

Teens are changed by the choices domestic abusers make...



Teenagers absorb all of the sights and sounds that surround them...good or bad.

Changes can be sudden after a traumatic incident, or gradual in response to the daily dynamics of abuse

Change can be visible, such as changes in their behavior, or on the inside such as changes in how they think and feel.

*“A child who lives with violence is forever changed, but not forever ‘damaged.’ There’s a lot we can do to make tomorrow better.”*



Allison Cunningham & Linda Baker (2007). *Little Eyes, Little Ears How Violence Against a Mother Shapes Children as They Grow*. Center for Children and Families in the Justice System.

*If you are concerned ...*

about how a domestic abuser may be impacting you or someone you know, help is available.

Caring Unlimited offers confidential assistance free of charge to anyone who is in an intimate relationship with an abuser.

- Individual Advocacy
- Support and Education Groups
- Legal Assistance and Court Advocacy
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing and Services
- Community Education, Training and Consultation

24 HOUR HOTLINE

1-800-239-7298

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Caring Unlimited is a member of the  
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence

CaringUnlimited   
York County's Domestic Violence Program

## Effects of Domestic Abusers on Teenagers



... and how you can help  
build their resiliency

24 HOUR HOTLINE

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## Child Development

What changes are teens experiencing?

- Increasing sense of self and separation from family (independence vs. dependence)
- Developing sense of self-worth (strongly linked to view of physical attractiveness)
- Dealing with puberty (new feelings, physical changes, sexual development)
- Increasing influence of peer group and desire for acceptance
- Navigating dating, sexuality, intimacy and relationship skills
- Increasing capacity for abstract reasoning and broader world views
- Mourning the loss of childhood
- Dealing with influences of media messages



Teenagers are not passive witnesses to an abuser's violence, they may...

- Feel that they caused the violence
- Feel responsible for the welfare of their siblings or parents both during and between incidents
- Feel vengeful OR sympathetic toward the abuser
- Worry that the non-abusive parent may date someone else who is abusive
- Become involved in unhealthy relationships themselves



As a result of exposure to a domestic abuser, teens may experience any of the following:

- ◇ Sleep and eating disorders
- ◇ Embarrassment about their family
- ◇ Insecurity, withdrawal, problems at school
- ◇ Depression, anxiety, low self-esteem
- ◇ Denial
- ◇ Early interest in alcohol, drugs
- ◇ Violent behavior
- ◇ Sexual promiscuity
- ◇ Running away from home
- ◇ Physical, emotional, sexual abuse
- ◇ Death

The best way a teen can heal from exposure to a domestic abuser is through a close bond with the non-abusive parent.

Other factors that build a teen's resiliency include...

- < Knowing it is not their fault
- < A sense of safety
- < Routines and predictability
- < Structure
- < Consistent rules
- < Consistent consequences
- < A close bond with siblings
- < Attachment relationships with adults in their community



References: Bancroft, Lundy *The Batterer As Parent*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishing, 1993. *Domestic Violence Crisis Advocate's Training Manual*. Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence: 2004.

