



BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES

Violence: It's all around us.

How Can we Avoid the Harmful Impacts?

Social Learning Theory is a sociological perspective that tells us individuals learn from their environment.



- What does this mean for children?

Children learn to imitate what they see and experience.

Exposure to violence can be "teachable moments" for children that we wish did not occur.

Children may experience violence in many areas of their life

- TV Shows portray violence
- News events surround school and family discussions with threats to security
- Video games engage children in violent behaviors
- Siblings and peers argue, hit, and fight
- Children may even witness abusive language or violence between parents or other adults



Witnessing violence teaches children

- Children learn what they live
- As they witness violence, children learn violence
- As they learn violence, they mimic violence
- As they mimic violence and receive certain responses, behaviors can become worse

With every opportunity to experience violence, children learn something we probably wish they hadn't.

Risk factors of experiencing violence can include:

The development of violent tendencies

- Hitting, throwing
- Name calling
- Aggressive behaviors

Stress

- Withdrawal
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Nightmares & sleep issues

Impact on Adulthood

- Pervasive anger/agitation
- Expressed need for control
- Partner violence
- Child abuse & maltreatment

Parents have significant power to protect children from becoming scarred by exposure to violence.



You may not see outward signs when a child has been impacted by violence.

Emotional scars can lie deep below the surface.

Like physical scars, emotional scars can linger for a long time.



See the next page to learn how to protect children from the impacts of exposure to violence ...

Protecting Children from the Impacts of Violence

Limit exposure to violence

- Monitor what is being watched on TV to ensure there is no violent activity.
- Make it a rule to not fight in the home while children are around.
- Remove a child if you think violence may occur.
- Be cautious of current events and what the media is saying that may be traumatic.
- When your child is misbehaving, do not scare them into behaving with violence i.e. do not spank or hit as a form of punishment.
- Watch your tone and the words that you are saying



What should you do when violence does occur?

- Reassure your child that you are sorry they had to witness such behavior, and explain why you do not wish for them to display this behavior
- Answer any questions they may have about what occurred, do not dismiss their fears, ensure them that they are safe
- Explain to them what was wrong with that they saw, and discuss what can be done in future situations
- **Monitor your own behaviors and “be the example” you want children to imitate!**

Children Learn What they Live

By Dorothy Law Holte

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child learns with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.