

Children and Trauma

When a child feels intensely threatened by an event he or she is involved in or witnesses, we call that event a trauma. There is a range of traumatic events or trauma types to which children and adolescents can be exposed. One of those is Intimate Partner Violence, often referred to as Domestic Violence.

Children who suffer from child traumatic stress are those who have been exposed to one or more traumas over the course of their lives and develop reactions that persist and affect their daily lives after the events have ended.

Even when children are not the direct victims of violence in the home, witnessing intimate partner violence can have significant impacts. Children growing up in families with intimate partner violence (IPV) are at increased risk of child maltreatment (CM). The most common form of child maltreatment co-occurring with IPV is neglect. Children who live in homes with IPV are more likely to be sexually abused than children who do not live in homes with IPV. Finally, children who are exposed to both IPV and child maltreatment may show more emotional and behavioral problems and are more at risk of becoming involved in violence later in life.

Tactics used in IPV can be physical, sexual, financial, verbal or emotional in nature against the partner. Individuals may also experience stalking, terrorizing, blame, hurt, humiliation, manipulation, and intentional isolation from social supports and family. IPV can vary in frequency and severity. **Children are often the hidden or silent victims of IPV**, and some are directly injured, while others are frightened witnesses. Children with IPV exposure are more likely to have also experienced emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, and community violence.

(<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/intimate-partner-violence>)