

The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people

Safeguarding Team – Splitz
Devon Domestic Abuse Support Service



Who we are...

- **SPLITZ** are the commissioned domestic abuse service in Devon. Providing support to men, women and children affected by DVA and running various projects funded by different charities and organisations.
- We provide helpline support, phone support, face to face support and working in partnerships with voluntary and statutory agencies.
- We aim to reduce risk, safety plan, provide emotional support, support with housing, support through the court processes, discuss all of the options available to the victims to help improve mental health and give advice around healthy relationships.

Children in Devon

- So far this year 3,200 victims of DVA have been referred into our service.
- Over 2,500 dependent children were living in those homes.
- **2,500** children and young people potentially needing support around DVA.
- 473 of these children were also referred to MASH due to safeguarding concerns.
- Where children in Devon are subject to Child Protection Plans, 82% of these involve DVA.
- Devon has the highest number of cases of DVA being identified as the main factor for a child being 'in need'.

Children and domestic abuse

130,000 children live in households with high risk domestic abuse in the UK

- There is a major overlap between direct harm to children and domestic abuse.
- 62 % of children experienced direct abuse in addition to witnessing the abuse of a parent.
- 28% of children experienced direct physical abuse at the hands of the adult perpetrator.

Children and domestic abuse

- Only half of children exposed to DA are known to social care.
- Domestic abuse is a factor in over half of serious case reviews.
- Children's outcomes significantly improve after support from specialist services.

Physical effects on children

- Nightmares/fears around going to sleep
- Physical symptoms e.g. headaches
- Hyper vigilance
- Fighting with others - 1/4 of children exposed to DA exhibit abusive behaviour
- Hurting animals
- Withdrawal from people
- Risky behaviour
- Separation anxiety
- Regression behaviour e.g. bed wetting

This is not a comprehensive list, there are many other negative consequences on children as a result of witnessing domestic abuse.

Emotional effects on children

- Depression/low energy
- Anxiety
- Flashbacks
- Loneliness and isolation
- Mirroring or identifying with the abuser
- Poor School performance
- Concentration difficulties
- Self harm/suicidal ideation
- Poor self esteem
- Problems with eating
- Taking on adult responsibilities
- Excessive worrying
- Dissociation

This is not a comprehensive list, there are many other negative consequences on children as a result of witnessing domestic abuse.

Effects on children that may last into adulthood if intervention support is not provided

- Lack of understanding of healthy relationships - the single best predictor as to whether a child becomes a perpetrator or a victim in later life is whether or not they grow up in a household with domestic abuse.
- Children who witness domestic abuse are more likely to experience pregnancies as teenagers, misuse substances and experience mental health difficulties in the future.

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What are adverse childhood experiences? (ACEs)

- ❖ Stressful or traumatic events and household dysfunction experienced in childhood which have a significant impact on the child's future.
- ❖ ACEs include: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, parental mental health, parental imprisonment, domestic abuse, separation of parents, bereavement and parental substance misuse.
- ❖ ACEs have been linked to suicide attempts, mental health difficulties, chronic health conditions, high risk sexual behaviours, miscarriages and early death.

Operation Encompass

Supporting children through key adults

❖ Operation Encompass is the reporting to schools, prior to the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has been exposed to, or involved in, any domestic incident.

❖ Operation Encompass will ensure that a member of the school staff, known as a Key Adult, is trained to allow them to liaise with the police and to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, while ensuring that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in, or exposed to, a domestic abuse incident.

ROBBIE



ACEs

ROBBIE

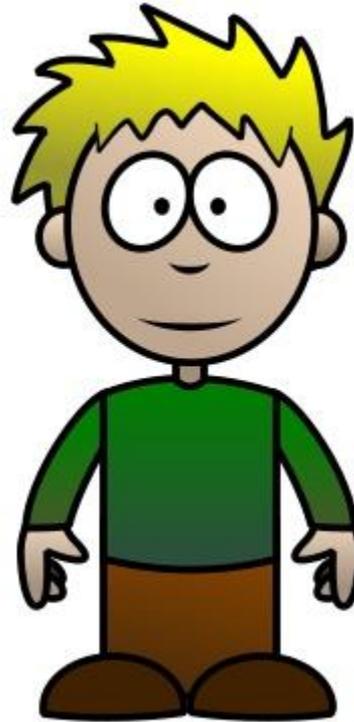
Possible future outcomes

Domestic abuse

Parental separation

Parent been in prison

Parental drug misuse



Twice as likely to be diagnosed with a chronic disease in later life

Twice as likely to smoke

Seven times more likely to become an alcoholic

Twelve times more likely to take his own life

Fourteen times as likely to demonstrate violence as an adult

Four times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes

What we do to support these children



How do we support young people in unhealthy relationships?



YP IDVA

- ❖ Supporting 14-18 year olds (up to 24 in special circumstances) in their own abusive relationships.
- ❖ The YP IDVA provides advice and support to these young people around their safety and emotional wellbeing; and housing, financial and legal support where appropriate.
- ❖ The YP IDVA also provides advocacy for these young people and supports them around their understanding of domestic abuse and healthy relationships.

Thank you for listening

Any questions?

