

Domestic violence critical essay

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Domestic Violence: Violence and Children Domestic Violence Domestic

Violence is defined as any violent or abusive behavior (whether physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, etc.) which is used by one person to control and dominate another with whom they have or have had relationship with. Every year, thousands of women are victimized at the hand of an intimate partner, making domestic violence one of the major crimes against women in the United States.

Despite the high rate of violence against women and the recent attention to the physical and emotional consequences of this abuse, until recently relatively little attention had been given to the unseen victims – the children. More than half the female victims of domestic violence live in a household with children under the age of 12 (United States Department of Justice – Violence by Intimates, 2000). Although estimates vary greatly, some research indicates that two – ten million children witness domestic violence each year in the United States (Rossman, Hughes, & Rosenberg, 2000).

Because children exposed to domestic violence may not necessarily be direct victims of abuse, they may be overlooked by helping professionals and, therefore their potential problems related to witnessing the abuse go unnoticed. Ignoring the consequences of exposure to violence on children can negatively impact their cognitive development as well as their emotional and physical health. Children exposed to domestic violence may be impacted in a variety of ways. Effects might be direct or indirect and one must consider prevention, intervention, and mediating factors.

Exposure may increase negative externalizing behavior, increase risk of aggressive behavior, cause anxiety and depression, lead to post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or perpetuate the cycle of violence by increasing the probability that the child will grow up to be a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence. It is important to understand that children who are exposed to violence are each unique and despite the fact that many may display negative consequences or great resiliency, each must be assessed carefully and individually to determine the exact consequence of exposure.

What can be done? The first and most important intervention for children is to address the issues of safety for the family. With so many children exposed to domestic violence and with potentially dire consequences resulting, it is important for courts, practitioners and advocates to better understand how children are affected by such exposure and how that impact might be altered by protective factors, such as supportive relationships with a caregiver.

The community should hold perpetrators responsible for their abusive behavior and provide a variety of legal interventions and social services to stop this violence. Child protection services, domestic violence agencies, juvenile courts, and community-based services should design interventions to create safety, enhance well-being, and provide stability for children and their families. Child welfare administrators should try to keep children affected by maltreatment and domestic violence in the care of their non-abusing parent, therefore creating permanency for the child/children.

The child protection services should have well-trained full time service providers/advocates on staff to respond meaningfully to the safety of multiple victims within a family. They should respectfully and without blame offer their services to victims, and provide the necessary service as soon as problems are identified. Child protection services, domestic violence

agencies, juvenile courts and even neighborhood residents should provide leadership to bring communities together to collaborate for the safety, well-being, and stability of children experiencing domestic violence.

What a child learns at an early age depends on the parent's ability to maintain and monitor what the children see and hear from their surroundings. References Rossman, R. B. , Hughes, H. M. , & Rosenberg, M. S. (2000). Children and Interparental Violence: The Impact of Exposure. Michigan: Edward Brothers. United States Department of Justice. (2000). Violence by Intimates. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from: <http://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv.pdf>