

More than three million children witness acts of domestic violence every year. In homes where domestic violence occurs between adults, children are abused at a rate 1500 percent higher than the national average. The violence may be kept from friends, relatives, teachers, and others, but the children of violent partners know what is happening. Whether the children observe the violence, hear it, learn about the violent incident after it has occurred, or are physically hurt themselves, the effects are always serious.

A home in which physical, sexual, emotional, or property abuse occurs is frightening and unhealthy, and can be devastating to a child. Children in these homes cannot truly be children. These children try to protect their parents or younger siblings. They worry about being an additional problem or burden to their family and fear for their own safety and security. They have the additional burden of carrying around the family secret.



15 Warning signs of an abusive relationship

- ⌘ A push for quick involvement
- ⌘ Jealousy
- ⌘ Controlling
- ⌘ Unrealistic expectations
- ⌘ Isolation
- ⌘ Blames others for problems and mistakes
- ⌘ Makes everyone else responsible for his/her feelings
- ⌘ Hypersensitivity
- ⌘ Cruelty to animals and children
- ⌘ “Playful” force during sex
- ⌘ verbal abuse
- ⌘ Rigid sex roles
- ⌘ Sudden mood swings
- ⌘ Past battering
- ⌘ Threats of violence



The Domestic Violence Program is partially funded by the State of Tennessee and the United Way

Domestic Violence Program

Because...Love shouldn't hurt.

The Children

It's not your Fault!



Domestic Violence Program
826 Memorial Suite #205
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Tel: (615) 895-0185

24-hour crisis line
(615)896-2012

We Can Help.

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Physical Abuse

Any injury a victimized parent suffers may also be suffered by the child as well. These include: bruises, scars, broken bones, lacerations, abrasions, broken bones, loss of use of parts of the body, brain damage, or death.

Physical Neglect

Oftentimes the victimized parent will be abused economically and emotionally. The children may be affected by lack of resources intentionally withheld, and resulting in: lack of food or proper shelter, clothing, or other basic needs; limited or no medical attention; poor supervision and, possibly, abandonment.

Sexual Abuse

All batterers do not sexually abuse children, but many do. If your partner is the child's parent, the sexual abuse is called incest. Some adults shift the blame to the child. Adults are always responsible for the abuse. Adults have the power over children not the other way around. The physical results of sexual abuse can include: injury to the genital area or other body parts, venereal disease, or pregnancy.



Traumatized children may show the following behaviors:

- ⌘ Intense sadness, anger, fear, confusion, self-blame, insecurity
- ⌘ Becoming isolated, withdrawn
- ⌘ Aggressive defiance of passive compliance
- ⌘ Low self-esteem, poor social/problem-solving skills, easily frustrated
- ⌘ Taking on parental roles
- ⌘ Violent behavior toward other children, pets, toys
- ⌘ Substance abuse, sexual acting out, delinquent behavior, running away

When People are Fighting Remember be SAFE.

- S** stay out of the fight.
- A** ask for help.
- F** find an adult who will help you.
- E** everyone knows it's not your fault!

Responsibilities

In Tennessee, adults have a legal responsibility for the safety and emotional well-being of children.

Professionals and other concerned adults are required by law to report any suspected child abuse to the Department of Human Services or the local police department.

Battered parents may be unable to protect or nurture their children and should try to find someone to help them with this task.

All children who have witnessed or have been a direct target of family violence should get counseling to help them with their feelings of fear, anger, helplessness, confusion, and pain and to break the cycle of violence.

Parents, whether staying in or leaving a violent relationship, have a responsibility to get counseling for their children.

Resources and Information

Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic & sexual Violence:
(800) 289-9018

Parent Helpline:
(800) 356-6767

Children's Advocacy Centers:
615-867-9000

Tennessee Department of Children's Services 24-hour child abuse reporting hotlines:
(877)237-0004