

# Hyde County Hotline, Inc.

24-Hours Crisis Line 252-925-2500

Visit us at: [HydeCounty-Hotline.org](http://HydeCounty-Hotline.org) Facebook: [Hyde County Hotline](#)

## The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Domestic violence in families is often hidden from the public eye and devastates its victims physically, emotionally, spiritually and financially. It threatens the stability of the family and has a negative impact on all family members, especially the children who are often the silent victims of Domestic Violence. Children who witness domestic violence may learn that it is acceptable to exert control or relieve stress by using violence, or that violence is in some way linked to expressions of intimacy and affection. They may be more prone to dating violence, delinquency and further victimization continuing the cycle of violence as adults.

Witnessing domestic violence can mean **SEEING** actual incidents of physical and/or sexual abuse. It can mean **HEARING** threats or fighting from another room. Children may also **OBSERVE** the aftermath of physical abuse such as blood, bruises, tears, torn clothing, and broken items. Finally children may be **AWARE** of the tension in the home such as their mother's fearfulness when the abuser arrives home. This awareness often means that the children live in **FEAR** for their mother's life, the lives of siblings and for their own lives.



### The Childhood Domestic Violence Association shared the following statistics:

1. 15.5 million children witness domestic violence each year in the US. 7 million of those children witness severe violence.
2. 40 million adult Americans grew up living with domestic violence.
3. Children from homes with violence are much more likely to experience significant psychological problems short- and long-term.
4. Children who've experienced domestic violence often meet the diagnostic criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the effects on their brain are similar to those experienced by combat veterans.
5. Domestic violence in childhood is directly correlated with difficulties learning, lower IQ scores, deficiencies in visual-motor skills and problems with attention and memory.
6. Living with domestic violence significantly alters a child's DNA, aging them prematurely 7-10 years.
7. Children in homes with violence are physically abused or seriously neglected at a rate 1500% higher than the national average.
8. Those who grow up with domestic violence are 6 times more likely to commit suicide and 50% more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.
9. Children who grow up with domestic violence are 74% more likely to commit a violent crime against someone else.
10. Children of domestic violence are 3 times more likely to repeat the cycle in adulthood, as growing up with domestic violence is the most significant predictor of whether or not someone will be engaged in domestic violence later in life.

## **The Reactions of Children Who are Exposed to Domestic Violence:**

Children who are exposed to battering become fearful and anxious. They are always on guard, watching and waiting for the next event to occur. They never know what will trigger the abuse, and therefore, they **never** feel safe. They are always worried for themselves, their mother, and their siblings. They may feel worthless and powerless.

Children who grow up with abuse are expected to keep the family secret, sometimes not even talking to each other about the abuse. Children from abusive homes can look fine to the outside world, but inside they are in terrible pain. Their family life is unstable, chaotic and crazy. They often blame themselves for the abuse thinking if they had not done or said a particular thing, the abuse would not have occurred. They may also become angry at their siblings or their mother for triggering the abuse. They may feel rage, embarrassment, humiliation and shame.

Children who live in abuse often feel isolated and are vulnerable. There is a need for attention, affection, and approval. Because mom is struggling to survive, it is difficult for her to be present for her children. These children become physically, emotionally and psychologically abandoned.

## **Emotional Response of Children Who Witness Domestic Violence May Include:**

- Fear
- Guilt
- Shame
- Sleep Disturbances
- Sadness
- Depression
- Anger

## **Physical Responses of Children Who Witness Domestic Violence May Include:**

- Stomachaches and/or headaches
- Bedwetting
- Loss of ability to concentrate.
- Some children may also experience physical or sexual abuse or neglect. Others may be injured while trying to intervene on behalf of their mother or a sibling.

## **Behavioral Responses of Children Who Witness Domestic Violence May Include:**

- Acting out
- Withdrawal
- Anxiousness to please
- Anxiety
- Short attention span which may result in poor school performance and attendance
- They may experience developmental delays in speech, motor or cognitive skills.
- They may also use violence to express themselves displaying increased aggression with peers or mother.
- They can begin self-injuring.

## Long-Term Effects on Children Who Witness Domestic Violence:

Whether or not children are physically abused, they often suffer emotional and psychological trauma from living in homes where there is abuse. When children live in a home where abuse is present they are denied the kind of home life that fosters healthy development. Children who grow up observing their mothers being abused, especially by their fathers, grow up with a role model of intimate relationships in which one person uses intimidation and violence over the other person to get their way. Because children have a natural tendency to identify with strength, they may ally themselves with the abuser and lose respect for their seemingly helpless mother. Abusers typically play into this by putting the mother down in front of her children and telling them that their mother is “crazy” or “stupid” and that they do not have to listen to her. Seeing their mothers treated with enormous disrespect, teaches children that they can disrespect women the way their fathers do.

Most experts believe that children who are raised in abusive homes learn that violence is an effective way to resolve conflicts and problems. They may replicate the violence they witnessed as children in their teen and adult relationships and parenting experiences. Boys who witness their mothers’ abuse are more likely to batter their female partners as adults than boys raised in non-violent homes. For girls, adolescence may result in the belief that threats and violence are the norm in relationships. Children from violent homes have higher risks of alcohol/drug abuse, post traumatic stress disorder, and juvenile delinquency. Witnessing domestic violence is the single best predictor of juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. It is also the number one reason children run away.

It is time we stood up and stepped in for these children! These children need to know that they matter! They are not defined by what has happened to them!

### Matthew 18:2-6

*2 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3 And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. 6 If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

---

## Things You Can Do To Help a Child Who Has Witnessed Abuse:

- **Healing begins with relationships.** The adult helping relationship is the most powerful tool we have to assist children in healing from traumatic events.
- **Help children know what to expect.** Provide a highly structured and predictable home and learning environment for children.
- **Let the child know that it is OK to talk about what has happened.** When children are ready, it helps to be able to talk about the violence in their lives with trusted adults.
- **Give parents support.** Help parents understand that young children think differently than adults and need careful explanations about scary events.
- **Foster children’s self-esteem.** Children who live with violence need reminders that they are lovable, competent and important.
- **Don’t try it alone.** Identify and collaborate with other caregivers in the child’s life.
- **Teach alternatives to violence.** Help children learn conflict resolution skills and about non-violent ways of playing.
- **Model nurturing in your interactions with children.** Serve as role models for children in resolving issues in respectful and non-violent ways.

**Hyde County Hotline, Inc.**  
**24-Hours Crisis Line**  
**252-925-2500**

Visit us at: [HydeCounty-Hotline.org](http://HydeCounty-Hotline.org)  
Facebook: Hyde County Hotline

**What We Do**

- Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Advocacy
- Survivor Services
- Safe Shelter
- Safety Planning
- Support Groups and Referrals
- Program Presentations for Adults and Children in Churches, Businesses and Schools
- Referrals

**How You Can Help...**

- Ask how we can help you
- Ask us about presentations
- Tell Others about us
- Become a Crisis Line Volunteer
- Donate to our Thrift Store
- Ask for a copy of our shelter needs list
- Monetary Donations are accepted

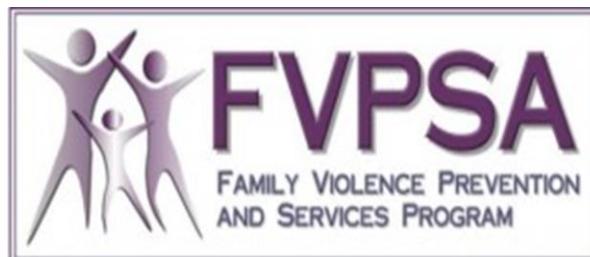
**We appreciate all of our volunteers and are very grateful for the time you invest in our agency and most of all the families we serve!!**

**Thank You!**



**If you would like to know more about programming in your church or business or to volunteer please call our office at 252-925-2502.**

*Love one another  
as I have loved you.  
John 15:12*



**Thank you to the N.C. Council for Women and Youth Involvement-Family Violence Prevention and Services Act Program and US DHHS for financial support.**

*If you look for Me  
at Christmas*

*you won't need a special star —  
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,  
I'm right there where you are.  
You may not be aware of Me  
amid the celebrations —  
You'll have to look beyond the stores  
and all the decorations.  
But if you take a moment  
from your list of things to do  
And listen to your heart, you'll find  
I'm waiting there for you.  
You're the one I want to be with,  
you're the reason that I came,  
And you'll find Me in the stillness  
as I'm whispering your name.*

*Love,  
Jesus*

**WORDS CANNOT  
EXPRESS HOW VERY  
GRATEFUL WE ARE  
TO ALL OF OUR  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS FOR THE  
LOVE AND CARE  
THAT IS SHOWN TO  
OUR CLIENTS AND  
THEIR FAMILIES!**

**WE ARE VERY  
BLESSED BY THE  
SUPPORTERS WHO  
SPONSORED THE  
CHILDREN IN OUR  
2018 ANGEL TREE  
CHRISTMAS  
PROJECT!**



**10 FAMILIES ARE  
PARTICIPATING THIS  
YEAR AND 25  
CHILDREN HAVE  
BEEN SPONSORED!**

**THANK YOU!!**

**WE APPRECIATE THE  
LOVE AND HOPE  
THAT YOU HAVE  
SHOWN BY SHARING  
WITH THESE  
FAMILIES THIS  
CHRISTMAS!!**

***Merry Christmas from the staff at Hyde County Hotline! May you  
be blessed beyond measure and be showered in the love and peace of  
Jesus!***