

HOW DOES WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IMPACT A CHILD?



Domestic violence is an ongoing experience of physical, emotional, psychological, financial and/or sexual abuse in the home that is used to establish power and control over another person.

What effect does witnessing domestic violence have on secondary victims, such as children who live in homes where partner abuse occurs?

Witnessing domestic violence can have life-long impacts on children and cause profound psychological harm. It disrupts their sense of safety and at a young age can impact their brain development.

When children have been in an abusive environment, their brains and bodies are regularly flooded with adrenaline and cortisol, keeping them on high alert, and locked in a cycle of fight-flight-freeze. As a result, a child may find it difficult to learn, concentrate, problem solve and regulate their own emotions, as they find it hard to feel safe.

Children who grow up witnessing violence and abuse can have social problems, fall behind in their learning and demonstrate challenging behaviours that are due to their trauma: however, these often get mistaken for ADHD. They can go on to experience anxiety and depression and often struggle with healthy relationship choices and substance abuse as they enter adolescence and adulthood. Child witnesses can display inappropriate attitudes about violence as a means of resolving conflict and indicate a greater willingness to use violence themselves.

We need to break the cycle. If you think that a child has or is being abused; or a criminal offence is happening and a young person is at immediate risk of harm, contact triple zero 000 immediately or contact the Child Protection Helpline 132 111.

It might feel scary to make a report, but it could mean the difference of that child and family getting the support they need.

NSW POLICE FORCE

Call your local Police Station; Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000; or in the case of an emergency dial 000

CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE

(to report suspected child abuse or neglect)
Phone: 132 111 (24/7) or 1800 212 936 (TTY)

KIDS HELPLINE

If you need to speak to a counsellor, call 1800 55 1800, (24/7). If you can't get to a phone, try www.kidshelp.com.au

LIFELINE 131 114 (24/7)

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICE

(CAPS) NSW Phone: 132111

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINE

1800 656 463 (24/7)

Call **GOT YOUR BACK SISTA** on **02 4989 2777** during business hours to book an appointment with our Support Team or receive information and advice.

