

How Intimate Partner Violence Affects Children

Across our communities, a troubling phenomenon occurs far too often – the co-occurrence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and child maltreatment. This interplay can be devastating and casts a long shadow into the future, particularly for the youngest witnesses. Understanding the co-occurrence of this violence and its profound impact on children is crucial. (https://minnesotachildrensalliance.org/news/intimate-partner-violence/?mc_cid=9b4d26c9ed&mc_eid=23b39a1ca8)

Supporting a Child Who Has Witnessed Intimate Partner Violence

If you learn or know that a child is exposed to domestic violence, working to create a stable and secure environment is important. WomensHealth.gov provides some basic guidelines for caregivers in situations of IPV:

- Help them feel safe.
- Talk to them about their fears. Let them know that it's not their fault or your fault.
- Talk to them about healthy relationships.
- Talk to them about boundaries. Let your child know that no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable.
- Help identify a reliable support system. In addition to a parent, this can be a school counselor, a therapist, or another trusted adult who can provide ongoing support. Some professionals are required to report when a child experiences or witnesses violence in the home.
- Get them professional help. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of talk therapy or counseling that may work best for children who have experienced violence or abuse.

(<https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/domestic-violence/effects-domestic-violence-children>)

Find support people for children other than the parent. Children are often afraid to voice their true feelings to either parent for fear of hurting one or the others feelings; they need a neutral support person. Above all children should be allowed to have whatever feelings they have.