

BREAKING THE CYCLE



CHILDREN EXPOSED  
TO WOMAN ABUSE

OF VIOLENCE

## A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

Developed by:

The Peel Committee  
Against Woman Abuse

January 2010

## IN THE WORDS OF THE CHILDREN...

**1. The Right to Basic Needs** Every child has the right to have clean water, good food, proper clothes, a home and be happy. **2. The Right to Make Friends and Freely Meet in Groups** Every child has the right to play together, have fun, make friends. The way to have a friend is to be one! **3. The Right to Religion, Culture and Beliefs** Every child has the right to be treated the same way in every country and not be treated differently because of the colour of their skin. Every child has the right to choose their own faith. **4. The Right to Privacy** Every child has the right to peace and quiet and have their own privacy from different people who bother you or from the internet. **5. The Right to Justice, Protection and Treatment** Every child has the right to have a safe place to live. They need to be able to live without fear. **6. The Right to Education** Every child has the right to learn even if it is in a special class. **7. The Right to a Caring Home Environment** Every child has the right to love. **8. The Right to Be Heard** Every child has the right to be respected, speak freely or give an honest opinion. **9. The Right to an Identity** Every child has the right to have their own name and nationality. Every child can show who they are. **10. The Right to Peace** Every child has the right to have a happy life where they can live in peace. **11. The Right to Equal Access** Every child has the right to have special care and training because it doesn't matter what skin colour or race or if they have any sickness or disability. **12. The Right to Play** Every child has the right to play and have fun. To have dancing flowers and magic mud.



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In 2000, PCAWA's Children Exposed to Woman Abuse Subcommittee initiated the development of this booklet for parents and service providers in the Region of Peel. We are grateful to the PCAWA Multicultural Subcommittee for their dedicated efforts in revising the 2006 edition, and the Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Committee for making this latest 2010 edition possible.

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MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
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SOCIAUX ET COMMUNAUTAIRES



And last but not least, we would like to acknowledge the many women and children who have contributed to the development of this booklet, for having the courage to share their stories and assisting with the preparation of this booklet.

## WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOKLET

This booklet was developed for women who have experienced or are experiencing violence, particularly where children are exposed to the abuse. It is designed to provide women and their families with:

- ▶ information on the impact of their children's exposure to woman abuse
- ▶ strategies for helping children cope with abuse
- ▶ parenting strategies in light of children's exposure to woman abuse
- ▶ educational resources parents and caregivers can use with their children
- ▶ a list of emergency contacts that can provide support to women and their families

Although the detrimental impact of children's exposure to woman abuse has received some attention over the past decade, it still remains an issue that is often overlooked or ignored. This booklet provides only a brief overview of the impact of children's exposure to woman abuse and the current resources available in the community for addressing this issue.

We encourage readers to use the booklet as a starting point to understanding and breaking the cycle of abuse and children's exposure to violence against women.

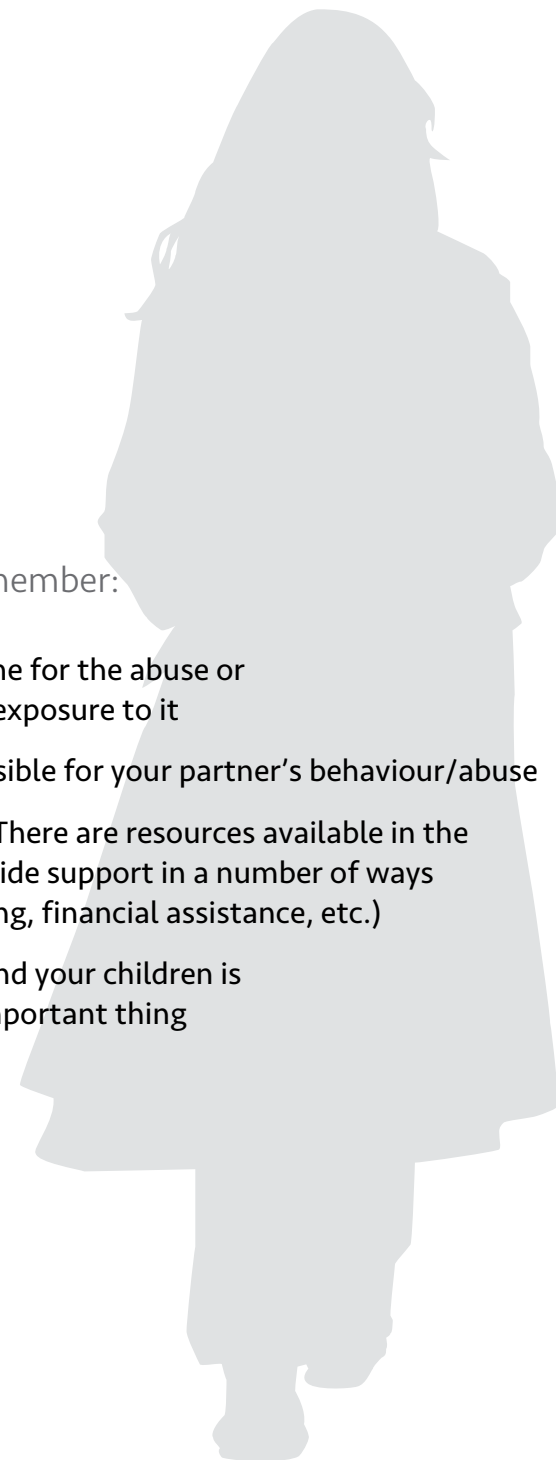
## TAKING CARE OF YOU

While this booklet focuses on supporting children exposed to woman abuse, it is important to understand some of what you, as a mother who has experienced abuse, may be dealing with while trying to support your children. You may be:

- ▶ experiencing ongoing abuse, threats of abuse, or surviving the impacts and trauma of past abuse
- ▶ fearful for your safety and your children's safety
- ▶ dealing with practical problems such as finding housing, financial support, and/or employment
- ▶ in the process of criminal and/or family law proceedings
- ▶ feeling isolated, alone, overwhelmed, helpless and/or hopeless
- ▶ feeling blamed for the abuse and/or your children's exposure to it
- ▶ fearful of being an outcast in your family or community
- ▶ fearful of losing your children because of their exposure to the abuse
- ▶ accused of being an unfit mother
- ▶ experiencing additional barriers such as racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, language barriers, etc.

It is important to remember:

- ▶ You are not to blame for the abuse or for your children's exposure to it
- ▶ You are not responsible for your partner's behaviour/abuse
- ▶ You are not alone. There are resources available in the community to provide support in a number of ways (counselling, housing, financial assistance, etc.)
- ▶ The safety of you and your children is always the most important thing



*Every woman has the right to make choices  
that are right for her.*

## WHAT IS WOMAN ABUSE?

Woman abuse is a widespread societal problem and domestic violence is considered a criminal act in Canada. It is a form of power and control that can take many shapes including verbal, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, sexual and physical abuse, as well as stalking and criminal harassment.

Women of all ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities, socio-economic classes, faiths, abilities, and professions experience abuse.

It is important to recognize the *differential impacts* of violence on different women. For example, based on a woman's identity, including the colour of her skin, her preferred language, and her socio-economic status, etc., her experience of violence and the barriers she faces while trying to cope with or escape the abuse will be different from other women who will have unique experiences of violence based on their own identities.

Since every woman's experience of violence is different, concepts of safety and feeling safe are also different for every woman.

This could mean that some women choose to stay in abusive relationships while others may choose to leave. Women often face criticism and judgement, or find themselves feeling guilty or ashamed of their choices. However, it is essential to understand that making difficult decisions about leaving or staying in abusive relationships may be influenced by a number of external or systemic factors such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, racism and other forms of oppression, societal/family pressure to stay or support to leave, the presence/lack of the physical ability to leave, pressures related to being a single parent, language barriers, etc.

## FORMS OF WOMAN ABUSE

Woman abuse can occur in a variety of relationships, including extended family relationships, heterosexual and same-sex relationships, as well as in dating, acquaintance and peer relationships. While every woman's experience of violence and abuse is unique, some of the forms which abuse can take are:

- **VERBAL ABUSE:** insults, shouting, swearing, put-downs, and degrading language
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** inducing fear, threats (to harm or kill the woman/children/pets, to take away the children, to have the woman deported from the country, or to commit suicide), suspicions of the woman's actions, accusations, isolation, and undermining a woman's self-esteem
- **FINANCIAL ABUSE:** controlling finances to disempower the woman, preventing her from seeking or maintaining paid employment, withholding or restricting access to money, exclusion from financial decision-making
- **SPIRITUAL ABUSE:** degrading another person's spiritual beliefs, withholding means to practice, forcing adherence to a belief system
- **SEXUAL ABUSE:** any unwanted act of a sexual nature including rape in a marriage or marriage-like relationship, refusal to use protection from sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancy, and forced exposure to or participation in pornography or prostitution
- **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** slapping, shoving, hitting, biting, torture, assault with a weapon, and/or murder
- **STALKING/CRIMINAL HARASSMENT:** persistently following someone, making harassing telephone calls, threatening someone

## STATISTICS ON WOMAN ABUSE

- As many as **one in every three women is beaten, coerced into sex, or abused** in some other way in her lifetime; **one woman in four is abused during pregnancy** (*United Nations Population Fund, 2002*).
- On average, approximately **75 women are killed each year** in Canada by their husband or common-law partner (*Statistics Canada, 2002*).
- Over **500 Aboriginal women have been slain or have gone missing over the past 15 years** in Canada due to violence against women (*Amnesty International, 2004*).
- In 2005, nearly **106,000 women and children were admitted into a shelter** for abused women (*Statistics Canada, 2008*).
- Between 1997 and 2006, the rate of **young women** (aged 15 to 24) **killed by their spouse was nearly 3 times higher** than all female victims of spousal homicide (*Statistics Canada, 2008*).
- **Immigrant women are at a higher risk** of experiencing woman abuse due to the barriers they face in relation to their immigration status. Refugee women are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to their precarious status (*YWCA, 2005*).
- The estimated **annual health-related cost** associated with violence against women is **\$1.5 billion** (*Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, 1995*).
- There are approximately **31,000 women over the age of 65 currently experiencing abuse in Ontario** (*Older Women's Network Toronto, 2004*).
- As a result of homophobia and a lack of accessible resources, **queer women are particularly vulnerable** to abuse (*National Association of Women and the Law, 2005*).
- **More than half of women with disabilities have experienced physical abuse**, compared with one-third of non-disabled women (*United Nations, 2007*).

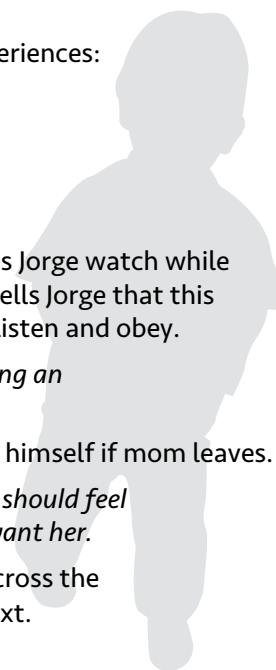
## WHAT IS CHILDHOOD EXPOSURE TO WOMAN ABUSE?

The following few sections are dedicated to helping you understand your children's exposure to woman abuse.

Children exposed to woman abuse see, hear and can otherwise become aware of violence against their mother. An abusive environment may cause them to feel tense, anxious and fearful. However, just as every woman's experience of abuse is different, children's experiences of abuse and the affects of their exposure to it are also different for each child.

The following are some examples of children's experiences:

- ▶ Mohammed hears his dad swearing at his mother and calling her names.
- ▶ *Ling sees bruises on her mom's face after hearing an argument the night before.*
- ▶ Dad brings Jorge into the bedroom and makes Jorge watch while he beats his mother with a baseball bat. He tells Jorge that this is what you have to do when women do not listen and obey.
- ▶ *Becky hears her dad accusing her mom of having an affair and hears her dad raping her mother.*
- ▶ Amir hears his dad saying he will kill mom or himself if mom leaves.
- ▶ *Jonelle hears her dad telling her mom that she should feel lucky to have him because no one else would want her.*
- ▶ Duane witnesses his dad throwing the dog across the room and telling his mom that she will be next.



*Children often believe that their parents are fighting because they are bad or that the violence is their fault.*

- ▶ **The violence is not your fault and it is not your children's fault.**
- ▶ **You are not responsible for your partner's abusive behaviour.**
- ▶ **You are not to blame for the abuse or for your children's exposure to it.**



## HOW ARE CHILDREN AFFECTED BY EXPOSURE?

### **When children see their mother being abused, they may learn that:**

- ▶ Violence is okay
- ▶ Violence is a way to resolve conflict
- ▶ Violence is an effective way to gain power and control over others
- ▶ Violence is a normal part of a relationship

### **Children can be directly or indirectly affected by seeing the abuse:**

- ▶ They may be directly abused by the abuser - verbally, physically, etc.
- ▶ They may be abused if they are trying to intervene and protect their mother
- ▶ They may feel torn between loyalties towards each parent
- ▶ Witnessing violence can be a form of abuse

### **Children exposed to woman abuse are affected on many levels:**

- ▶ Emotionally (anxiety, anger, depression, low self-esteem)
- ▶ Physically (difficulty sleeping or eating, health problems)
- ▶ Socially (poor social skills, peer rejection)
- ▶ Cognitively (development delays, poor school performance)
- ▶ Behaviourally (aggression, tantrums, immaturity)

### **The severity of the impact on a child may be influenced by:**

- ▶ The age and developmental stage of the child
- ▶ How long the abuse has been happening
- ▶ The severity and frequency of the abuse
- ▶ The support the child receives

## HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO WOMAN ABUSE?

In Canada, up to 360,000 children are exposed to violence in the home each year (*Unicef, The Body Shop International and the Secretariat for the United Nations, 2006*).

Three to five children in each classroom are exposed to violence in the home (*YWCA Calgary, 2005*).

Children witnessed violence in more than half of the cases in which women feared for their lives (*Statistics Canada, 2006*).

Children are physically assaulted in 12% of the incidents they witness (*Education Wife Assault, 1993*).

On any given day in Canada, about 2,500 children are living in an abused woman's shelter with their mothers. 67% of these children are under 10 years of age (*Statistics Canada, 2006*).

## THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Children who are exposed to abuse may learn that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict and that it is a normal part of a relationship. Research shows that being exposed to violence can increase children's chances of being abused and/or being abusive in adulthood. In fact, **boys who witness violence against their mothers are more likely to abuse their own wives than children of nonviolent parents**. This is the cycle of violence.

It is important to recognize, however, that not all children who are exposed to woman abuse become abusive or get involved in an abusive relationship in adulthood. Children are resilient and many factors, such as supportive mothers and caregivers, and nurturing environments, can help break the cycle of violence.



# HOW EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE CAN IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

The following charts have been adapted from "Little Eyes, Little Ears: How Violence Against a Mother Shapes Children as They Grow" by Alison Cunningham and Linda Baker, the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System. The full resource can be found at [www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca).

*Serious behavioural and emotional problems are 17 times higher for boys and 10 times higher for girls who observed woman abuse, than children that did not have the experience. (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson, 1990)*

## INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Key Aspects of Development → →	Potential Impacts of Exposure to Violence
Take in information from the world around them through the five senses	<i>Loud noises/vivid visual images associated with violence can be distressing</i>
Form secure attachments	<i>Parents/caregivers may be unable to consistently respond to child's needs, negatively affecting the parent-child bond</i>
Become more active explorers of the world through play	<i>Fear and instability may inhibit exploration and play; play may imitate aggression seen/heard</i>
Learn about social interaction/relationships from what they hear/observe	<i>Learn about aggression in observed interactions</i>

## PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Key Aspects of Development → →	Potential Impacts of Exposure to Violence
Learn to express anger/other emotions in appropriate ways	<i>Learn unhealthy ways to express anger and aggression</i>
Experiences/observations most salient in forming meaning in their world	<i>Confused by conflicting messages (e.g., what I see vs. what I am told)</i>
Outcome is more salient than the process	<i>May be distressed by perceived unfairness, father's arrest and/or trip to shelter</i>
Think in egocentric ways	<i>May attribute violence to something they did</i>
Form ideas about gender roles	<i>Learn gender roles associated with violence and victimization</i>
Increase physical independence (e.g., dressing self)	<i>Instability may inhibit independence; may see regressive behaviours</i>

## TEENAGERS

Key Aspects of Development → →	Potential Impacts of Exposure to Violence
Increased sense of self and autonomy from family	<i>Accelerated responsibility and autonomy, positioning youth in care-taking roles/premature independence; poorly developed family skills in respectful communication/negotiation; parent-child conflict, early home-leaving, school drop-out</i>
Physical changes brought on by puberty	<i>May try to stop violence; may use increased size to impose will with physical intimidation and aggression</i>
Increased peer group influence and desire for acceptance	<i>Possibly more embarrassed by family resulting in shame, secrecy, insecurity; might use high-risk behaviours to impress peers (theft, drugs); may increase time away from home; may engage in maladaptive defensive (e.g., drugs) and offensive (e.g., aggression towards abuser) strategies to avoid or cope with violence and its stigma</i>

## TEENAGERS

Key Aspects of Development → →	Potential Impacts of Exposure to Violence
Self worth more strongly linked to view of physical attractiveness	<i>View of self may be distorted by abuser's degradation of mother and/or child maltreatment; may experience eating disorder and use image management activities (e.g. body piercing, tattoos)</i>
Dating raises issues of sexuality, intimacy, relationship skills	<i>May have difficulty establishing healthy relationships; may fear being abused/abusive in intimate relationships, especially when conflict arises; may avoid intimacy or prematurely seek intimacy and child-bearing to escape and create own support system</i>
Increased capacity for abstract reasoning and broader world view	<i>"All or nothing" interpretations of experiences may be learned and compete with greater capacity to see "shades of grey" (e.g., everyone is a victim or a perpetrator); this may be intensified by experiences of child maltreatment; may be predisposed towards attitudes and values associated with violence and/or victimization</i>
Increased influence by media	<i>Possibly more influenced by negative media messages re: violent behaviour, gender role stereotypes</i>

# A CHILD'S SAFETY PLAN

This plan was developed to help mothers teach their children some basic ways to keep themselves safe.

It is based on the belief that the most important thing that children can do is to protect themselves. Although children often try to stop the violence by distracting the abuser or directly interfering in the abusive episode, they cannot stop the abuse. It is important to tell your children that the best and most important thing to do is to keep themselves safe.

Children who are exposed to woman abuse can be profoundly affected. It can be very traumatic for them to witness violence, whether it is directed at them or at someone they love. Personal safety and safety planning are extremely important.

Below is a list of things you can do to develop a safety plan for you and your children, however your children's plan may depend on their age and developmental ability:

- ▶ Tell your children that the **most important thing is for them to be safe**. Children should know that it is not their responsibility to make sure that their mother is safe
- ▶ The first step of any plan is for the children to **leave the area where the abuse is occurring**. Have your children pick a safe room/place in the house, preferably with a lock on the door and a phone
- ▶ **Teach your children how to call for help**. It is important that your children know *not* to use a phone where they can be seen by the abuser. This puts them at risk. Talk to your children about using a neighbour's phone or a pay phone if they are unable to use a phone at home. If you have a cell phone, teach your children how to use it
- ▶ Make sure that your children **know their full name and address** (rural children need to know their concession and lot #)

- ▶ **Role play** with your children and practice what they will say when they call for help

## For example:

Dial 911.

An operator will answer and say: "Police, Fire, Ambulance."

Your child should say: *Police.*

Then your child should say:

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I need help. Send the police.*

*Someone is hurting my mom.*

*The address here is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*The phone number here is \_\_\_\_\_.*

- ▶ It is important for children to **leave the phone off the hook after they are finished talking**, otherwise the police may call the number back for verification. This could create an even more dangerous situation for you and your children
- ▶ **Pick a safe place to meet your children**, out of the home (i.e. at a known neighbour's home, police/fire station), after the situation is safe for you and for them (so that you can easily find each other)
- ▶ **Teach your children the safest route** for them to take to get to the planned place of safety.

## NOTE:

- ▶ When the police are called to respond to an incident in your home, there is a chance that you may be charged. This often occurs if the perpetrator claims you have assaulted him/her, even if you acted in self-defense
- ▶ Police involvement can result in arrest, detainment and/or deportation if you are a woman without legal status in Canada
- ▶ Police involvement will also result in the involvement of Child Protection Services (e.g., Children's Aid Society).

(Excerpt from Creating a Safety Plan. Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse.)

# HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN

**Let** your children know that the violence is not their fault. Children often feel that their behaviour caused the violence and/or separation. They need to be reassured that it is an adult problem and they did not cause it.

**Reaffirm** your unconditional love for your children. They may fear that their behaviour will cause you to leave or divorce. Let them know that you will always love them no matter how they behave.

**Promote** your children's self esteem. Spend time with them. Express love and affection. Notice what they are doing right. Encourage them to be children.

**Allow** your children to express different types of feelings. When parents separate, children may feel sad, angry, ashamed, guilty, afraid, confused, relieved, or worried. These are all natural reactions you can expect from your children. Help them find safe ways to express their feelings.

**Reassure** your children that they will be okay. Explain that there have been many changes. Help them understand that their family is not the only family that has had this experience, and that other families have made things better.

**Encourage** your children to talk about what they saw and/or heard. It may be difficult for you to hear what they experienced, but everyone needs the chance to express their feelings – especially feelings of anger, hurt, pain or fear.

**Acknowledge** the mixed/confusing feelings children may have toward their parents. Let them know that it is okay to love someone and feel angry at the same time.

**Remind** your children that you don't expect them to look after you. They may feel responsible for keeping you or their siblings safe, but their priority is to keep themselves safe. Refer to the "A Child's Safety Plan" section to give your children the skills to stay safe.

**Understand** that there is a reason for your children's behaviour. Acknowledge this in words they can understand. Unless you discuss what is going on, your children will work out reasons of their own for the problems and will often blame themselves.

**Create** methods of discipline that are respectful and do not humiliate your children.

**Mention** to your children's teachers or daycare staff that there have been changes in your family. It helps when your children are understood and supported by other adults. If there is a change in your children's behaviour, others will then be better able to support them.

**Be clear** with your children about what is happening in everyday life. Children who live with abuse need information ahead of time about where they will be, and how long they will be staying there. If your children have a hard time separating from you, reassure them that you will be safe and let them know when you will be back.

**Get support** for yourself and for your children. It takes a lot to balance your needs along with those of your children, especially when they have been exposed to abuse. But you don't have to do it alone.

**Remind** yourself that children are resilient. Providing a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters healthy development will help you and your children heal from experiences of abuse and exposure to violence.

**Remember** that you are not alone. There are supports available in the community that are dedicated to providing services to meet your needs.

(Adapted from: B.C. Institute Against Family Violence. Volume 6, Issue 2, Summer 1999.)

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

→ **1. If my children are exposed to abuse, how will they be affected?**

Children are affected by exposure to woman abuse in different ways. When children witness abuse, they may learn that violence is a normal and acceptable way to resolve conflict, or a method of gaining power and control over someone else. Some children are more likely to accept excuses for abusive behaviour and/or to behave aggressively themselves in adulthood as a result of childhood exposure to violence. However, children are resilient and not all children respond to trauma in the same way. Many factors contribute to whether the cycle of violence will continue into adulthood, such as a child's coping style, stressors in their life, support systems, and the ability to talk about their experiences in a safe space.

→ **2. If my children do not see my partner hurting me, will they be affected?**

Children do not have to see abuse to be affected by it. They can be affected through hearing the abuse or seeing its results (i.e. bruises, broken household items, parents being physically and/or emotionally unavailable to their children, police intervention, fathers being removed from the home, and/or going to a shelter). Children can feel the tension in their environment which can cause them to worry about their own safety and the safety of other family members. However, all children are unique and thus, they will be affected by exposure to woman abuse in unique ways.

→ **3. How can I talk to my children about what has happened?**

It may be difficult for you to talk with your children about what has happened in your family. However, it is important to give your children permission to express their feelings about their experiences so that they may begin the journey to healing. For assistance in this process, you may choose to connect your children and/or family to supports in the community. Refer to the section on How Parents Can Support Their Children for a few tips.

→ **4. My child is angry. How do I respond?**

Anger is a common response for children exposed to woman abuse. It is usually a cover-up for other emotions. For example, your children may be feeling a sense of responsibility, frustration, confusion, sadness and/or worry. Depending on their age, you may find creative ways to explore how your children are feeling, such as through artwork, games, and videos. If your children are not comfortable talking with you, seek assistance from community supports, friends or family members so that you do not have to deal with this situation alone.

→ **5. If my partner was abusive to me and s/he has access to my children, what can I do to keep my children safe?**

It is important to try to make your abusive partner's access to your children safer for them and for yourself. Family members or friends can act as intermediaries to arrange access visits, including transporting your children, so that you do not have to deal directly with your abuser. Develop a safety plan for yourself if you pick-up or drop-off your children for visits yourself, and ensure that the exchange takes place in a safe public area. There are Access Centers which are intended to provide a safe setting for visits or exchanges to take place. Where you have concerns for the safety of your children, developing a safety plan with them and talking to them about strategies to stay safe during visits could be very important. If there are issues, contact your lawyer or child protection services.

→ **6. If I tell someone that I am being abused and I have children, will they contact child protection services?**

The law requires that when someone believes that a child has been or is at risk of emotional, physical or sexual abuse, they have a legal duty to report this information to a Children's Aid Society (CAS). These reports can be made anonymously.

Many community agencies believe that when children are in a family in which domestic violence is occurring, they need to report this to CAS. The agency should advise you of this duty and let you know if they are going to call, but they may not always do so.

When police respond to a call involving woman abuse, they will automatically contact CAS if children are living in the home.

Once a call is made to CAS, CAS will complete an assessment to determine whether there is or has been child abuse. There may be an initial phone call and information provided with no further contact. Where they have concerns, they will conduct a further investigation. The primary concern of CAS is the safety and wellbeing of children and so they will seek to determine whether the child is safe and can take legal action if they believe your children are at risk. CAS can also be helpful to you in assessing whether an abusive partner is a risk to your children. Community agencies will assist you in dealing with CAS including getting legal support if required.

Some abusers tell women that if she reports the violence, her children will be taken away. This is intended as a threat and tool to silence and control women and to keep them from getting help. It is important that you tell someone you trust so that they can help you through the process of creating safety for yourself and your children.

→ **7. How can I get help that will not cause me and my children more trouble?**

Some support services are not safe for all women. This may be intentional or unintentional. Many services may adhere to a duty to report woman abuse and lack of legal status in Canada to authorities such as the police and/or child protection services. This can leave women vulnerable to incarceration, deportation, and separation from their children. There are safe, confidential and anonymous services available in the community such as:

- ▶ **Assaulted Women's Helpline:** 1-866-863-0511  
1-866-863-7868 TTY
- ▶ **Femaide (Francophone Helpline):** 1-877-336-2433  
1-866-860-7082 ATS
- ▶ **Kids Help Phone:** 1-800-668-6868

Some shelters and Violence Against Women Counsellors may also provide safe services. Through these types of services, women can seek support without providing any identifying information about themselves (i.e. name, location, etc.). Women can also ask which organizations are safe to call or visit for additional support and which organizations will not report to child protection services or to the police. The first priority should be your safety. Seek support to identify which services are safe to access and get information about reporting processes to ensure your safety.

*It is important that you tell someone you trust so that they can help you through the process of creating safety for yourself and your children.*

# EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

## VIDEOS

### **“Seen But Not Heard”** (B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses, 1993)

This 29 minute video examines the effects on children witnessing woman abuse at home. To order (416) 538-6613 or 1-800-263-6910

### **“Tulip Doesn’t Feel Safe”** (Kinetic Inc., 1993)

This 15 minute video through animation teaches children aged six to eight how to deal with various unsafe situations, specifically wife abuse. To order call (416) 963-5979.

## CHILDREN’S BOOKS

### **A Family That Fights**

S. Bernstein. (Illinois: Albert Whitman and Co., 1991)

### **Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families**

M. Brown (Michigan: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986)

Dedicated to the many aspects of separation and divorce, the questions children ask, and ways of coping with the confusion and uncertainty.

### **Hands Are Not for Hitting**

M. Agassi (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 2000)

### **Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care**

J. Wilgocki and Marcia Kahn Wright. (Magination Press, 2002)

### **My Star Daddy**

K. Francis. (2005)

Story of a little girl who experiences domestic violence and is getting help through counselling. Intended for therapeutic use with children who have experienced or witnessed some form of domestic violence.

### **Something Is Wrong at My House**

D. Davis (Seattle: Parenting Press Inc., 1984)

This book is about feelings and ways to cope when living in a violent home.

### **Talking to my Mum: A picture workbook or workers, mothers and children affected by domestic abuse**

Catherine Humphrey, Audrey Mullender, Ravi Kithira, Agnes Skambalis (Great Britain: Athenaeum Press, 2006)

A picture workbook for workers, mothers, children affected by Domestic Abuse.

### **Talking About Domestic Abuse: A photo activity workbook to develop communication between mothers and young people**

Catherine Humphrey, Audrey Mullender, Ravi Kithira, Agnes Skambalis (Great Britain: Athenaeum Press, 2006)

An activity workbook to develop communication between mothers and young people.

## LITERATURE

### **Children’s Exposure to Domestic Violence: A Guide to Research and Resources**

A. Summers (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2006)

### **Children Who See Too Much: Lessons From the Child Witness to Violence Project**

M. Groves (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002)

### **Don’t Hit My Mommy: A Manual for Child-Parent Psychotherapy with Young Witnesses of Family Violence**

Lieberman, Alicia, & Van Horn, Patricia (Zero to Three, 2005)

A research informed work that includes theoretical and practical ideas for working with children who have witnessed or experienced interpersonal violence.

### **Helping Children Thrive: Supportive woman abuse survivors as mothers**

L. Baker and A. Cunningham (Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2004)

### **Just Because I Am: A Child’s Book of Affirmation**

L. Murphy-Payne. (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Inc., 1994)

**Safe and Sound: A Cross Culturally Sensitive Interactive Guide for People Working with Women and Children Exposed to Family Violence**

Catholic Family Services of Durham, Thistle, Dennis-Grant, & Townsend, Angela (Oshawa, ON: Catholic Family Services of Durham, 2006)

This manual incorporates an understanding of culture and diversity in dealing with domestic violence. It uses an experiential approach to the group exercises that cover power and control, the experience of immigration, barriers to accessing help and finding the strength to reach out.

**Supporting Women after the Domestic Violence Loss, Trauma & Recovery**

H. Abrahams (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007)

**When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the wounds of Witnessing Abuse**

L. Bancroft. (G.P. Putnam's Son's, 2004)

Helping young children heal the wounds of witnessing abuse.

**GAMES**

**“Let’s Go Fish A Memory”** (Blue Heron games. Vancouver, B.C.)

This game can be used to enhance a child’s ability to identify and express feelings. Both listening and speaking skills are emphasized.

**“The Dragon Game”** (Blue Heron Productions, Nelson, B.C.)

This game encourages story telling about different experiences of anger as well as other closely related feelings such as anxiety, frustration and embarrassment.

**“The Hero’s Journey”** (Victim Services of Peel, Mississauga, ON.)

This game is an expressive arts resource designed for working with 6 - 12 year old children who have been affected by family violence). To order contact Victim Services at (905) 568-1068.

**OTHER RESOURCES**

**“Building Blocks Resource Kit for Violence-Free Play and Learning” A free book and toy for Region of Peel Parents and Caregivers with Children 0-6 years old.**

(Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse / Peel Committee On Sexual Assault)

This resource is a fun interactive tool that comes in the form of a resource guide book and a set of toy blocks to promote violence-free play and learning. To order contact PCAWA at (905) 282-9792 or PCSA at (905) 273-4100.

**“Creating a Safety Plan”** (Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse)

This booklet identifies key steps to increasing safety. Available in multiple languages.

To order copies of this booklet, contact PCAWA at (905) 282-9792.

**WEBSITES FOR WOMEN ON LEGAL RIGHTS AND EDUCATION**

**Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women and Children** - [www.crvawc.ca](http://www.crvawc.ca)

**Family Law Education for Women** - [www.onefamilylaw.ca](http://www.onefamilylaw.ca)

**Metrac** - [www.metrac.ca](http://www.metrac.ca)

**National Clearinghouse on Family Violence** - [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/index.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/index.html)

**Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse** - [www.pcawa.org](http://www.pcawa.org)

**Springtide Resources** - [www.womanabuseprevention.com](http://www.womanabuseprevention.com)





For additional copies of this booklet, please contact:

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