



*Giving voice to the unspeakable...
responding to domestic abuse in Jewish homes.*

Effects of Domestic Abuse on Children

Approximately 90% of children are aware of the violence and abuse directed at their mothers.

Emotional effects of domestic abuse on children include:

- Low self-esteem
- Shame
- Taking responsibility for the abuse
- Guilt for not being able to stop the abuse
- Guilt for loving the abusive parent
- Fear of abandonment
- Distrust of adults/authority
- Depression, feelings of helplessness and powerlessness
- Embarrassed by effects of abuse on dynamics of home
- Anger about violence and chaos in their lives
- Constant anxiety that another abusive incident will occur

Cognitive effects of domestic abuse:

- Failure to thrive
- May experience cognitive or language problems and/or developmental delays

Physical effects of domestic abuse on children:

- Children may experience stress-related physical ailments such as headaches, stomach aches, ulcers and rashes
- Nervous, anxious, short attention spans, frequently misdiagnosed Attention Deficit Disorder

Boys who witness domestic abuse are:

- 4 times more likely to be abusive in a dating relationship
- 25 times more likely to commit rape as an adult
- 6 times more likely to commit suicide
- 1000 times more likely to commit violent acts against an adult partner or their own children
- Confused over gender appropriate behavior

Girls who grow up in abusive homes are:

- 6.5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted
- More likely to commit self inflicted injuring behavior
- More likely to develop eating disorders
- More likely to become pregnant as teenagers



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There is no evidence, however, that girls who witness their mothers' abuse have a higher risk of being abused as adults

- Older children may be hurt while trying to protect their mothers.
- Children from violent homes have higher risks for drug and alcohol abuse and juvenile delinquency.
- Studies conclude that mothers were 8 times more likely to hurt their children when they were being battered than when they were safe from violence.
- Children are present in 41-55% of homes where police intervene in domestic violence calls.

For more information call SHALVA 773-583-HOPE (4673)