



## EFFECTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN

### *INDIRECT ABUSE*

- Children hurt by hearing mom called no good or that she deserves to be punished.
- Children who are abused, or see others abused in the family, learn that "Might is right", and pain and coercion are the ways 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.

### *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.
- Little ability to feel badly for other people.
- No connection to own feelings.
- Anxiety about separation and loss.



### *SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES*

- Identification with the aggressor, better to be big and bad, than weak and terrified.
- 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.

### *PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES*

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