



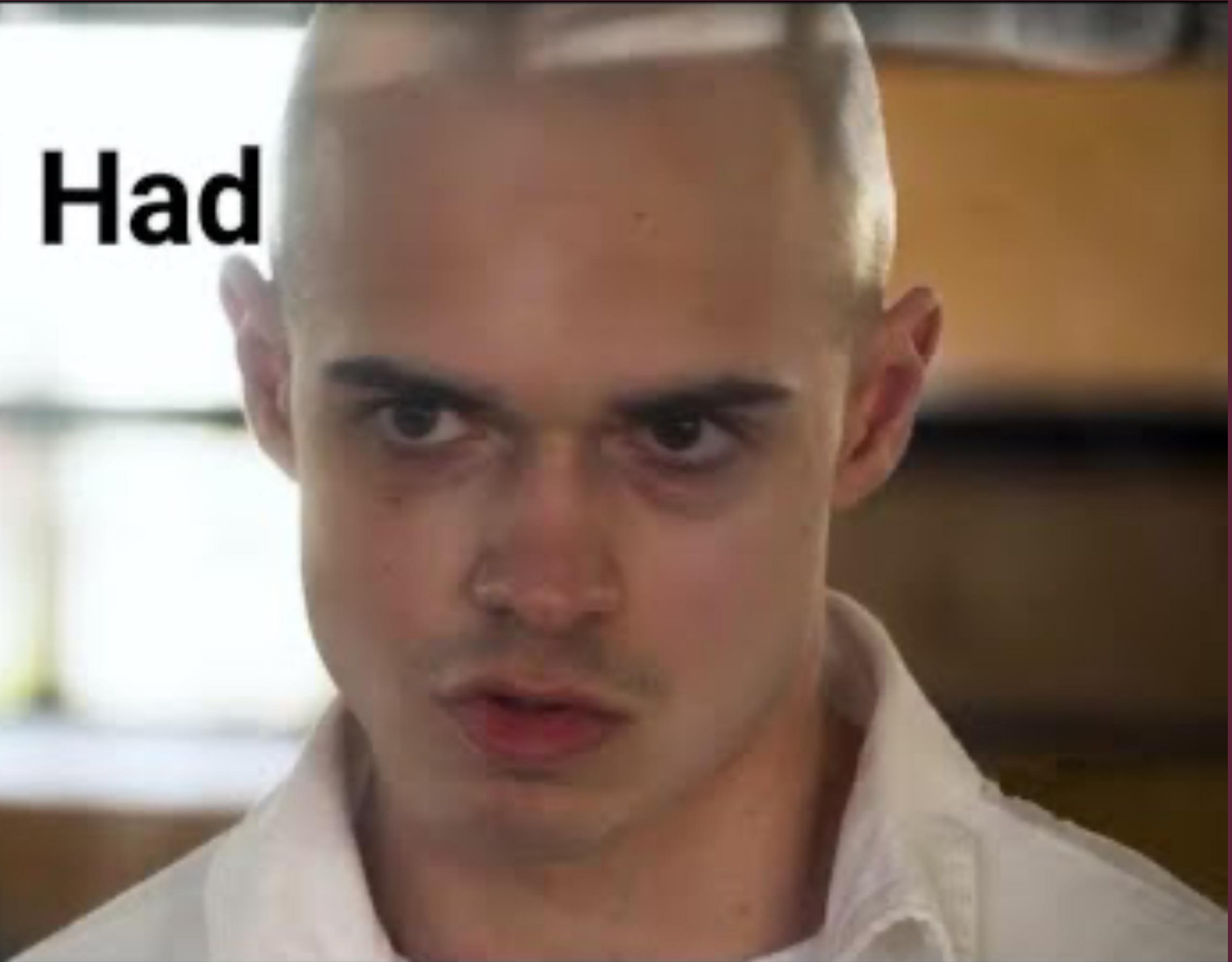
Siblings and Domestic Violence

Sibling relationships can be complex, and in some cases, they may involve domestic violence. This presentation explores the dynamics of sibling relationships, the prevalence of sibling abuse, and strategies for intervention and prevention.

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The
Family I Had

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Overview

- I. Understanding the Dynamics of Sibling Relationships
- II. The Prevalence of Domestic Violence Among Siblings
- III. Who is at risk?
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- V. The Emotional and Psychological Impact on Victims
- VI. Recognizing the Warning Signs of Sibling Abuse
- VII. Strategies for Intervention and Prevention
- VIII. The role of Family, Friends, and Community

Understanding the Dynamics of Sibling Relationships

Importance of Sibling Bonds

Siblings often develop strong emotional connections and can serve as important sources of support and companionship throughout life.

Rivalry and Conflict

Sibling aggression, often mistaken for rivalry, involves an intent to harm physically or mentally, unlike rivalry, which seeks parental attention. Sibling abuse is more severe, frequent, and unidirectional, including behaviors like weapon use, injuries, sexual assault, or persistent intimidation. A national survey found that one-third of children aged 0–17 experienced sibling victimization in the past year, with 4% facing injury or weapon threats from a sibling

Parental Influence

Parents are key to managing and minimizing abuse between siblings. The way parents interact with and discipline their children can significantly impact the dynamics between siblings and the likelihood of abuse.



The Prevalence of Domestic Violence Among Siblings

Siblings

- 1

Underreported Issue

According to the National council on family relations, the most common form of family violence witnessed or experienced by youth is sibling aggression. Sibling abuse is often overlooked or minimized, leading to a lack of data and awareness about its prevalence.
- 2

Varying Forms of Abuse

Sibling violence can take many forms, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation.
- 3

Lasting Consequences

Victims of sibling abuse can suffer long-term mental health issues, relationship difficulties, and a heightened risk of future victimization.

The Prevalence of Domestic Violence Among Siblings

Siblings

- In the U.S., 40% of children engage in physical sibling abuse, while 85% engage in psychological abuse.
- A study of 272 high schoolers found 60% had experienced sibling abuse, and 32% of surveyed children and adolescents reported being victims.
- Each year, over 29 million children commit at least one act of physical violence against a sibling, with severe attacks—such as throwing, kicking, or punching—occurring in 53% of cases.
 - Of these, 19 million incidents would be classified as assault outside the family.
 - Additionally, 3 in 1,000 children, or approximately 109,000 nationwide, have used a knife or gun on a sibling.
- Sibling abuse is more common than spousal or parental abuse of a child.

Who is at risk?

- Certain populations are more vulnerable to sibling victimization, including children with autism, physical disabilities, or LGBTQ identity.
- Sibling aggression norms vary by race, with White children reporting higher rates than other groups.
- While sibling aggression spans social classes, it is more frequent in families with college-educated parents and those facing financial stress.
- Research links sibling aggression with parenting factors like interparental conflict, family violence, inconsistent or harsh parenting, lack of supervision and warmth, corporal punishment, and maltreatment. Improving parenting practices is thus a promising approach to reduce sibling aggression.



Factors Contributing to Sibling Violence

Learned Behavior

Witnessing or experiencing abuse within the family can normalize and perpetuate violent behavior among siblings.

1

Unmet Needs

Feelings of neglect, jealousy, or lack of parental attention can trigger resentment and aggression among siblings.

2

Power Imbalances

Older or physically stronger siblings may use their advantage to dominate and abuse younger or weaker siblings.

3



The Emotional and Psychological Impact on Victims

Trauma and Stress

Victims of sibling abuse may experience long-lasting emotional and psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Damaged Self-Esteem

Abuse from a trusted sibling can deeply undermine a victim's self-worth and confidence, leading to low self-esteem and difficulty forming healthy relationships.

Disrupted Development

Sibling violence can significantly disrupt a child's normal social, emotional, and cognitive development, with lasting consequences.

The Emotional and Psychological Impact on Victims

- Research links sibling violence to future dating violence; individuals who experienced sibling abuse are more likely to engage in abusive dating behaviors.
- The journal, *Child Maltreatment*, found 35% of 2,030 children were "hit or attacked" by a sibling in the past year, with 14% experiencing repeated attacks, 4.55% sustaining injuries, and 2% being attacked with objects like rocks, toys, or knives.
- Children aged 2–9 who are repeatedly attacked are twice as likely to show trauma symptoms like anxiety, depression, and sleeplessness.
- Sibling abuse can also contribute to long-term issues such as sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, substance abuse, and addiction.

Recognizing the Warning Signs of Sibling Abuse



Physical Signs

- Child develops unexplained bruises, cuts, or other physical injuries after hanging out with their siblings.



Emotional Signs

- Sudden changes in mood, withdrawal, or increased anxiety.
- Child may fear being left alone with their sibling.
- Child may have increased anger and lashing out.



Recognizing the Warning Signs of Sibling Abuse



Behavioral Signs

- Aggressive or destructive behavior, or fear of a sibling.
- Children commonly act out their abuse while playing.
- Child may be overly compliant to the demands of their siblings.
- Child may seem withdrawn during sibling interactions.
- Child may make obvious attempts to avoid interaction with their sibling



Verbal Signs

- Verbal threats, insults, or excessive criticism from one sibling to another.
- Aggressive or foul language is used.



Strategies for Intervention and Prevention

1

Promote Open Communication

Encourage siblings to express their feelings and concerns in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

2

Teach Conflict Resolution

Provide siblings with the tools to manage disputes and disagreements in a healthy, non-violent manner.

3

Involve Parents and Caregivers

Work with parents and caregivers to address the underlying issues and establish clear boundaries and consequences.

The Role of Family, Friends, and Community

Providing a Safe Space

Family members, friends, and community organizations can offer a safe haven and support for victims of sibling abuse.

Raising Awareness

Educating the community about the prevalence and impact of sibling violence can help reduce stigma and encourage reporting.

Advocating for Change

Advocating for better resources, policies, and legislation to address sibling abuse can create systemic change.