***Affects of Domestic Violence on Children***

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In homes where domestic violence occurs, children are at a higher risk of suffering physical abuse themselves. Regardless of whether children are physically abused, the emotional effects of witnessing domestic violence are very similar to the psychological trauma associated with being a victim of child abuse. Each year, an estimated minimum of 3.3 million children witness domestic violence. Listed below are some of the ways children can become affected:

***Emotionally:***

*Guilt:* feels the violence is his/her fault

*Shame*: having to keep family secrets

*Fear/Anxiety*: of violence or expressing feelings

*Depressed/Powerless/helplessness:* to change their home situation

*Anger*: about the violence or chaos

*Grief:* family losses, frequently moving

*Burdened:* with responsibility beyond their years, caretaking of parent(s) or other children

***Physically:***

*Somatic complaints*: headaches, stomachaches, asthma

*Nervous/Anxious*: short attention span, tired, lethargic, often sick

*Decline in personal hygiene*

*Regression in developmental tasks*: bed-wetting, thumb sucking, clinging, etc.

*NO Reaction*

***Behaviorally:***

*Extremes in behavior*: acting out or withdrawn, overachiever/underachiever

*Sarcastic, ridged, defensive*

*Attention seeking behaviors*

*Bed-wetting, nightmares, chaotic behavior (trouble setting limits), running away*