

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

The following behaviors can often be seen in children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence.

Infants — Age 3

- physical problems (frequent colds, diarrhea)
- excessive screaming and irritability
- problems falling asleep
- developmental delays (not gaining weight, not eating)
- anxiety, sadness, crying, emotional withdrawal

Ages 3 — 7

- delayed language development
- regression to infant-like behavior such as thumb sucking
- difficulty getting along with others
- hostility and aggression
- defiant and destructive behavior
- clinging behavior
- fear
- self-blaming and feelings of guilt

Ages 7 — 13

- low self-esteem
- conflicted feelings about the abuser
- increased aggression toward peers, siblings and parents
- shame (denying the violence at home)

- delinquent behavior (stealing, fighting, using drugs)

Ages 13 — 18

- patterns of blaming others for his/her behavior, especially parents
- high levels of anger and anxiety
- inappropriate belief that violence can be a response to conflict
- protective behavior toward the victim
- violence against the victim
- sense of responsibility for the care of younger siblings
- running away
- patterns of truancy
- substance abuse problems
- promiscuous behavior

Additional Effects — All Age Groups

- increased emotional needs
- difficulty adjusting to school
- school phobias (might fear leaving the victim alone)
- somatic problems (asthma, peptic ulcers, chronic headaches, ab-

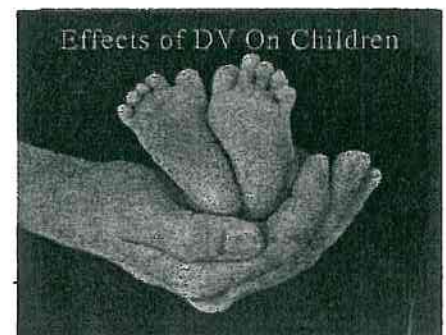
dominal cramps)

- eating disorders
- patterns of increased deceptiveness (excessive lying, stealing, cheating)
- inclination to mutilate or kill animals
- inability to trust and develop relationships
- low tolerance for frustration
- self-destructive behavior, self-mutilation
- memory of every detail of abuse
- blames the victim for the abuse, pressures him/her to make things better
- poor sexual image
- low self-esteem
- bed wetting"

Information directly from:

<http://>

www.cadvny.org/2009/09/14/effects-of-domestic-violence-on-children/



Recommended Readings

No Violence = Good Health (A group manual to be used with preschool aged children who have witnessed family violence)

Helping Kids Heal
- Rebecca Carman, CSW

A family that Fights
- Sharon Chesler Berstein

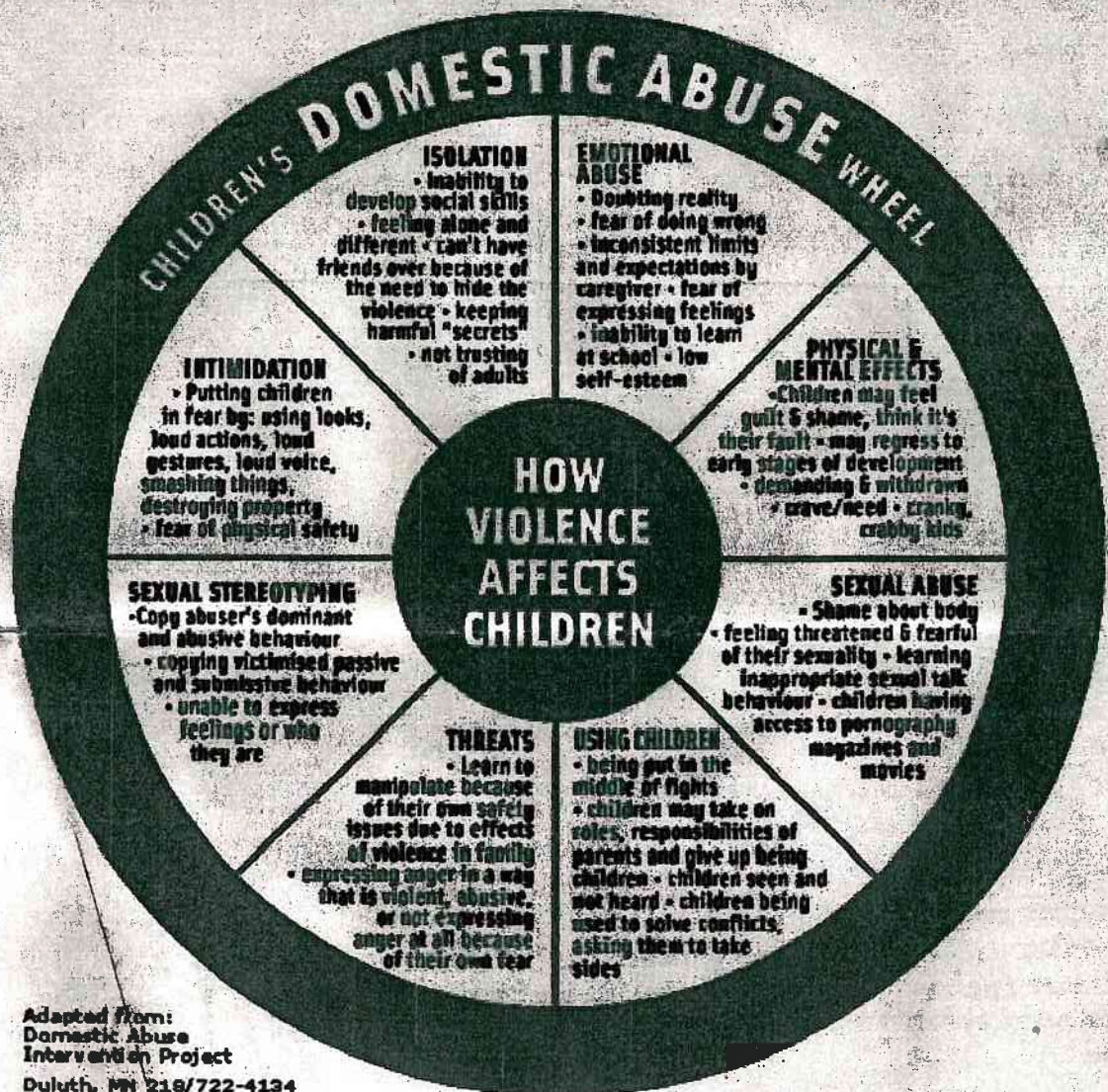
A Terrible Thing Happened
- Margaret M. Holmes

When Something Terrible Happens- Marge Heegaard

Talking about domestic violence [Book] -Nicola Edwards

Kids Need to Be Safe- A book for children in foster care
-Julie Nelson

Families Change- A book for children experiencing termination of Parental Rights
-Julie Nelson



Adapted from:
Domestic Abuse
Intervention Project
Duluth, MN 218/722-4134

<http://www.womensrefuge.co.nz/resources/image/>