



rape and abuse
crisis center
advocacy, counseling, education.

Children Living in Homes with Domestic Violence

How Children Feel When Abuse is Occurring between Parents

- **Powerless** because they can't stop the abuse
- **Guilty**, believing they somehow caused the abuse
- **Helpless** because they feel a need to help solve the problem
- **Angry**, blaming the victimized parent, assuming they are at fault
- **Angry**, blaming the abusive parent for hurting members of the family
- **Confused** because the parents may try to force children to choose sides
- **Afraid** for themselves and all family members
- **Isolated and insecure**, often making up excuses so they don't have to go home or to explain why they can't invite friends over
- **Dishonest and embarrassed** because they make up excuses for injuries and bruises
- **Overwhelmed** by the situation, often leading to poor school performance and avoidance of their friends

Characteristics of Children Living in Homes where there is Violence

- Lonely
- Isolated—tend to not bring home friends
- Use violence and threats to solve problems
- Difficulty in developing close relationships--has trouble separating self from conflict
- Blames self--takes responsibility for the violence witnessed
- Uses all energy to keep "the family secret"
- Problems trusting others
- Fear of failure—unwilling or fearful of trying something new
- Over-achieving--feels need to be perfect
- Limited physical expression in regards to body image
- Accident-prone
- Conflicting feelings of shame or guilt
- Confusion about family roles
- Identify with abusive parent to stay safe
- Denial
- Pseudo maturity--reversal of family roles
- Developmental delays
- Aggressive language or behavior
- Preoccupation with violence
- Unusual degree of fear
- Associates love with violence
- Feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness
- Fear of abandonment
- Need for attention
- Trouble respecting authority figures
- Regressive behavior (i.e.: bedwetting, baby talk, phobias, fear of dark)
- Chronic run away

24-hour Crisis Line (701)293-7273
www.raccfm.com

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