The Effect of Domestive 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.

Is LOVE supposed to hurt?

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

In an emergency, dial 911
Metropolitan Police Department:
1st District: (202) 698-0555
1DSubstation: (202) 698-0068
2nd District: (202) 715-7300
3rd District: (202) 673-6815
4th District: (202) 715-7400
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
DC Superior Court
500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 4550
Washington, DC
NW: (202) 879-0152

2041 Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue, SE, Room 400
Washington, DC 20020
(202) 879-1500

Online: https://www.probono.net/dccourts/

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
Legal Aid Society: (202) 628-1161
www.legalaiddc.org
Bread for the City: (202) 265-2400
SAFE: (202) 879-7857

A guide to getting educated and getting help.
**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.

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**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

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*Source: My Sister’s Place, Inc. (http://www.mysistersplacedc.org)*

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**The Cycle of Family Violence**

- Children Witness Violence Between Parents
- Adult Children Enter Into Relationships
- Children Learn Use of Violence to Resolve Conflict
- Adult Children Enter Into Relationships

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

(202) 671-SAFE (7233)