

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP CHILDREN?

Let the children know that it is not their fault. Children are not to blame for the abuse.

Let children know that it is okay to talk about the abuse. Talking about feelings may help to sort out what is happening and give children a better understanding of the issue. Let them do the talking. Do not blame either parent. Do not promise that all will be well.

Help children work out a safety plan to protect themselves:

- a safe place for them to go when there is fighting; preferably with a door and lock
- numbers to call for help when it is safe
- ensure that the children know their full name and address

Inform children that it is not safe to become involved in the fighting. Stress the importance of them being safe.

Let children know that it is okay to have mixed feelings about the abusive partner; it is okay to love him and hate what he does.

WHO CAN YOU CALL FOR HELP?

There are many agencies that can provide support for children who are exposed to woman abuse. Some local agencies are:

Children's Aid Society

- 1-866-939-9915 or 613-933-2292

Children's Treatment Centre

- 613-933-4400

Inspire - Community Support Services

- 613-932-4610

Akwesasne Child & Family Services

- 613-575-2341 ext. 3139

Équipe psycho-sociale

- 613-938-7112

Akwesasne Wholistic Health & Wellness

- 613-575-2341 ext. 3115

Maison Baldwin House

- 1-800-267-1744 or 613-938-2958

Maison Interlude House

- 1-800-461-1842 or 613-801-8169 (support line)

Naomi's Family Resource Centre

- 1-800-267-0395 or 613-774-2838 (crisis line)

Iethinistenha Shelter

- 613-937-4322 or 1-800-480-4208 (crisis line)

Cornwall Community Police

- 613-932-2110

Ontario Provincial Police

- 1-888-310-1122 (non-emergency)

Akwesasne Mohawk Police

- 613-575-2340 (non-emergency)

Kids Help Line

- 1-800-668-6868

LGBT Youth Line

- 1-888-687-9688

Fem'aide

- 1-877-336-2433

IT

MATTERS

THE EFFECTS
ON CHILDREN
EXPOSED TO
DOMESTIC ABUSE



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FACTS TO CONSIDER

- As children age, sex-role patterning becomes increasingly apparent and behavioural patterns begin to emerge along gender roles.
- Children who witness their mothers being abused tend to defend their mothers and intervene thus endangering themselves.

Children exposed to domestic violence may:

- see or hear their mother assaulted or demeaned,
- learn what happened to their mother,
- experience the aftermath of violence in their home (e.g., injuries, damaged possessions),
- be used by an abusive parent as part of the abuse,
- see or hear conflict and abuse during access exchanges or visits,
- see or hear their mother killed,
- see their father abuse his new partner during visits,
- be denied necessities (e.g., economic abuse of mother deprives child).

(Western University, Learning Network Newsletter, 2012)

- Three out of every five children in school classrooms across Canada are witnessing assault on their mother at home. (National Clearing House on Family Violence)
- Serious behavioural problems are 17 times higher for boys and ten times higher for girls who have witnessed abuse than children who have not. (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson)
- Children who are exposed to domestic abuse have comparable level of adjustment problems to children who are physically abused themselves. (OWD Wife Assault: The Impact on Children, pg 1)
- Children exposed to domestic abuse see, hear and are very much aware of the abuse their female parent or guardian face, even though their parents may believe otherwise.
- Boys who witness their fathers abuse their mothers have a 1000% chance of abusing their partners in future relationships than sons of non-violent fathers. (Strauss, Gelles, Stienet)



The majority of research has looked at quantitative differences in the adjustment of groups of children who were exposed to domestic violence compared to children who were not. Findings indicate that exposure to domestic violence is a risk factor for the development of difficulties for children of all ages.

- Physical (e.g., stomach aches; headaches; asthma; insomnia)
- Emotional (e.g., depression; anxiety; guilt; self-blame; PTSD)
- Behavioural (e.g., aggression; suicidal behaviours; alcohol and illicit drug use; truancy/early school leaving)
- Academic/Cognitive (e.g., distortions in attitudes and beliefs about violence and abusive behaviour; difficulty concentrating and learning)
- Social (e.g., isolated; difficulty trusting; may accept and/or use violence within peer and dating relationships).

Children may experience and display the above difficulties for reasons other than exposure to domestic violence (e.g., significant stressors such as death of a loved family member or pet; serious illness of parent; homelessness; marital separation; losses due to dislocation). (Western University, Learning Network Newsletter, 2012)

