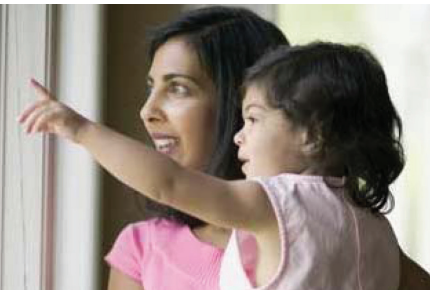


VIOLENCE AT HOME AFFECTS YOUR CHILDREN



You Can Make a Better Future

When there is violence in the home, children are always affected, even if they are asleep or not in the room when the fighting or abuse happens. The longer you live in a violent situation, the harder it will be for your children.

We know asking for help is hard, but it is important for you and for your children that you get support. We want to help you live a safe life with healthy relationships. You and your children deserve this. We all do.

You may see some of these behaviors in your children when there is violence in the home:

Children 5 years old or younger

- Going back to behaviors such as thumb-sucking, bedwetting, and fear of darkness
- Being extra clingy or withdrawing from touch
- Playing violently with their toys or with friends
- Having sleep problems, including nightmares

Children 6–11 years old

Any of the above, plus:

- Having problems at school, including missing school a lot
- Looking sad, worried, or not wanting to do what they usually like to do

Teens 12–17 years old

Any of the above, plus:

- Skipping school or letting grades slip
- Engaging in risk-taking behavior, such as using drugs or alcohol, unsafe sex, driving recklessly, or late night “partying”

What can you do for your children during this difficult time?

The most important thing you can do for your children is to stop the yelling, put-downs, and violence. The sooner you do this, the better for both you and your children.

You can also help your children deal with the situation. Work out a safety plan and share it with them. Let them know you have hope for a better future, and that you are going to do whatever it takes to make it better.

Studies show that families who talk about the violence and abusive behavior in a hopeful, problem solving way grow strong together. Getting support from your family and other places will help everyone in your family.

Other things you can do to help your children cope:

- Tell your children they are important and will be cared for
- Let them know the violence is not their fault
- Model non-violent ways to deal with anger and frustration
- Let your children know you are getting help
- Encourage relationships with other trusted adults outside the family
- Encourage your children’s participation in sports, music, or other activities
- Establish supportive, consistent routines, such as eating meals together
- As much as you can, have an adult at home when children wake, go to sleep, and get home from school

Some things you can say to your children:

- “What is happening is not your fault.”
- “When adults get mad at each other, there are safer ways to deal with the angry feelings than hitting, name-calling, or making threats. It is not OK, and they need help to stop.”
- “Kids, grownups, and animals all need and deserve kindness and respect.”
- “In order to get help to stop the hitting, we need the police, our family, counselors, our friends, and the court. Sometimes this means the person who hits has to go away.”



Reading books about coping with domestic violence opens conversation and can help younger children understand what is happening.

Some books to consider include:

A Safe Place

by Maxine Trottier Ages 4–8
Escaping domestic violence by going to a shelter helps Emily and her mom be safe and gain hope.

The Mad Family Gets Their Mads Out

by Lynne Namka Ages 3–8
A boy describes how he feels bad when he and his family get angry. The book suggests ways to express anger constructively so everyone feels better.

A Family That Fights

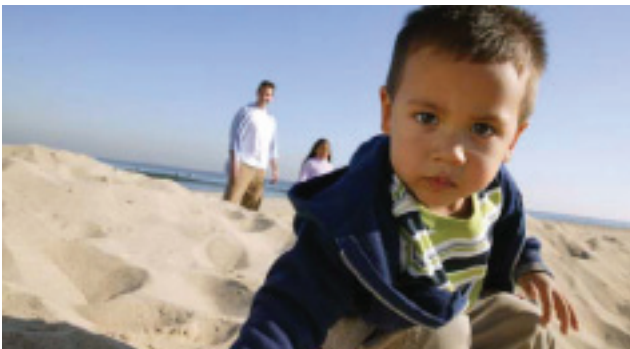
by Sharon Chesler Bernstein Ages 6–10
This story shares how Henry feels living in a family with domestic violence. Strategies for coping are listed in the back of the book.

Something Is Wrong At My House

by Diane Davis
Ages 3–10 (two sets of text for different ages)
Chris describes how living with domestic violence makes him feel and behave, and tells the ways he can make himself safer and feel better.

A Terrible Thing Happened

by Margaret M. Holmes Ages 4–8
Sherman the raccoon shares how seeing something scary made him feel and behave, then tells what he did to make it better.



Kaiser Permanente resources:

It’s always hard to talk about family violence, especially the first time, but Kaiser Permanente has experienced clinicians who can help make it easier. Please talk to your child’s pediatrician or make an appointment in Mental Health or Psychiatry. We will listen. We want to help you and your children to live a safe life.

Many Kaiser Permanente medical centers offer support for parents, including classes and parent groups. Ask your local medical center’s Health Education Department and Mental Health Department for available classes and groups.

Community resources:

Contact the National Domestic Violence hotline to find community resources in your area: (800) 799-7233, or (800) 787-3224 for TTY for the hearing/speech impaired

Helpful Web sites:

Kaiser Permanente domestic violence Web site
kp.org/domesticviolence

National Domestic Violence Hotline (for victims, perpetrators, and concerned friends and family)
ndvh.org

California Courts Self-Help Center
courtainfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/dv

ChildHelpUSA (provides support and resources for parents)
childhelp.org

US Dept of Health and Human Services (helps girls deal with conflict in a variety of relationships)
girlshealth.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline (for teens and parents)
loveisrespect.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (helps teens form healthy dating relationships)
chooserect.org

Men Stopping Violence (for men concerned about their own violence)
menstoppingviolence.org