

Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

A School Personnel Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Responses

INDEX

The Purpose of this Project.....	2
Why you need to know.....	2
How this handbook can help.....	2
Definitions.....	3
Domestic Violence Facts	4
Power and Control Wheel	5
Power and Control: Abuse of Children	6
Why Women Stay	7
Impacts on Children and Adolescents.....	9
Potential Impacts at Different Ages	10
Teaching Strategies	11
Emotional Needs of Abused Children.....	13
When to Seek Profession Help for a Student	15
Handling Disclosure.....	16
Recognizing Child and Neglect	17
Reporting to Child Protective Services	18
VBPS Policy on Child Abuse or Neglect	19
Project HOPE	20
Supporting Students Living in a Shelter	21
School-Based Violence Prevention.....	22
Safety Planning.....	23
Teen Power & Control Wheel	24
Teen Survey	25
Where to Go for Help.....	26
Resources.....	27



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The Purpose of this Project

In 2005, The Office on Family Violence & the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance combined their resources to explore service enhancements that would:

- significantly improve services to children and youth exposed to domestic violence
- create new standards of service and train providers
- develop new services for children and youth in the community

As one of the largest shelters in Virginia and a leader in domestic violence services, Samaritan House was chosen as one of the sites to design and implement such service enhancements. We chose two service enhancements to meet the needs of the population we serve:

- Provide safety planning and education on healthy relationships and violence prevention with middle school youth through a voluntary after school program.
- Educate and train school personnel on how to identify, safety plan and respond effectively to a child or youth exposed to domestic violence.

Why you need to know

Each year in the U.S., millions of children and adolescents are exposed to violence in their homes, schools, neighborhoods and through the media.^{5,6,7,8}

- Children and adolescents living with domestic violence are at risk for increased emotional and behavioral problems,^{8,9} including increased violent behavior.^{10,11,12} They are also at increased risk of experiencing emotional or physical abuse.^{9,10,13} These difficulties may compromise their availability for learning and their capacity to get along with others at school.
- Early identification of difficulties can lead to earlier and more effective support and intervention for young people and their families. Teachers are in an ideal position to identify when a student is having difficulty.
- School-based interventions are prevention initiatives that can reduce risk and increase protective factors for students. Teachers may be the caring adults who make a difference in the lives of students experiencing difficulties at home.

How this handbook can help

- Learn about domestic violence and its impact on children and adolescents.
- Recognize the signs that students may display when they are having difficulties. These signs may occur for a variety of reasons, including domestic violence.
- Learn ways to support students and deal with challenging behaviors in school.
- Offer support and information about resources to parents who may be adult victims of domestic violence.

Definitions of Domestic Violence

Understanding domestic violence helps us support affected students.

Children exposed to domestic violence

Refers to children and adolescents seeing, hearing, or being aware of, violence against one parent figure that is perpetrated by someone they know intimately.

Perpetrator

Refers to individuals who are violent toward their intimate partner. It is used interchangeably with *offender, offending parent, batter, abusive partner, and abuser.*

Victim

Refers to individuals who are abused by their intimate partner. It is used interchangeably with *survivor, victimized parent, abused partner, adult victim and battered partner.* Many domestic violence advocates prefer the term “survivor” as it reflects the reality that many abused individuals cope and move on with personal strength and resourcefulness.

Domestic Violence

A pattern of abusive behaviors used by one individual intended to exert power and control over another individual, in the context of an intimate or family relationship (VSDVAA).

- Occurs in all age, ethnic, socioeconomic, educational, occupational, and religious groups, and of varying physical abilities and lifestyles
- May not only include the intimate partner of relationships of spousal, live-in partners and dating relationships, also familial, elder and child abuse¹
- Is used to intimidate, humiliate or frighten victims as a systematic way of maintaining power and control over them
- Is abusive behavior that in most cases is learned. Witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next²
- *Is caused by the perpetrator* and not by the victim or the relationship
- Differentially affects men and women: 73% of family violence victims are female³
- May present an increased risk to the victim and children at the time of separation from the abuser
- Results in victim behavior that is focused on ensuring survival (e.g., minimizing or denying the violence, taking responsibility for the violence, protecting the perpetrator, using alcohol or drugs, self-defense, seeking help, remaining in the abusive relationship)

Domestic Violence Facts

- One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. In 2006, 51,652 individuals in crisis contacted Virginia domestic violence programs.
- In 2005 there were 147 homicides relating to domestic abuse in Virginia including 20 children who were killed by their caregivers.
- Between 2000 and 2006, the number of women and children staying in domestic violence shelters doubled. During fiscal year 2006-2007 Samaritan House provided emergency shelter to 412 individuals from 171 families. 56% of those served were children.
- Between 3.3 and 10 million American children witness domestic violence annually.
- Up to 40% of violent juvenile offenders witnessed domestic abuse in their homes.
- Boys who witness domestic violence are **twice as likely** to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.
- 30% to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household.

**“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world.”**
– Nelson Mandela



Power and Control Wheel



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT

202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.duluth-model.org

Power and Control: Abuse of Children



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Why Women Stay

When working with children who live in violent homes the question may arise, why doesn't the abused parent leave? Here are some of the motives in operation that lead the non-abusive partner to remain in the violent relationship:

Fear of Partner's Actions :

- He will threaten to leave me.
- He said he would "hunt me down and kill me."
- He will kidnap the children and disappear.
- He will spread horrible rumors about me.
- I will never be safe, I might as well live with him.
- She will "out" me at work or to my family. *(if victim is gay or lesbian)*

Effects of Abuse:

- Depression
- Feelings of immobility
- Can't face making decisions
- I am so used to my life being this way.
- I have no real options or choices.

Roles the Culture Forces upon Women:

Guilt:

- I will ruin his life if I leave.
- She will lose her job if I report this.
- He will start drinking again.
- I will disappoint my family.
- I have to take care of him.

Economic Dependence:

- He has all the money.
- I have never had a good job, how will I care for the kids alone?
- Better to be beaten up at home than to be on the street.
- I would rather die than be on welfare.

Dependence on Traditional Gender Roles:

- I am afraid to be on my own, who will protect me?
- I fear that I will never be in a relationship again.
- He gives me a sense of security.
- I don't want to be a divorced woman.

The Children:

- My children will blame me and resent me.
- My children need a father.
- Children need a “real family”.
- Unwilling to give up the “house with a white picket fence, 2.2 children” dream.
- He will steal the children.
- He will turn the children against me.
- Sons need male role models.
- She is the biological mother; I have no legal rights.

Isolation:

- He doesn't let me out of the house; I don't even have any friends to call for help.
- If I *ever* tell *anyone* about this, he will kill me.
- My sister said I couldn't come to stay with her anymore, after the last time...
- He said he would teach Helen a lesson if I went over there again.

Personal History:

- My father beat my mom- it just goes with being in a relationship.
- Getting hit isn't the worst thing that can happen in a family—I know of worse things...

Love and Hope:

- I keep hoping that he will change.
- I believe him when he keeps saying that it will never happen again.
- I don't want to give up the good times.
- She promised she would go to therapy.
- Sex and intimacy
- My marriage vows
- My religion
- I love him.

Note: This list is not necessarily comprehensive, and not all of these reasons are found in each case, but a combination of some of them can usually be found and may be compelling enough to keep a woman in the relationship.

“Success is never final; failure is never fatal; it is courage that counts.”

- Joseph Joubert



Impacts on Children & Adolescents

- Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to exhibit behavioral, physical, and mental health problems, including depression and anxiety.
- Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, or engage in teenage promiscuity.
- Children and adolescents may experience strong ambivalence toward their violent parent. They may lose respect for the victim and/or develop a negative image of all men.
- Exposure to violence may desensitize children and adolescents to aggressive behavior. Aggression may become the “norm” and is less likely to concern them.
- Decreased academic performance



Potential Impacts at Different Ages

Key Aspects of Development	Potential Impact of Domestic Violence
Preschoolers	
<p>Learn how to express aggression and anger, as well as other emotions, in appropriate ways.</p> <p>Think in egocentric ways.</p> <p>Form ideas about gender roles based on social messages.</p> <p>Increased physical independence (dressing self, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Learn unhealthy ways of expressing anger and aggression; possibly confused by conflicting messages (e.g., what I see vs. what I'm told). ➔ May attribute violence to something they have done. ➔ Learn gender roles associated with violence and victimization. ➔ Instability may inhibit independence; may see regressive behaviors.
School-aged Children (6-11 years)	
<p>Increased emotional awareness of self and others.</p> <p>Increased complexity in thinking about right and wrong; emphasis on fairness and intent.</p> <p>Academic and social success at school has primary impact on self-concept.</p> <p>Increased safe sex identification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ More awareness of own reactions to violence at home and its impact on others. ➔ Possibly more susceptible to adopting rationalizations heard to justify violence (e.g. alcohol causes violence; victim deserves abuse). ➔ Ability to learn may be decreased due to impact of violence (e.g., distracted); may miss positive statements or selectively attend to negative or evoke negative feedback. ➔ May learn gender roles associated with intimate partner abuse (e.g., males are perpetrators – females are victims).
Adolescents	
<p>Increased sense of self and autonomy from family.</p> <p>Physical changes brought on by puberty.</p> <p>Increased peer group influence and desire for acceptance.</p> <p>Dating raises issues of sexuality, intimacy, relationship skills.</p> <p>Increased influence by media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Family skills for respectful communication and negotiation may be poorly developed due to violence; transition to adolescence may be more difficult for youth and family. ➔ May try to physically stop violence; may use increased size to impose will with physical intimidation or aggression. ➔ Possibly more embarrassed by violence at home; may try to escape violence by increasing time away from home; may use maladaptive coping to avoid violence (e.g., drugs). ➔ May have difficulty establishing healthy relationships; possibly at greater risk to become involved in dating violence. ➔ Possibly more influenced by negative media messages about violent behavior, gender role stereotypes.

Teaching Strategies

1. Create a safe and low-stress environment that promotes respect toward others.

- Establish an explicit norm against violence.
- Consistently enforce non-acceptance of violence.
- Teach and reward non-violent conflict-resolution and cooperation.
- Model nurturing and respectful behavior.
- Foster cooperation and reduce competition and situations where students may be humiliated (e.g., peers picking teams).

2. Provide positive experiences and activities to promote security, self-esteem and learning.

- Verbally praise students for their efforts.
- Provide opportunities for fun.
- Assist students in recognizing their strengths and experiencing success.

3. Let students know what to expect.

- Plan and prepare the students for visitors.
- Minimize last minute scheduling changes.
- Give advance notice of upcoming events.
- Give advance notice of upcoming lessons or activities that may touch on difficult experiences.

4. Increase positive connections to school.

- Look for a match between the student's interests and/or strengths and the course (e.g., special project), school (e.g., assisting custodian), or extracurricular activity (e.g., club, sports).
- Strongly encourage participation.
- Enlist peer (e.g., cross-age mentor, tutor) and adult (e.g., staff, volunteers) support to provide encouragement to foster connections.

5. Use a variety of teaching strategies

- Provide time during the school day for homework completion.
- Use co-operative learning strategies that allow for more immediate feedback, occasion to share and small group opportunities.
- Consider ways of physically setting up your classroom to take into account a variety of learning styles.
- Check often to see if what you are saying or modeling is being heard and understood.
- Repeat information in a calm manner.
- Allow students to use learning aids such as tape recorders, calculators, reference charts, and word processors, if necessary.

6. Be aware that some activities or situations may remind students of troubling events associated with the violence in their homes.

- Examples of events or themes that may be difficult for children living with violence include:
 - raised voices
 - alcohol/drug prevention
 - making something new to give a parent
 - violence prevention education
 - peer fights



**“A teacher affects eternity;
he can never tell where his
influence stops”
-Henry Brooks Adams**

Emotional Needs of Children Who Have Domestic Violence in Their Families

1. Dealing with Fear

Feeling fear of those they love, in their home, where they should feel most safe.

Students need to:

- Be able to talk to someone they trust about their feelings.
- Learn ways to keep themselves safe and have a plan for what to do when there is violence.
- Have a feeling of control in the situation. (e.g. "I will go to the neighbors house if I feel unsafe").

Plan:

- Listen to their feelings.
- Let them know that it is OK to talk about the violence and ask questions.
- Develop a safety plan with the student.

2. Dealing with Anger

Feeling angry at the abusive person, or at the survivor for not leaving the situation

Students need to:

- Know that it is *normal* and *okay* to feel angry.
- Be able to talk about their feelings with someone they trust.
- Express their anger in non-destructive ways and work on being nonviolent.

Plan:

- Acknowledge the student's anger and their right to feel angry.
- Teach the student to express anger by talking about it, not by hitting, yelling, etc.
- Model appropriate expression of anger by using respectful communication.

3. Dealing with a mixture of anger and love

Feeling torn between feelings of anger and love toward the abusive person.

Students need to:

- Learn that it is okay to feel both anger and love toward someone.
- Know it is okay to love their parent even when they hate the behavior they see.
- Know that are not bad if they love the abusive parent.

Plan:

- Help the student understand that it is normal to have positive and negative feelings for someone they love.

4. Confusion about being able to love both parents

Feeling the need to choose one parent over the other, or the need to take sides.

Students need to:

- Know that it is okay to love both parents at the same time.

Plan:

- Support children who interact with both parents so that they don't feel caught in the middle.
- Encourage children to talk freely about feelings for, or activities with both parents. (If they want to).

5. Dealing with loss

Loss of a healthy, safe family; loss of one parent if they leave, or the constant threat of this; loss of comfort in the home

Students need to:

- Talk about feeling with someone they trust
- Develop a support system of extended family or friends outside of the home

Plan:

- To help the child identify another person; for example, a grandparent, aunt or uncle, teacher, counselor, etc., who they can talk to about their feelings.
- To encourage the child to spend time with supportive family members and friends.
- To speak honestly and thoughtfully about changes in life that might affect them.

6. Handling feelings of guilt and responsibility

Fear of having caused the violence, or not stopping it in some way. Feeling that they have to prevent the violence, take care of Mom, or take care of the family.

Students need to:

- Understand that the violence is not their fault, that it is an adult problem for the adults to work out.

Plan:

- Talk honestly about the violence and reassure the child that they are not to blame.
- Make sure that the child does not take full responsibility for housework, chores, child care, etc. that are the parent's responsibility.
- Take whatever steps possible to ensure that violence does not take place again.

7. Feeling life is unpredictable and never knowing when a crisis will erupt

Feeling vulnerable on a daily basis, with no power or control about what will happen

Students need to:

- Find areas in their lives where they can have control and make plans and decisions
- Create a safety plan
- Create some structure and stability wherever possible (e.g. creating a daily routine that provides a sense of control).

Plan:

- To help the child plan a predictable daily routine to help them have a sense of control.



“Children have more need of models than critics.” –Joseph Joubert

Source: Helping Children who Witness Domestic Violence: A guide for parents. Instructor's Manual, By Meg Crager and Lily Anderson. Funded by the King County Women's Program. 1997.

When to Recommend Professional Help for a Student

Depression: sad most of the time, withdrawn, loses interest in “fun” activities, ongoing problems with eating or sleeping, talks about wanting to die or engages in potentially risky behaviors.

Anxiety: Despite efforts to reassure, create a safe environment and provide opportunities for the child to develop age-appropriate coping skills, child continues to experience anxiety and worry that interferes with normal developmental tasks such as, learning at school, sleeping in own room, leaving house to go play with others, separating from parents, or putting energy into own growth.

Anger: “mad all the time.” Behaves in ways that make you feel afraid for their safety or that of others when angry, pattern of tearing up their things or the property of others.

Self-esteem: Child frequently refers to self in a put-down way, doesn’t take care of own appearance, allows other to take advantage of them, tries to be “invisible.”

Trauma response: Repetitively focuses on violence in conversation or play, has nightmares about violent situation, has day dreams about violent or scary situations, freezes, numbs, drifts off when exposed to stressful situations.

Sleep problems: Nightmares that do not ease with increased security and comfort. Nightmares or other sleep problems that interfere with the child’s ability to enjoy and learn during the day.

School problems: Behaviors that interfere with appropriate learning and do not improve, despite changes at school and home supporting more appropriate behaviors. Difficulties with concentration and attention that interfere with learning.

Play: Unable to engage in age-appropriate play, unable to be spontaneous in play, play frequently focuses on themes of violence or being hurt.

Regressed behaviors: Child’s behavior becomes more immature and continues to be over a period of time.

Physical: Frequent complaints of physical pain or illness for which there is not medical explanation. Increase in symptoms of chronic illness, such as asthma, that the physician believes is not medically based.

Also Consider: Behaviors that continue to have a negative impact on the child’s relationship with peers, family, caretakers, teachers and others such as:

Inability to make or keep friends

Aggression towards younger children and/or animals

Sexualized acting out toward younger or more vulnerable peers

Fire-setting

Substance abuse

Threats to harm self

Handling Disclosure

Children are often afraid to talk to an adult about what has happened to them. This may be because they have been threatened by their abuser, or are afraid that they will be blamed for the abuse. Adults may also have difficulty talking about abuse because they are worried about “saying the right things.” The most important things to remember are to honor the child’s trust, listen carefully, do not make empty promises, and remind him or her that the abuse is not their fault.

Children may disclose or tell you about abuse in many different ways. Younger children may display their feelings or act out violence using toys or drawing. Older children are often more verbal and may use one of three ways:

- **Indirect Hints**

“I couldn’t sleep last night because of all the noise.”
“Mr. Jones wears funny underwear.”

Gently encourage the child to be more specific, but bear in mind that in order to take further action and support the child, you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

- **Disguised Disclosure**

“My friend said I can’t come over because her parents are mean.”
“I know someone who is being touched in a bad way.”

Again, encourage the child to tell you more about the “other child.” They may be talking about a sibling or a friend, but they are just as likely to be talking about themselves. It is probable that the child will eventually tell you who about whom they are speaking about.

- **Disclosure with Strings Attached**

“I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell anyone else.”

Most children know there are negative consequences for telling about something bad that has happened. Let children know that you want to help and that you may have to tell another person to get the help the child needs.

Things to consider when a student begins to disclose sensitive information

- Find a private place to talk.
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling the truth.
- Try not to talk to the child using words that he or she may not understand.
- Remind the child that it is not his/her fault and that s/he is not bad.
- Determine the child’s immediate need for safety. What actions can be taken to keep the child safe and prevent this from happening again?
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support her/him.
- Let the child know what you will do.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep. It is very important that the child trusts you.

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Unexplained bruises or burns * Multiple injuries in various stages of healing * Bruises/welts resembling instrument used (e.g. belt, cord) * Human bite marks * Injuries regularly appearing after absence, weekend, etc. * Unexplained fracture, lacerations, Abrasions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reports injury by caretaker * Uncomfortable with physical contact * Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably * Wears clothing inappropriate to weather (to cover body) * Afraid to go home * May be a chronic runaway * Behavior extremes (withdrawn, aggressive) * Apprehensive when other children cry
Physical Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consistent hunger, poor hygiene * Unattended physical problems or medical needs * Consistent lack of supervision * Abandonment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reports no caretaker at home * Beggars, steals food * Frequently absent or tardy * Constant fatigue, listlessness, or falling asleep in class * Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure) * Shunned by peers
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sexually transmitted diseases (pre-teens) * Pregnancy * Difficulty walking or sitting * Pain or itching in genital area * Torn, stained or bloody underclothing * Bruises/bleeding in external Genitalia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reports sexual abuse * Highly sexualized play * Detailed, age inappropriate, understanding of sexual behavior * Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings * Exhibits delinquent behavior * May attempt suicide or self-injury * May have eating disorders * Deterioration in academic performance
Emotional Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Frequent stomach aches, headaches, or unexplained weight fluctuation * May have speech disorders * May lag in physical development * May have non-organic, failure-to-thrive, medical diagnosis * May have learning problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exhibits age inappropriate behaviors, such as: thumb sucking, biting, head banging or rocking * Exhibits extreme behaviors, such as: over compliance, passivity, aggression, or withdrawal * Exhibits emotional or intellectual developmental delays * Exhibits cruel behavior, or may seem to get pleasure from hurting others/animals * May abuse alcohol or drugs * May have eating disorders

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Who:

Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect; however Section 63.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* requires that designated professionals who have contact with children immediately report their suspicions. It is not necessary to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. Reports can be made anonymously. Persons reporting in good faith are immune from civil and criminal liability pursuant to Section 63.2-1512 of the *Code of Virginia*.

What:

It is helpful to have pertinent information available when you call in a report.

- 1) The child's name, age, date of birth, and address
- 2) The perpetrator's name and relationship to the child, address and phone number (if available)
- 3) A description of the incident in the child's words
- 4) The mother's name, home number and work number
- 5) The father's name, home number and work number
- 6) Names of any other children or adults in the home

Following the call, document:

- 1) The date and time of the report
- 2) The CPS worker's name and phone number
- 3) If the case is reportable and if not, reasons why it was not reportable

When:

Reports should be made as soon as possible to prevent further incidents from occurring. School personnel should follow the School Board's procedure.

Where:

The Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-552-7096
Virginia Beach: 437-3400
Norfolk: 664-6022
Chesapeake: 382-2000
Portsmouth: 393-9500

Note: If a student is over the age of 18, is mentally or physically handicapped and child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report should be made to Adult Protective Services.

VBPS Policy on Child Abuse or Neglect

School Board of the City of Virginia Beach
Regulation 4-68.1

PERSONNEL

Child Abuse or Neglect

Regulations governing child abuse or neglect allegations are designated below.

- A. An abused or neglected child is defined as any child less than eighteen (18) years of age who is without parental care or guardianship caused by the unreasonable absence or the mental or physical incapacity of the child's parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis; or whose parents or other person responsible for his care:
1. Create or inflict, threaten to create or inflict, or allow to be created or inflicted upon such child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or create a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions;
 2. Neglect or refuse to provide care necessary for his health; however, no child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall for that reason alone be considered to be abused or neglected;
 3. Abandon such child;
 4. Commit or allow to be committed any act of sexual exploitation or any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law;
 5. Unreasonable absences him/herself or is mentally or physically incapable of caring for the child.
- B. Any teacher or other person employed by the School Board will report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect immediately to the principal. Principals shall then immediately report such incidents of suspected abuse or neglect to the local Department of Social Services and allow Child Protective Services authorities to determine the necessity of a child abuse investigation. If the person suspected of the abuse is the principal, the report shall be made directly to the Department of Social Services.
- C. When the person suspected of abuse is an employee of the School Board, an investigation will also be conducted by the Department of Human Resources and Child Protective Services. Employees found guilty of such conduct or who have a founded case of neglect or abuse will be recommended for termination.

Regulatory Authority:

Code of Va., § 16.1-228. Definitions.

Code of Va., § 22.1-279.1. Corporal punishment prohibited.

Code of Va., § 63.2-1509. Physicians, nurses, teachers, etc., to report certain injuries to children; penalty for failure to report.

Code of Va., § 63.2-1511. Complaints of abuse and neglect against school personnel; interagency agreement.

Approved by Superintendent: July 16, 1991
Revised by Superintendent: August 18, 1992
Revised by Superintendent: March 8, 2006

Project HOPE

Children often become homeless when their non-abusing parent flees an abusive partner. They may have to relocate several times before the family finds safety and self-sufficiency. Project HOPE ensures that every child continues to receive a quality education.

The *McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act* is Title X, Part C of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This legislation ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school.

Definition of Homeless *

Anyone, *due to lack of housing*, who lives:

- in emergency or transitional shelters
- in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, abandoned in hospitals, awaiting foster care placement.
- in cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings.
- Doubled up with relatives or friends.
- In these conditions and is a migratory child or youth.

* To determine homelessness, consider the **permanence** and **adequacy** of the living situation.

Homeless Students Have the Right to:

- Immediate enrollment in school
- Attend school without a permanent address
- Stay enrolled in the school they were attending when they became homeless for as long as they remain homeless (**if there are no safety concerns due to domestic violence**).
- Receive free and reduced price meals at school.

What Your Family Can Do Before You Move:

- Tell your child's school that you are moving and give them the new contact information.
 - o Domestic Violence victims may not be able to disclose contact information.
- Let school officials know if you want your child to stay in his/her school of origin while you are getting the family stabilized.
- Ask for a copy of your child's school records, including immunizations.

Tips for Families Who Move Often

- Keep a copy of birth certificates and school records accessible.
- Safeguard all health and immunization records.
- Have a reliable person keep a second copy of the child's birth certificate, school records, and health information.

Supporting Students Living in a Shelter

Make necessary allowances for school assignments.

- It may be difficult to complete assignments because of circumstances at the shelter (e.g., lack of quiet space or appropriate school supplies) and the student's emotional state.

Cooperate with the safety plan that may have been developed in conjunction with the non-offending parent.

- Children and adolescents may have helped to develop a plan that may include where they must go when transported to school (e.g., office) what to do if the abusive parent comes to the school. It is important for every staff member at the school to be aware of this plan. This may involve protocols established with the shelter and police for crisis situations (e.g., hostile parent without visitation rights demands to see the student).

Be aware of any school policies and procedures in case a crisis situation occurs.

- Policies that include procedures for dealing with these difficult and distressing situations are helpful (e.g., Who will call the police? Who will stay with the student? Where will the student be taken until the police arrive?). The goal is to maximize the safety and minimize the emotional distress of all students, parents, staff members and school visitors.



**“School served as my shelter from many storms ...
Teachers opened doors to worlds for me
that the rest of my life had slammed shut.”¹⁴**

School-Based Violence Prevention

- **Learn about violence in relationships, how it impacts students, and school-based prevention. For example:**
 - Seek out professional development on topics such as children exposed to domestic violence, bullying, dating violence, and school based prevention.
- **Continually work to develop school practices that are inclusive and promote students' sense of belonging and availability for learning. For example:**
 - Model inclusiveness.
 - Provide sports activities for all students, not only for the few who make school teams.
 - Address the "cool-kid cliques" or "gangs" that abuse and silence others (e.g., separate classes or lunch hours, cross peer mentors/tutors).
 - Develop strategies to engage and foster connections (e.g., academic, social, athletic) for all students to the school.
- **Make helping create a safe school in and out of your classroom a priority. For example:**
 - Consistently enforce and "bring to life" a school code of conduct that defines and promotes respectful behavior and provides an explicit norm against violence.
 - Establish peer mediation programs in which students learn to use conflict resolution skills in the halls and in the school yard.
 - Model respectful strategies for classroom management.
- **Help plan and/or support special violence awareness events for students. These events name and define violence, as well as increase awareness about different types of violence and its impact on victims. For example:**
 - Plan assemblies featuring guest speakers whose lives have been touched by violence.
 - Organize a violence prevention fair.
 - Schedule a theater production focused on violence prevention and debriefing sessions with older student facilitators.
- **Learn to effectively teach an anti-violence curriculum, and/or effectively integrate anti-violence lessons into existing subject matter.**
 - Plan a math lesson on gathering, graphing and interpreting data that uses student surveys on bullying
 - Use the topic of dating violence for an English writing assignment to practice the five paragraph essay.
- **Develop strategies for coping with the stress associated with learning about students' exposure to violence and with being exposed to incidents of student violence. For example:**
 - Find opportunities to professionally and confidentially debrief.
 - Develop supportive work environments that promote a balance between work and home.

Teaching is the greatest act of optimism. – Collen Wilcox

Safety Planning

When you believe a student is being exposed to domestic violence you need to ensure that they have a plan that will keep them safe from harm.



S

STAY OUT OF THE FIGHT

- You may want to get in the middle of the fight to protect and help, but this is not a safe thing for you to do.
- Stay out of the room where the fighting is happening



A

AVOID GETTING TRAPPED IN A SMALL ROOM, CLOSET, THE KITCHEN OR BATHROOM

- You may feel like hiding, but if you go into a corner or closet, it may be difficult for you to get out again safely.
- Don't get trapped in the kitchen or bathroom where there are objects and surfaces that may be dangerous.



F

FIND A PHONE IN A SAFE PLACE, CALL 911 FOR HELP AND STAY ON THE PHONE.

- Use a phone out of reach and out of sight of the abuser. For safety, you may go to a neighbor you trust and use their phone.
- Tell the person on the phone what is happening in your home and ask for immediate help. Give you address to the person on the phone. Stay on the line until the police arrive.



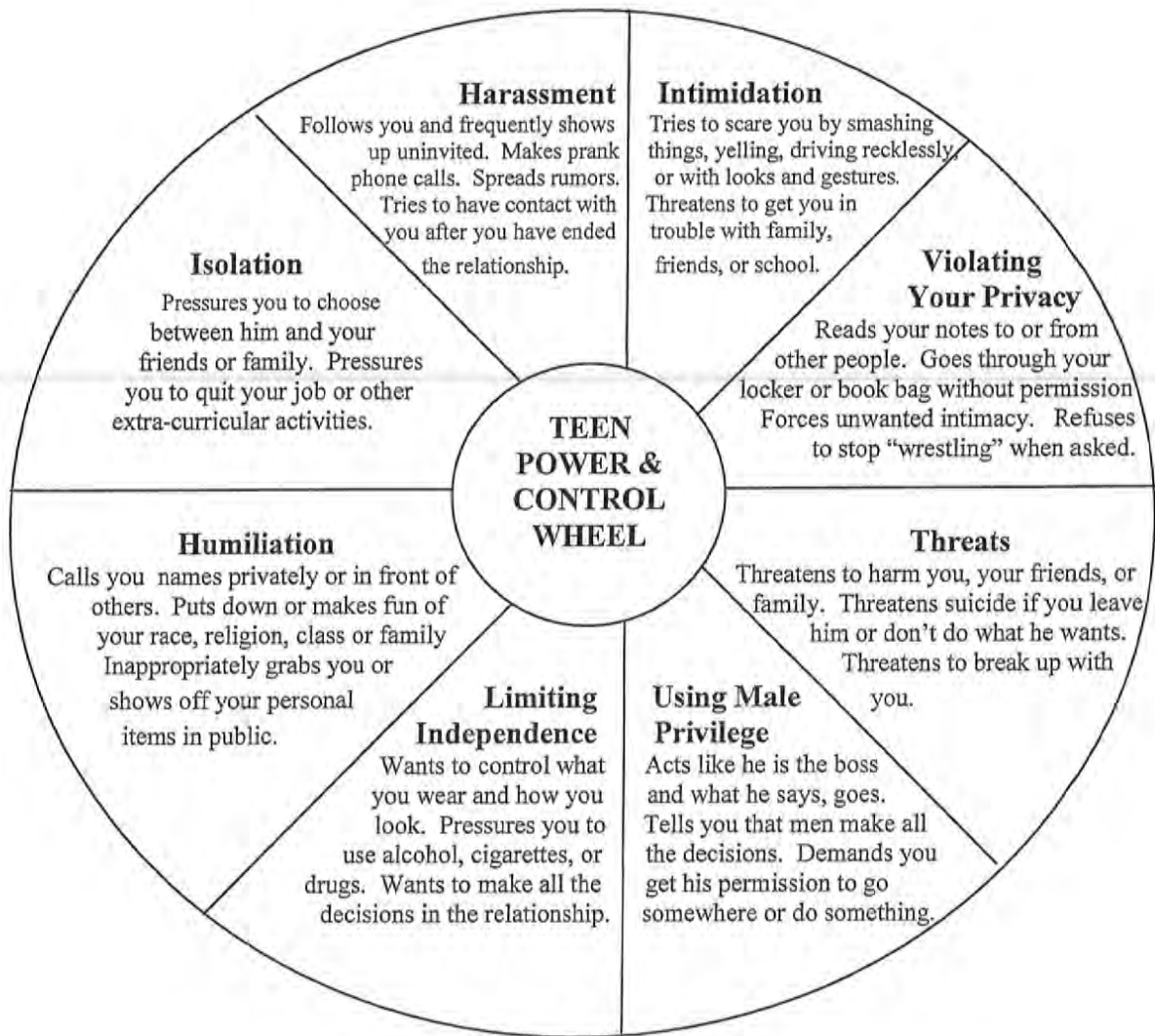
E

ESCAPE TO A SAFE PLACE, FIND A RELATIVE OR NEIGHBOR AND ASK FOR THEIR HELP.

- Think about grownups that you would feel safe talking to.
- Don't give up if the first person you go to won't help. Try another person and keep trying until you find someone to help you.

Always remember...the violence is not your fault!

Teen Power and Control Wheel



"Anger is just one letter short of danger"

Teen Survey

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you feel safe and comfortable in your relationship? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you spend time with friends and family outside of your relationship? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Is your privacy respected and can you spend time alone? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Can you express your feelings without fearing your partner's reactions? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you laugh, play and have fun with your partner? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you each take responsibility for you own actions and happiness? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Do you feel comfortable refusing affection, a date, or other activities? |

If you answered "no" to any of the questions above consider discussing your relationship with someone you trust, such as a parent, friend, school counselor/teacher, or call a confidential hotline. Samaritan House 757.430.2120 or the statewide hotline 1.800.838.8238

Warning Signs

Are you in a dangerous relationship? Next

Steps:

Early warning signs that your partner may become abusive in the future

- Extreme jealousy
- Limits your time with friends and family
- Alcohol or drug use
- Controlling behavior
- Demands sex or affection
- Unpredictable mood swings
- Calls you hurtful or mean names
- Harms animals or children
- Abused former partners
- Hypersensitive
- Slaps, pushes, or hits during an argument
- Threatens violence
- Does not take responsibility for his/her own actions, problems or feelings

- Get help immediately. What friends and adults can you tell about the abuse? Talk about the abusive relationship, your fears and an action plan.
- Inform people at school (principal, teachers, security, etc.) in order to be safe.
- Always walk with a friend to school, classes or after-school activities.
- Consider changing your cell phone number, route to school and locker.
- Keep a record of the abuse by taking pictures of bruises or damaged property and by keeping a journal.
- Call the police to report the abuse (you do not have to file charges).
- Do not see your partner alone. Do not let your former partner into your house or car. If you have to meet in person, meet in public and with your own friend.
- Contact a local advisory group or agency for support and more information.

Where to Go for Help

- Teen Confidential Hotline (Provided by Seton House)757-498-HELP
.....757-498-4357
- Youth Crisis Network757-623-2627
..... 1-800-448-4663
- Response Sexual Assault Services Hotline757-622-4300
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline1-800-273-8255
- Child Abuse Hotline1-800-552-7096
- Domestic Violence Hotline (Provided by Samaritan House)757-430-2120
- Family Violence Sexual Assault Virginia State Hotline.....1.800.838.8238
- National Domestic Violence Hotline1.800.799.SAFE



**Please call today.
Help is free and confidential.**