

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN BY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

INFANTS

Needs for attachment to caretaker as well as routines around sleeping and eating may be disrupted. Lack of availability cause long-term emotional disturbance.

- ❖ Irritability
- ❖ Difficulty sleeping
- ❖ Diarrhea
- ❖ Poor health in general

TODDLERS

Boys tend to show externalized behaviors while girls show internal behavior such as passivity, anxiety, and somatic problems.

- ❖ Low self-esteem
- ❖ Frequent Illness
- ❖ Severe shyness
- ❖ Hitting, Biting
- ❖ Increased aggression in general

PRESCHOOLERS

Preschool children developmentally view most events in relation to self; therefore, they often see themselves as the cause of adult anger and violence.

- ❖ Irritability
- ❖ Increased anxiety
- ❖ Increased somatic complaints
- ❖ Social isolation from peers
- ❖ Difficulty relating to age appropriate activities

ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN

When violence in a family is extreme, children at this age may attempt to escape problem or try to divert attention from parents by acting out in dramatic ways.

- ❖ Decreased socialization and adaptive skills
- ❖ Females: depression, anxiety, withdrawal
- ❖ Difficulty concentrating
- ❖ Poor academic performance
- ❖ Children over age 11 may become protective of abused parent and become secretive about family situation

ADOLESCENTS

Some adolescent boys begin to use the assaultive behavior modeled in parental relationships to handle abuse as a problem between their parents.

- ❖ Anxiety, depression, hostility
- ❖ Often blame victimize parent for abuse & view frustration and anger
- ❖ Contributes to risk of domestic violence in adult relationships
- ❖ May contribute to violent delinquent behavior

Sources: James, M. (1994). "Domestic violence as a form of child abuse. Identification and prevention." National Child Abuse Protection Clearing House. Publisher: Australia.

Alessi, I. I. and Hearn, K. (1984). Group treatment of children in shelters for battered women. In AR. Roberts (ed.) (pp. 84-115) Battered Women and their Families: Intervention Strategies and Treatment Problems. Springer Publishing: New York.