

CHILDREN WHO WITNESS VIOLENCE ARE HARMED ...



CHILDREN see, hear and remember more than adults think they do. Parents may think that their children are asleep or watching TV, but children often know when their parents are fighting.

CHILDREN react differently at different ages, but ALL children — even infants and toddlers— can be affected by witnessing violence.

CHILDREN who witness or who experience domestic violence grow up believing that abuse is ok - i.e. the father is their primary male role model. Repetitive abuse reinforces the behavior as normal.

CHILDREN grow up believing that by hitting someone - they will give you what you want, i.e. abuse is an effective method of getting what you want.

CHILDREN feel helpless and are scared of the abuser, so they gravitate towards the abuser to survive, and are often afraid to show outward affection towards the mother for fear of retribution from the abuser.

BOYS who witness violence against their mothers are five times more likely to abuse their female partners as adults, than boys raised in non-violent homes.

CHILDREN may directly or indirectly receive injuries being struck by thrown items or weapons. Older children may receive injuries while trying to protect their mother from abuse.

PSYCHOLOGICAL and emotional effects suffered by children who are victims of domestic violence or who have witnessed domestic violence include: depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, phobias, withdrawal, lowered self esteem, guilt, fear of abandonment and self blame. Over a period of time, a child experiences developmental disabilities.

CHILDREN develop psychosomatic complaints such as headaches, abdominal pains, stuttering, bed wetting and sleep disturbances.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

If you have a spouse or partner who is violent, it is important to have a safety plan for yourself and your children. As part of the child's safety plan, the following should be discussed”

1. Instruct the children to stay out of the parents' fights because they may get seriously injured.
2. Agree on a safe place to go if there is a serious fight, such as a friend or neighbor's house.
3. Teach them to call for help. Have them practice picking up the phone to call.
4. Make sure they know their own address and phone number.
5. If they are home and feel unsafe, help them determine where they can go to feel safe.

- Reassure children that they are not responsible for the abuse.
- Provide safe opportunities for children to talk; e.g., bedtime, on walks, in the car.
- Listen to children. Do not talk too much or explain away the violence.
- Provide opportunities or activities to enhance thinking processes; e.g., “if I do this, then that will happen.”
- Teach decision making and communication skills.
- Assist children in articulating & achieving goals.

HELP IS AVAILABLE



For all emergenciesDial 9 1 1

Statewide Children's Treatment
Programs1-800-897-LINK

Utah Domestic Violence Help Line
.....1-800-897-LINK

Dept. of Children and Families
State Hotline1-800-678-9399
Blanding, UT Office435-678-1491
Moab, UT office.....435-259-3720

Victim Advocate...435-587-2237, ext 136



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CHILDREN IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Contact San Juan County *Victim Advocate*
for More Information about
Domestic Violence

Tel. 435-587-2237, ext. 136