The Correlation Between Domestic Violence and Children’s Development

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Introduction

• It is estimated that each year 3.3 million U.S. children will witness violence against their mother or female caretaker by a family member.
• Children said to have witnessed four types of domestic violence: verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.
• Children are the secondary victims of domestic violence, and are often forgotten about.
• Witnessing domestic violence leads children to have a variety of age-dependent negative effects.

Coverage

• Information found through the Tennessee Technological University Volpe Library search engine.
• Key terms used to research:
  - “Domestic Violence”
  - “Children’s Development”
• Definitions:
  - Domestic Violence: violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner.
  - Children’s Development: Child development refers to the sequence of physical, language, thought and emotional changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood.

Methodology

• The following steps were followed in order to complete the literature review of this topic:
  1. Selected a research topic,
  2. Created key terms to complete search,
  3. Used key terms to find relevant articles,
  4. Reviewed the articles,
  5. Created a literature review,
  6. Synthesized the information into the final review,
  7. Summarized information into the final review

Results

• Three themes and eight sub-themes were found between participants who have witnessed domestic violence:
  - Themes:
    • Contextualizing the violence
    • Dealing with the impact of witnessing abuse
    • Devising survival coping strategies
  - Sub-themes:
    • Emotionally charged home environment
    • Type, frequency and duration of the violence
    • Deficient family relationships
    • Feeling invisible and becoming depressed
    • Feeling invisible and blocking out the abuse
    • Attempting to stop the abuse
    • Establishing a safe supportive place of retreat
    • Moving out and moving on

Participants And Mothers Were Subject To And From Whom:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Abuse</th>
<th>Verbal Abuse</th>
<th>Financial Abuse</th>
<th>Sexual Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance

• Children should always be protected from witnessing domestic violence and removed from the situation as soon as possible, and we MUST protect them.
• The findings showed us that children who witness domestic violence in the home are more likely to exhibit similar psychological effects.
• Children who witness domestic violence have an increased risk of poor school performance, cognitive delay, emotional and behavioral issues, trauma symptoms and mental health diagnoses in childhood.

Conclusions

• Domestic violence affects more than the primary victim, there are secondary victims who experience negative outcomes as well.
• We must protect children from being exposed to domestic violence, because it can lead to developmental declines as well as those behaviors reoccurring in their future.

References