

Children's Exposure to Violence and Abuse

If you live with your own children or the children of your partner, you play an important role in their lives. Children learn lessons about life by watching how the adults in their lives treat them and one another. Experience has shown that children who have been exposed to violence and abuse can suffer many of the same difficulties of children who have been directly abused.

The following questionnaire is designed to help you identify the exposure of your children or your partner's children to abuse and violence in the home.

Are your children's daily routine interrupted by arguments between yourself and your partner?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have your children heard you call your partner a name or put her down?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have you directed negative comments about your partner to your children?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have you threatened your partner with taking the children away from her?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have the children tried intervening when you have been physically or verbally abusive to your partner?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have your children been in the house when you have been physically abusive to your partner?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have your children seen the physical damage to property following a violent incident?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have your children ever seen physical injuries to an adult following a violent incident?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Has your abuse ever led to the loss of work time and income for the family for either you or your partner?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Have your children ever lost time with you because of a separation, divorce or incarceration related to your violence?	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
Have your children ever demonstrated fear in reaction to your behavior in the household?	<i>Never</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
Do your children have any learning problems, difficulties in school, emotional problems, or behavior problems that might be related to their exposure to your abuse at home?	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	

If you answered "yes," "occasionally," or "frequently" to any of these questions, then your children may be receiving negative consequences from your behavior. All children who are exposed to domestic violence can be helped-especially if you can take responsibility to end your abusive behavior and seek the appropriate help for the children. In families where dads have been violent, children gain more from group counseling when their dads accept that the children need counseling and support. Even if you have been abusive, you still have an important role as a father to play.

