

Spreading the Good News

Volume 1 Issue 2

Children, Youth and Violence

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CHILDREN, YOUTH & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Did you know?

According to the NCADV, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence;

- **In 2010, 5 million children and youth in the US were exposed to partner violence.**
- **Over a half million children and youth are living in a domestic violence shelter or transitional housing facility.**
- **Abusive partners use children to control victims. ■**

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WHY IT MATTERS

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

A violent and hostile environment has devastating effects on children and youth physically and emotionally. They become extremely concerned for themselves and the family. They feel powerless and worthless. They can begin to display the following:

- Difficulty paying attention
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Perpetuating the cycle abuse
- Self-harm
- Fear
- Shame
- Violent behaviors
- Inability to solve conflict
- Obesity
- Substance abuse
- Post - Traumatic Stress Disorders
- Emotional deficits
- Abandonment Issues
- Develop unhealthy relationships
- Learning difficulties
- Confusion
- Bedwetting
- Eating disorders
- Detachment Issues

These effects may long lasting effects and carry on well into adulthood if not addressed. In many cases mental health treatment is not provided. ■

Academic Issues

In an article written by Wayne State University in 2014, the writer suggests, “To achieve school success is generally contingent on the ability to effectively meet a combination of demands. Attention, memory, organization, comprehension, and self – regulation of behavior are some of the abilities needed for successful classroom learning.”

Children and Youth dealing with the trauma of Domestic Violence have a difficult time accomplishing these goals.

They are traumatized and dysfunctional in these areas. They can lack effective communication skills, an inability to memorize and organize information and have trouble forming positive peer and adult relationships.

They tend to act out in the following ways:

- Reacting to triggers (smells, sounds or anniversaries of the traumatic events)
- Struggling to cope with anxiety
- Anger
- More likely to fail a grade
- Work avoidance
- Fighting
- Cursing
- Breaking or smashing objects
- Hitting walls

These outwardly actions are indicators of internal struggles that children and youth of domestic situations face on a daily basis.■

The importance of youth voice

It is imperative these young people are heard. They need a consistent release. They need to process.

Children and youth who experience or witness violence, become traumatized. Many are in shock during these episodes. They do not understand why the people who are supposed to love and care for them or even strangers would harm them or their love ones. They feel helplessness and shame. Some have difficulty expressing the experience and will tend to silence themselves. Listening to their stories will give them an outlet, someone to release the anger and tears without penalty. They need a place to safely express concerns. Some of the actions you can take to assist a child or youth are listed below:

- Listen without judgement
- Give them your undivided attention
- Reassure them that they are safe
- Do not push allow them to process
- Follow up with regularly
- Provide them with coping strategies
- Look for signs of physical scars
- Help them to safety
- Report issues of visible abuse ■

PERSONAL STORY

I'm scared. My mother and father will get very mad at me saying something, but I can't take it anymore. I am tired of this. My daddy keeps on putting his hands on us. Every time he gets mad, he beats up my momma. Sometimes he hits us too. I don't understand why he keeps doing it. I want to run away. I love my daddy, but he doesn't love us. I wish he would just go away sometimes. We can't even have a good time in our house. When I get big I am going to get him. When he comes home, everybody gets quiet and scared. We just go to our room and then we hear screaming and cussing. We hear loud noise and bumping. They tell us that we have to be quiet so that we don't disturb our neighbors, but if they can hear us, they can hear them and they don't even come to help. If we call the police they will take my parents. My momma always looks so sad. She looks happy when he is not around and it's just us.

We try to be good, but that don't help. He still treats us bad. Sometimes we don't even eat because momma can't cook when she is in her room crying, so we just wait until we get to school. My little sister just sits there and shakes and cries. I don't want to live there anymore. I am going to tell my grandma if it don't stop.

I cry too. I be nervous when I go around my uncles and cousins because they look at us funny and say we don't act like other kids. My momma won't tell them and we can't to talk to anyone about it because we will get in trouble. I wish somebody would help us.

I'm scared. I think momma should tell of our family to come over our house every day so it don't happen. I think about my momma at school all the time, but I don't want to tell my friends because they be happy at school, and they might talk about me.

I am going to call the police for real next time.

-Anonymous Child Victim

A POEM

SPEAK

For those who cannot

For those afraid of what will happen next.

So they hide in their closets with their siblings, telling them "Do not speak"

As dad hits the walls,

Stomping through the house,

He walks in the room and opens the door.

And as they scream he says, "do not speak,"

He swings his hand and hits his children with scarred knuckles.

Mom is yelling, begging him to stop.

But all he has to say is,

"Do not speak."

Years later the children are growing up

With a bruise on their body

To match each line that they drew on their wrist

With the same blade their dad used to scare them with.

As he yelled out,

"Do not speak"

But we must speak up, for those who cannot.

For those afraid of what will happen next.

For those who have dreams where they can smell the whiskey on their father's breath.

As their father san them a whiskey flavored lullaby

Then it all repeats the next day.

The drinking, the screaming, the new additions of black and blue to their skin

And through it all, they can't even

SPEAK

-Run4TheHorizon■

WHERE YOU CAN GET HELP

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

24/7/265

PHONE: 1-800-799-7233

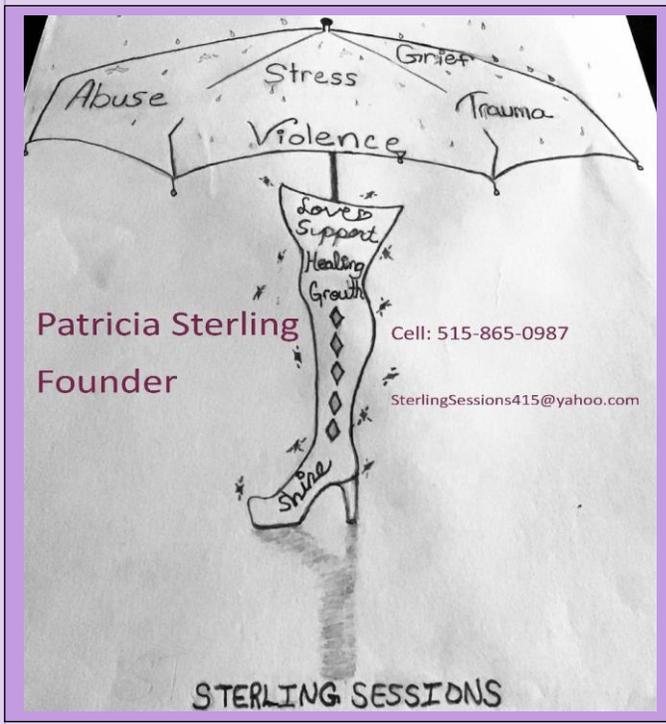
TTY: 1-800-787-3224

**ONLINE CHAT AVAILABLE – CHAT NOW
BUTTON**

HELP FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Prayers for the abused/Oppressed

Luke 11:46, 17:2, 18:1-8, John 8: 1-11, Luke 8:43,
John 4:1-42 –Taken from restoredrelationships.org



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