

FACT SHEET

INCIDENCE

- ❖ **It is estimated that between 2.3 and 10 million children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year in the United States.**
[Carlson, B. E. (1984). Children's observations of interparental violence. In A. R. Roberts (Ed.) *Battered women and their families* (pp. 147-167). New York: Springer
among a nationally representative sample of American men and women. Paper presented at the Ross Roundtable on "Children and Violence," Washington, D.C.]
- ❖ **As many as half a million children may be encountered by police during domestic violence arrests each year in the U.S.**
[Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (November 2000). *Safe from the start – taking action on children exposed to violence.* (Publication #NCJ182789) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.]
- ❖ **There is an overlap of 30 to 60 percent between violence against children and violence against women in the same families. The home can be a dangerous place.**
[Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (November 2000). *Safe from the start – taking action on children exposed to violence.* (Publication #NCJ182789) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.]
- ❖ **Domestic violence has been shown to occur disproportionately in homes with children under age 5.**
[Taylor, L., Zuckerman, B., Harik, V., & Groves, B. (1994). Witnessing violence by young children and their mothers. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* 15 (2), 120-123.]
- ❖ **Although many adults believe that they have protected their children from exposure to domestic violence, 80-90 percent of children in those homes can give detailed descriptions of the violence experienced in their families.**
[Doyne, S., Bowermaster, J. & Meloy, R. (1999). Custody disputes involving domestic violence: Making children's needs a priority. *Juvenile & Family Court Journal*, 50, (2).
Jaffe, P., Wolfe, D., & Kaye Wilson, S. (1990). Children of battered women. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.]
- ❖ **Studies have shown that 25 percent of domestic homicides are witnessed by the children of the victim.**
[Doyne, S., Bowermaster, J. & Meloy, R. (1999). Custody disputes involving domestic violence: Making children's needs a priority. *Juvenile & Family Court Journal*, 50 (2). Jaffe, P., Wolfe, D., & Kaye Wilson, S. (1990). Children of battered women. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.]

EFFECTS

- ❖ Findings of 29 articles reviewed indicated that children who witness domestic violence are at risk for maladaptive responses in one or more of the following areas of functioning: (a) behavioral, (b) emotional, (c) social, (d) cognitive, and (e) physical.
[Kolbo, J., Blakely, E., & Engleman, D. (1996). Children who witness domestic violence: A review of empirical literature. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 11 (2), 281-293.]
- ❖ The impact of exposure to domestic violence and child abuse can continue through adolescence if safety and other interventions are not provided. Many adolescents who have grown up in violent homes are at risk for recreating the abusive relationships they have observed.
Sudermann, M., Jaffe, P.G. & Hastings, E. (1995). Violence Prevention Programs in Secondary (High) Schools. In E. Peled, P. Jaffe & J. Edleson (Eds.) *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.]
- ❖ Witnessing violence as a child is also associated with adult reports of depression, trauma-related symptoms and low self-esteem among women, and trauma-related symptoms among men.
[Silvern, L., Karyl, J., Waelde, L., Hodges, W.F., Starek, J., Heidt, E. & Min, Kyung. (1995). Retrospective reports of parental partner abuse: Relationships to depression, trauma symptoms and self-esteem among college students. *Journal of Family Violence*, 10, 177-202.]
- ❖ Some may be jumping to the conclusion that all children exposed to adult domestic violence should be redefined *under the law* as maltreated children... such conclusions are both faulty and also may not be the most useful response to these children.
[Edelson, J.L., *Should Childhood Exposure to Adult Domestic Violence be Defined as Child Maltreatment Under the Law?* Prepublication draft]

INTERVENTION

- ❖ We can intervene to help children through working with them around regulation of emotion, coping, accurate perceptions of social situations and establishing a trusting relationship with at least one person. We can also work with battered mothers to help them cope with the depression and distress they feel surrounding the battering, helping them to provide more access to a buffering relationship.
[Rossman, B. B. R., Hughes, H. M. & Rosenberg, M. S. (2000) Children and interparental violence: The impact of exposure, Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel]