For children’s treatment programs and other domestic violence services in the state of Utah, call:

1-800-897-LINK (5465)
Children Who Witness Violence Are Harmed...

Children are harmed by domestic violence even if they never see it and are never physically abused themselves. Even hearing yelling, name-calling, slapping and hitting sounds is abuse and it has a profound effect on children.

- They cannot get enough positive attention from a parent who lives in fear.
- They cannot relax and feel secure because they know something is wrong.
- They may feel guilty because they cannot protect the abused parent.
- They learn that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflicts.
- They learn that to love someone is to accept abuse from them.
- They can easily become victimized themselves, either by an abuser or a harassed, frustrated victim.
- They can develop behavioral problems, eating disorders and sleep disorders.
- They may slip back into more childish behaviors, such as thumb-sucking, nail-biting, and bed-wetting.
- They often have problems with depression, anxiety, fear and guilt that may carry into their adult life.
- They may have mixed feelings in that they still love the abuser.
- Their grades and ability to concentrate in school may be affected greatly.
- They may have difficulty establishing healthy relationships; possibly at greater risk to become involved in dating violence.

What You Can Do...

If you have a spouse or partner who is violent, it is important to have a safety plan for yourself and your children. As part of the child’s safety plan, the following should be discussed:

- Instruct children to never get involved during an argument between adults.
- Agree on a safe place to go if a serious fight occurs in a child’s home; such as a friend or a neighbor’s house.
- Teach children to call for help. Have them practice picking up the phone to call.
- Make sure children know their own address and phone number.
- Reassure children that they are not responsible for the abuse.
- Provide activities to enhance thinking processes; e.g., “if I do this, then that will happen”.
- Assist children in articulating and achieving goals.
- Listen to children. Do not talk too much or explain away the violence.
- Provide safe opportunities for children to talk; e.g., bedtime, on walks, in the car.
- Teach problem solving skills including multiple solutions for a given problem and non-abusive responses to conflict situations.
- Reinforce the importance of telling the truth when talking to police officers, teachers and other trusted figures.
- Teach decision making and communication skills.
- Remember when you are safe, your children are safe.