



Violence in our homes

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A DIFFICULT SUBJECT TO TALK ABOUT, but it is even more difficult to experience. Violence can occur between partners, as child abuse, toward elderly family members and even in teen dating relationships. Whenever a family experiences violence in the home, it has a devastating impact, tearing relationships apart and destroying the feelings of safety and security so important for nurturing young children.

Domestic violence is a pattern of hurtful behavior in which one family member attempts to control another family member through threats or actual use of physical violence, sexual assault, verbal and physical abuse, and/or coercive behaviors.

Millions of families experience domestic violence every year. Nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually abused by their partners sometime during their lives. Men account for 18 percent of abuse victims. Studies indicate that as many as ten million children are exposed to domestic violence annually. These statistics are staggering, and yet police report that crimes of domestic violence are drastically underreported.

Children bear the brunt of domestic violence, even when they are not directly abused.

- ◆ They are at risk for behavioral and emotional problems, delays and disabilities in cognitive development, and long-term problems in school and life.
- ◆ Infants and toddlers are at the greatest risk of death and injury from child abuse.
- ◆ Young children's ability to recover from the trauma of domestic violence is linked to the presence of a healthy parent or other adult in their lives.
- ◆ A child's emotional recovery depends more on his or her relationship with the non-battering parent than anything else.

It is almost certain that someone you know is experiencing domestic violence. It may be happening in your own family. Often it's difficult to know what to do. You can take action that will make all the difference in the world to your young child, or to someone else's. You can trust your parent educator to help you find assistance. You can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.



Every child deserves a safe and secure home in order to learn, grow and develop to his or her potential. Every parent deserves relationships that are safe, loving, and supportive. ❖

Types of domestic violence

If you experience any of these, get help.

- ◆ **Physical abuse.** When one person hurts, or tries to hurt, another by hitting, kicking, burning, or with other violent force.
- ◆ **Sexual abuse.** Forcing a partner to take part in a sex act when that partner doesn't want to or is too young to consent.
- ◆ **Threats.** Words, gestures, use of weapons, or anything that communicates the intent to cause harm.
- ◆ **Emotional abuse.** Causing psychological damage through words or actions. Harming a person's self-worth.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233

Family Violence Prevention Fund

www.endabuse.org