

## When Children Witness Violence in the Home:

Children can be deeply affected by violence in the community and at home. They see violence on TV and in video games, and hear it in music. Children may also witness fights that involve yelling, screaming, or hitting. Sometimes these fights end with someone getting hurt, badly beaten, stabbed, or even shot. But, witnessing violence at home is especially troubling for children.

### Did You Know That...

- ❖ 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.

### Did How Children React When They See or Hear Violence...

Symptoms vary by age and personality, but these are some of the common reactions children might have:

- ❖ Difficulty with sleeping, poor appetite, stomachaches, headaches, nightmares, and bed-wetting
- ❖ Becoming fearful or moody
- ❖ Worrying about the safety of loved ones
- ❖ Finding it hard to concentrate, learn, and behave at school
- ❖ Trouble making or keeping friends
- ❖ Running away
- ❖ Drugs and alcohol involvement
- ❖ Sometimes children blame themselves for the violence

Children may react immediately to the violence they witness. However, some will have a delayed response. Children learn from what they see.

***When children grow up seeing others acting violently, they are more likely to use violence when they grow up.***

Age	Physical	Emotional	Behavioral	Developmental
<b>Pre-Natal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor nutrition</li> <li>• violence-increased miscarriages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased miscarriages</li> <li>• low birth weights</li> </ul>
<b>Birth to 2years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low weight</li> <li>• digestive problems</li> <li>• no appetite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• irritability</li> <li>• sadness</li> <li>• anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sleeping problems</li> <li>• startles easily</li> <li>• cry excessively</li> <li>• excessive screaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• failure to thrive</li> </ul>
<b>2-6 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of bowel control</li> <li>• lack of bladder control</li> <li>• stomach aches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear</li> <li>• anxiety</li> <li>• guilt (feels responsible for abuse)</li> <li>• separation anxiety</li> <li>• lacks self-confidence</li> <li>• self-centered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acts out</li> <li>• very aggressive-mimics abuse</li> <li>• parent</li> <li>• verbally abusive</li> <li>• defiant</li> <li>• very withdrawn</li> <li>• clingy, whining</li> <li>• tries not to be noticed</li> <li>• problems making or keeping friends</li> <li>• regressing to younger behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor verbal skills</li> <li>• quiet, doesn't talk</li> <li>• poor cognitive skills</li> <li>• poor motor skills</li> <li>• poor impulse control</li> <li>• fears new things, people</li> </ul>
<b>7-12 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bedwetting</li> <li>• stomach aches, ulcers</li> <li>• headaches</li> <li>• insomnia</li> <li>• eating disorders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low-self esteem</li> <li>• ambivalence toward person using abuse</li> <li>• denial and secrecy</li> <li>• fear and anger</li> <li>• guilt-can't protect parent/loves the person using abusive behavior</li> <li>• self-blame</li> <li>• nightmares</li> <li>• shamed and embarrassed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aggressive, bully</li> <li>• violent-may hurt peers, siblings, animals</li> <li>• lies and steals</li> <li>• self-abuse</li> <li>• may mimic behavior of same sex parent</li> <li>• withdrawn or clingy</li> <li>• deny violence in home</li> <li>• doesn't invite friends home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor grades or failure</li> <li>• school phobia</li> <li>• poor impulse control</li> <li>• learning disabilities</li> <li>• poor peer relationships</li> <li>• few or no friends</li> </ul>
<b>13-18 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bedwetting</li> <li>• stomach aches, ulcers</li> <li>• headaches</li> <li>• severe acne</li> <li>• eating disorders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low-self-esteem</li> <li>• loneliness and isolation</li> <li>• extreme anger</li> <li>• anxious, fearful</li> <li>• withdrawn</li> <li>• uncommunicative, especially about feelings</li> <li>• indifferent, no emotion</li> <li>• blames others, especially parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very violent</li> <li>• criminal activities</li> <li>• self-destructive-substance abuse, promiscuity, self-mutilation, suicidal ideas</li> <li>• delinquency, risk taking</li> <li>• take on parent/caretaker role</li> <li>• runaway or stays away from home</li> <li>• protective/abusive to parent</li> <li>• uses violence to solve problems</li> <li>• violence in dating</li> <li>• refuses to bring friends home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor school performance or failure, truancy, drop out</li> <li>• immaturity</li> <li>• poor impulse control</li> <li>• few friends</li> </ul>