non-violence and teach conflict resolution skills.** Work on how to resolve issues without anger or violence.

**Teach personal safety.** Show them how to call 911 if the situation is bad. Identify people they can trust if they need to go somewhere.



## WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP

### Police

**In an emergency, dial 911**

Metropolitan Police Department:

1st District: **(202) 299-2037**

1DSubstation: **(202) 698-0068**

2nd District: **(202) 715-7300**

3rd District: **(202) 673-6815**

4th District: **(202) 715-1506**

4DSubstation: **(202) 576-8222**

5th District: **(202) 698-0150**

6th District: **(202) 698-0880**

6DSubstation: **(202) 698-2088**

7th District: **(202) 698-1500**



### National

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
**(800) 799-SAFE (7233)**

### Local

Domestic Violence Intake Center

NW: **(202) 879-0152** SE: **(202) 561-3000**

24-hour shelters, Hotlines and Counseling:

House of Ruth: **(202) 667-7001** x 217

My Sister's Place: **(202) 529-5991**

Financial Assistance

Crime Victims Compensation Program:  
**(202) 879-4216**

Legal Assistance

American University: **(202) 274-4140**

AYUDA: **(202) 387-0434**

Bread for the City: **(202) 265-2400**

SAFE: **(202) 879-7857**



### Domestic Violence Unit

300 Indiana Ave, N.W., Room 3156  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Office: 202-727-7137 | Fax: 202-727-6491

<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/victimassistance>

## The Effect of Domestic Violence on Children in the Home

It hurts them too! Even if your children are not being abused, observing violence in your home leaves lasting effects on their development.



A guide to getting educated and getting help.



## SOME STATISTICS AND FACTS

- An estimated three to ten million children witness domestic violence in their homes.
- Fifty percent of men who abuse their female partners also abuse their children.
- Over three million suspected abuse and neglect cases are reported to public child welfare agencies.
- In Washington, DC, 61% of children in grades one and two, and 72% of children in grades five and six have witnessed violence.
- Boys who grow up in non-violent homes have a one in 400 chance of becoming a violent adult; boys who grow up in a violent home have a one in two chance of becoming a violent adult.
- Children from homes where their mothers are beaten suffer from severe eating and sleeping disturbances, have ulcers, rashes, headaches, depression and extreme anxiety.
- Eighty percent of teen runaways and homeless youth have come from violent homes.
- Girls from abusive homes are six times more likely to be sexually assaulted and much more likely to become pregnant in adolescence.
- A boy from a home where his mother is abused is 74% more likely to commit a violent act.
- Children who witness domestic violence are four times as likely to be arrested.

*\*Source: My Sister's Place, Inc.  
(<http://www.mysistersplacedc.org>)*

## Questions and Answers



### Do signs of abuse in the family differ for boys and girls?

Often they do! Many times boys become more aggressive and girls more passive.

### Are children really aware of what is happening?

Yes. Children recognize and are often very affected by domestic violence.

### What difference can the community make?

Good role models, family support, and community support are all key to overcoming the negative.

### What do children from violent homes experience?

Children feel chaos, danger, fear and tension, confusion, isolation and hopelessness.

## Effects of Witnessing Domestic Violence

- Constant anxiety, which may cause headaches, ulcers, speech and hearing problems
- Feelings of emotional abandonment
- Anger management problems
- Difficulty with respect and setting boundaries
- Extreme guilt and blame for not being able to stop the abuse
- Low self-esteem, fearfulness and depression
- Feelings of isolation
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use
- Behavioral problems
- Adult role taken on prematurely
- Developmental delays and learning disabilities
- Fear and distrust in closer relationships
- Trouble sleeping, eating and using the restroom
- Conflict over taking sides; blaming one parent for the abuse, yet blaming the other parent for not putting a stop to it
- "Failure to thrive" symptoms, even as infants
- Poor health
- Academic problems

**If you suspect interfamily violence is affecting a child you know, call D.C. Child Protective Services at:**

**(202) 671-SAFE (7233)**

## The Cycle of Family Violence Symptoms and Risks

