

Domestic Violence Hurts Your Child

Adults involved in domestic violence are not the only people hurt. Children growing up in a violent household may suffer from problems that affect their health and relationships with others, now and in the future.

The trauma of domestic violence may leave your child at greater risk of being depressed, anxious and aggressive. Boys in violent homes face a greater risk of abusing their partners. Girls exposed to family violence are more likely to grow up and date men who are abusive than girls with nonviolent parents.

Family violence stresses a child. Here are ways to give your son or daughter extra attention to deal with what they have seen or heard:

- Tell your child you love him or her.
- Emphasize what happened is not your son or daughter's fault.
- Share your feelings about domestic abuse.
- Teach your child ways to relax and unwind.
- Stay calm if bed-wetting, crying or acting out occurs.

Encourage your child to:

- Discuss, write or draw about how he or she feels.
- Cry or express another strong emotion. It's OK.
- Join activities to help redirect attention and energy and develop healthy self-esteem.
- Talk to a counselor.
- Learn nonviolent problem-solving techniques.

Providing positive ways to help your child express and understand his or her feelings can help to minimize negative effects now and for years to come.

