Children and Youth

All children who live with domestic violence are affected by the experience. The nature and extent of the effects vary greatly. Some children are severely traumatized, particularly if they are among the many who are also victims of child abuse. Others are able to cope well, and go on to live healthy, productive lives.

Children are not just eye witnesses to domestic abuse. They are actively involved in trying to understand to the abuse, predict when it will happen and protect themselves and their family. Effects of exposure can include emotional and behavioral problems, developing negative core beliefs about themselves and others, and adopting the values of the abuser.

Many teens are victims of violence and abuse in their dating relationships. Teens are particularly vulnerable to partner abuse because they have less recourse to legal remedies than adults, and may avoid asking for help due to fear of peer pressure or the disapproval of adults.

Wisconsin domestic violence programs are committed to meeting the needs of these children and youth and to educating their communities about the impact of battering in their lives. Most Wisconsin domestic violence agencies provide services for youth both in their programs and in their communities. Since 1999, our Children and Youth Program has supported these efforts by offering training, technical assistance and networking opportunities to those working with youth exposed to domestic abuse or dating violence. Since 2008, the CY Program has focused on supporting mother-child relationships hurt by domestic violence through its Family Centered Services Training and more recently, through the Growing Together Project.

Training New Children and Youth Advocates

The guide offers an introduction to the basic knowledge and skills, divided by topics, that are important for children and youth (CY) advocates in Wisconsin domestic violence programs. It is a training tool for new CY advocates and their supervisors to use together. The guide is divided into two sections. The ?Knowledge? section includes topics that children and youth advocates should become familiar with. These topics are arranged in approximate order of their importance to the job. The ?Skills? section includes skills needed to do the job. Each topic contains a link to one or more free, web-based resources that provide newly-hired children and youth advocates with a basic foundation in each of these important job-related topics. Suggestions for using the guide are included.

Guide to Training New Children and Youth Advocates

Click to view all Children & Youth Resources

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