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# Family Violence

## Understanding the Issue



## What is Family Violence?

- Abuse of power within the family
- Any form of violation, abuse, or intimidation directed against any family member
- As issue of power and control in a relationship
- Effects the emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual being of an individual
- A serious social problem that affects us all, it is not an individual problem.

### Forms include:

- Child Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Elder Abuse
- Suicide and Self Harm

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*It is a learned behaviour that can be changed.*

## P. A. R. E. N. T. S. Acronym

- **P** – patience  
(builds a strong heart)
- **A** – acceptance  
(unconditional love)
- **R** – respect  
(mutual between parents and children)
- **E** – encouragement  
(boosts self-esteem)
- **N** – nurturing  
(love and support)
- **T** – truthfulness  
(honest and sincerity)
- **S** – safety  
(provides a safe place)

## **What do families do?**

- Provide safety and security
- Provide love and affection
- Provide generations of children
- Provide guidance and support
- Provide wisdom and knowledge
- Provide law and order (rules)
- Provide structure and boundaries
- Provide humour and laughter
- Provide value and belief systems
- Provide teaching of new skills
- Provide learning opportunities
- Share and respect one another
- Understand and support one another
- The raising of children

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*There is no 'perfect' family, but we can learn to live healthier and happier with one another.*

## **More about family violence...**

### **Abuse has many faces:**

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Social abuse
- Financial abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Mental abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Child sexual abuse

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*It is a cycle that can continue over several generations.*

*It is an attempt of control over another person, it is not a loss of control.*

*It weakens us, our families, our communities, our Nations.*

*We can make a difference!*

## Understanding the Issue

- Everybody is affected by family violence (victims, abuser, children, parents, grandparents, extended family, community, neighbours, helpers, pets, etc)
- Abuse is multi-generational, it is a cycle
- Abused children are likely to grow up and become either victims or abusers (*1 million children witness violence in Canada-Stats. Canada 2004*)
- We, First Nations, come from a history that is family oriented (we need to support our families)
- It exists, it matters, and it can be reduced

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*Just by learning about family violence, you are making a difference!*

## Characteristics of a Healthy Family

- Communication
- Safety and security
- Unconditional love
- Respect for all members
- Trust and honesty
- Nurturing and caring
- Supporting
- Accepting
- Stability
- 'Fun times'
- Goals and values
- Sharing
- Problem solving skills

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*As family members, we should focus on each relationship. We will have different relationships with each member of our family. At times, we may need to mend certain relationships.*

*Healthy families are shaped from healthy relationships.*

## Healthy Families

### What is a family?

A family is those who we recognize as 'part' of our family. Someone we love and care for. It could mean "biological" or a "family of choice."

### Types:

- Extended family
- Blended family
- Single-parent family
- Nuclear family
- Step family
- Same sex family
- Clan family

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*Although there are many types of families, they do have one thing in common — that is — the ability to live healthy, happy lives with one another.*

## Factors that Contribute to Family Violence:

- Learned behaviours through government interventions (colonization, assimilation, cultural genocide, residential schools, etc)
- Loss of culture (lack of parenting skills)
- Abuse of substances (poor coping skills)
- Poverty
- Gender stereotypes
- Substandard living conditions and overcrowding
- High unemployment rate
- Racism, discrimination
- Oppression
- Low levels of education (public education)
- Lack of opportunities
- Isolation (slow response time)
- Lack of services

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*First Nations are resilient. Despite the processes inflicted upon us, the process to disrupt our families, we have remained strong and intact.*

### **Impacts of family violence:**

- Incarceration (jail, prison, detention centre)
- Substance abuse (addictions)
- Low self esteem
- Emotional disorders
- Depression
- Suicide (thoughts and attempts)
- Unhealthy relationships
- Stress and anxiety
- Lack of parenting skills
- Family dysfunction
- Memory loss
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Nightmares (sleeplessness)
- Self-destructive behaviours
- Poor self-image
- Poor coping mechanisms
- Eating disorders
- Poor hygiene
- Increase in high risk behaviour (sexual)
- Sense of shame and/or guilt
- Death of loved ones

### **Warning Signs:**

- Acting jealous or possessive
- Controlling contact with family or friends
- Making all the decisions
- Dangerous or risky behaviours
- Making accusations or lying
- Becoming violent or angry after drinking or doing drugs
- Not taking "NO" for an answer
- "Put downs" concerning ideas, friends, family, appearance
- Other behaviours that are threatening, manipulative, embarrassing, blaming

### **Providing Protection:**

- Safe, violent-free homes
- Strong childhood attachments to caregivers
- Good parental supervision
- Positive role models
- Passing on knowledge of values and belief systems