

Witnessing Violence

Seeing or hearing violence among family members hurts children in many ways. They can experience a sense of danger, chaos, confusion, isolation, fear, tension and/or hopelessness. They do not have to be hit to feel the pain of violence. Children who witness domestic violence are at special risk for emotional and developmental problems.

Individual therapy can help family members rebuild self-esteem, learn to trust again and develop healthy ways to express emotions.

Therapy for children may include:

- * Play therapy
- * Drawing
- * One-on-One counseling
- * Family therapy

If you are caring for a child or children who have witnessed domestic violence, call to learn more about services in your area.

Domestic Violence 24-Hour Hotlines

New Castle County
302-762-6110

New Castle County
Bi-Lingual
302-762-6110

Northern Kent County
302-678-3886

Kent & Sussex County
302-422-8058

Kent & Sussex County
Bi-Lingual
302-745-9874

Domestic Violence

How it Affects Children



**Be aware of the
warning signs!**

Created by:
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Children in violent homes...

- * May feel protective of an abused parent but they may also resent him or her for not stopping the abuse.
- * Sometimes, may feel close to the abuser, other times, they may hope he or she goes away or dies.
- * May feel guilty for not being able to rescue their family or for loving someone who is abusive.

Treatment and support can make a difference. Self-help groups, individual and group therapy can help children and their families.

Get more information and support.

Contact your local domestic violence hotline.

Emotionally, children can struggle with:



- * Anxiety
- * Depression
- * Poor self-esteem
- * Alcohol
- * Other drug use
- * Thoughts of suicide

Developmentally, Children can lag behind others in:

- * Growth
- * Speaking
- * Reading
- * Writing
- * Making friends



Children from violent homes may become adult victims of abuse or abusers themselves or they may commit other violent crimes.

Witnessing domestic violence can create a cycle of violence. Some children from violent homes may grow up believing violence is a normal part of family life. Children may also suffer long-term effects.

Unusual behaviors or moods may occur...

- * Playing alone or having few or no friends
- * Using violence to solve conflicts
- * Being overly responsible (as if the child is the “adult of the family”)
- * Developing low self-esteem
- * Sleeping too little, too much or during school
- * Flashbacks