



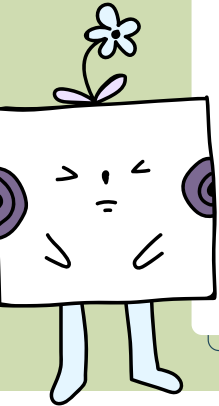
Parenting a child who has experienced domestic abuse

Domestic abuse and trauma

What is trauma?

Trauma is an emotional response to an intense event that threatens or causes harm. Can be a singular event or multiple over time.

Observing, witnessing and/or experiencing domestic abuse can be traumatic. Some factors that can determine the impact of trauma is age, frequency, relationships, and coping skills.



Effects of Trauma on Children

• Bodies

- Inability to control physical responses to stress
- Trouble sleeping
- Chronic illness

• Brains (Thinking)

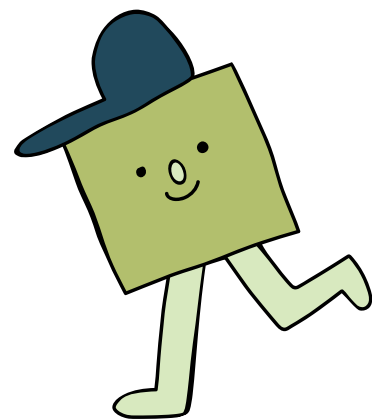
- Difficulty thinking, learning, and concentrating
- Impaired memory
- Difficulty switching from one thought or activity to another

• Emotions (Feeling)

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling unsafe
- Inability to regulate emotions
- Difficulty forming attachments to caregivers
- Trouble with friendships
- Trust issues
- Depression, anxiety- embarrassment or shame - *Conflicting thoughts about parents*

• Behavior

- Lack of impulse control
- Fighting, aggression, running away
- Substance abuse



24/7 Helpline
920-235-5998

Tips to Being There for Your Child



- Celebrate and praise your child
- Be emotionally and physically available to your child
- Respond, don't react
- **Identify trauma triggers-** If your child is acting in an unexpected way to a situation, maybe there is a trigger to a trauma they are experiencing
- Avoid physical punishment
- **Don't take their behavior personally-** allow them to feel what they are feeling without judgment
- **Listen to your child** - Let them know that it's valid to experience a range of feelings
- **Follow a routine and be predictable-** Let them know when things might change in their routine
- **Be patient-** Everyone heals differently from trauma
- **Help them learn to relax** (Breathing techniques, calming music, yoga, coloring)
- Encourage self esteem
- **Keep your child out of the middle of conflict-** don't make them take sides or communicate for the adults

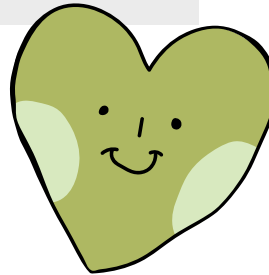


Reminder: Children are resilient! With love, support, and care, children can thrive and heal.

Our Youth Advocates are here to help your child identify feelings, establish a sense of safety and trust, learn coping skills, and encourage self esteem! Call our hotline at (920) 235-5998 for youth services.

Things to Say to Your Child

- It is not your fault this happened.
- I love you!
- I will do whatever I can to keep you safe!
- You always deserve to be and to feel safe.
- You can tell me how you feel.
- It is okay to cry or feel sad or confused.
- I am sad and might cry too. That's okay though, I am still here for you.
- It is okay to love your parent and still be hurt or confused by them. It is not easy.



*All Information provided by:
Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2014). Parenting a child who has experienced trauma. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau*