**Domestic Violence Information Sheet for Children**

**What does Domestic Violence mean?**

Domestic Violence means that one adult family member is hurting another family member. This “hurt” can occur when an adult pushes, shoves, hits, slaps, punches, or uses objects to hurt another family member. The hurting can also occur through name calling, not allowing someone to do what he/she wants, making a person do things that she he/she doesn’t want to , and by threatening to push, hit, slap, punch, or even kill the person. This can seem very scary, but the most important thing to remember is that when adults fight, it’s *never* the child’s fault. Children can’t stop the fighting between adults in their home, no matter how good they are.

**Are there a lot of kids who see and hear domestic violence in their homes?**

Yes. More than 3 million kids see this violence in their homes every year. This means that there are lots of children who see and hear adult family members hurting one another.

**WHAT CAN KIDS DO TO HELP THEMSELVES WHEN THEY SEE OR HEAR THIS KIND OF VIOLENCE IN THEIR HOMES?**

1. When there is no fighting, they can talk to their parents about how it feels when one parent hurts another.
2. Plan with their parents to have a “safe” house or place where they can go when their parents are fighting.
3. Come up with a safety plan with the battered parent in case of emergencies.
4. Talk to a grandparent, aunt or uncle, a grown up friend, a friend’s parents, or a family helper about how they feel when their parents fight.
5. Draw pictures of what they are feeling.
6. Do things that make them happy, such as reading favorite books, playing board games or video games, watching TV shows, and talking to friends on the phone (or visiting them).
7. Remember that they are not the reason one parent is abusing the other.

**WHAT CAN KIDS DO IF THEY ARE FEELING UNHAPPY OR SCARED, EVEN IF THEY NO LONGER LIVE WITH THE PERSON WHO WAS VIOLENT TO THEIR ABUSED PARENT?**

1. Talk to the abused parent or other trusted adult about how it felt when they saw or heard the violence in their home.
2. Talk to the abused parent or other trusted adult about what it feels like now that things are different, even if the feelings are confusing.
3. Talk to a family helper about all of these confusing feelings.
4. Do things to help them feel happy, such as drawing, reading, coloring, playing board games, playing video games, watching TV, playing sports, and spending time with family and friends.
5. Remember that no matter what had happened between their parents, it was *not* their fault.