

## **Developmental Needs and the Impact of Domestic Violence**

### **Developmental Needs of Infants**

### **Potential Impact of DV**

To take in information and learn about the world through the use of the 5 senses	Loud noises, violent images can be distressing to the senses and learned information about the world
To form secure attachments	Parents may not consistently meet infant's needs which affects the securing of the normal parent-child bond
To become active explorers of the world through play	Imitation of the violence may be seen in the child's play. Children may be afraid to explore and play because of tension or past experiences of violence
To learn about social relationships and observe interactions between family members	Children may learn aggression from witnessing the batterer's violence

### **Developmental Needs of Pre-schoolers**

### **Potential Impact of DV**

To learn how to appropriately express angry feelings and other emotions	Children learn unhealthy expressions of emotions or believe violence comes from anger
To make observations about the world that form the meaning of the world	Children receive conflicting messages from seeing one thing and being told another about violence
To think in ego-centric ways	Children may begin to believe they caused the violence or their behaviors can stop the violence
To form their ideas about gender roles in society	Children may learn that one sex is aggressive and violent and the other is passive or victimized
To increase their physical independence	Regression and fear of "doing it wrong" may inhibit the child's attempts to do things for themselves

**Developmental Needs of School-Age Children**

**Potential Impact of DV**

To increase an emotional awareness in themselves and in others	Children become more aware of their own reactions to violence and the impact the violence has on others, especially the survivor
To increase the complexity in their thinking about "right and wrong."	Children may become more susceptible to believing unhealthy rationalizations for the violence (such as alcohol causes it or that the survivor caused it by doing something wrong). Children may feel guilt either because they believe they were causing the violence or because they see their parent as "wrong" for being violent
To develop a self-concept partially based in their ability to succeed academically and socially	Children's learning may be compromised because they are too distracted by fear or worry to concentrate. Children may not be able to develop healthy social relationships based on ideas about behaviors.
To learn from peers and other outside influences outside the home.	Children are more at risk for being bullied or acting aggressively which inhibits their ability to learn positively from outside sources.
To increase their identification with the same sex.	Children may see girls as victims and boys as aggressive and attempt to mold themselves into the sex role ascribed to them

**Developmental Needs of Adolescents**

**Potential Impact of DV**

<p>To increase their sense of autonomy and independence from their family</p>	<p>Adolescents may have too early developed autonomy because they felt they needed to try to take the role of the caregiver, making the developmental need stunted. Adolescents may have difficulties outside their families because they may have poor communication and negotiation skills. Some adolescents may be unwilling to stay home and this can lead to too much time spent away and no reinforcement at home for new things learned outside home.</p>
<p>To develop naturally through puberty</p>	<p>Adolescents may believe their new height or stature will help them to protect the survivor. Some adolescents may use their size to intimidate or act aggressively towards others based on their learned behaviors</p>
<p>To maneuver their peer groups and seek acceptance</p>	<p>Adolescents may have increased high-risk behaviors to fit in or to cope with their home situation. Adolescents may have shame about their families or the violence in the home and may spend more time out of the home and seek acceptance from destructive peers</p>
<p>To learn about romantic relationships and develop ideas about sexuality, intimacy and relationships</p>	<p>Adolescents may have difficulty forming relationships because of fear of either being abused or being abusive. Adolescents may either avoid relationships or seek comfort in a relationship that is unhealthy or developmentally they are unprepared for</p>
<p>To develop abstract thinking</p>	<p>Adolescents may feel stuck in "black or white" thinking about relationships and behaviors learned from witnessing DV as children</p>