

# Domestic Violence and Children: Impact and Protective Factors

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Our mission is to reduce the incidence and trauma of all crimes through person-centered emotional support, advocacy, and medical services, and community-based prevention efforts.



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## Agenda

- Overview of Domestic Violence
- Impact on Children
- Protective Factors
- Opportunities for identification, education and support
- Resources



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# Content Warning

Some of the information we discuss today may be upsetting. Please take care of yourself as you need to during and after this presentation.




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# Overview of Domestic Violence

- The New York State Department of Health defines domestic violence as "a pattern of behavior used by an individual to establish and maintain power and control over their intimate partner."
- Behaviors may include:
  - Acts of threats of physical violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Acts to humiliate
  - Economic control
  - Isolation from family, friends, and support networks
  - Verbal abuse
- Domestic violence affects people of any gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and socio-economic status.




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Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs. The Duluth Model – Power and Control Wheel  
<https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>




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Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs. The Duluth Model – Abuse of Children  
<https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>

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## Prevalence of Domestic Violence

- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) conducted by the Center for Disease Control found that 1 in 4 women, and 1 of 10 men report having experienced abuse at the hands of a partner.
- The National Institute of Justice estimates that 25% of children are exposed to family/domestic violence.

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## Impact

- Short Term Impacts
  - Physical Health
    - Are at a higher risk for physical injury themselves, whether intentional or unintentional
    - Generally, have poorer overall health
    - More likely to engage in self-injurious behavior and/or attempt suicide
  - Academic Challenges
    - Declined educational performance
    - Higher risk of dropping out of school
  - Psychological Health
    - Have higher rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder than their peers
    - Lower levels of self-esteem
    - Feelings of guilt, shame, and fear
  - Behavioral Issues
    - May include regression or aggression
    - Unhealthy relationship dynamics with peers

U.S. DOJ. Domestic Violence. 2020

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## Impact

- Long Term Impacts

- Physical Health
  - Higher rates of asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Higher risk for cardiac issues and stroke
  - Chronic Pain
- Psychological Health
  - Increased rates of depression, anxiety and PTSD as adults
  - Substance use disorder
- Polyvictimization
  - Research indicates higher risk for victimization later in life

Gilbert et al 2023



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## Protective Factors

- Protective factors promote well-being and reduce the risk for negative outcomes.
- These factors can help to mitigate the impact of exposure to domestic violence, and help children negotiate these challenging situations.
- These should not take the place of any immediate safety needs – that must be prioritized.
- Efforts designed to reduce risk exposure can help short-term and long-term.
- Protective factors include individual, relationship and community level supports

Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015



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## Protective Factors – Individual Level

- Self-Regulation skills
  - Anger management, coping skills, and emotional awareness
  - Impact: decreases in PTSD, anxiety, and depression; healthy social skills and social networks; overall resiliency
- Problem-Solving skills
  - Adaptability
  - Impact: Improved mental health, including lower rates of PTSD, anxiety, and depression



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## Protective Factors – Relationship Level

- Parenting Competencies
  - Emotional support, strong parent-child bond, parental responsiveness
  - Impact: Lower likelihood of running away, lower risk of antisocial behavior, increase in self-esteem
- Parent/Caregiver Well-Being
  - Positive psychological functioning,
  - Impact: Better mental health outcomes, more resilient behaviors



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## Protective Factors – Community Level

- Positive School Environment
  - School-based interventions for youth who are exposed to domestic violence
  - Impact: Reduction of depression, PTSD symptoms, and dating violence



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## Building Protective Factors

- Individual Level:
  - Promote self-regulation and problem-solving skills
  - Individual counseling
  - Group counseling specifically for children exposed to domestic violence
  - Education which teach strategies to build these skills
- Relationship Level:
  - Provide support to non-offending parents
  - Parenting skill development
  - Individual and group counseling
- Community Level:
  - Connection to therapeutic interventions and violence prevention in school
  - Lean into collaborations as necessary



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## Opportunity - Education

- Erin's Law
  - Signed into NYS law August 2019
  - Requires public schools to provide child sexual abuse prevention education to students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Opportunity for education, disclosures, and service/support connection

Erin's Law | New York State Education Department



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## Opportunity - Education

- Enough is Enough Law
  - New York State Education Law 129-b requires colleges and universities to address and prevent domestic, sexual, and dating violence on campus
  - Opportunity to reach new college students who may have witnessed domestic violence while growing up
  - Training and supportive services

Enough is Enough | Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence



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## Opportunity - Healthcare

- Screening for Domestic Violence
  - Public Health Law 2805-z includes requirements for hospitals to screen all incoming patients for domestic violence
  - Recognition that healthcare personnel play crucial roles in supporting patients experiencing domestic violence
  - Includes service connection to local domestic violence and/or victim assistance program
- Universal patient education
  - Ensures that all patients are provided with information and resources
  - May be safest way to get information to patients impacted

New York State Department of Health: Domestic Violence



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## Opportunity - Healthcare

- Considerations
  - Who is in the room?
  - Are alternative methods of disclosure offered – such as self-reported survey, materials in bathrooms?
  - How are questions asked?
  - What are next steps if there is a positive screening?
  - Are you educating all patients who come in about healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics, even those who do not screen as “positive” for domestic violence?
  - Are there materials, such as pamphlets, QR codes, etc. available if someone wants to take information with them?
  - Are the materials safe for someone to leave with?



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## Opportunity - Support

- Connection to Services
  - Child Advocacy Centers, Domestic Violence Programs, and other victim serving organizations provide no cost, specialized care.
  - Many offer free mental health therapy using evidence-based interventions, such as TF-CBT.
  - Some organizations actively partner with schools and bring services to campuses for students to access without barriers.
  - Many collaborate to provide supportive care to both children exposed to domestic violence and to non-offending parents.



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## Conclusion

- Witnessing domestic violence during childhood can have a profoundly negative impact on children.
- However, protective factors at the individual, relationship, and community level have been found to reduce the short and long-term negative consequences of exposure to domestic violence.
- There are many opportunities built into many systems to support these protective factors, including education, identification of survivors, and connection to no cost, supportive services.



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## Support Resources

Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015 <https://www.childwelfare.gov>

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs. The Duluth Model – Power and Control Wheel and Abuse of Children  
<https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>

Enough is Enough | Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence  
<https://trainingandcenter.org>

Gilbert LK, et al. Intimate Partner Violence and Health Conditions Among U.S. Adults—National Intimate Partner Violence Survey, 2010–2012. *J Interpers Violence*. 2023 January; 38(1-2) NP237–NP261. doi:10.1177/08862605221080147  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9509488/>

U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women. Domestic Violence. Updated January 22, 2025. <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence>



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## Support Resources

### New York State Resources

- New York State Department of Health. Domestic Violence  
[https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/sexual\\_violence/domestic\\_violence.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/sexual_violence/domestic_violence.htm)
- New York State Education Law 129-b  
<https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/compliance-education-law-article-129-and-article-129-b>
- New York State Public Health Law 2805-z  
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBH/2805-Z>
- Certified Rape Crisis Programs
  - NYS DOH: Rape Crisis Program  
[https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/sexual\\_violence/rape\\_crisis\\_program.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/sexual_violence/rape_crisis_program.htm)
  - NYSCASA: New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
<https://nyscasa.org>
  - New York City Alliance: Homepage  
<https://svfreenyc.org>



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## Support Resources

- Child Advocacy Centers
  - NYS OCFS: Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) | Directories  
[https://ocfs.ny.gov/directories/cac.php?TSPD\\_101\\_R0=084c043756ab200093d3930c94b783f1dfbafada89cd5f8fb0085f634c6145f150c3c003141a8667081251ed93143000ebfb5df14d6d0373a2522172662fc49ff5cd77fb8b235e95f147f6512049ecc4e60c5b38057d03c728bc2af61f2d2fc](https://ocfs.ny.gov/directories/cac.php?TSPD_101_R0=084c043756ab200093d3930c94b783f1dfbafada89cd5f8fb0085f634c6145f150c3c003141a8667081251ed93143000ebfb5df14d6d0373a2522172662fc49ff5cd77fb8b235e95f147f6512049ecc4e60c5b38057d03c728bc2af61f2d2fc)
  - New York State Children's Alliance: Home  
<https://www.nyschildrensalliance.org>
- Erin's Law | New York State Education Department  
<https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/erins-law>
- Legal Services  
New York Crime Victim Legal Network: CVLN <https://crimevictimshelony.org>



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## Support Resources

- Licensed Domestic Violence Programs
  - NYS OCFS: Domestic Violence Prevention in New York State | Domestic Violence Prevention | OCFS  
[https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/domestic-violence/?TSPD\\_101\\_R0=084c043756ab20001d3b99ebef9757ede7c27dcf128f32ed6de82822e1d03252cf791e207717988b08e6d8a926143000ee301d847ccf693c8d0c0e69cbb57f1d7d451e663fcfcc289b02e633f0892ba1b7d3f8603ce783d8e0bcb7bdfbe8a088](https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/domestic-violence/?TSPD_101_R0=084c043756ab20001d3b99ebef9757ede7c27dcf128f32ed6de82822e1d03252cf791e207717988b08e6d8a926143000ee301d847ccf693c8d0c0e69cbb57f1d7d451e663fcfcc289b02e633f0892ba1b7d3f8603ce783d8e0bcb7bdfbe8a088)
  - NYS OPDV: Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence <https://opdv.ny.gov>
  - NYSCADV: New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence <https://www.nyscadv.org>



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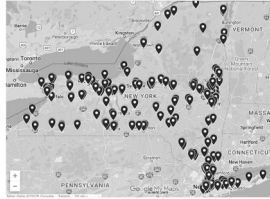
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## Support Resources

- New York Office of Victim Services (NYS OVS): OVS Resource Connect

- Provides an interactive search tool to find local resources
- Can search by topic/concern area
- Provides direct contact information for programs/services

<https://ovs.ny.concerncenter.com>



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## Contact Information



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