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Parenting After Domestic Violence: Towards Health and Healing for You and Your Child



"I want to show my kids what real love looks like. They think abuse is 'normal.' I used to too."

"Make sure you take care of yourself so you can take care of your children."

"Enroll in trauma therapy as soon as you can. It helped my kids cope with their PTSD and helped identify ADHD and Autism."

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?
Tips from Advocates and Survivors to Nurture Resilience

Many parents are uncertain about bringing up the impact of domestic violence on their child. Parents may hope once their child is in a safe place they will forget about it. They may think discussing it does harm or "the less they know the better." A parent may be scared it will anger the abuser.

Parents may even think since they were not physically harmed, they were not impacted.

Unfortunately, even children who were not physically abused still suffer the impacts. They may have experienced:

- Hearing threats or insults
- Seeing caretakers angry and afraid
- Getting blamed for the violence
- Losing their home or friends
- Missing out on activities because one parent controlled transportation or money

There are many reasons why this conversation is difficult, but talking to your child about their experience is critical for building a healthy future for them. Studies show that people who have six or more adverse childhood experiences (ACES) are likely to lead lives that are, on average, 20 years shorter. Removing your child from violence *and* talking with them after is life saving!

Parenting is so hard. It's important children know that violence is unacceptable and you are there for them. Here are some key ideas to get across to your child.

- I love you so much.
- It's not your fault.
- Violence is never the way to solve problems.
- You can talk to me anytime.
- It's good to talk about feelings.
- You may feel lots of different ways and that's okay.
- I'm here for you.
- I am making sure we are safe.
- Healing doesn't happen once. It's a process.

Please click the pdf attachment below to access the full booklet. Parents and other caregivers will find tips and quotes from advocates and domestic violence survivors on how to talk with your child, nurture resilience, and build a support system.

Last updated on September 11, 2023.

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