

THE IMPLICATIONS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN



Children can be exposed to domestic violence in a variety of ways, all of these ways have long-lasting implications on a child. A child can be affected when they see or hear their mother being abused. They can also be impacted by being told about the abuse or seeing the aftermath of the abuse.

What are some signs that may indicate exposure to domestic violence?

- Increased emotional behaviours and difficulty regulating emotions; e.g. display of aggression, excessively irritable or hyperactivity.
- Diminished school performance and academic achievement.
- Tiredness as a result of sleep disturbances

Indirect Abuse

- Children are impacted by hearing mom get called names, get yelled at or any demonstration of mistreatment or abuse.
- Children who are abused, or see others abused in the family, learn that inflicting pain and coercion is a way to get what they want.
- Children may be used as “spies” and interrogated about their mother’s behavior.
- Children can be used as hostages.
- The abuser insists that the mother leaves some of the children at home if she goes out so she can’t run away.
- Partner may tell her if she leaves she will never see the kids again.

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Emotional Difficulties

- Fearfulness or constant fears of impending danger.
- Nightmares.
- Difficulty in dealing with fear, anger and sadness.
- Feelings of guilt.
- Feelings of helplessness.
- Inability to act for themselves and inhibits boundaries.
- Apathy and/or no connection to their own feelings.
- Taking on adult roles prematurely (i.e. care taker).
- Anxiety about separation and loss.

Social Difficulties

- Identification with the aggressor.
- The feeling that it is unsafe or impossible to respond like a child.
- A hard time solving problems with siblings and other children.
- Inability to concentrate which can lead to difficulties at school.
- Low self-esteem.
- Mixed feelings toward their parents.
- Lack of trust in adults.
- Withdrawal into books, television, video games.
- Few friends because of keeping peers at a distance to keep family secret.

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Physical Difficulties

- Constant stomach aches.
- Headaches.
- Ulcers.
- Rashes.
- Diarrhea.
- Bedwetting.
- Very high level of stress.
- Delays or regression in development.
- Speech disorders

What supports are available for children at Three Oaks?

We offer a Children's Outreach Program for children ages 4-16 who have been exposed to domestic violence. Our Children's Outreach Program provides individual counselling and offers a children's group. The program explore various topics including managing emotions, types of abuse and myths about domestic violence, safety planning, conflict resolution, communication styles, boundary setting, healthy relationships and self-esteem. During a mother's stay at the emergency shelter, we will encourage them to bring their children to ensure the safety of everyone in the home.

How do I access the services at Three Oaks?

Call our confidential, 24/7 Crisis Line to access any of our services. Our services are all self-referral. Our services are both free and confidential!

Get Support Today.

**24/7 Crisis Line: 613-966-3074 or
toll free 1-800-267-0533**