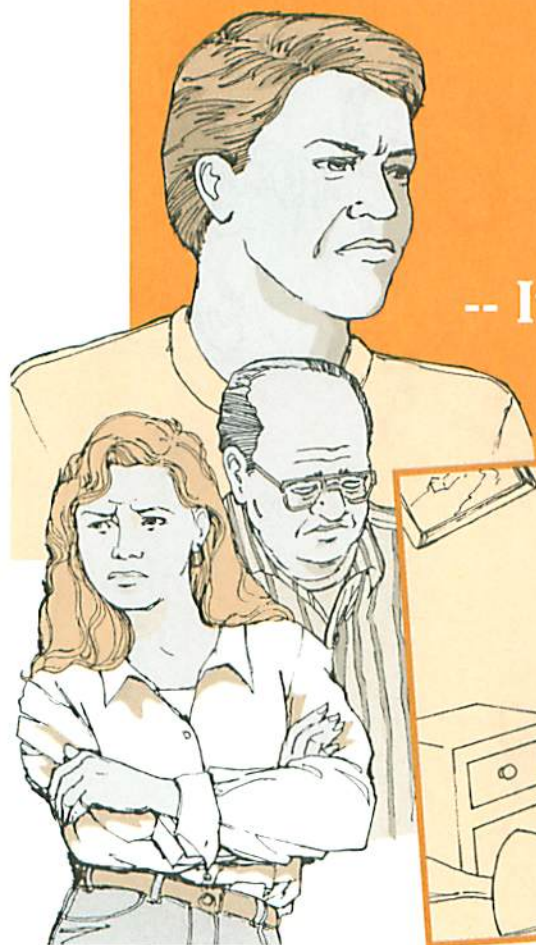


# Violence in the Family

-- It's everyone's  
concern



# What is family violence?

It's the mistreatment of one family member by another.

Family violence includes:

## Physical abuse

-- such as slapping, hitting or burning

## Sexual abuse

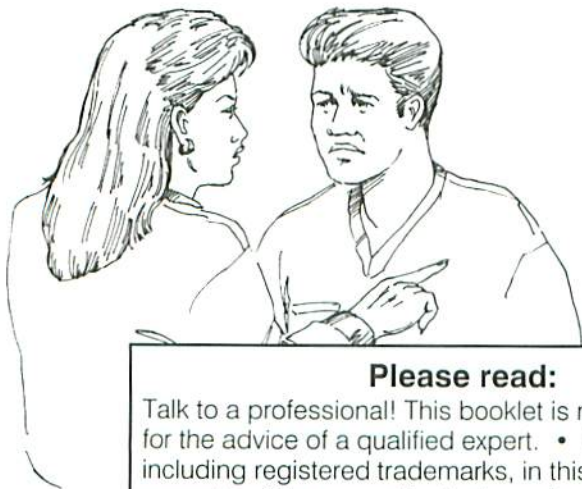
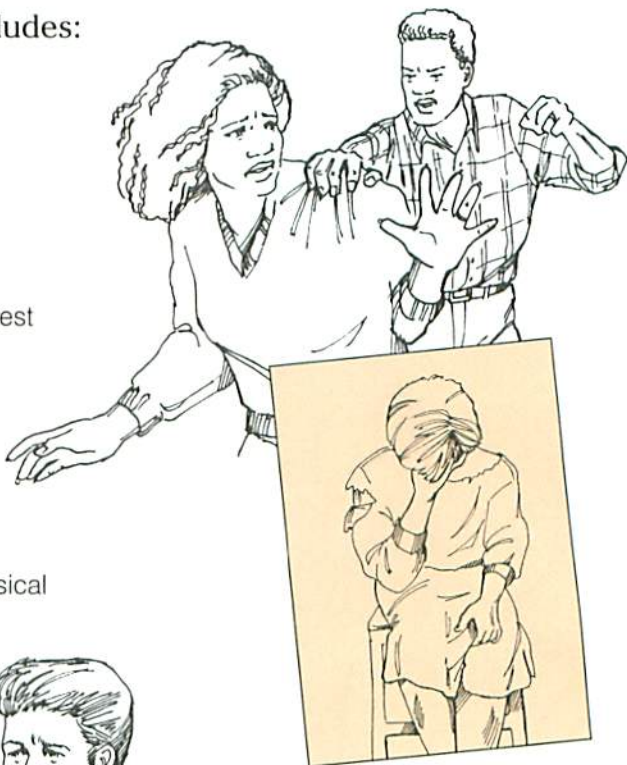
-- including rape and incest

## Emotional abuse

-- such as threats, insults or harassment

## Neglect

-- for example, poor physical or emotional care.



**Family violence is a crime. It is a widespread problem in our society.**

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# Why should I learn about family violence?

Because by learning about it, you can help solve the problem.



## Family violence often goes unreported.

Victims often feel:

- ashamed about what's happened
- hopeless about improving their situation.

Witnesses may also fail to report family violence, thinking it's "none of their business."

## In the meantime, family members suffer.

Family violence often results in:

- physical injuries
- emotional pain
- economic loss.



**Raising awareness of family violence can help stop the suffering.**



# Every family member suffers from family violence.



## Victims

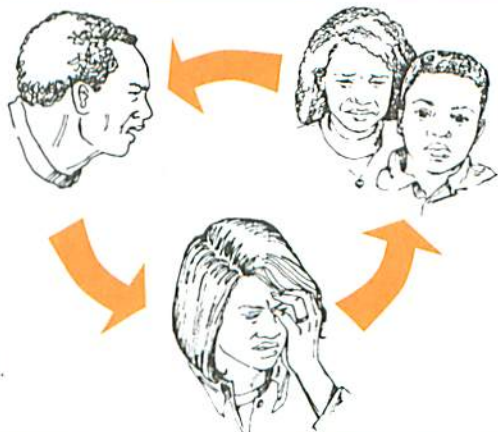
may experience:

- serious physical injury, even death
- mental suffering, such as depression, loss of self-esteem, anxiety, feelings of helplessness and worthlessness
- work problems, loss of job and income.

## Violence often follows a vicious circle.

For example:

- A husband abuses his wife and children.
- The wife takes out her frustration on children, too.
- Children who suffer or witness violence may abuse brothers and sisters -- or, later, their own families.



## Abusers

may experience:

- loss of self-esteem, leading to continued violence
- legal problems, fines, jail
- work problems, loss of job and income
- possible violent revenge by victims
- continued violence in their relationships, unless they seek help.



## Society also suffers:

- the legal and economic burden of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of abusers (and added danger to law enforcement personnel)
- the social costs of crime.



# Common traits of people who are violent

They often:

## Witnessed or suffered abuse as children

Violence is a learned behavior. Many abusers witnessed or suffered abuse earlier in life.

## Crave power

Some people see violence as a way to gain control over family members.

## Have low self-esteem

People with a poor self-image may use violence to feel important.

## Abuse alcohol or other drugs

This is a common factor in violent households.

## Have mental problems

People who are violent may have untreated mental problems.

**Family violence can happen to families of any economic or social class.**



# Child abuse

is the mistreatment or neglect of a child.

Adults who abuse children often:



## Lack maturity

Some parents are easily frustrated and overwhelmed by everyday problems.

## Have unreasonable expectations

If a parent doesn't understand what a child can and cannot do, the parent may think the child is misbehaving.

## Lack parenting skills

Adults who don't understand how to meet a child's needs may feel guilty. They may take these feelings out on the child.

## Face money problems

Some family members may blame children for money problems or take their frustrations out on children.



**Child abuse is especially tragic because children trust adults to keep them safe.**

# Partner abuse

is the mistreatment of one partner by another.

People who abuse their partners tend to:

## Make excuses

Often, the abuser blames an attack on some other person or situation -- the partner, troubles at work, jealousy, etc. Or, the abuser may say that he or she "didn't really mean it."

But, there is no excuse for abuse.



## Repeat the abuse

Partner abuse often happens over and over again -- even though the abuser promises to stop. In many cases, the abuse gets worse.



**Women are abused more often than men.**

# Elder abuse

is the mistreatment of a parent or older family member by another member.

## Elder abuse includes:

- neglect
- isolation
- verbal abuse
- overmedication
- failure to provide medical care
- misuse of the older person's money.

## People who abuse older people often have histories that include:

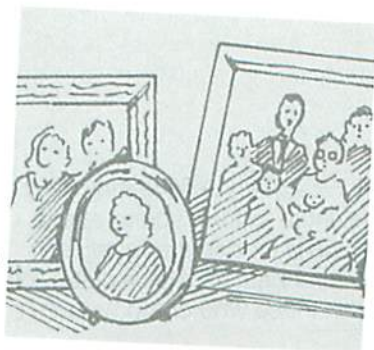
- abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- being abused themselves
- untreated mental problems.



## Older people may not report abuse

because they are:

- dependent on the abuser
- ashamed of having raised abusive children
- afraid they'll be put in an institution.



# Why does family violence continue?

Both victims and abusers often feel powerless to change the situation. They often feel trapped by:

## A lack of alternatives

A spouse or child may be dependent on an abuser. Older people and children may feel powerless to escape.

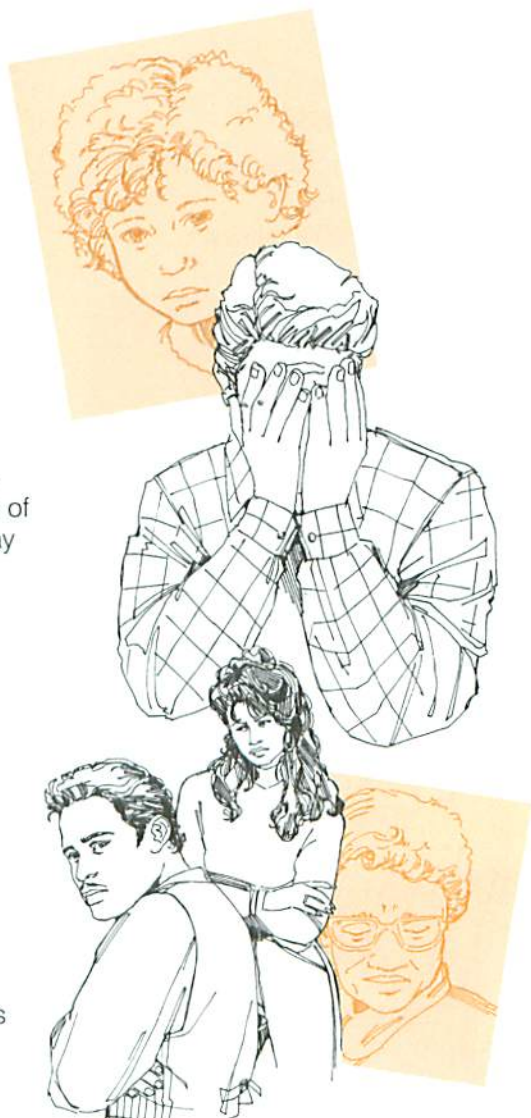
## Fear and shame

Victims may feel helpless, guilty or worthless. They may feel ashamed of their troubled relationships and may not trust those who could help.

Abusers may be afraid of being punished or losing their families if they seek help.

## Isolation

Victims often believe they have nowhere to turn, so the abuse remains hidden. Language or cultural barriers may isolate victims from those who could help.





### Lack of protection

In the past, law enforcement agencies and the courts have often been unable to give much protection. Today the situation is changing.

### Lack of knowledge

Family members may not know that help is available from local human service agencies, shelters and local law enforcement.

Abusers may not realize that they can learn to express their feelings in positive ways.



### Hopes and wishes

Many people in violent homes love each other and enjoy some good times together. Victims may feel that it's better to suffer than to be separated. But without help, violence often gets worse.

# There are many sources of help for troubled families.

Look in the front section of the phone book or in the yellow pages under “Children,” “Social Service Organizations” or “Crisis Intervention.”

If you suspect a problem, seek help right away.

## Hotlines

provide immediate help. Call the:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
- Childhelp USA® National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD® (1-800-422-4453).



## Family and social service agencies

provide counseling, protection, referrals and legal advice.

## Clergy and religious groups

often provide counseling, parenting advice, classes on family life and referrals.



### **Shelters**

offer emergency and short-term lodging, protection, counseling, etc.

### **Self-help groups**

are available for abusers of alcohol and other drugs, and their families (for example, AA, Narcotics Anonymous and Al-Anon).

### **Legal assistance centers**

provide legal help for victims who cannot afford a lawyer.

### **Support groups**

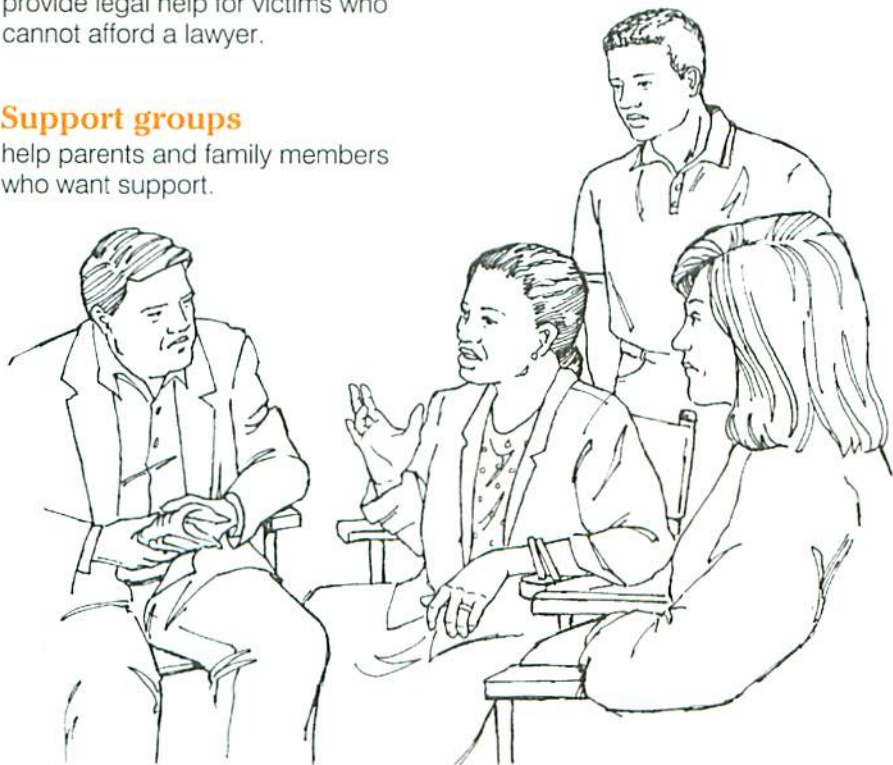
help parents and family members who want support.

### **Hospitals and mental health centers**

offer emergency medical and psychiatric care, as well as inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care.

### **Law enforcement officials**

may be called for intervention or protection.



**Many services are free or inexpensive.**

# Family violence can be prevented!

Here's what you can do:

## As a family member

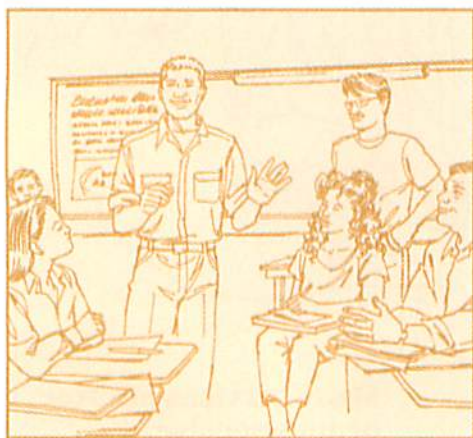
Help those who have problems with violence to:

- recognize their tendency toward violence
- realize that violence is a crime -- not an acceptable way to solve problems
- seek help to find better ways to share feelings, resolve conflicts and express anger.



## As a member of the community

- Support programs that increase public awareness of family violence, teach parenting skills and help people learn to express feelings.
- Encourage attempts to reduce violence in media and in advertising.
- Report known or suspected family violence to the police or sheriff's department.
- Support treatment of abusers.



# Family violence hurts everyone.



## Recognize

the seriousness of family violence.

## Seek help

for victims and abusers.



## Support

educational, legal and social efforts to put an end to family violence.



**Make your home  
a place for love  
-- not violence!**