

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO PARTNER ABUSE

Recent research studies have confirmed that witnessing partner abuse affects the emotional well being of children. The immediate trauma of witnessing abuse includes, self-blame, fear for their parent's safety and ultimately fear for self. Children react to their environment in different ways, and reactions can vary depending the child's gender and age. Children exposed to partner abuse are more likely to develop social, emotional, psychological and or behavioural problems than those who are not. Children who witness partner abuse may show more anxiety, low self esteem, depression, anger and temperament problems than children who do not witness violence in the home. Even when abuse is not happening, there is often an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, anger and tension that pervades the family home. Children in these homes learn that violence is a normal family interaction and that it is a valid method of conflict resolution. This perpetuates the intergenerational cycle of abuse.

SERVICES:

1. Hastings Children's Aid Society
2. Children's Mental Health Services
3. Parent Child Clinic
4. Three Oaks Foundation

For More Information on Children Exposed, See:

Bala, N. M. C. *et al.*, (1998) *Spousal violence in custody and access disputes: Recommendations for reform*. Status of Women Canada; Dumas, D., Margolin, G., & John, R. <http://www.problemsolvingcourts.com>

Suderman M. & Jaffe P. (1999) *A Handbook for Health and Social Service Providers and Educators on Children Exposed to Woman Abuse/Family Violence*, Health Canada