



the effects of VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

All children are affected by violence. The signs may be different in each child because of the way children:

- Decode and interpret the experience.
- Have learned to cope and survive in stress.
- Use support people, like teachers and grandparents.

Emotional Effects:

- Guilt- responsible for violence
- Shame- doesn't happen anywhere else
- Fear- of expressing feelings (anger), of divorce or separation, of the unknown, of injury, of a hostile world
- Confusion- conflicted loyalties (love/hate)
- Anger- about violence, chaos
- Depression/Helplessness/Powerlessness- to change things (especially caretaker children)
- Grief- of losses
- Burdened- inappropriate roles as caretakers, parents, etc.

Behavioral Effects:

- act out vs. withdraw
- Overachiever vs. underachiever
- Refuses to go to school
- Care taking- filling adult roles
- Aggressive or passive; bullying or "doormats"
- Rigid defenses- aloof, sarcastic, rigid, blaming, defensive
- Seeking attention in behaviors
- Bedwetting, nightmares

Physical Effects:

- Somatic complaints (headaches, stomach aches, asthma, etc.)
- Nervous, anxious- short attention span (seems like hyperactivity)
- Tires, lethargic (seems like lazy)
- Often sick with colds, flu, etc.
- Neglect personal hygiene
- Regression in developmental tasks (regressive behavior)
- No reaction, at times, to physical pain

Social Effects:

- Isolated- no friends or distance in relationships
- Relationships with friends may start intensely and end abruptly
- Difficulty trusting others
- Poor conflict resolution skills
- May be excessively socially involved (overcompensates by staying away from home)

Cognitive Effects:

- Feel responsible for violence
- Blame others for their behavior (to not act responsibly)
- Feel that it is OK to hit others for whom they care in order to:
 1. Get what you want
 2. Express anger
 3. Feel powerful
- Low self-concept (cannot succeed in changing violence)
- Don't ask for what they need
- Don't trust (promise to change)
- Feel anger is bad- people get hurt
- Learn more strict gender roles (being a boy/man means....being a girl/woman means...)