

Healthy Families Healthy Nations  
**Domestic Violence Training**

for Professionals and Service Providers

Theme - Improving Our Communities - Understanding Violence

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# How Family Violence Affects An Individual

*The Life Cycle*



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### **Children From Violent Homes Grow Up Believing That:**

- it is 'okay' for one parent to abuse the other
- it is 'okay' to hit other people
- violence is a way to solve problems
- big people have power over smaller people
- men are bullies who push women and children around
- women are victims who can not take care of themselves or their children
- victims deserve to be abused

### **Points To Consider:**

- not all children who witness family violence will grow up and be victims or abusers
- we all have the potential to live healthy violent-free lives
- healing the children of yesterday and years gone past is necessary in order to secure a positive future for the children of tomorrow

### **Life Stages:**

Pre-Natal → Infant → Child → Adolescent →  
Adult → Elder

**Family violence of any type, affects an individual at all stages of life.**

### **□ Elder**

- chronic physical pain, headaches
- high stress levels
- low self esteem
- depression, suicidal thoughts
- fear and anxiety
- insecure, not confident in self
- hopelessness, helplessness
- abuse alcohol/drugs/solvents
- abusive to self and others (physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually, spiritually, financially)
- withdraws, isolates from family, friends, community
- no respect for self and others
- self harm, self hate
- resorts to childlike behaviours

**Unless the cycle of violence is interrupted, it will likely continue from one generation to the next.**

**Family violence of any type, affects an individual at all stages of life.**

**□ Adult**

- chronic headaches, pain
- eating problems
- insecure, not confident in self
- low self esteem
- high stress levels
- feelings of helplessness, hopelessness
- depression, suicidal thoughts
- self harm, self hate
- ▶ sleeping problems
- ▶ poor self care
- ▶ poor coping skills
- ▶ abuse alcohol/drugs/solvents
- ▶ fear and anxiety
- ▶ relies heavily on others
- ▶ withdraws and isolates from family, friends, community
- ▶ high risk sexual behaviours
- ▶ multiple partners (unhealthy relationships)
- ▶ no respect for self and others
- ▶ irresponsible, immature, not reliable
- ▶ abusive to self and others (physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually, spiritually, financially)

**Family violence of any type, affects an individual at all stages of life.**

**□ Pre-Natal**

- ▶ there are increased miscarriages due to physical abuse
- ▶ miscarriages can also occur because of high stress levels
- ▶ poor health and lack of proper nutrition will also affect the baby (not taking care of self)

**□ Infant (0-24 months)**

- ▶ cries a lot and is fussy/cranky
- ▶ problems sleeping
- ▶ problems digesting food
- ▶ failure to thrive (motor skills, language, ability to learn and grow)
- ▶ startles easy, begins to feel fear
- ▶ non responsive
- ▶ difficulties bonding to parent/caregiver

**□ Child (2-6)**

- ▶ physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches)
- ▶ problems sleeping (nightmares, night terrors, insomnia, bed wetting)
- ▶ startles easy, feels fear and anxiety
- ▶ whines, clings, fear of separation
- ▶ failure to thrive (motor skills, language, ability to learn and grow)

**Family violence of any type, affects an individual at all stages of life.**

**Child (School-Age)**

- ▶ poor grades, behavioural problems at school (may fail grades)
- ▶ difficulty concentrating, focussing on tasks
- ▶ poor social skills
- ▶ low self esteem
- ▶ aggressive, fighting, bullying
- ▶ withdraws, isolates, passive
- ▶ eating problems (overeating, under eating, hoarding/stashing food)
- ▶ over sexual
- ▶ over protective of mom/caregiver (separation anxiety)
- ▶ fearful of things like death, being abandoned, anger, people
- ▶ insecure, lack confidence in self
- ▶ difficulty trusting others
- ▶ shows no respect for self and others

**Adolescent**

- ▶ poor grades, behavioural problems at school (failing, skipping, or quits school)
- ▶ poor concentration, difficulty focusing on tasks
- ▶ low self esteem
- ▶ insecure, no confident in self, confused
- ▶ runs away from home
- ▶ stays out late, doesn't bring friends home
- ▶ feels responsible to take care of victim and/or household (may always stay home)
- ▶ wild mood swings, fear, violent outbursts of anger

**Family violence of any type, affects an individual at all stages of life.**

**Adolescent** continued

- ▶ destroys property, vandalizes community, other criminal behaviour
- ▶ abuses others (siblings, parents, grandparents, pets, friends, peers)
- ▶ poor judgement and decision-making
- ▶ immaturity
- ▶ withdraws and isolates from family, friends, community
- ▶ eating problems (overeating, under eating, hoarding/stashing food)
- ▶ severe acne
- ▶ high stress levels
- ▶ gang involvement
- ▶ involved in drugs/alcohol/solvents
- ▶ dating violence (controlling, abusive towards opposite sex)
- ▶ early pregnancy and/or marriage
- ▶ sexually promiscuous
- ▶ risky behaviour, recklessness
- ▶ suicidal thoughts, depression
- ▶ self harm, self hate
- ▶ mistrust towards adults and other authority figures
- ▶ no respect for self and others
- ▶ abusive to self and others (physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually, spiritually, financially)