Excerpts from the resource: "Helping Children Thrive: Supporting Woman Abuse Survivors as Mothers".
HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE:
SUPPORTING WOMAN ABUSE SURVIVORS AS MOTHERS

Copies of this resource can be downloaded at no cost, in English and French, from: www.lfcc.on.ca
You can order hard copies for the cost of printing and shipping.

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The views expressed herein are those of the Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ontario Women’s Directorate or the Government of Ontario.

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Special thanks go to Anna and Itrat who provided comments from a consumer’s point of view.

On the Web: Hot Links to organizations and resources listed in this document are at
www.lfcc.on.ca/mothers.html

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Disponible aussi en français: visitez www.lfcc.on.ca/meres.html
### FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

- How to Use This Resource .......................................................... 2
- Working with Abused Women: Assumptions & Values .................. 4
- 10 Principles of Service Delivery ............................................... 5
- Characteristics of Abusive Men .................................................. 6
- Positive Messages for Mothers .................................................. 8
- Advocacy Wheel ........................................................................ 9
- The Needs of Abused Women as Mothers ................................. 12
- Working with Mothers in Shelters ............................................. 13
- Working with Women on Farms or in Rural or Remote Areas ...... 14
- Working with Aboriginal Women .............................................. 15
- Working with Women New to Canada ..................................... 16
- How Abusive Men Parent ............................................................ 20
- How Abusive Men Affect Family Dynamics ............................. 24
- Effects of Power & Control Tactics on a Mother ....................... 26
- Roles Children may Assume When Woman Abuse Occurs .......... 30
- Why the “Everyday Essentials” for Parenting are Important for Children who Lived with Violence ................................. 34
- Survival Strategies of Children & Teenagers ......................... 42
- Potential Impact of Violence on Children of Different Ages ...... 46
- Taking Care of Yourself ............................................................. 72
- Knowing When to Report Child Maltreatment ......................... 74
- Additional Resources ................................................................ 75

### FOR WOMEN

- Power and Control Wheel ........................................................... 7
- Staying Safe .............................................................................. 10
- Helping Your Children Stay Safe .............................................. 11
- You Know what you Need: Ask for it ....................................... 18
- You Know what your Children Need: Ask for it ....................... 19
- The Abuse of Children Wheel & The Nurturing Children Wheel .. 22
- How an Abusive Partner can Affect you as a Mother ............... 28
- “Everyday Essentials:” Top Ten Tips for Parents ..................... 32
- Lessons Children can Learn from Violence .............................. 35
- 10 Things I Can Do: Using the “Everyday Essentials” at Home .. 36
- Choosing Non-negotiable Rules in our Family: R.S.V.P. .......... 38
- What I Learned from my Parents About Being a Parent .......... 40
- How my Child or Teen Copes .................................................... 44
- Books to Read with my Children ............................................. 45
- You and Your Baby or Toddler ............................................... 50
- You and Your Pre-schooler ...................................................... 52
- You and Your School-aged Child .......................................... 54
- You and Your Teenager ........................................................... 56
- Life with a Teenager: Some Survival Tips ............................... 58
- 10 Basic Points of Good Discipline ......................................... 58
- Two Exercises to Practise: “Clean up your room” and “Negotiating a Curfew” ........................................... 62
- Healing and Strengthening the Mother/Child Bond ................ 64
- Navigating Children’s Contact with their Father ..................... 66
- When Children Act Abusively in Your Home ......................... 68
- When you Need More Support ............................................... 70
- When your Child Needs More Support ................................... 71
- Taking Care of Yourself ............................................................ 73

### REFERENCES CITED

- back cover
Authoritarianism

If an abusive man involves himself in child discipline, he has rigid expectations, low empathy and an angry style of "power-assertive" (i.e. verbal and physical force) punishment. Discipline is a quick fix to an immediate problem, not a thoughtful strategy based upon reasonable and age-appropriate expectations. He may see himself as a superior parent and not listen to input from his partner. He may swing between authoritarian and permissive, even neglectful, parenting.

“He expects them to be perfect, like adults, but they are just kids who need to run and play.”

“Most times he just ignores the kids but if he had a bad day, he explodes at them for no reason.”

“I kept telling him: in Canada, girls go to the mall and it is just harmless fun with their friends.”

Low Involvement, Neglect & Irresponsibility

While children must respect his authority, their daily care is the mother’s responsibility, especially routine or less pleasant duties such as diapers and homework. He may be unaffectionate with children and find excuses to avoid coming home. He is unlikely to sacrifice his needs to meet family responsibilities. His praise and attention, so rarely bestowed, may be highly valued by children. Neglect can alternate with periods of authoritarian control.

“With what he leaves at the bar in tips in just one night, I could buy a package of diapers. Then he tells CAS that the baby has diaper rash because I don’t change her enough.”

“I got a job but I had to lie and stay on Ontario Works. He took my pay cheques and I had to feed the kids somehow.”

Undermining of the Mother

Overruling her decisions, ridiculing her in front of the children, portraying himself as the only legitimate parenting authority. Contempt towards his partner shows children it is okay to insult and even physically abuse her.

“I try and keep it all on track, the homework and baths and getting to bed on time, but then he says it’s okay to watch ‘Law & Order’ and I look like the bad guy who is always nagging.”

“My son is starting to treat me just like his father did.”
This model shows the power and control tactics associated with child maltreatment.

Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 202 East Superior St., Duluth MN 55802
This model shows eight ways to love and care for children.

1. **TRUST and RESPECT**
   - acknowledge children's right to have their own feelings, opinions, friends and activities
   - promote independence
   - allow for privacy
   - respect their feelings for other parent
   - believe your children

2. **Promote EMOTIONAL SECURITY**
   - talk and act so that children feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves
   - be dependable
   - be gentle

3. **Provide PHYSICAL SECURITY**
   - provide food, shelter, clothing
   - teach personal hygiene & nutrition
   - monitor safety
   - maintain a family routine
   - attend to wounds

4. **Give DISCIPLINE**
   - be consistent
   - ensure rules are appropriate to age & development of child
   - be clear about limits & expectations
   - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

5. **Give AFFECTION**
   - express verbal and physical affection
   - be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt

6. **Give TIME**
   - participate in your children's lives: activities school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
   - include your children in your activities
   - reveal who you are to your children

7. **Provide DISCIPLINE**
   - be consistent
   - ensure rules are appropriate to age & development of child
   - be clear about limits & expectations
   - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

8. **Give TIME**
   - participate in your children's lives: activities school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
   - include your children in your activities
   - reveal who you are to your children

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    - include your children in your activities
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    - be clear about limits & expectations
    - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

12. **Give AFFECTION**
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    - be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt

13. **Give TIME**
    - participate in your children's lives: activities school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
    - include your children in your activities
    - reveal who you are to your children

14. **Provide DISCIPLINE**
    - be consistent
    - ensure rules are appropriate to age & development of child
    - be clear about limits & expectations
    - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

15. **Give AFFECTION**
    - express verbal and physical affection
    - be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt

16. **Give TIME**
    - participate in your children's lives: activities school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
    - include your children in your activities
    - reveal who you are to your children

17. **Provide DISCIPLINE**
    - be consistent
    - ensure rules are appropriate to age & development of child
    - be clear about limits & expectations
    - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

18. **Give AFFECTION**
    - express verbal and physical affection
    - be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt

19. **Give TIME**
    - participate in your children's lives: activities school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
    - include your children in your activities
    - reveal who you are to your children

20. **Provide DISCIPLINE**
    - be consistent
    - ensure rules are appropriate to age & development of child
    - be clear about limits & expectations
    - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

21. **Give AFFECTION**
    - express verbal and physical affection
    - be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt

22. **Give TIME**
    - participate in your children's lives: activities school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
    - include your children in your activities
    - reveal who you are to your children

23. **Provide DISCIPLINE**
    - be consistent
    - ensure rules are appropriate to age & development of child
    - be clear about limits & expectations
    - use discipline to instruct, not to punish

Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 202 East Superior St., Duluth MN 55802
These points are summarized from *The Batterer as Parent* (2002) by Lundy Bancroft & Jay Silverman.

### FOSTERING DISRESPECT FOR THE MOTHER & HER PARENTING AUTHORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects of violence, verbal abuse, and victim blaming</th>
<th>Children see their mother as helpless, down trodden, stupid. They may acquire the abuser’s view of the woman as unworthy of respect and some will see her as a legitimate target of abuse.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliberate tactics</td>
<td>Interferes with mother’s attempts to create structure; contradicts her rules; rewards child’s disrespectful behaviour to mother; ridicules mother; portrays her as incompetent in front of child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After separation</td>
<td>Vies for child’s loyalty by making his home a fun place with no rules; permits activities disapproved of by mother (e.g., violent videos); may alienate child from mother; may seek custody as vengeance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NEGATIVELY INFLUENCING THE MOTHER/CHILD RELATIONSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct interference</th>
<th>May prevent mother from comforting distressed child; may prevent use of birth control so children are born too close together, overwhelming the mother; social isolation restricts opportunities to involve children in extra-curricular activities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indirect interference</td>
<td>Abuse fosters depression, anxiety, poor sleeping, rage, loss of confidence so mother cannot focus on the needs of children; may increase likelihood of maltreatment, use of drugs/alcohol, or permissive and even neglectful parenting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s distancing themselves from mother</td>
<td>More pronounced in boys and teenagers of either sex, the development of contempt for a mother or being ashamed to be associated with her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence by children against mother</td>
<td>Also more common in boys, and most often after a separation, a child assumes the role of abuser, sometimes to win the approval of the absent father.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USING THE CHILD AS A WEAPON AGAINST THE MOTHER

During the relationship
Maltreatment, neglect or other hurtful behaviour to child (e.g., destroying Christmas presents) to hurt mother; having child spy on mother; deliberate endangerment of child; threats to harm, kidnap or kill child, leave the family destitute, or call the CAS.

After separation
Blaming mother for separation; enlisting child’s support to pressure mother for reconciliation; using child to communicate with or spy on mother; seeking custody.

IMPACT ON FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Sowing divisions
Turning family members against each other or creating alliances of some against others by, for example, favouring one child over others; lying; revealing confidences; fomenting conflict; punishing all children for the misbehaviour of one, etc.

Scapegoating one child
Blaming one child for all problems in the family.

Chronic fear and emotional deprivation
Deepen and solidify unhealthy dynamics among family members; children may compete for abuser’s attention because his attention and affection are scarce.

Role reversal
Parentification of children (i.e., adopting or being given a parental role in the family) and infantilizing of mother (i.e., treating her like a child) may over time see the woman being protected by child; child may try to predict and prevent violence by the abuser.

TACTICS IN CUSTODY DISPUTES

Using unfair tactics
Projecting non-abusive image; using new partner as character reference; using the mother’s anger or mistrust to discredit her defensive accusations; presenting self as the party willing to communicate; manipulating mediation or dispute resolution; using litigation as abuse; using woman’s sexual orientation against her; using actions in one court to advantage in another; involving his parents to seek visitation.
The tactics of power and control, listed on page 7, are the hallmarks of an abusive man, whether or not physical violence is used. The consequences of these tactics for women are well-documented and understood and include erosion of self-esteem, living in chronic fear, health challenges, and lack of self-determination.

How might power and control tactics affect a woman as she parents her children?

1. woman believes she is an inadequate parent
   - woman portrayed by abuser as unfit mother, cause of children’s deficits
   - fears having her children taken by CAS
   - is frustrated in attempts to create structure or be consistent
   - children may have problems at school, in neighbourhood, fuelling her belief she is a bad parent

2. woman loses the respect of some or all children
   - some children see her as legitimate target of abuse
   - children disregard her parental authority, don’t follow her rules
   - children may grow to devalue or be ashamed of mother

3. woman believes twisted excuses abuser provides for his behaviour
   - believes abuse is her fault so tries to modify her behaviour
   - believes abuse is her fault so feels guilty about its effect on children
   - believes abuse is linked to alcohol or stress
   - believes abuse is culturally or religiously appropriate
   - believes men and boys should have more privileges and power in the family

4. woman changes her parenting style in response to abuser’s parenting style
   - is too permissive in response to authoritarian parenting of abuser
   - is too authoritarian to try and keep children from annoying abuser
   - makes age-inappropriate or unreasonable demands on children to placate abuser
   - is afraid to use discipline because the children have been through so much
   - left to do all the demanding parts of parenting while he engages in fun parts
5. woman’s capacity to manage is thwarted or overwhelmed
   • depression, anxiety, poor sleeping, etc. compromise woman’s capacity to care for children and provide for their daily needs
   • if denied use of birth control, too many children are born too close together
   • may be denied sufficient money to meet children’s basic needs for food etc.
   • reactive rather than pro-active parenting, responding to crisis not preventing problems

6. woman may use survival strategies with negative effects
   • may use alcohol or drugs to excess
   • may maltreat children, physically or verbally
   • may leave them with inadequate caretakers to get a break
   • may avoid being at home (e.g., working double shifts)

7. woman’s bond to children is compromised
   • children may be angry at mother for failing to protect them or evict abuser
   • mother prevented by abuser from comforting distressed child
   • one child assumes care-taking role for mother
   • children anticipating a mother’s deportation or leaving may become anxious or may emotionally disengage to protect themselves from impending loss

8. woman gets trapped in competition for children’s loyalties
   • abuser attempts to shape child’s view of himself as good and mother as bad
   • abuser is fun parent who has no rules
   • after separation, abuser entices children to support his bid for custody with promises of great life at his house
   • abuser has more money and can offer more material goods and nicer home

* use these items as background to guide a group discussion on how women’s parenting can be affected by power and control tactics
* the form on page 28 can help in this exercise
In our family, we can adopt or be given “roles” we willingly or unconsciously play while interacting with others in the family. Examples of family roles are: the mediator of disputes, the “baby” of the family, the prized child who can do no wrong, the responsible one on whom everyone relies, or the “black sheep” who does not fit in and is expected to disappoint the others.

Roles that develop or are assigned in families characterized by woman abuse reflect the unique ways each person adapts and copes with the secret, confusing, and dangerous situation in which he or she lives.

Key points about family roles...

• a role may be imposed on the child or it may be assumed by the child
• children can play more than one role
• children may play roles during abusive incidents (e.g., referee, rescuer, deflector/distractor, caretaker of younger siblings)
• a child may use the role as a strategy to cope, so it might not be turned off overnight once the abuser is gone
• roles assigned by the abuser can lead to guilt, grief and other hurtful emotions, especially after he is gone

Examining family roles is important because...

• it helps us understand how a child interprets and copes with violence (so we can intervene effectively)
• it helps us understand how different children in the same family can have dramatically different understandings of what happened in their homes
• it helps us understand how a child may think and feel once the abuser is gone
• it is a framework for understanding how tension can occur between siblings or in the mother-child relationship

For example, children who adopt pseudo-adult roles such as the “caretaker” may have difficulty adjusting when expected to assume the role of child once again. The “abuser’s assistant” may take up the role of abuser. The “scapegoat” child’s isolation within the family may be intensified by feelings of responsibility for the marital break-up. The “perfect child” may be impatient with and blaming towards siblings who misbehaved or otherwise “triggered” abuse by the abuser.
These are examples of roles played by children in some families characterized by woman abuse.

**Caretaker**
Acts as a parent to younger siblings and mother. May oversee routines and household responsibilities (e.g., meals, putting young siblings to bed), help to keep siblings safe during a violent incident and comfort them afterwards (e.g., reassuring siblings, getting tea for mother).

**Mother’s Confidant**
The child who is privy to mother’s feelings, concerns, and plans. After witnessing abusive incidents, his or her recollections may serve as a “reality check” for mother, if abuser later minimizes or lies about events.

**Abuser’s Confidant**
The child who is treated better by abuser and most likely to be told his justifications for abuse against the mother. May be asked to report back on mother’s behaviour and be rewarded for doing so with, for example, privileges or absence of harsh treatment.

**Abuser’s Assistant**
The child who is co-opted or forced to assist in abuse of mother (e.g., made to say demeaning things or to physically hit mother).

**Perfect Child**
The child who tries to prevent violence by actively addressing issues (wrongly) perceived as triggers, in this case by excelling in school and never arguing, rebelling, misbehaving, or seeking help with problems.

**Referee**
The child who mediates and tries to keep the peace.

**Scapegoat**
The child identified as the cause of family problems, blamed for tension between parents or whose behaviour is used to justify violence. May have special needs or be a step-child to the abuser.

Children learn what they live. The experience of living with violence teaches lessons. A mother’s reaction to violence is also a learning experience.

Children who live with violence can learn some things that are not true...

- the victim of violence is the one to blame
- violence and threats get you what you want, win arguments or solve problems
- boys/men should be in control and girls/women should obey
- when people hurt others, they do not get in trouble
- women are weak, helpless, incompetent, stupid, or violent
- anger causes violence or drinking causes violence
- a person can love you and hurt you at the same time
- anger should be suppressed because it could get out of control
- inequality between men and women is okay in relationships

Children can learn good lessons from a mother’s actions to leave and be safe...

- hurting other people does have consequences
- being a victim of violence is not your fault
- women do not have to accept violence or abuse as normal or as an expected part of relationships with men
- women are strong, capable and resilient
- “Mommy will keep me safe”
- there are people who will help women and children be safe
When faced with a difficult situation, children “cope” by coming to an understanding (possibly distorted) about what is happening and dealing with the flood of hurtful emotions. Their strategies can involve feelings (emotional), thoughts (cognitive), or actions (behavioural).

Some strategies are helpful
- examples are seeking peers or supportive adults to talk about the feelings
- young children cannot easily engage in healthy strategies and need adults to buffer them from the harmful consequences of family adversities such as violence

Some strategies are helpful but costly
- strategies may be helpful during a crisis but not healthy in the long run, such as emotional numbing, self-injury, substance use, having a baby to escape the family, or being an emotional caretaker for a parent
- these strategies can be a response to a variety of family adversities, including violence and maltreatment
- an objectively helpful strategy may not “work” while some objectively unhealthy strategies do work
- they help a child get through a time of stress or crisis, such as when there is violence in the home
- however, if used after the crisis is over, or in other circumstances, these strategies may create problems
- the longer a strategy is used, or the more effective it is in shielding a youth from overwhelming emotions and hurt, the harder it may be to extinguish

Once the family is safe, gradually extinguishing strategies with negative effects and replacing them with healthier strategies may be the key to helping children who have lived with family adversities such as violence.

These are some coping strategies commonly observed in children and teenagers who have lived with violence and maltreatment. Remember that coping styles vary with age.

Mental Blocking or Disconnecting Emotionally
- numbing emotions or blocking thoughts
- tuning out the noise or chaos, learning not to hear it, being oblivious
- concentrating hard to believe they are somewhere else
- drinking alcohol or using drugs

Making it Better Through Fantasy
- planning revenge on abuser, fantasizing about killing him
- fantasizing about a happier life, living with a different family
- fantasizing about life after a divorce or after the abuser leaves
- fantasizing about abuser being “hit by a bus”
- hoping to be rescued, by super heroes or police or “Prince Charming”
Physical Avoidance
• going into another room, leaving the house during a violent episode
• finding excuses to avoid going home
• running away from home

Looking for Love (and Acceptance) in all the Wrong Places
• falling in with bad friends
• having sex for the intimacy and closeness
• trying to have a baby as a teenager or getting pregnant as a teen to have someone to love you

Taking Charge Through Caretaking
• protecting brothers and sisters from danger
• nurturing brothers and sisters like a surrogate mother/taking the “parent” role
• nurturing his or her mother

Reaching out for Help
• telling a teacher, neighbour, or friend’s mother
• calling the police
• talking to siblings, friends, or supportive adults

Crying out for Help
• suicidal gestures
• self-injury
• lashing out in anger/being aggressive with others/getting into fights

Re-Directing Emotions into Positive Activities
• sports, running, fitness
• writing, journalling, drawing, acting, being creative
• excelling academically

Trying to Predict, Explain, Prevent or Control the Behaviour of an Abuser
• thinking “Mommy has been bad” or “I have been bad” or “Daddy is under stress at work”
• thinking “I can stop the violence by changing my behaviour” or “I can predict the violence”
• trying to be the perfect child
• lying to cover up bad things (e.g., a bad grade) to avoid criticism and worse

* help women use the sheet on page 44 to identify coping strategies of each child (this exercise will not be helpful for babies, toddlers, or most pre-schoolers)
* distinguish between those used in response to violence in the past and those still used today
* help women devise specific ways to encourage healthy strategies
Points to keep in mind

• these little ones are highly vulnerable to maltreatment including shaken baby injuries
• women with babies require and deserve extra support with basic needs
• if a mother is struggling, help with parenting at this early point can get things on the right track early in a child’s life

Implications for Intervention with Mothers of Infants and Toddlers

• ensure the mother is safe from violence and children are safe from maltreatment
• help with housing, accessing income assistance, accessing medical services, and other assistance she requires (see pages 18 and 19 for a form for mothers)
• offer support to the woman as a mother (e.g., parenting assistance, referral to moms-and-tots group, etc.)
• make a referral to the local home-visiting program for young mothers and babies
• a high-quality child care program will be respite for the woman and help the child with self-regulation and age-appropriate socialization
• assist the woman to gain legal advice if required for custody and support issues
• discuss the strategies she might use to address safety of the child when on access visits with her ex-partner (see page 66)
• consult the Children’s Aid Society if you have concerns a baby might be at risk for abuse/neglect or in need of protection: see page 72 for information applicable in Ontario

Help the woman find the Ontario Early Years Centre nearest her at www.ontarioearlyyears.ca
Implications for Interventions with Mothers of Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5)

- ensure the mother is safe from violence and children are safe from maltreatment
- help with housing, accessing income assistance, accessing medical services, and other assistance she requires (see pages 18 and 19 for a form for mothers)
- offer support to the woman as a mother (e.g., parenting assistance, referral to parenting program, etc.)
- encourage the mother to re-establish comforting routines (e.g., bed time) as soon as practically possible
- a high-quality child care program will be respite for the woman and help the child with age-appropriate socialization and school readiness
- assist the woman to gain legal advice if required for custody and support issues
- discuss the strategies she might use to address safety of the child when on access visits with her ex-partner (see page 66)
- consult the Children’s Aid Society if you have concerns a child might be at risk for abuse/neglect or in need of protection: see page 72 for information applicable in Ontario

Learn more about assisting pre-schoolers in *Understanding the Effects of Domestic Violence: A Handbook for Early Childhood Educators* (2001), available at [www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)
### Implications for Interventions with Mothers of School-age Children (ages 6 to 12)

- ensure the mother is safe from violence and children are safe from maltreatment
- help with housing, accessing income assistance, accessing medical services, and other assistance she requires (see pages 18 and 19 for a form for mothers)
- offer support to the woman as a mother (e.g., parenting assistance, referral to parenting program, etc.)
- liaise with the school if required to access assessments or supports there
- assist the woman to gain legal advice if required for custody and support issues
- discuss the strategies she might use to address safety of the child when on access visits with her ex-partner (see page 66)
- consult the Children’s Aid Society if you have concerns a child might be at risk for abuse/neglect or in need of protection: see page 72 for information applicable in Ontario

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#### POTENTIAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased emotional awareness for self and others</td>
<td>more aware of own reactions to violence; more aware of impact on others (e.g., mother’s safety, father being charged)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased complexity in thinking about right and wrong; emphasis on fairness and intent</td>
<td>possibly more susceptible to rationalizations heard to justify violence (e.g., alcohol as cause, victim deserves it) or may challenge rationalizations not viewed as fair or right; may assess “was the fight fair?”; can see discrepancies between actions and words and consider intent; justifications involving children may lead to self-blame or guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic and social success at school has primary impact on self-concept</td>
<td>learning may be compromised (e.g., distracted); may miss positive statements or selectively attend to negatives or evoke negative feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased influence from outside family (e.g., peers, school) and competition assumes new importance within peer group</td>
<td>possibly more influenced by messages that confirm attitudes and behaviours associated with partner abuse; may use hostile aggression to compete; increased risk for bullying and/or being bullied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased same sex identification</td>
<td>may learn gender roles associated with partner abuse (e.g., male perpetrators, female victims)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Learn more about assisting school children in *Children Exposed to Domestic Violence: A Teacher’s Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Responses* (2002), available at [www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)
### POTENTIAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON TEENAGERS

#### KEY ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

- Increased sense of self and autonomy from family
- Physical changes brought on by puberty
- Increased peer group influence and desire for acceptance
- Self worth more strongly linked to view of physical attractiveness
- Dating raises issues of sexuality, intimacy, relationship skills
- Increased capacity for abstract reasoning and broader world view
- Increased influence by media

#### POTENTIAL IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Accelerated responsibility and autonomy, positioning youth in care-taking roles and/or premature independence; family skills for respectful communication and negotiation may be poorly developed, so transition to adolescence may be more difficult and result in such challenges as parent-child conflict, early home leaving, school drop-out
- May try to stop violence; may use increased size to impose will with physical intimidation or aggression
- Possibly more embarrassed by family resulting in shame, secrecy, insecurity; might use high risk behaviours to impress peers (e.g., theft, drugs); may increase time away from the home; may engage in maladaptive defensive (e.g., drug) and offensive (e.g., aggression towards abuser) strategies to avoid or cope with violence and its stigma
- View of self may be distorted by abuser’s degradation of mother and/or child maltreatment; may experience eating disorder and use image management activities (e.g., body piercing, tattoos)
- May have difficulty establishing healthy relationships; may fear being abused or being abusive in intimate relationships, especially when conflict arises; may avoid intimacy or prematurely seek intimacy and child bearing to escape and create own support system
- “All or nothing” interpretations of experiences may be learned and compete with greater capacity to see “shades of grey” (e.g., everyone is a victim or a perpetrator); this style of processing information may be intensified by experiences of child maltreatment; may be predisposed towards attitudes and values associated with violence and/or victimization
- Possibly more influenced by negative media messages re: violent behaviour, gender role stereotypes

See page 56 for ideas about helping teenagers

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The Ontario Women’s Directorate has prepared a “tip sheet” for adults who work with or mentor youth, to encourage positive influences:

[www.ontariowomensdirectorategov.on.ca](http://www.ontariowomensdirectorategov.on.ca)
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


What About Me! Seeking to Understand the Child's View of Violence in the Family (2004), by Alison Cunningham & Linda Baker [available at www.lfcc.on.ca]


Web Sites
National Clearinghouse on Family Violence ......................www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence/
Education Wife Assault..............................................................www.womanabuseprevention.com
Ontario Women's Directorate.............................................www.ontariowomensdirectorate.gov.on.ca
Ontario Women's Justice Network........................................www.owjn.org
B.C Institute Against Family Violence........................................www.bcifv.org

Web Sites on Parenting and Child Development
Child Development Institute.................................................www.childdevelopmentinfo.com
Parent Kids Right ......................................................................www.parentkidsright.com
Canadian Parents.....................................................................www.canadianparents.com
The Center for Effective Discipline ........................................www.stopf Lifting.com
Helping Children Thrive

This resource is for service providers in Ontario who support women who are moving beyond abuse. The goal is to promote effective parenting of children who lived with violence against their mothers. The information contained here can be applicable in individual work with women or as an adjunct to group work, for a brief or longer-term intervention. Both women and service providers are directed to additional material and resources of greater depth for more information. All material is grounded in three bodies of research: the expressed needs of abused women as mothers; techniques of “effective” parenting; and, the effects of violence on children.

References Cited


