X. **Effects of Domestic Violence on Children Victims/Witness – (Part 3A)**

Domestic violence affects every member of the family, including the children. Family violence creates a home environment where children live in constant fear. Domestic violence affects every member of the family, including the children. Family violence creates a home environment where children live in constant fear.

Children who witness family violence are affected in ways similar to children who are physically abused. They are often unable to establish nurturing bonds with either parent. Children are at greater risk for abuse and neglect if they live in a violent home.

Studies show that 3-4 million children between the ages of 3-17 are at risk of exposure to domestic violence each year. U.S. government statistics say that 95% of domestic violence cases involve women victims of male partners. The children of these women often witness the domestic violence. [http://www.domesticviolenceroundtable.org/effect-on-children.html](http://www.domesticviolenceroundtable.org/effect-on-children.html).

"Families under stress produce children under stress. If a spouse is being abused and there are children in the home, the children are affected by the abuse." *(Ackerman and Pickering, 1989)*

**A. Statistics**

- Studies show that child abuse occurs in 30 to 60 percent of family violence cases that involve families with children. *(J.L. Edleson, "The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering." Violence Against Women, February, 1999.)*

- A survey of 6,000 American families found that 50 percent of men who assault their wives, also abuse their children. *(Pagelow, "The Forgotten Victims: Children of Domestic Violence," 1989)*

- Research shows that 80 to 90 percent of children living in homes where there is domestic violence are aware of the violence. *(Pagelow, "Effects of Domestic Violence on Children," Mediation Quarterly, 1990)*

- A number one predictor of child abuse is woman abuse. *(Stark and Flitcraft, "Women at Risk: A Feminist Perspective on Child Abuse," International Journal of Health Services, 1988)*

- The more severe the abuse of the mother, the worse the child abuse. *(Bowker, Arbitell, and McFerron, "On the Relationship Between Wife Beating and Child Abuse," Perspectives on Wife Abuse, 1988)*

- Some 80 percent of child fatalities within the family are attributable to fathers or father surrogates. *(Bergman, Larsen and Mueller, "Changing Spectrum of Serious Child Abuse," Pediatrics, 1986)*
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Effects of Domestic Violence on Children Victims/Witness - Statistics Continued:

- In families where the mother is assaulted by the father, daughters are at risk of sexual abuse 6.51 times greater than girls in non-abusive families *(Bowker, Arbitell and McFerron, 1988)*
- A child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk fact for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next *(American Psychological Association, Violence and the Family: Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family, 1996)*
- Male children who witness the abuse of mothers by fathers are more likely to become men who batter in adulthood than those male children from homes free of violence *(Rosenbaum and O’Leary, “Children: The Unintended Victims of Marital Violence,” American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1981)*
- Older children are frequently assaulted when they intervene to defend or protect their mothers. *(Hilberman and Munson, “Sixty Battered Women,” Victimology: An International Journal, 1977-78)*
- In a 36-month study of 146 children, ages 11-17 who came from homes where there was domestic violence, all sons over the age of 14 attempted to protect their mothers from attacks. Some 62 percent were injured in the process. *(Roy, 1988) Reference for this section: http://www.acadv.org/children.html.*
- Children older than 5 or 6 have a tendency to identify with the aggressor and lose respect for the victim. *(Crites, L. and Coker, D. (1988) “What Therapists See That Judges May Miss: A Unique Guide to Custody Decisions When Spouse Abuse is Charged,” The Judges Journal, Spring.)*
- Serious child abuse almost always postdates the infliction of serious abuse of mothers by fathers or male partners. *(Stark, E. and Flitchcraft, A. "Women and Children at Risk: A Feminist Perspective on Child Abuse.” International Journal of Health Services, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1988.)*
- More than 40 children are abducted by a parent each hour in this country. More than 54% of these abductions occur in the context of family violence. *(Greif, G. and Hegan, R. When Parents Kidnap. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1992.)*
- Sixty-three percent of all males between the ages of 11 and 20 who are serving time for homicide in America killed their mother and batterer. *(Edwards, Leonard P. "Reducing Family Violence: The Role of the Family Violence Council.” Juvenile and Family Court Journal, Vol. 1, 1992.)*

Next section posted will be “Domestic Violence Series (Part 3) – “Effects of Domestic Violence on Children Victims/Witness – Dynamics of Domestic Violence That Are Unhealthy for Children” (Part 3B) on Thursday, August 2nd.