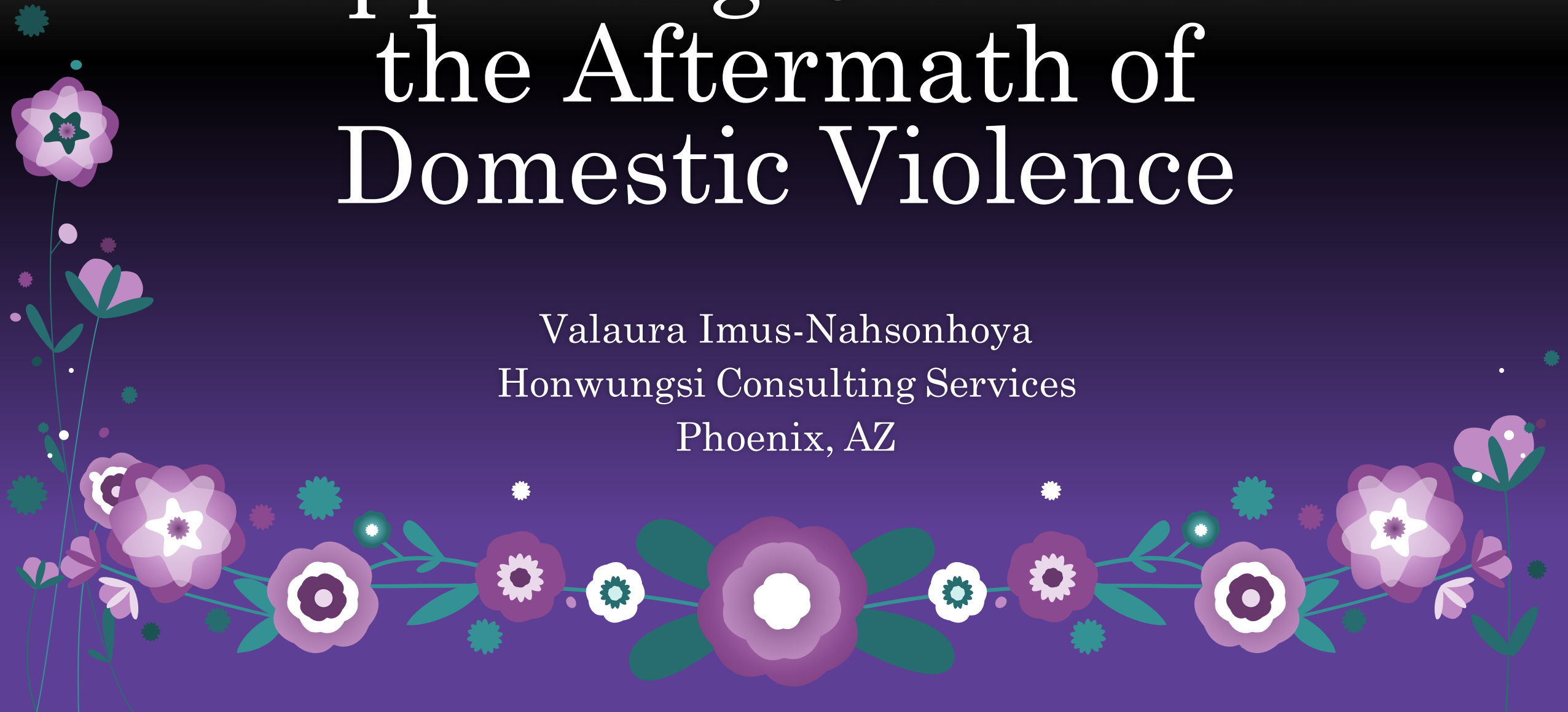


Supporting Children in the Aftermath of Domestic Violence

Valaura Imus-Nahsonhoya
Honwungsi Consulting Services
Phoenix, AZ



Who Is Valaura?



- Member of the Hopi Tribe
- 16 years of direct victim services to crime victims in Tribal and Federal agency
- Executive Director of Honwungsi Consulting Services
- Employed with National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.
- Worked for Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services Victim Assistance Program as a Supervisory Victim Specialist and for the Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Law Enforcement and Security. Installation and development of the Department's Victim Assistance Program at the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Phoenix Office
- First Victim Specialist to work with DOI Office of Law Enforcement & Security and crime victims served by the Bureau of Indian Affairs District III.
- Previously worked for the Hopi Tribe in Arizona as the Program Director of the Hopi Domestic Violence Program and served as Legal Advocate for the Office of the Hopi Tribal Prosecutor.
- Earned Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice with an Emphasis in Legal Studies from Grand Canyon University. Also earned a Legal Advocate Certification through National Tribal Trial College/Wisconsin Law School.
- Certified as a Domestic Violence Trainer by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training (AzPOST). Certified in Peer Support.

What kind of Abuse?



**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**



**Family
violence**



In the United States alone:

- 5 million children experience some form of traumatic experience
- More than 2 million of these are victims of physical or sexual abuse
- Millions are living in terrorizing atmospheres of violence in their home

Sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline, National Center for Victims of Crime, and WomensLaw.org.
Office on Violence Against Women, <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm>






Statistics

- 10-20% of children are at risk for exposure to domestic violence
- In 38% of incidents of violence, under age 12 were residents of the household
- Child abuse occurs in 30-60% of family violence cases that involve families with children

The Child Welfare Information Gateway, (2009). Domestic violence and the child welfare system. Retrieved from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/domesticviolence.cfm>





ARIZONA

- 33 children were assaulted by family members
- Every 44 minutes in Arizona, one or more children witness a domestic violence incident



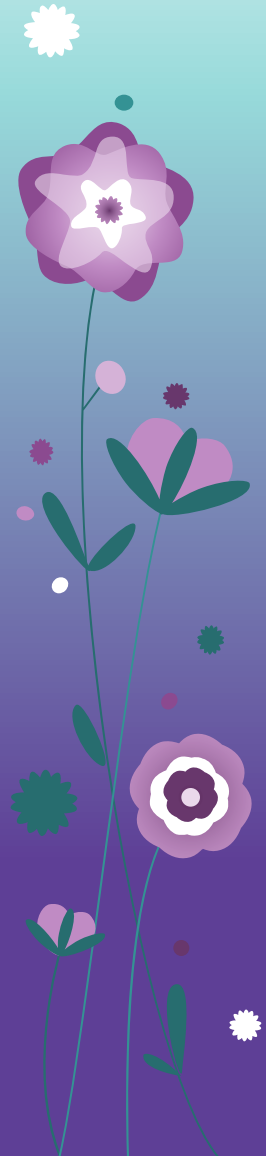
What is Domestic Violence?

- Domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain **power and control** over another intimate partner.
- Domestic violence can be **physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological** actions or threats of actions that influence another person.
- This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.

Sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline, National Center for Victims of Crime, and WomensLaw.org.
Office on Violence Against Women, <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm>



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Sexual Abuse



- Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent.
- Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.

Sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline, National Center for Victims of Crime, and WomensLaw.org.
Office on Violence Against Women,
<http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm>



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Economic Abuse

- Is defined as making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money, or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment.



Sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline, National Center for Victims of Crime, and WomensLaw.org.
Office on Violence Against Women, <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm>



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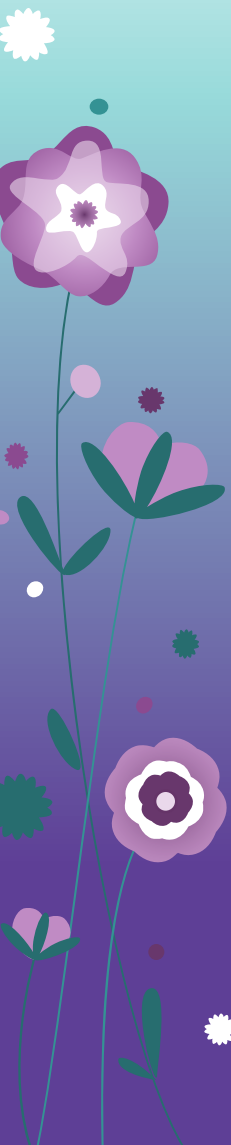


Who is abused?

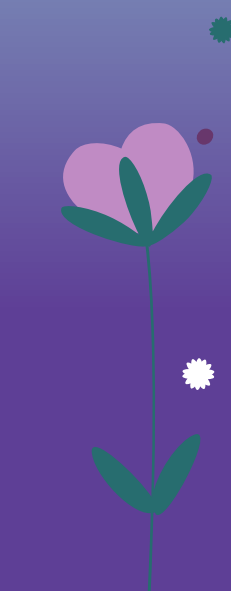
- Domestic violence can happen to **ANYONE** regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender.
- Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.
- Domestic violence occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and can happen to intimate partners who are married, living together, or dating.



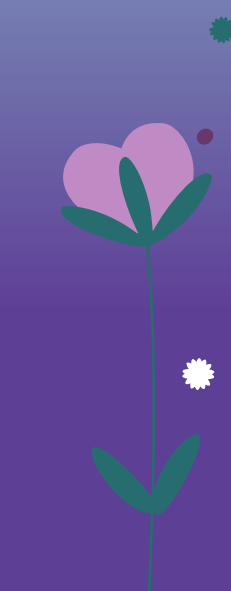
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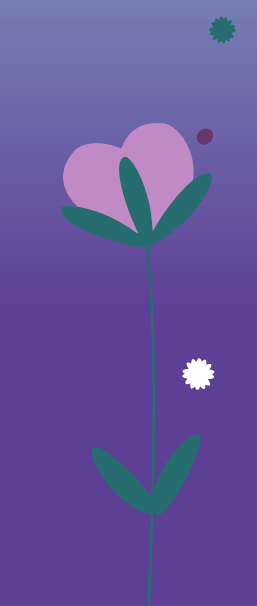


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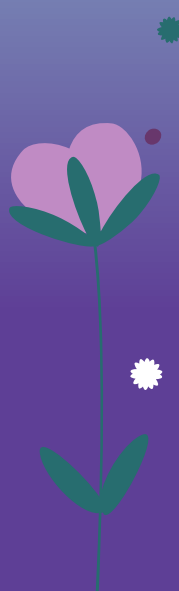
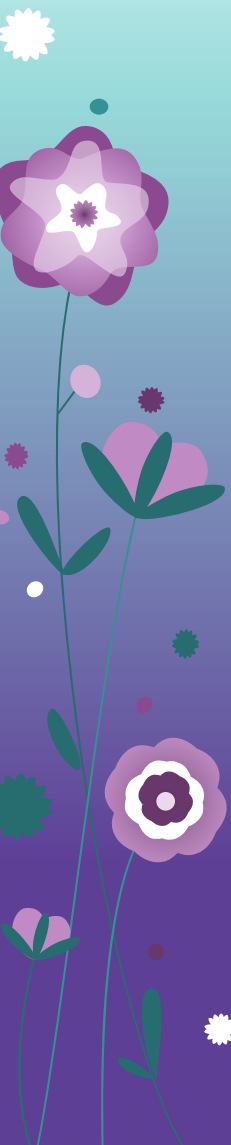
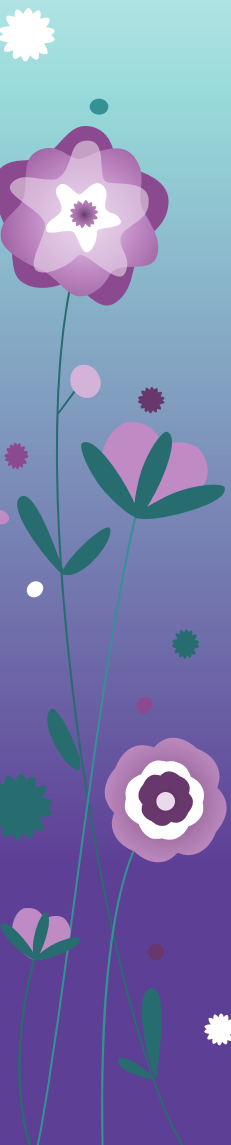
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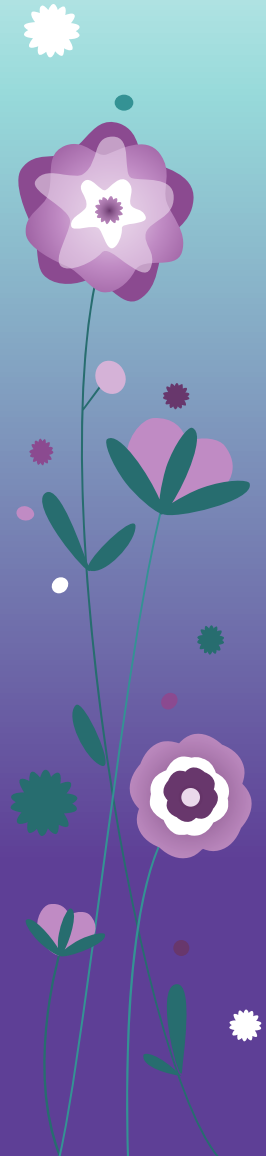


How Children Are Involved in Adult Domestic Violence: Results From A Four City Telephone Survey <http://www.mincava.umn.edu/link/documents/children/children.doc>

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Often referred to as the “**forgotten**” victims because intervention is generally targeted to the adult victim or perpetrator.



Dynamics of Domestic Violence for Children



Kathleen Berger

Age Specific Indicators

How Domestic Violence Affects Children



INFANTS

- ◎ Basic needs for attachment is disrupted
- ◎ Routines around feeding/sleeping are disrupted
- ◎ Injuries while “caught in the crossfire”
- ◎ Irritability or inconsolable crying
- ◎ Frequent illness
- ◎ Diarrhea
- ◎ Developmental delays
- ◎ Lack of responsiveness
- ◎ Difficulty sleeping



Berger, K.S. (2010). In Invitation to the Lifespan. New York: Worth Publishers.

PRESCHOOL



- Somatic or psychosomatic complaints
- Regression
- Irritability
- Fearful of being alone
- Extreme separation anxiety
- Developmental delays
- Sympathetic toward abused parent

Berger, K.S. (2010). In Invitation to the Lifespan. New York: Worth Publishers.

ELEMENTARY AGE

- ◎ Vacillate between being eager to please and being hostile
- ◎ Verbal about home life
- ◎ Developmental delays
- ◎ Externalized behavior problems
- ◎ Inadequate social skill problems
- ◎ Gender role modeling created conflict/confusion



Berger, K.S. (2010). In Invitation to the Lifespan. New York: Worth Publishers.

PREADOLESCENCE



- Behavior problems become more serious
- Increased internalized behavior difficulties
- Emotional difficulties
- Poor social skills
- Developmental delays
- Protection of abused parent
- Sees abused parent as “weak”
- Guarded/secretive about family

Berger, K.S. (2010). In Invitation to the Lifespan. New York: Worth Publishers.

BIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



- Nervousness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Panic
- Shame
- Easily irritated
- Substance abuse
- Inability to regulate emotions
 - Underdeveloped cortex



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Poor concentration and focus
- Low academic achievement
- Poor adaptation to learning environment
- Poor language skills
- Lack conflict resolution skills
- Overreact to non-threatening triggers
- Difficulty with tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills



- Create rationalizations to justify abuse
- Dissociate from situation
- Focused on survival
- Worry excessively
- Confused
- Thoughts of inadequacy
- Lie to cover up the abuse
- Learn distorted gender roles

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Isolated from others
- Uncomfortable in social situations
- Unable to trust others
- Lack peer relationships



- Protect siblings
- Disobedient
- Low self-esteem



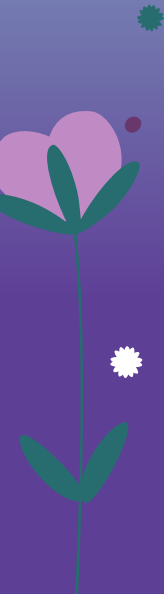
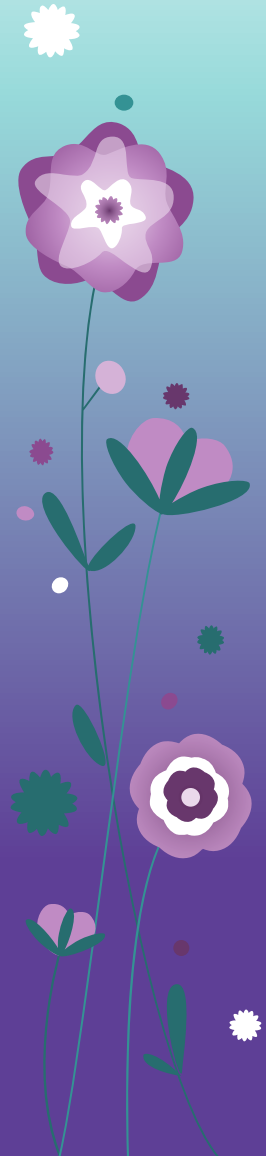
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Negative self-concept
- Unworthy
- Constantly afraid
- Feel insecure
- Feel unloved
- Jealous of others
- Become more aware of their own reactions to violence
- Feel anxious



EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (cont)

- Concerned for their mother/father
- Frustrated
- Helpless
- Guilty
- Irresponsible
- Vengeful
- Resigned



Domestic Violence and Children

Witnessing violence always has an impact on children!



The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children





Children are exposed to violence by:

- Directly watching the abuse
- Suffering harm incidental to the abuse
- Being forced to watch or participate in the abuse of the victim
- Being used as a spy
- Being used by the abuser to manipulate the victim

(Stop Violence Against Women, 2010)



Children who live with violence face the following risk

- Being neglected
- Losing their home and living in a shelter
- Being directly abused
- Losing one or both of their parents
- Death



(The Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2009)

Examples of children's statements

"I dream about my
mom being killed"

"I tried to stop him. I should
have been stronger. He
wouldn't have hit my mom
if I could have stopped him."

"I can't make
mommy/daddy mad"

“Monsters in the closet – domestic violence from a child’s view



“Monsters in the closet – domestic violence from a child’s view

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbRba9XHKKw>
- 2:34







How to talk to a child who witnessed abuse

“YOU ARE SAFE”

“IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT”

“I CAN PROTECT YOU”

“THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE”

“ABUSE IS NOT NORMAL”

“YOU DON’T HAVE TO KEEP SECRETS”

“IT IS OK TO LOVE THE ABUSER

“WHEN YOU GROW UP YOU WON’T BE A
MONSTER LIKE HIM OR A VICTIM LIKE
ME”





Frequent questions

Should I talk about the traumatic event?

- Do not be afraid to talk about what happened with the child.
- If a child senses that you are upset about the event, they will not bring it up.
- Listen to the child, answer questions and provide comfort and support.
- It is okay to tell a child that you don't know why something happened or that you are confused and upset by it, too.


Rule of Thumb: Let the child guide when you talk about what happened





Frequent questions (Con't)

How should I talk about the event?

- ◎ Use age appropriate language and explanation
 - ◎ It takes many individual moments of sad clarity for the reality of trauma to actually sink in for young children
 - ◎ Between the moment of harsh reality, children use a variety of coping techniques (some of which can be confusing/upsetting to adults)
 - ◎ Children tend to re-experience the event through drawing and words, may repeat or re-live elements of the event, and/or develop empathy for others such as characters or animals as a mean of protection.
- 

Frequent questions (Con't)

Should I talk to others about the traumatic event?

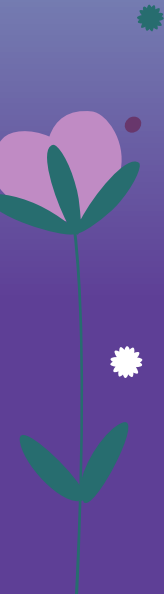
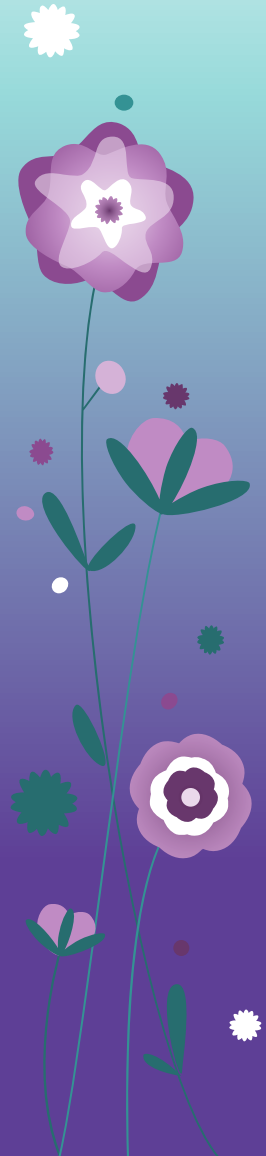
- ◎ YES! Inform adults and children in the child's world what has happened
- ◎ Let teachers, counselors, parents of the children's friends know some of the pain that the child is experiencing
- ◎ This allows the people in the child's life to give them tolerance, understanding and nurturing that will smooth away.

Do children understand events accurately?

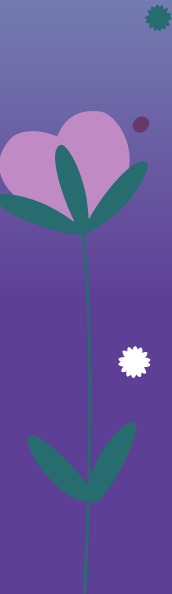
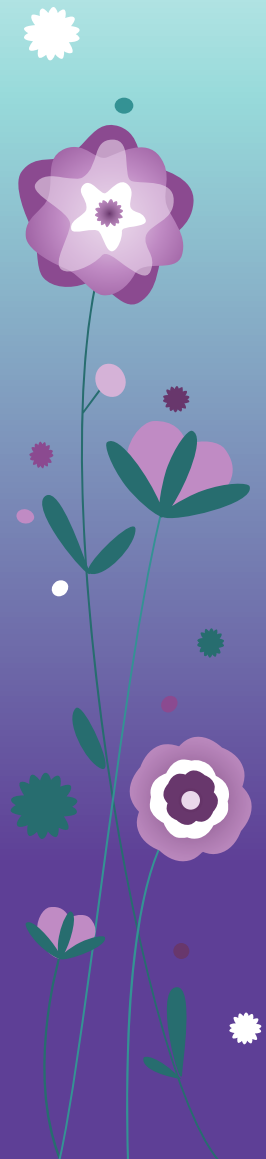
- Young children often make assumptions about the cause of major events
- They may feel they are at fault which can lead to very destructive and inappropriate feelings of guilt
- Do not let the child develop a sense that there is a secret about the event – this can be very destructive
- Expect a child who witnesses a crime or who is the victim of a crime to be traumatized in a variety of ways

Do children understand events accurately? (Con't)

- Be ready to work with the child one on one
- Be empathetic to the needs of the child
- Don't expect the child to open up to you immediately.
- Remember, people can be tolerant or insensitive when dealing with the traumatized child



Supporting Children through Traditional Healing





Healthy family relationships

- Relationships between parents
- Relationships between parents and children
- Relationships between siblings



All have their own characteristics and personalities.

All can be fostered and supported

Time

- Spend time with one another
- Family time is a fundamental building block to strengthening family bond
- Share meals, outings, activities
- Spend time one-on-one



Communication

- Showing characteristics of communication
 - ◉ During meal time – not silence
- Exchange ideas

Will be able to express emotions, fears and desires without fear of repercussions

Conflict is expected, however, ability to communicate will assist in resolving conflict.



Trust



- Trust one another
- Critical characteristic for parents
- Helps to make the right decisions based on family VALUES

Fulfilling Needs

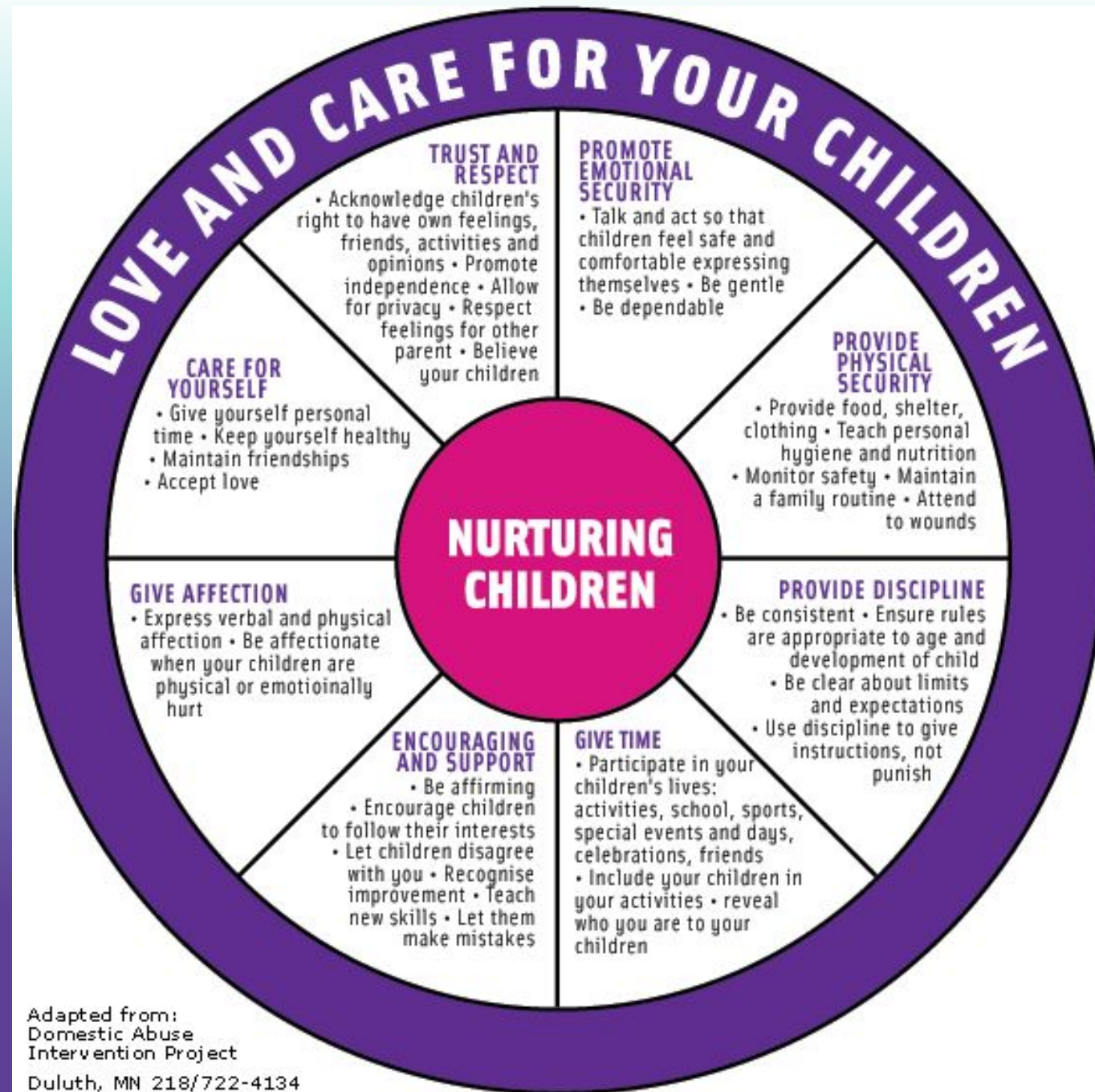
- Times of duress and need
 - Family members step up to provide support
 - Will help one another



Family goals

- Set family goals
- Enhances communication
- Working together







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A photograph of children playing in a river, overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The scene shows several children in traditional clothing wading through the water. In the background, there are people on horseback and a small structure. The text 'CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE' is centered in white serif font.

CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE

ASKWALI THANK YOU



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