

Witnessing Violence

Seeing or hearing violence among family members hurts children in many ways. In general, they can experience a sense of danger, chaos, confusion, isolation, fear, tension, and or hopelessness. They do not have to be hit to feel the pain of violence. Children who witness domestic violence are at special risk for emotional and developmental problems.

Individual therapy can help family members rebuild self-esteem, learn to trust again, and develop healthy ways to express emotions.

Therapy for children may include:

- ♥ Play therapy
- ♥ Drawing
- ♥ One-one-one counseling
- ♥ Family therapy

If you are caring for a child or children who have witnessed domestic violence call to learn more about services in your area.

24-Hour Hotlines

New Castle County
24-Hour
Domestic Violence Hotline
762-6110

Kent/Sussex County
24-Hour
Domestic Violence Hotline
422-8058

Northern Kent
24-Hour
Domestic Violence Hotline
678-3886

Latino/a Population
1-302-745-9874 or
855-9515

Domestic Violence

How It Affects Children



Be aware of the warning signs!

*Created by:
The Domestic Violence
Coordinating Council*

Children in violent homes...

- ♥ May feel protective of an abused parent, but, they may also resent him or her for not stopping the abuse
- ♥ Sometimes, may feel close to the abuser, other times, they may hope he or she goes away or dies
- ♥ May feel guilty for not being able to rescue their family - or for loving someone who is abusive

Treatment and support can make a difference. Self-help groups, individual, and group therapy can help children and their families. Group therapy and self-help groups can provide support from people who have had similar experiences.

Get More Information and Support.

Contact your local domestic violence hotline.

Emotionally, children can struggle with:

- ♥ Anxiety
- ♥ Depression
- ♥ Poor self-image
- ♥ Alcohol
- ♥ Other drug use
- ♥ Thoughts of suicide

Developmentally, children can lag behind others in:

- ♥ Growth
- ♥ Speaking
- ♥ Reading
- ♥ Writing
- ♥ Making friends

Unusual behaviors or moods may occur...

- ♥ Playing alone or having few or no friends
- ♥ Using violence to solve Conflicts
- ♥ Being overly responsible (as if the child is the “adult of the family”)
- ♥ Developing low self esteem
- ♥ Sleeping too little, too much, or during school
- ♥ Flashbacks

Witnessing domestic violence can create a cycle of violence. Some children from violent homes may grow up believing violence is a normal part of family life. Children may also suffer long-term effects. For example, they may grow up to become adult victims of abuse or abusers themselves, or they may commit other violent crimes.