# Training Toolkit

## English Version

children first

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# Introduction

Children First aimed to improve the quality of assistance and support provided by public and private services for minors suffering from WDV. In particular the idea is to Enhance the ability of practitioners to recognize/treat cases of WDV and to create an evidence-based framework based on multidisciplinary, cooperation, new holistic treatments of the child through the release of practical transnational guidelines and local protocols.
In this perspective the following toolkit will provide to practitioners practical guidelines and training materials to build training modules and activities. All the information contained in this toolkit were developed starting from the information detected in needs assessment realized during the first phase of the Children First project and organized in training modules by expert from CISMAI and CSCD.

The trainng toolkit is aimed:

- To increase knowledge and skills on main aspects of witnessed violence, in its features and its implications in terms of detection and treatment with eyes on the EU practices and laws
- To spread a culture of cooperation among professionals working in different fields related to the phenomenon of WV and among professionals of different local non-profit organizations in target areas

Training contents will cover the following topics:

- Module 1: EU framework for the detection and treatment of cases of witnessed violence and main examples of successful guidelines for practitioners at EU level
- Module 2: EU framework for Enhancing interagency and multidisciplinary cooperation and collaboration, both at national and at transnational levels
- Module 3: Empowerment of women mothers of children victim of witnessed violence
- Module 4: Empowerment of children witnessing domestic violence

For each modules this toolkit will provide information of the main issues and the methodology followed, the agenda of the course, a short video that summarize the main content of the modules and the materials used during the sessions (slide and activities sheets).

# Module 1

## EU framework for the detection and treatment of cases of witnessed violence and main example of successfull guidelines for practitioners at EU level

The program of this first training session is focused on witnessed violence, as a primary form of maltreatment of children and adolescents (WHO, 2006) experiencing situations of domestic violence, especially mothers. The reference model used for reading the phenomenon and for interventions is Ecological systems theory (1979) adopted by the WHO for mistreatment.

A better knowledge and recognition of the phenomenon taking into account the contextual and cultural difficulties: from the definition that declines its characteristics, the nature of the trauma and the medium and long-term consequences on children and young people, both in terms of psychopathology and behavior and models learned.
The phenomenon of witnessed violence, also framed from an EU epidemiological point of view and contextualized in the current pandemic reality in EU, will be read from two perspectives: the gender perspective and the centrality of children. In fact, violence against women and witnessed violence are two aspects of male violence that sees both women and children as victims, as indicated by Istanbul Convenction.
The Italian situation in this regard and the work done by Cismai in recent years for the recognition of witnessed violence in Italy and with ISPCAN in EU will be mentioned.
Through the analysis of the main resistances to the approach and recognition of violence we will question the resistance of the operators and how to overcome stereotypes about violent men, women and children.

Let's start with children: recognize the trauma of violence against children in order to cure it and the consequences on their life trajectories, with reference to the most recent scientific acquisitions (WHO, DSM 5). Witnessing violence produces psychic trauma and serious consequences on the psychological and behavioral structure, produces damage to relationships and the learning of dysfunctional gender models
The integrated network, as claimed by WHO, is a necessity for a multi-professional work that compares and shares: the possibility of a collective mind, a plurality of looks that allows you to mentalize the problem in its facets, dynamics and emotions. Sharing language, definitions, guidelines, tools, in particular knowing the dynamics of domestic violence and the damage to children, allows the activation of multidisciplinary and appropriate interventions to avoid uncoordinated actions and avoid secondary traumatization.
Violence prevention priority: EU Prevention Program, INSPIRE (WHO), on witnessed violence and its indications.

This training module aims improving partcitioners' knowledge and skills for to correctly recognize witnessed violence, its consequences, damages wich produces and identify children, their rights and their needs.
The module provides information and tools that can be easily adopted in existing working practices.

The trainings are primarily intended for professionals working with children and their mothers, and families, as social workers & psychologists, welfare and health experts, teachers, lawyers, police officers.

The Toolkit has been developed on the the active, as much as possible, participation of professionals, inviting them in discussions, comparison for their working and local reality, sharing and commenting on videos, analyzing and sharing clinical case. The program (draft agenda below) has been settled for online training.

**Video - Witnessed violence: an underestimated problem**
https://youtu.be/b6Db9d-Qvvo

## Draft Agenda | 09.00 am - 13.00 pm
Online (Horizon Service - Jan 14th; Women Center of Karditsa - Jan 28nd, Dinamika Center - Feb 10th 2021)

| Time | Topic | Supportive Info material |
|---|---|---|
| 09.00 | Introduction<br><br>Violence against women and witnessed violence<br>Gender perspective ad reading model on domestic violence<br>The work of the Cismai for the recognition of witnessed violence in Italy: definiction and guidelines 2005<br>Epidemiology in the world (Global Report) and in Italy<br><br>The Covid pandemic and witnessed violence | <br><br>Video<br><br>Slides /Clinical case<br><br><br><br>Discussion and comparison |
| 10.30 | Break | |
| 10.45 | Resistances, stereotypes and method ostacles in the recognition of witnessed violence | Slides |
| 11.15 | The children' feelings<br><br>The trauma of the violence, DSM 5, diagnosis, sintoms, consequenties | Video: activation and discussion<br><br>Slides and clinical case |
| 11.30 | Break | |

Follows

| Time | Topic | Supportive Info material |
|---|---|---|
| 11.50 | Revision 2017 Cismai Guidelines | |
| 12.30 | Network and strategies for to promove the integration | Slides discussion |
| 12.45 | PreventionProgram Ispire | Slides |
| 13.00 | Conclusion | Video |

# Module 2

## EU framework for enhancing interagency ans multidisciplinary cooperation and elaboration, both at national and at international level

The program of this second training session is focused on the 2017 Cismai guidelines, to present a tool for implementing and strengthening the cooperation between multi-disciplinary agencies, both nationally and transnationally.The Cismai guidelines, in fact, used in Italy and presented and shared at European level with Ispcan, the largest international network on child maltreatment and abuse, represent an example of integrated intervention modalities on the subject of witnessed violence that can be applied in different countries.

The goal is to provide guidance for operators in these complex situations that would help them to implement effective interventions following a sequence of rigorous steps, indicating which tools to use, focus on the most important actions to keep children, their needs and rights, at the center of our interventions.

In this session Cismai guidelines will be presented in detail, they are the result of the work of a scientific commission and the comparison of the centers working on these issues: the new aspects (from the definition to the treatment of special orphans, the need for follow-up to study the most adequate, that domestic violence occurs not only in cohabitation but also in the phases of separation and divorce, to pay particular attention to these periods, due to the risk of an escalation of violence and that violence interferes in the relationship with children and on the parenting abilities of the abused woman and the abuser) and the structure (critical issues and recommendations for each phase of the intervention).

What to know and what to do in the various phases of the intervention and the main actions through the discussion of the main operational nodes, highlighting the most appropriate indications and the tools to be used.

**Detection** (detect the presence of children in these situations, identyfing their distress signals, learn to distinguish couple conflict and violence, make an analysis of the risk of relapse and lethality of the situation through evidence-based tools)

**Protection** (not just stop violence, the rights of children in judicial processes and in visits with a violent father, evaluate the risk to children in these contacts,when the child does not want to see the violent father

**Evaluation** ( parental skills in domestic violence, learn about the characteristics of the abusive father and the abused mother for a correct evaluation; evaluation trauma children, consequentes, damaged areas in children development, according to age, trauma in special orphans, tolls and needs.

**Treatment** ( reparative interventions for children: needs, tools and methods)

**Follow up** (the importance of comparing the adequacy of instruments.

In each phase the need for integrated work between the operators will be highlighted.

Finally the priority actions to combat domestic violence will be presented (to promote activities of education to affectivity and gender equality, to raise awareness toward denial, minimization and stigmatisation mechanisms,to provide training on domestic violence indicators, lethality indicators, to know that chronic violence damages the parenthood of mothers, to know the consequences that can result from improper and uncoordinated intervention which can lead to institutional abuse, specific training on feminicide cases in order to be able to provide adequate care to special orphans.

All these aspects are underlined in the guidelines and represent a virtuous path that must be followed and implemented. The sharing of good practices, which give valid and adequate operational indications, and which have as centrality the rights of children, first of all to well-being and health, Nationally and internationally reproducible are an important step in tackling violence.

The module provides information and tools that can be easily adopted in existing working practices. The remote training requires the frontal lesson mode, the contents will be presented through explanatory slides, enriched by comments and additions, reports of clinical cases, group exercises looking for an interactive mode as much as possible. The lessons will be complemented by short videos that will introduce and highlight the most important contents.

The methodological definition of the training described will make the most of the experiences of the partners and the cognitive and practical result of the representatives of the different partner countries. Ample space will be dedicated to comparison, transferability and applicability of interventions in relation to specific local contexts, in a logic of capacity building on which the entire training system tries to be based

**Video - How to intervene: a guide for operators**
https://youtu.be/HCAKTmb48nI

## Draft Agenda | 02.00 am - 06.00 pm

Online (Horizon Service - Jan 14th; Women Center of Karditsa - Jan 28nd, Dinamika Center - Feb 10th 2021)

| Time | Topic | Supportive Info material |
|---|---|---|
| 14.00 | Introduction<br>The Cismai guideline 2017 "The Guidelines of intervention on children witnessing Domestic Violence" as guide for operators.<br>Context and new definition<br>**Decection**:detect the presence of children; identyfing their distress signals; recognize the violence;conflict/violence,risk assestment.<br>Recomandations<br>**Protection**: not just stop violence, the rights of children in judicial processes and in visits with a violent father, evaluate the risk to children in these contacts<br>When the child does not want to see the violent father<br>Reccomandatios | Video<br>Slides /Clinical case<br>Discussion and comparison between the esperiences |
| 15.00 | Break | |
| 15.15 | **Evaluation**: parental skills in domestic violence, learn about the characteristics of the abusive father and the abused mother for a correct evaluation; evaluation trauma children, consequentes, damaged areas in children development, according to age, trauma in special orphans. Tolls and needs. | Slides and clinical case |
| 15.45 | Break | |
| 16.00 | **Treatment:** reparative interventions for children: needs, tools and methods<br>exercises on the model of intervention of the guidelines with three cases | Slides and clinical case<br>Group activity on case studies |
| 17.10 | Break | |
| 17.25<br>18.00 | **Conclusion:** the priority actions to combat domestic violence | Slides and video |

# Module 3

## Empowerment of woman mothers of childrem victims of witnessed violence

The reasons for the development of this Module 3 are dictated by the need to support the children experiencing situations of domestic violence by providing economic empowerment activities to their mothers. The modules is intended for use by professionals – mainly social workers, working in Crisis and Counseling Centers, which offer support to victims of any gender-based violence, including domestic violence. Tranining offers a combination of theoretical parts and practical games and exercises to be easily adopted and applied by the professional in situations of group work or individual work and the concrete needs of the women – survivors.

It is important to note that support for economic empowerment can and must begin once the crisis of violence has been overcome.

Entrepreneurship training is presented in a relatively easy format, but it should be kept in mind that a small number of women survivors will have the courage to start planning their own business and will go through the exercises.

Here is a description of a draft agenda for an online training below, that was piloted during the Children First project and which could be easily adopted for different needs, according to the time trainers have.

The module started form the idea that gender-based violence is entrenched in and supported by social and cultural beliefs about stereotypical gender roles, and by patriarchal structures and practices. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence. Intimate partner violence is defined as any act of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occurs between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim (EIGE, 2017a). Every woman can be a victim of intimate partner/domestic violence, but women face this violence differently, based on their social, ethnic and economic differences. Unfortunately, women who are victims of domestic violence are usually victims of a combination of violent behavior. The abuser can use a number of tactics to undermine the economic independence of a current or former intimate partner. There is a theoretical approach called “feminist economics” that helps understanding gender inequality as both a cause and a consequence of violence against women by the intimate partner: violence is a tool used by perpetrators to maintain and strengthen the subordination of women, and economic violence is one of the forms of the domestic violence, together with the physical and psychologic one.

The concept of women's economic independence recognizes that women are economic actors who contribute to economic activity and should be able to benefit from it on an equal base with men, and that financial independence can play an important role in

strengthening the position of women in society and at home. There are ad hoc economic empowerment programs and economic advocacy strategies, which are helping women regain their financial stability. At the same time, other support services, such as those aimed at improving skills through training and education, or those that increase the possibility of entering / re-entering the labor market, are crucial for creating the conditions for achieving economic independence and avoiding violence.

**Video - Woman Empowerment as a part of the solution**
https://youtu.be/nPJ6ygTaVYA

## Draft Agenda | 09.00 am - 13.00 pm

Online training Horizon Service - Jan 15th, 2021; Dinamika Center - Jan 29th, 2021 and Women Center of Karditsa - Feb 11th, 2021

| Time | Topic | Supportive Info material |
|---|---|---|
| 09.00 | Introduction<br><br>Economic Independence, Employment and Economic Security | Slides |
| 09.20 | Module 2: Empowerment Concept | Slides discussion |
| 10.00 | Module 2: From Theory to Practice<br>- 6 Work Elements<br>- Technology of **Local Supporting Network** development | Slides |
| 11.15 | Break | |
| 11.30 | Module 3: Practical Examples and Tools<br><br>**A / Motivation Work**<br>a) Emotional Competences<br>b) Social Relationship Plan Development<br>**B/ Women Skills and Competences**<br>c) Balance of Competences<br>d) Career Plan Development<br>e) Training in Leadership<br>f) Training in Entrepreneurship<br>**C/ Sample of Plan for Network Development** | Slides<br><br>Exercises |
| 12.50<br>13.00 | **Conclusion** | Video<br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCUFJtXlImc |

# Module 4

## Empowerment of children witnessing domestic violence

**Focus on principles of the right of the child to be heard and practical tools on life skills and resilience of children**

The effects of domestic violence on women are well documented.The issue of children witnessing domestic violence has been usually underestimated. Far less is known about the impact on children who witness a parent or caregiver being subjected to violence.Children who grow up in a violent home are more likely to be victims of child abuse. Those who are not direct victims have some of the same behavioural and psychological problems as children who are themselves physically abused.Children who are exposed to violence in the home may have difficulty learning and limited social skills, exhibit violent, risky or delinquent behaviour, or suffer from depression or severe anxiety. Children in the earliest years of life are particularly vulnerable: studies show that domestic violence is more prevalent in homes with younger children than those with older children.Children who are exposed to violence in the home are denied their right to a safe and stable home environment. Many are suffering silently, and with little support. Children who are exposed to violence in the home need trusted adults to turn to for help and comfort, and services that will help them to cope with their experiences. The report[2], developed jointly by UNICEF, The Body Shop International and the Secretariat for the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, examines some of the underlying causes of domestic violence and the impact on children of being exposed to violence in the home is a base for many of the training materials part of that module.

This training module aims improving partcitioners' knowledge and skills for supporting children in their effort to know better their rights and their efforts in resilience building. In preparation phase we detected also the role of parents and family capacity to support children in their empowerment process. The module provides information and tools that can be easily adopted in existing working practices.
The trainings materials are primarily intended for practitioners working with children and their families as social workers & psychologists, welfare and health experts, teachers at primary school; lawyers; prosecutors and police officers.

The toolkit has been developed on the the active participation of practitioners, inviting them in discussions, analyzing and sharing local content to some EU recommendations / rights and taken part in individual and group activities. Working in groups has many advantages mainly in aspect of sharing ideas and experience. And at the same time training materials consist of some recommendations or self – assessment questionnairies that can support the individual work. The program (draft agenda below) has been settled for online training.

**Video - Towards a Child-friendly justice**
https://youtu.be/59KBc32OloI

[2] https://www.unicef.org/media/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf

| Time | Topic | Supportive Info material |
|---|---|---|
| 14.00 | Principle of the best rights of the child<br>Rights of the Children according to the Convention on the Rights of the Children – Right to be heard; Right to Information; Right to Protection and Privacy;<br>Right to non - discrimination and privacy;<br>Discussion on local legal environment<br>Practice Guidelines for the experts who prepare children for the hearings | Videos on children and justice \| European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (europa.eu)<br>Checklists for experts who prepare children for the hearings<br>The Child Interview. Practice Guidelines |
| 15.30 | Break | |
| 15.40 | For Practitioners : Institutional Response (Good Practice from Bulgaria: National Referral Mechanism for children – victims of violence); Resilience: Definition; What is/ isn't a resilience; Casita Model; | Infographics<br>Template: Casita Model |
| 16.10 | Training Activity 1: Individual Exercise Discussion | Template: Helpful List of Questions for Social Workers |
| 16.40 | Break | |
| 17.00 | Training Activity 2: Group Exercise (Case Studies) | Templates: Case Studies 1 & 2 (Center Dinamina cases ) |
| 17.30<br>18.00 | For Parents (Parctitioners working with families/parents) - What's Domestic Violence (DV), The effects of witness of DV on kids; Second Hand Abuse; Positive parenting;<br>7C model of resilience<br>Training recap; Q&A | Template: 7Cs model of resilience<br>Info material: Building resilience through positive parenting. Little Children: Big Challenges (Sezame Street Show): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0JcqUTiAJM<br>Little Children: Big Challenges: R is for Resilience: https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/activities/r-is-for-resilience/ |

**Training activity (Group Exercise)**
Participants are divided in 2 groups. Each group receives a case[1]. In 30 mins discussion each group supported by a template of Casitta Model and Hint questions from the above give suggestions how to solve the cases. Then trainer presents the way the case was solved by Dinamika Centre Team. A final discussion on what can be improve in management of the cases followed.

**Case 1:**
*The case concerned a 12-year-old boy (Mario) who was a witness of emotional and mental violence from his father to his mother. At first glance, the child looks anxious, finds it difficult to control his emotions during conversations concerning the mother as an injured person. Verbal aggression was also observed.*

**Case 2:**
*T. is 15 years old, a victim of domestic violence within the meaning of the LPADV (Law on Protection against Domestic Violence), from a small town. The mother S. has been systematically subject to physical, mental, economic and sexual abuse for 12 years by her husband. The family scandals have often occurred in the presence of their two children. They were also restricted by the father from leaving the house, were not allowed to go to school regularly, and were forced to help with the household (the father was a farmer). T. lived in a family in which respect, love and all family and moral values were not respected by the father (he lived in a house with another woman, from whom he had two children). T.'s childhood was spent in deprivations, restrictions and family scandals. She had never celebrated a birthday "with cake and candles." She grew up as a depressed child and had difficulty communicating with children of her age. Her only consolation was music (she dreamed of becoming a singer).*

*After another aggressive act in September few years ago, mother and her children sought shelter and support from relatives in the neighboring village. The mental harassment continued there as well, which is why they sought help from the police. The victims are directed to the Association "Center Dinamika". Accommodation in the Crisis Center is offered. Meanwhile, the father managed to dissuade his son T. (17 years old) and takes care of him. The child T. together with her mothet were hosted for a long time in the Crisis Center by order of Social Support Directorate.*

[1] Real cases provided by Centre Dinamika for discussions

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società cooperativa sociale HORIZON service

CISMAI
Coordinamento Italiano dei Servizi contro il Maltrattamento e l'Abuso all'Infanzia

ARES2.0

ΚΥΚ
ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΡΔΙΤΣΑΣ

Center for Sustainable Communities Development

Център Динамика
сдружение

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# Witness domestic violence

## First session

Gloria Soavi
CISMAI / Scientific Committee Coordinator

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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WITNESSED VIOLENCE: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME PHENOMENON

The violence suffered by mothers and witnessed by children are two sides of the same problem: **MALE VIOLENCE**

**It is important to take a gender perspective**



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# INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

**Ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) in understanding the complexity of "intimate partner violence«**

***Socio-cultural factors*** (norms, male and female gender models, etc.)

***Relational*** (early relational experiences that affect adult ways of experiencing intimacy in the couple relationship; violence suffered or observed in the family of origin, etc

***Individuals*** (insecure-ambivalent attachment to significant figures)

All of this affects adult relationship outcomes

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# VIOLENCE AFFECTS WOMEN AND….

***"Of normal quarrels as in all families…."***



Domestic or intimated patner violence consists of various forms of violence - physical, sexual, psychological, economic - exercised by the husband or partner or ex partner.
These are rarely isolated episodes: the violence is almost always multiple and repeated, the aim is to exercise power and control over women " (Romito, 2000)

***Domestic violence can cause death*** in Italy Istat 2019 data 111 domestic homicides 88.3% were killed by a known person. In particular, 49.5% of cases from the current partner, corresponding to 55 women, 11.7%, from the previous partner, equal to 13 women, in 22.5% of cases (25 women) from a family member (including children and parents) and in 4.5% of cases by another person they knew (friends, colleagues, etc.) (5 women).

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# CHILDREN…NOT ONLY WITNESSES BUT ALSO DIRECT VICTIMS

**In addition to being direct or indirect witnesses, they can become victims of:**

- *physical violence*
- *verbal violence*
- *psychological violence*
- *sexual violence*
- *economic maltreatment*
- *persecutory behavior*
- *or stolking*




The risk of being directly physically or sexually abused increases significantly for children living with a domestic violence situation. According to research, 30 to 66% of children living with a situation of domestic violence also suffer direct abuse.

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# VICTIMS BEFORE BIRTH

***The child can be the victim of witnessed violence even before birth***

Domestic violence can cause difficult pregnancies, preterm births, underweight babies;

Discharges of cortisol and adrenaline pass into the placenta



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# FIRST DEFINITION
# - CISMAI (2003) -

"For violence witnessed by children in the family contex we mean the experience by the child of any form of maltreatment, carried out through acts of physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and economic violence, against reference figures or other affectively significant adult and minor figures.

# FIRST DEFINITION
# - CISMAI (2003) -

This includes violence carried out by minors on minors and/or other family members, neglect and mistreatment of pets.

The child can experience such acts:

- **Directly**: when they occur in his perceptual field
- **Indirectly**: when he is aware of it and / or perceives its effects "

# CISMAI'S WORK FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION IN ITALY OF WITNESSES VIOLENCE AS A FORM CHILD MALTREATMENT

**2005 - CISMAI National guidelines**

«Requisiti minimi degli interventi nei casi di violenza assistita da maltrattamento sulle madri»

"Minimum requirements anda standard in WDV on mothers"

*drawn up by the Scientific Commission and approved by the Cismai' s Board and the Assembly of Members*

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# ISTANBUL CONVENTION (2011)

**Council of Europe: "Protection and support for children who witness violence"**

**Article 26**

*The Parties shall take the necessary legislative and other measures to ensure that they are duly taken into consideration, as part of the protection and support services for victims, rights and needs of children witnesses of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention*



# THE RED CODE IN ITALY

As regards witness violence of wich the **child who witnesses the maltreatment is also considered an injured party.**

The Red Code has provided further provisions that intend to widen the protection banks and avoid situations of prejudice towards children, acting in particular on the offended party (right to information, timely hearing)



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# EPIDEMIOLOGY

**Recognized by OMS as a form of primary maltreatment**

*Problems defining*

In some countries it is considered psycological maltreatment

In others it is considered form of maltreatment of its own



# EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE AND WITNESSING VIOLENCE.

Globally, emotional abuse is estimated to have an impact on the lives of millions of children with a prevalence of 363 per 1000 (one in three) children under the age of 18.

One in four children under the age of 5 lives with a mother who is victim of partner violence



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# WITNESSES TO VIOLENCE INCREASE.. IN ITALY (ISTAT, 2019)

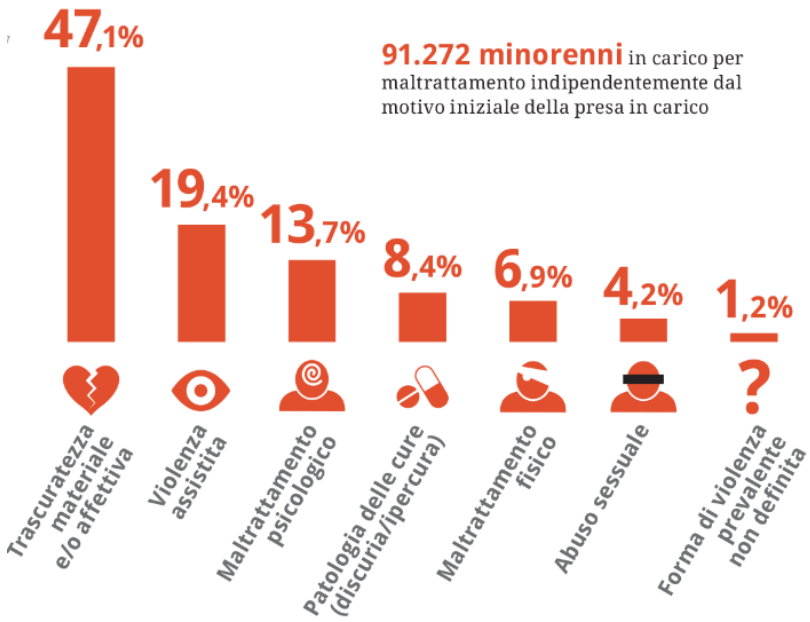
Looking at the data from 2014 to 2018 also shows the increase in the percentage of women who declare having children (which goes from 54.9 percent to 62.5 percent).

In the same reference period, the percentage of victims who declare episodes of witnessed violence increased by 10 percentage points, going from 57.5 per cent (of the total number of victims with children per year) **to 67.4 per cent.**

Even more dramatic is the growth in the percentage of those who declare that the episodes of violence also target children. The number of victims who affirm that the violence suffered also affected their children goes from 836 to 1,084.

# HOW MANY VICTIMS?

WDV
2nd maltreatment form
**(100.000 children "in charge" by social services)**
More cases or are we getting more effective in detection of WDV?
How does "the voice" of children support our action?




**Italy 2015**

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# LET'S NON FORGET….

The 1,600 boys and girls who witnessed the murder of their mother **In Italy (**2006-2016)

*(2017 estimate, Bauldry)*



# PANDEMIC RISKS

*"…Movement restrictions, loss of income, isolation, overcrowding and high levels of stress and anxiety are increasing the likelihood that children experience and observe physical, psychological and sexual abuse at home – particularly those children already living in violent or dysfunctional family situations...»*

(End Violence Against Children, 2020)





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# IN ITALY

**Istat 2020 during the lockdown**

**5,031** calls for help to 1522, 73% more than the same period in 2019.

**64.1%** also reported cases of witnessed violence.



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# COVID-19

These consequences of the COVID-19 response have altered the intensity and frequency of risk factors for interpersonal violence . Although the situation is not identical in every country where lockdowns have been implemented, there is often a considerable impact on levels of violence. Decreases in homicides and violence-related injuries receiving emergency medical treatment (both of which mostly involve older adolescents and adult males) have been reported,. By contrast, **spikes in calls to helplines about child abuse and intimate partner violence have been observed, alongside declines in the number of child abuse cases referred to child protection services. In addition, an increase in potential or actual online harms, including sexual exploitation and cyber-bullying resulting from increased internet use by children, has been identified .**

In short, with adults and children being quarantined for weeks to prevent the spread of COVID-19 – and in some cases with the people who hurt them – it is possibly **the worst situation imaginable for family violence" ( Global Report 2020).**

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# THE CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN ITALY:

## CISMAI'S ACTIVITIES

***Lessons Learned 19 May 2020***

*Gloria Soavi* – **CISMAI President**



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# «THE FORGOTTEN MISTREATMENT» (LUBERTI, 2006)

**The violence witnessed is still underestimated and difficult to detect**

- cultural reasons and stereotypes
- difficulty in "diagnosis": confusion between couple conflict and violence
- the nature of the psychological abuse



# OBSTACLES AND RESISTANCE



Gender-based violence still presents itself as a hidden and unthinkable phenomenon and even more so in the connections between the victimization of the mother and the children.

Idealization of the family Witnessed violence and its effects on children are still underestimated.

It is difficult to tolerate in one's mind the idea that intimate relationships can actively produce suffering.

Mechanisms of minimization and denial collide society minimizes operators often minimize the parents themselves minimize, abused women minimize and deny,

# STEREOTYPES ON MAN

**THE VIOLENT MAN IS A GOOD FATHER BECAUSE HE BEATS THE MOTHER BUT NOT THE CHILDREN**



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# STEREOTYPES ON WOMAN

**THE WOMAN IS IN SOME WAY COMPLICIT IN THE VIOLENCE AND WHY DIDN'T SHE LEAVE EARLIER?**



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# STEREOTYPES ON CHILDREN

**CHILDREN DON'T UNDERSTAND, THEY DON'T NOTICE, THEY FORGET**



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# VIOLENCE ACTIVATES RESISTANCES

**Also in professionals?**

- Non-recognition or its minimization
- Rejection in response to contact with pain
- Judging attitude towards the woman
- Distrust of the possibilities for change
- The violent man does not ask for help
- Fear of the violent

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# METHOD OBSTACLES

Confusion - through ignorance or cultural resistance - between couple conflict and violence

**Violence is not conflict**

The difficulty in recognizing the psychological abuse in both women and children

**Psycological violence is not seen**

# THE TRAUMA OF VIOLENCE

**DSM-V** includes domestic violence and witnessing violence among the causes of PTSD, so witnessing violence produces **psychic trauma**

A trauma, which has been defined as "the pain of the powerless«,that paraly zes, takes away the strength to react, leaves one over- whelmed. (Herman, 2005)



# CHILDREN'S FEELINGS

- **Fear**
- **Pain**
- **Confusion**
- **Impotence**
- **Anguish**
- **Anger**



*But also guilt, feeling invisible, hyperarousal, freezing, dissociation….*

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# TRAUMATIC EVENTS

- with a limited duration in time, characterized by the unexpected and the intensity of the event, such as earthquakes, accidents, etc .;
- sequential situations with possible cumulative effect;
- characterized by prolonged exposure to stressful conditions that can cause feelings of helplessness, compromising attachment bonds and affecting the sense of security (Van der Kolk, 2004) ***as a domestic violence***

# SYMPTOMATOLOGY DSM-V

**Symptoms related to PTSD are divided into four groups**

Intrusive symptoms (e.g., intrusive memories, unpleasant dreams,dissociative reactions or flaschback, intense distress, and physiological response to triggers)

Persistent avoidance of memories, thoughts or feelings surrounding the traumatic event or avoidance of external factors (for e. People, places) –

Persistent negative changes in thoughts and mood (e.g. cognitive distortions, detachment)

Hypervigilance or increased arousal (for example, aggression, outbursts of anger, sleep disturbances, concentration problems, reckless or self-destructive behavior).

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# THE CONSEQUENCES

**Witnessing violence and living in an environment where violence is pervasiveproduces trauma to the child with serious consequences on psychological development, depending on age**



Post-traumatic stress disorder

Emotional-relational difficulties

Anxiety, depression Food disorders

Cognitive and behavioral difficulties

Various forms of long-term maladaptation

Violent social behavior (bullying,delinquency)



# DAMAGE TO RELATIONSHIPS

They learn contempt for women and for people seen as weak

Experience a severe distortion of family and emotional relationships

They identify emotional relationships as relationships of overwhelm

The internalization of dysfunctional gender models

Risk of intergenerational transmission of violence as a victim and as an aggressor

# THE PREVAILING PROBLEMS OF THE CHILDREN



**Various adaptations:**

- adultization, responsibility, guilt
- the idealization of the parent and the adoption of dysfunctional victim/violent gender models
- the child protector of the victim
- the child identifies with the aggressor



# THE CONSEQUENCES ON GENDER SPECIFICITY

As with all traumatic experiences, a lot depends on the age of onset, the quality and frequency of events

We do not know on the basis of which criteria the choice of alliance takes place, often the homologous parent chooses

In general, daughters tend to identify with the victim mother, and to assume her personality, risk of replicating wrong "choices" partners to submit to

Children fantasize about saving their mother and become aggressive by identifying with their father

Violent children with mothers

# HOW TO PROTECT BOYS AND GIRLS ?

- Early detection of violence
- Situation and risk assessment
- Turn on protection
- Assessment of the psycho-physical state of boys and girls
- Damage assessment on parenting
- Repair and treatment



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# REVISION 2017 CISMAI GUIDELINES

**In line with the Istanbul Convention which constitutes the framework for the phenomenon of domestic violence and violence against women**

Special attention to "special orphans"

Greater articulation of protection interventions, treatment in favor of children / and victims of witnessed violence

Need for coordination and integration between the Services and organizations that deal with mothers and fathers and the Services and Organizations that deal with children including Anti-violence Centers and Refuge Houses, to avoid contradictory and fragmented interventions.

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# MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERVENTIONS IN CASES OF VIOLENCE WITNESSED BY MALTREATMENT OF MOTHERS 2017 CISMAI

**Detection**: Recognizing domestic violence includes a timely assessment of the degree of risk and physical and / or mental danger / lethality for children witnessing violence. Difference between conflict and violence

**Protection:** stop violence against the mother to guarantee the right to physical and psychological health. In regulating the custody of children and any methods of visit, the presence of violence must be taken into account and not underestimated (Conv. Istambul art 31)

**Evaluation:** an early medical and psychological evaluation of the state of the children should be carried out. Any other types of mistreatment they suffered should also be noted. Harm on parenting

**Treatment**: reparative interventions both individual and of family relationships, where possible. The treatment of post-traumatic outcomes in the mother is of fundamental importance, in order to repair the mother-child relationship.

**Follow up:** verification of interventions and evidence based tools

# THE INTEGRATE NETWORK

The complexity of violence is faced with the integration of skills and training.

Avoid that the child remains "invisible" in the steps of intervention

Not web but "healing" network (law enforcement, community, social services,health services, judiciary, etc.)

The need to coordinate methods, times and objectives in order not to create secondary  victimization in both mothers and children

# NETWORK: TANGLE OR OPPORTUNITY?

**Does the network complicate or complexify?**

Networked in all phases of the intervention process: devices Multidimensionality is support in recognition, evaluation, positioning, but forces you to get involved and puts your point of observation in crisis

The network is an opportunity as a space for reflection, nourishment, but also a tangle of power and competition between professionals, services, stakeholders: how and where to deal with these aspects on an organizational and operational level?

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# STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION

- Share a definition of the phenomenon
- Sharing knowledge: on violence against women and violence against children
- Share guidelines and evidence based tools
- Transversal and specific training
- Maintain the centrality of children

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# THE INSPIRE: PREVENTION PROGRAM







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# INTERVENING TO SIMULTANEOUSLY PREVENT CHILD MALTREATMENT AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Child maltreatment and intimate partner violence also share common risk factors, including poorly developed life skills; attitudes, beliefs and norms supportive of violence; unsafe environments; and poverty. Preventing either type of violence can therefore help reduce the other, and approaches that target common risk factors will prevent both. This is recognized by several INSPIRE approaches that aim to prevent intimate partner violence (e.g. community mobilization programmes to change norms and values supportive of violence against women, and microfinance with gender norm training), and by the INSPIRE implementation and enforcement of laws strategy.

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# A guide for operators

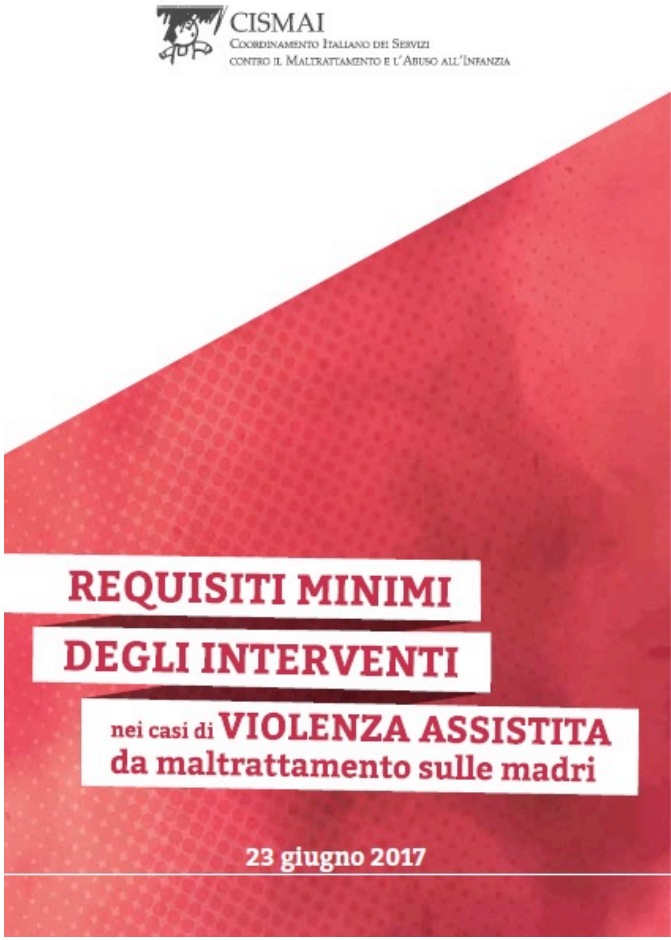
## Second session

Gloria Soavi
CISMAI / Scientific Committee Coordinator

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# REVISION 2017

- In line with the Istanbul Convention
- Special attention to "special orphans"
- Greater articulation of  interventions
- Coordination and integration between all the Services and organizations ( fro children mather and violent father)
- Avoid contradictory and fragmented interventions.



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# MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERVENTIONS IN CASES OF VIOLENCE WITNESSED BY MALTREATMENT OF MOTHERS 2017 CISMAI

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**Follow up:** verification of interventions and evidence based tools

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# INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION

**2017**

International presentation at 15 th ISPCAN CONGRESS (International Society Prevention Child Abuse and Neglect) in The Hague , presentation new

***Guidelines of intervention on children witnessing Domestic Violence (Cismai)***



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# NEW DEFINITION 2017

For violence witnessed by minors in the family context we mean the experience by the child and adolescent of any form of mistreatment carried out through acts of physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, economic and persecutory acts (so-called stalking) on reference figures or other emotionally significant figures, adults or minors.

**Of particular gravity is the condition of orphans called special, victims of violence witnessed by homicide,multiple homicides, homicide-suicide.**

The child or adolescent can experience it directly (when the violence / murder occurs in his / her perceptual field), indirectly (when the minor is or becomes aware of the violence / murder), and / or perceiving its acute effects and chronic, physical and psychological.

Witnessed violence includes witnessing the violence of minors against other minors and / or other family members and neglect and mistreatment of pets and farm animals.

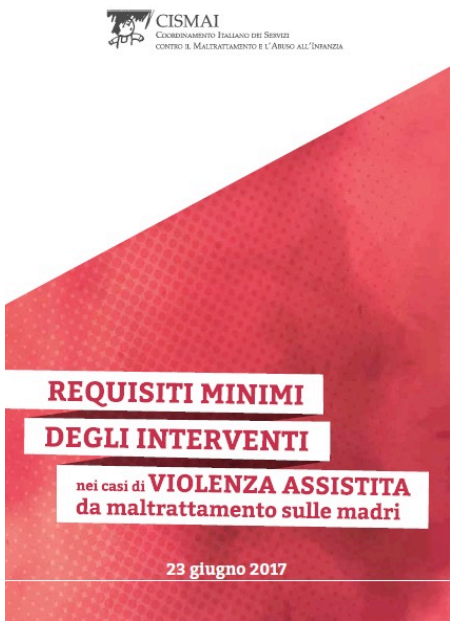
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# NEW DEFINITION 2017

Violence against women is a widespread, underestimated and scarcely detected phenomenon, which can put at risk, starting from the early stages of pregnancy, the psycho-physical health and the very life of both mothers and children.

The involvement of children in domestic violence can occur not only during the cohabitation of the parents, but also in the separation phase and after separation. In these phases, the risk of escalation of violence increases and the possibility of a lethal outcome (homicide of the mother, multiple homicides, homicide-suicide).

The dynamics of domestic violence interfere with the relationshipwith children, altering the expression of the parenting functions of the abusive mother and father and the attachment patterns.



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# WITNESSED VIOLENCE TRAUMA

Witnessed violence is a form of maltreatment that can cause short, medium and long-term harmful effects in children and adolescents,

**affecting the various areas of functioning:**

- psychological,
- emotional,
- relational,
- cognitive,
- Behavioral
- social.



Different acute or chronic diagnostic pictures of post-traumatic origin can be configured, with different times of onset.

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# THE «SPECIAL ORPHANS»

- These are the children of feminicide: sons and daughters of the victim and the murderer
- They suffer a double trauma: the dramatic loss of the mother and the ‘loss’ of the father at the same time
- They go through a traumatic grieving process
- Psychopathological consequences and PTSD can be particularly complex Traumatic bereavement Secondary traumatization



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# STAGES OF INTERVENTION

- Detection
- Protection
- Evaluation
- Treatment
- Follow up



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# DETECTION

**For the detection of witnessed violence to be possible it is essential that operators have learned to recognize male violence against women in its structural dimension and in its widespread diffusion.**

**That is, they are able to "see" a dimension that is still underestimated and / or denied.**

The survey consists of:

- Detect the **presence of children** in situations of domestic violence
- identyfing their distress signals

**It is a phase that involves service operators for both minors and adults, belonging to the social, health, educational and legal sectors, given that multidisciplinary and multi-contextual attention is required, in collaboration with the Anti-violence Centers**.

Situations may have different characteristics with respect to urgency and severity.

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# CHILDREN..NOT ONLY WITNESSES BUT ALSO DIRECT VICTIMS

**In addition to being direct or indirect witnesses, they can become victims of:**

- *physical violence*
- *verbal violence*
- *psychological violence*
- *sexual violence*
- *economic maltreatment*
- *persecutory behavior*
- *or stalking*



The risk is even higher in cases of homicide of the mother. In the presence of children in addition to the very serious psychological damage, they are at risk of physical injury even with a fatal outcome.

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# TO RECOGNICE VIOLENCE, ONE MUST KNOW IT

- Recognize that couple violence exists
- Adopt a gender perspective
- Overcoming the victim-executioner readings
- Recognize the nature and characteristics of violent relationships



Violence is not just physical violence
Recognizing the stages of violence (Walker)
Adopt an "ecological" reading

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# DETECTION

Recognizing violence against women early: **distinguishing violence from conflict** It is essential to distinguish conflict situations (without denying the damage that these can cause to boys and girls) from situations of violence and maltreatment, avoiding to identify as conflict or quarrels between partners situations where abusive and violent acts and / or behaviors take place on the mother, even serious and repeated.

Analyze the couple relationship and its characteristics.

The border is sometimes tenuous ...

**Assessment of the risk and danger / lethality connected to the situation of violence** (type of violent acts, indicators on the perpetrator, victims, etc.), escalation and relapse with evidence-based tools

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# DISTINGUISH BETWEEN …

**Conflict**

Symmetrical relationship that provides for even serious disagreements between two equal people, who perceive and consider themselves as such

**Violence**

Asymmetrical relationship in whichthe man uses violence to maintain a relationship of power and oppression over the woman that produces the limitation of freedom

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# THE RISK OF NOT DETECTING THE DANGER OF THE SITUATION

- Indicators relating to the type and dynamics of violent acts.
- Indicators relating to mothers and / or other family members who have been victims of maltreatment.
- Indicators relating to children witnessing violence.
- Indicators relating to the perpetrator.
- Social indicators.
- Institutional indicators.

( Luberti, 2005)

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# THE TOOLS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

Strumenti evidence based per la valutazione del rischio di recidiva, della pericolosità e letalità della situazione di violenza




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# RECOMMENTATIONS

- Carry out an early detection of risk situations to avoid iatrogenic damage
- Accurately discriminate high conflict conditions from situations of violence.
- Make an accurate description of the facts reported by the woman or a third party.
- Make a timely assessment of the degree of risk and danger / lethality through the use of standardized tools for the purpose of detecting the risk, escalation of violence and relaps (SARA-SARA Plus, SURPLUS4).
- Perform a careful assessment of the psycho-physical state of the boy and the girl, even in the absence of information from parents.

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# PROTECTION

***Stop violence toward mothers in all its forms.*** All interventions have to be **prompt, effective and sustainable**, The timing and methods of protection interventions, included in judicial procedures, must respect the needs of minors in relation to their psychophysical well-being,and their best interests.

All **custody decisions** have to take into account the **presence of violence** (art. 31 Istanbul convention) in order to evaluate the necessity to terminate the parental rights of the violent parent (art. 45 Istanbul convention)Shared custody has always to be evaluated carefully in domestic violence situations

The **appropriateness of protection meetings** has to be evaluated with great attention, evaluating  the psycho-physical risk for the children.

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# HOW CHILDREN PERCEIVE THE VIOLENT FATHER

**Daddy of the sun**:

he is a dad who plays with his children, and pamper them and care for them when they are sick
Teach many things, listen and joke

**Storm dad**:

he doesn't care for his children, He doesn't play,he doesn't joke, he gets angry a lot and often .. even when there is no good reason ... ..



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# HOW THE VIOLENT FATHER PERCEIVES HIS CHILDREN

In his eyes they are "invisible"

The violence often continues even after separation: a tool to reach and hit the mother

Often "he was not a child" and has stories of abuse experienced in his family

Rigid and violent educational models

**But also….**

Seductive

Manipulative

Seeking alliance against the mother

Creating complicity especially if the child is male

"Buy" child's interest

***So more confusing***

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# EVALUATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHILDREN AND THE VIOLENT FATHER

**Carefully evaluate the risk to children in contact with the abusive parent**

**Bancroft and Silverman (2002) propose 13 points**

- Physical danger level for the mother
- Level of psychological violence for the mother and children
- Level of coercion and manipulation in relationships
- History of negligent or severely uninvolved parenting
- History of substance abuse or psychiatric problems
- Having put their children at psychological and physical risk during the violence against their mother
- I refuse to accept the separation

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# WHEN THE CHILD DOES NOT WANT TO SEE THE FATHER

- Lives linked to witnessing violence
- He may have been a direct victim of violence
- Post traumatic experiences
- The reasons  he expresses must be listened to and understood
- We must not deny the reality he experienced
- Don't create "confusion"

**Avoid secondary victimization**

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# P.A.S. ?

The child with his refusal puts in place a defense, he is communicating that that relationship for the violent father is a source of anxiety, difficult, problematic.

He tells us with his refusal that we have not understood what he wants to tell us and that we are unable to help and support him.

Adopt rigorous evaluation procedures to diagnose or exclude the presence of prejudicial behavior on the part of the parent who is rejected, such as to justify the child's rejection.

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# RECCOMENDATIONS

The **appropriateness of protection meetings** has to be evaluated with great attention, evaluating  the psycho-physical risk for the children.

The operators present at the protected meetings must have specific and adequate training that allows them to recognize and stop violent dynamics, including psychologically and manipulative

Protection meetings are **NOT** an intervention of parenthood evaluation and treatment of **violent fathers**

When a child refuses to meet a father, first of all we have to evaluate the hypothesis that refusal could be connected to **child's fear** caused by having witnessed **father's violence.**

Not denying the existence of situations in which one parent manipulates or influences the child against the other parent, **every hypothesis of manipulation or conditioning has to be proven referring to evidence-based elements and not to be assumed before hand.**

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# EVALUATION

In assessing the recoverability of parental skills, **for the purposes of a correct diagnosis, prognosis and treatment, the damage caused by protracted maltreatment must be taken into account, both from a medical and psychological point of view, discriminating any basic problems or related to the structuring of the personality from post-traumatic symptoms and the effects of violence.**

**In fact, there is a risk that the outcome is a "photographic" evaluation that focuses mainly on the inadequacies of the woman, without tracing them back to damage from abuse.**

It is necessary to implement programs for the assessment of perpetrators,including the assessment of the dangerousness-lethality, the risk of relapse and the recoverability of parental skills, without ever disregarding the ability to assume responsibility and recognize the damage inflicted.

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# COUNTERING STEREOTYPES

## Is the father who mistreats the mother a good father?



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# THE VIOLENT FATHER

He is not protective: he exposes children to violence

Self-centered on his own needs

Uses violence to define his power

He does not know how to grasp the developmental needs of the children, who tend to be perceived as a "property", like the mother.

These characteristics constitute a strong risk factor also with respect to the possibility of generating violent behavior towards them

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# THE VIOLENT FATHER

**The parent who makes the child witness violent behavior perpetrated on the other spouse or other children, in addition to being a source of trauma in itself, he fails to perform important care functions**

The protection function

The function of affective regulation

The function of encouraging exploration and self-mastery

The developmental function in the child of self-reflexive activities

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# COUNTERING STEREOTYPES

## The mother is not protective and why didn't she leave earlier?



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# WHY DON'T THEY LEAVE?

**Approach that assumes disapproval and guilt for staying in the relationship**

Abuse profoundly undermines the integrity of women,impoverishing them to the point of making every movement,every different thought, every emotion, every solution different from what their reality is like

Very often, children are an important push for getting out of violence

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# THE BATTERED MOTHER

The violence suffered, especially chronic, produces in the mother a transversal damage to the representation of herself as a woman and as a mother and to her parenting skills

Anxious, frightened, terrified, she feels guilty she tries to survive, she feels fragile and wrong, she can't often "look" at her children

Her parenting skills are severely affected (disorganized attachment type), she hardly maintains good levels of emotional response and attention to the child's needs

The mother can become neglectful and at times abusive to the children.

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# THE RISKS OF A SUPERFICIAL PARENTAL EVALUATION

***An abused mother doesn't always look good …***

A mother who is the victim of physical and/or psychological abuse can easily be assessed as an inadequate mother

Fragile mothers

Ascertaining the damage caused by the violence

***An abusive father can be better assessed….***

Countering the idea that a violent person is an adequate father

Assess the risk of relapse of maltreatment

Assess the level of denial

Recognition of impact and damage on children

***Avoid neutrality: mother and father cannot be on the same level***

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# COUNTERING STEREOTYPES

## Children don't understand, they don't notice, they forget




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# THE RISKS OF A SUPERFICIAL DIAGNOSIS ON THE CHILD

- Evaluate the impact  of the violence on the child
- On their internal world and relationship
- Evaluate the presence and the degree of the trauma
- Symptoms or difficulties and their manifestations
- The presence of other types of maltreatment
- Lissen to children's feeling

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# ASSESS THE DAMAGED AREAS

## Behavioral

- Attention deficit and hyperactivity
- Behavioral disturbances
- Anger/aggression Anti-social behavior

## Social / relational

- Low social skills
- Isolation
- Difficulty empathizing
- Lack of trust in relationships

## Psychological/emotional

- Adultization
- Excessive empowerment
- Fear of emotional relationships
- Hypercontrol
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Failure to recognize emotions
- Dissociation

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# TRAUMA EVALUATION

Presence of symptoms

PTSD Diagnosis

Presence of post-traumatic experiences

**Defense mechanisms: denial, freezing emotional, split**

The consequences of the trauma vary depending on the victim's degree of vulnerability, age, the characteristics and duration of the traumatic event, protective skills of families and protecion agencies.



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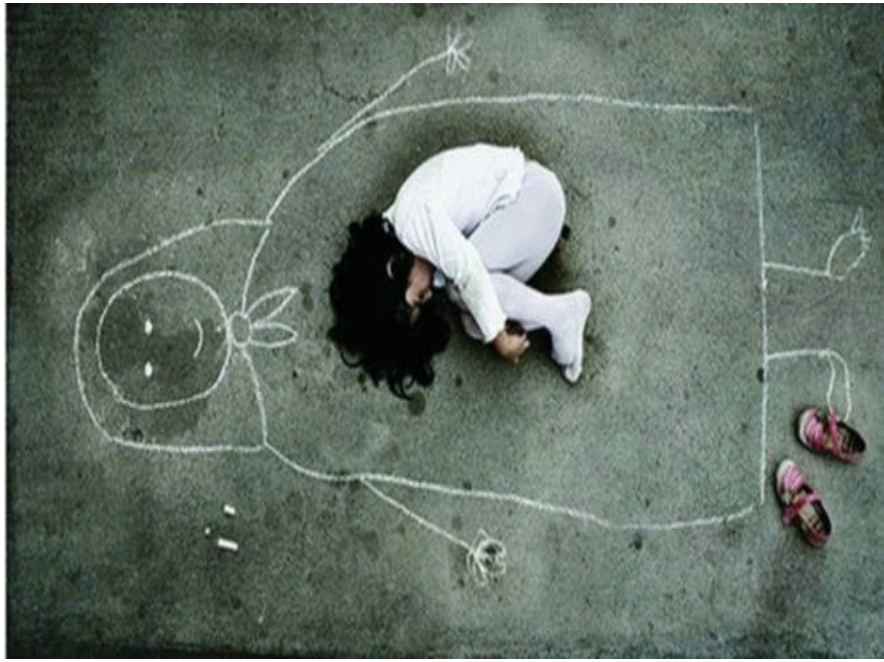
# EVALUATION

## Special orphans

In the case of feminicide, the evaluation must not be limited to the moment of its implementation.

It requires, on the part of the operators, adequate preparation and experience, which takes into account the specific nature of traumatic bereavement, determined by the death of the mother by the father.

Specific training for operators.



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Operators must make use of evidence-based tools for assessing the trauma of witnessed violence and the specific trauma of special orphans**

It is necessary to integrate the information collected by the operators of the various services, in order to avoid fragmented assessments

Operators must be able to recognize their defense mechanisms, which could lead to minimize or normalize the reading of gender-based violence

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# TREATMENT

Witnessing the violence of one parent toward the other causes confusion in the inner world of the child about what is affection, intimacy, love and violence, and **undermines the heart of primary relationship** and therefore the development of a secure attachment

Children witnessing domestic violence **always need individual and/or mother-child therapeutic intervention**, in order to repair the damages of violence.

It is furthermore **necessary to treat the post-traumatic effects on mothers**

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# REPARITIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN

**Integrated management**

Working with the boy / girl on post-traumatic contents

Work on gender models

Repair relationship with the mother

Work on the relationship with the father only  if he worked on himself



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# REPARITIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN: TOOLS

Individual child psychotherapy

Trauma treatment with evidence-based tools

Psychoeducational groups for children

Mother-child dyad

Narrative Model



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# MOTHER-CHILD INTERVENTIONS

***When the mother is sufficiently ready and to recognize her emotions***

Joint redefinition of the events that occurred.

The condemnation of violent behavior (not of the person).

The explication of thefeelings and experiences associated with violence (fear, anger, shame, helplessness).

Recognizing and sharing the harm children are carrying.

The redefinition of the possible maternal choice to separate / move away from the abusive partner, in terms of assuming responsibility for the protection of oneself and children

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# THE «SPECIAL ORPHANS»

**Treatment** for the «special orphans» has to be adequate to the special needs of these children and it has to **include their new caregivers**

It is important that the child be accompanied with continuity and not only in the initial phases



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# IS A CHANGE POSSIBLE FOR THE VIOLENT FATHER?

*The improvement of the parenting of an abuser is indivisible from his progress in dealing with violence towards the partner … It therefore means recognizing violence and above all understanding the consequences that violence has had on children*

Bancroft (2013)

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# RECCOMENDATIONS

The treatment of post-traumatic outcomes in the mother is of fundamental importance, in order to repair the mother-child relationship.

We will work on the repair of the father-child relationship, after the diagnostic and prognostic evaluation

In domestic violence situations **family mediation interventions <u>are not</u> appropriate (art. 48 Istanbul Convention), along with family and couple therapy**

These therapeutic interventions have to be subordinated to treatment processes that gave positive results on taking responsibility for violence and the damages it caused to mothers and children, on handling emotions and on impulse control

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# PRIORITIES:

## prevention, awareness raising and training,local operational cooperation protocols

**It is necessary**:

- To promote activities with children, adolescents and adults on the subject of **education to affectivity and gender equality**
- To **raise awareness** toward **denial, minimization and stigmatisation mechanisms**, present at a socio-cultural level toward family and feminine violence
- To provide **training on domestic violence indicators**, lethality indicators, and on the correct detection methods
- To know that **chronic violence damages the parenthood of mothers**
- To know the consequences that can result from improper and uncoordinated intervention which can lead to **institutional abuse**
- A specific **training on feminicide cases** in order to be able to provide adequate care to special orphans.



# Thank you for attention
# Buon Lavoro!!

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# Empowerment of women mothers of children victims of witnessed violence.

## Focus on strategies for enhancing the economic independence/ entrepreneurship of the woman

---

## Module 3

Stanimira Hadjimitova
CSCD, Bulgaria

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# CONTENTS


INTRODUCTION

Module 1: Empowerment Concept

Module 2: From Theory to Practice: AVC Role

Module 3: Practical Examples and Tools

I. MOTIVATION WORK

- emotional competencies
- developing survivors' social relationship plan

II. EMPOWERMENT: WOMEN'S SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

- balance of competencies
- career programme plan development
- training in leadership
- training in entrepreneurship

III. PLAN FOR NETWORK DEVELOPMENT - SAMPLE

# ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

**Is widely recognized as a prerequisite for women and men to be able to exercise control over their lives and make their choices.**

Paragraph 26 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted on The Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) states a clear commitment of States to: *promote women's economic independence, including employment, and to eradicate the constant and growing burden of poverty on women, tackling the structural causes of poverty, through changes in economic structures and ensure equal access for all women as agents of development, including those in rural areas, to productive resources, opportunities and public services.*

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# EMPLOYMENT

- **Is generally recognized as a key prerequisite for economic independence and the avoidance of poverty.**
- Quality of employment and employment conditions are particularly important: poor working conditions and maintaining any kind of employment can in fact lead to low incomes, low learning opportunities and, in many countries, to lack of access to social protection and thus a reduction in old-age pension rights, which ultimately account increases the risk of poverty.
- When considering economic independence in general and in particular economic independence of women, it is also important to consider **economic security**, which gives the ability to plan the future opportunities and risks in a way that basic needs are met

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# MODULE 1:

# EMPOWERMENT CONCEPT

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# SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Is about changing society in a way that the place of women is respected and the way they want to live is recognized, not in conditions dictated by others. A sense of autonomy and self-esteem is essential to be able to make independent choices - about sex, marriage, children, education, work.

# POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Affects equality in representation in political institutions and the right to vote so that women can participate in making decisions that affect their lives and the lives of others like them; to be able to express opinion, to speak on their own behalf, and to have the right to participate in the democratic process.

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# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Concerns the ability of women to contribute to and benefit from the outcomes/achievements of economic activities, under conditions in which their contribution is acknowledged, their dignity is respected; they are given the opportunity to negotiate a fairer distribution of the fruits of development

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# EMPOWERMENT IS USUALLY APPLIED AS A:

- process of enhancing sensitivity, developing independence and increasing a woman's control over her own resources and decisions concerning her life.
- process through which women strengthen their abilities, their role, autonomy and authority, as individuals and as part of a social group that changes and transforms submissive relationships.

# THEREFORE, EMPOWERMENT IS NOT ..

- something that can be "gifted", but rather it is a **dynamic process** that requires individual and collective effort.
- It is linked to the new concept of shared power ("power with") based on more democratic social relationships.

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# TO BE A TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS

- empowerment must account for both the **individual** as well as the **collective** and **social dimension.**
- **individual level**: the changes are aimed at achieving higher self-confidence, self-esteem and opportunity to negotiate their own interests.
- **group and social level**: strengthening our relationships, support and mutual recognition, to allow us to deal with common problems and achieve the protection of common interests.
- **collective dimension** creates social, political and economic changes aimed at eliminating gender discrimination in all areas of social relations and social structure.

# FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

- "women's empowerment" = instrument for combat violence against women as a violation of human right
- way for women to realize their place among others, their potential and rights and to transform the situation and establish equality in human relationships
- awareness of the right to have rights

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# MODULE 2:

# FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE:

## role of anti-violence centers (avc) for women's economic empowerment

# IMPORTANT:

- The economic empowerment of women - victims of violence of their intimate partner (**IPV**) is a process of upgrading the work of the respective Antiviolence Center (**AVC**)
- **after** the woman has received support for overcoming the crises situation
- This work has to be done by the AVC specialist (professional) **together** with the woman survivor
- It is of a great importance for the **real leaving** of the violent relations.

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# WORK ELEMENTS

- **Motivation training**: working with the survivor of violence to reveal her potential and resources; regaining self-esteem and self-confidence; building a stable self-confidence
- **Training in specific job search skills** - writing a CV, participation in a job interview, etc.
- **Support for finding a permanent job**, not just any, but corresponding to her qualifications, knowledge and skills; which will make her happy and satisfied and will ensure her a decent income
- Training in **entrepreneurship skills and knowledge for starting her own business**
- **Support in housing**
- **Support for children** - for their enrollment in a nursery / kindergarten / school, incl. assistance in providing clothes and shoes, school supplies and medicines for them.

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# IN ORDER TO BE EFFICIENT

**this work must be recognized by the AVC management and staff as:**

- important and necessary
- structured
- regular
- planned

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# THE MAIN TOOL FOR AVC ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS GOAL IS

- building of a **LOCAL SUPPORTING NETWORK OF STAKEHOLDERS**
- that recognize the problem as important for the concrete individual and for the society as a whole and
- agree to start working together in a network on jointly formulated goals for prevention and for combating this issue

# TECHNOLOGY OF THE L.S.NETWORK DEVELOPMENT:

- **Formulation of common Objectives to be recognized by all members**;
- **Creating a list and database of potential members.**

  Important: make personal contacts, if possible face to face with representatives of the institutions / organizations that are authorized to make decisions. Start with a smaller number of members - e.g. with those with whom AVC already has some relationship, and gradually expand the circle

# TECHNOLOGY

- In parallel, AVC develops its idea for managing the Network, which discusses later with the members.
- The network must be coordinated by a designated person from the AVC, who is provided with a payment for this activity. It is good to appoint functions for the other members of the Network, incl. as volunteers

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# TECHNOLOGY

AVC elaborates and proposes to the members an **Annual Activity Plan**, seeking to cover all the above **6 elements** that contribute to economic empowerment of the survivor.

The Plan includes: frequency of meetings between the members of the Network; the activities and responsibilities of each member; ways of communication. It is important the Network to become useful with something for everyone member.

# TECHNOLOGY

A TERRITORIAL PROTOCOL

- for the establishment of the Network and for the cooperation has to be signed.
- It is recommended to do this at an official meeting, in the presence of media.

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# BUSINESS CASE OF THE NETWORK

- 83% of WVV face difficulties in keeping their jobs as a result of the violence they have experienced! *(Source: National Council for Social Services, Denmark)*
- Accidents at work: 75% of abusers cannot concentrate due to the violence they cause; in 19% of cases (directly or indirectly) this leads to accidents at work due to negligence. *(Source: Vermont Domestic Violence Council)*
- The cost of gender-based violence against women in the EU can be estimated at almost € 256 billion. *(EIGE)*

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# WORK WITH BUSINESS:

Develop guidelines and do trainings on how businesses can participate in:

- **prevention** GBV by raising awareness of the problem in the workplace
- improving the **protection and reintegration of women affected** by GBV

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# BUSINESS COMMITMENT IN RESPONSE TO GBV

## I. An appropriate policy in favour of own employees

- establishment of internal procedures for reception and response of signals, incl. developing Action Plan;
- assigning a focal point;
- creating an anonymous email / mailbox for alerts;
- distribution of leaflets / information packages
- organizing trainings and informing employees, human resources and managers
- Victim's support: special leave and reintegration measures to overcome isolation; flexible working hours; new job; support in finding a new home
- cooperation with specialized organizations and institutions, incl. women's NGOs

# BUSINESS COMMITMENT IN RESPONSE TO GBV

**II. Activities in support of national and local policies for the prevention, support and reintegration of GBV survivors**

- offering work to GBV survivors
- participation in national / local campaigns against GBV
- support, incl. financial, for AVC
- participation in the local coordination mechanism, together with NGOs, trade unions, institutions

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**Role of the business in women survivors of IPV Economic Empowerment:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCUFJtXlImc

# THANKS FOR THE ATTENTION!

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# Empowerment of children witnessing domestic violence.

## Focus on principles of the right of the child to be heard and practical tools on life skills and resilience of children

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## Module 4

Diana Georgieva
CSCD, Bulgaria

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| Time | Topic | Supportive Info material |
|---|---|---|
| 02.00pm<br>03.30pm | • Principle of the best rights of the child<br>• Rights of the Children according to the Convention on the Rights of the Children – Right to be heard; Right to Information; Right to Protection and Privacy; Right to non - discrimination and privacy;<br>• Discussion on local legal environment<br>• Practice Guidelines for the experts who prepare children for the hearings | Videos on children and justice \| European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (europa.eu)<br>Checklists for experts who prepare children for the hearings<br>The Child Interview. Practice Guidelines |
| 03.30pm<br>03.40pm | Break | |
| 03.40pm<br>04.10pm | • Resilience For Practitioners: Institutional Response (Good Parctice from Bulgaria: National Referral Mechanism for children – victims of violence);<br>• Resilience: Definition; What is/ isn't a resilience;<br>• Casita Model; | Infographics<br>Template : Casita Model |
| 04.10pm<br>04.40pm | • Training Activity 1: Individual Exercise<br>• Discussion | Template: Helpful List of Questions for Social Workers |
| 04.40pm<br>05.00 pm | Break | |
| 05.00 pm<br>05.30 pm | • Training Activity 2 : Group Exercise (Case Studies) | Templates: Case Studies 1 & 2 (Center Dinamina cases ) |
| 05.30pm<br>06.00 pm | • Resilience For Parents - What's DV, The effects of DV on kids; Second Hand Abuse;<br>• Positive parenting;<br>• 7C model of resilience<br>• Training recap;<br>• Q&A | Template: 7Cs model of resilience<br>Info material: Building resilience through positive parenting |

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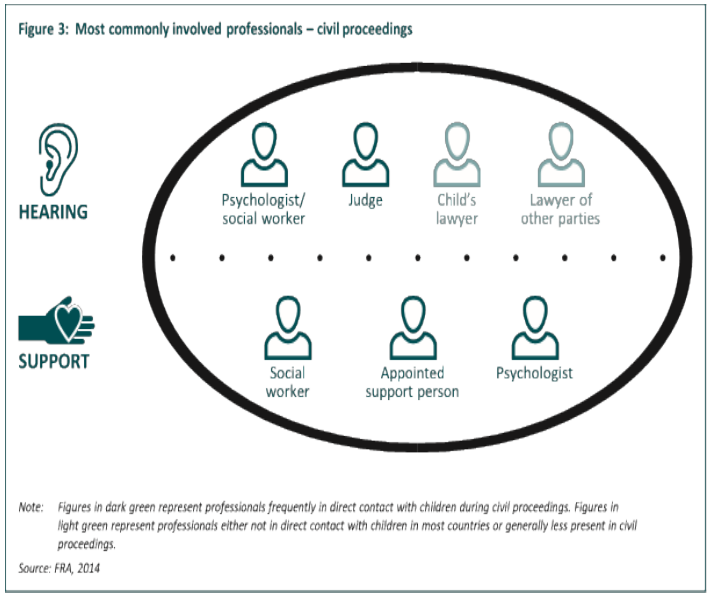
# PRINCIPLE OF THE BEST RIGHT OF THE CHILD

The Council of Europe guidelines identify the best interests of the child as one of the four fundamental principles of child-friendly justice. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has pointed out "that an adult's judgment of a child's best interests cannot override the obligation to respect all the child's rights under the Convention. It recalls that there is no hierarchy of rights in the Convention; all the rights provided for therein are in the 'child's best interests' and no right could be compromised by a negative interpretation of the child's best interests." Children's participation is strongly linked to their best interests being met, as also expressed in Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

# PRINCIPLE OF THE BEST RIGHT OF THE CHILD

## Right to be heard

The right to be heard and express one's views is essential for effective participation in judicial proceedings. It is guaranteed to children by both European and international human rights instruments. For example, Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides that "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." The Council of Europe's Guidelines on child-friendly justice specify that meaningful participation requires a safe and friendly environment and the use of appropriate questioning methods to determine and respond to a child's specific needs in accordance with his or her age and maturity.



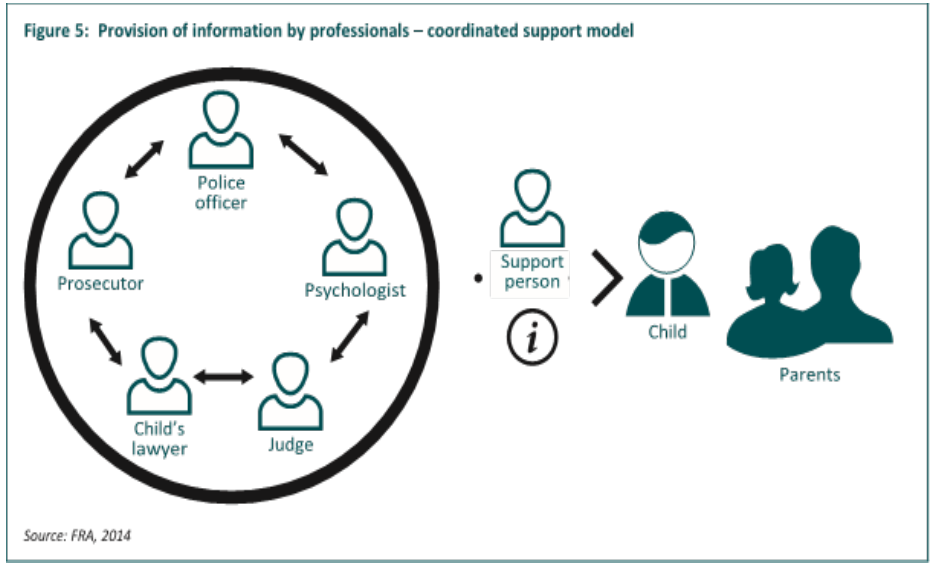

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FFJZFM5Cn8&feature=youtu.be

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/children-and-justice-their-right-to-be-heard_en.mp4

# PRINCIPLE OF THE BEST RIGHT OF THE CHILD

## Right to information

Respecting children's right to be informed, as guaranteed to children by the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN, is crucial to their wellbeing and effective participation in judicial procedures. General Comment No 12 on the right to be heard of the Committee on the Rights of the Child states, "Particular attention needs to be paid to the provision and delivery of child-friendly information, adequate support for self-advocacy [and] appropriately trained staff."




https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIrZ10dh61w&feature=youtu.be

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/right_to_information_en.mp4

# PRINCIPLE OF THE BEST RIGHT OF THE CHILD

**Right to protection and privacy**

International standards clearly prioritise the protection of children involved in judicial proceedings, while also encouraging their participation. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) and the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse build on the CRC to constitute a new reference framework at the European level. Both define general measures of protection for victims of violence, as well as specific measures targeting child witnesses.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyZ7QGBNSE8&feature=youtu.be

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/right_to_protection_en.mp4

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# PRINCIPLE OF THE BEST RIGHT OF THE CHILD

**Right to non-discrimination**

Non-discrimination is a basic principle of international human rights law. The CRC (Article 2) considers nondiscrimination a cross- cutting aspect applicable when implementing all articles of the convention. Protection from discrimination covers not only children but also their parents or legal guardians. The Council of Europe's guidelines identify non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, and dignity and the rule of law as fundamental principles of child-friendly justice.

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EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

HELPING TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS A REALITY FOR EVERYONE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

UGUAGLIANZA

# Giustizia a misura di minore – Lista di controllo per professionisti

## Quali provvedimenti si devono adottare affinché un procedimento sia a misura di minore?

*Il minore potrà esercitare il proprio diritto di essere ascoltato?*

- ☐ Occorre creare le condizioni atte a garantire che il minore sia ascoltato.
- ☐ I professionisti dovrebbero riconoscere chiaramente tale diritto nel corso dell'intero procedimento.

*Il minore sta ricevendo assistenza professionale e personale?*

- ☐ L'assistenza professionale potrebbe prevedere l'intervento di assistenti sociali e psicologi.
- ☐ Persona di fiducia.

ASSISTENZA

*In che modo è possibile informare il minore sul procedimento e sui suoi diritti?*

- ☐ Attraverso informazioni orali e scritte.
- ☐ Informazioni adeguate all'età, alla maturità, al livello di comprensione e alle difficoltà di comunicazione del minore.
- ☐ Materiale visivo.

1

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# CHILD'S INTERVIEW. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

An expert who assesses a child victim of emotional, physical or sexual abuse, must have a complete understanding of the developmental processes typical for the **witness's age**, using it as the frame of reference for the evaluation of the child's individual characteristics and the **level of his or her cognitive, emotional, and social development.**

Factors, which can influence the accuracy of information provided by the child, include:

- the child's age,
- the level of cognitive, emotional, and social development,
- verbal reconstruction of the event (level of verbal development),
- the number of details (memory of events),
- information about the event received from other people (potential pressure exerted by the family),
- the way of establishing rapport by the psychologist,
- is the psychologist an authority figure for the child and how is he/she perceived (as threatening, helpful, etc. )?
- the interviewing style and the structure of questions,
- personality factors.

Taking all these factors under consideration, a psychologist who prepares for such an assessment, has to acknowledge **that his task is not only to evaluate the psychological credibility of the child witness's testimony, but also to protect the child's psychological well-being.**

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# CHILD'S INTERVIEW. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

**1. Rapport building and developmental assessment**

- Setting
- Greeting, the first contact
- Assess Developmental Level and Check Suggestibility

**2. Information gathering**

- Set the basic rules
- General Techniques for Interviewing

**3. What you must not do**

**4. Closing the interview – very important**

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# Coffee Time
# 10 mins



# COORDINATION MECHANISMS

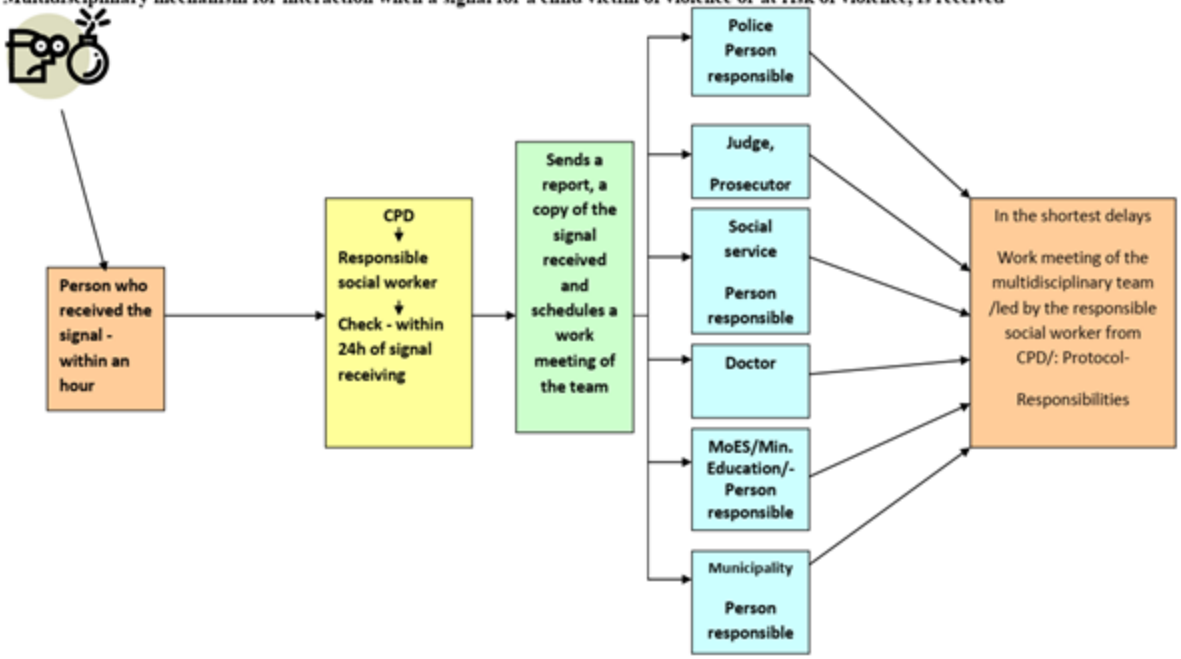
**National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for children – victims of violence**

procedure for interaction in cases of children – victims of violence or at risk of violence; procedure for counteraction in a situation of crisis intervention when a serious danger exists for the child.

NRM is a formal agreement among Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Justice (MJ), Ministry of Education and Science (MES), Ministry of Health (MH), Ministry of Culture (MC), Social Assistance Agency (SAA), National Association of Municipalities and Ombudsman.

Often many cases remain outside the scope of this mechanism and they remain of local intervention.

**Multidisciplinary mechanism for interaction when a signal for a child victim of violence or at risk of violence, is received**[15]




[15] Multidisciplinary mechanism for interaction when a signal for a child victim of violence or at risk of violence is received, Schema contained in the Agreement on cooperation and coordination of the work of the territorial structures of the bodies for protection in case of children, victims or at risk of violence and in crisis intervention, http: // Projects - nazub.org/images/znaas_documenti/sporazumenie2010.pdf




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# RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. Being resilient does not mean that people don't experience stress, emotional upheaval, and suffering. Some people equate resilience with mental toughness, but demonstrating resilience includes working through emotional pain and suffering

https://www.everydayhealth.com/wellness/resilience/#resilience-theory

| Resilience is: | Resilience is not : |
|---|---|
| Something that develops through a dynamic process involving individual factors (e.g. temperament), environmental factors (e.g. family relationships) and the interaction between those factors | Something a child has or does not have |
| Something that can change over time | Solely about the skills and capabilities of the individual child |
| Something that everyone can learn – to deal with current adverse experiences or to prepare for future adversity | An innate quality that only some people are born with |
| Something that may look different in different settings, including family, cultural and broader community environments | A fixed character trait (i.e. you either have it or you don't) |
| | Freedom from negative emotions |

In resilience, the emphasis is on shared responsibility between all involved individuals. In real life, resilience can be built or destroyed in several ways. There is no single solution to do it.




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# CASITA MODEL

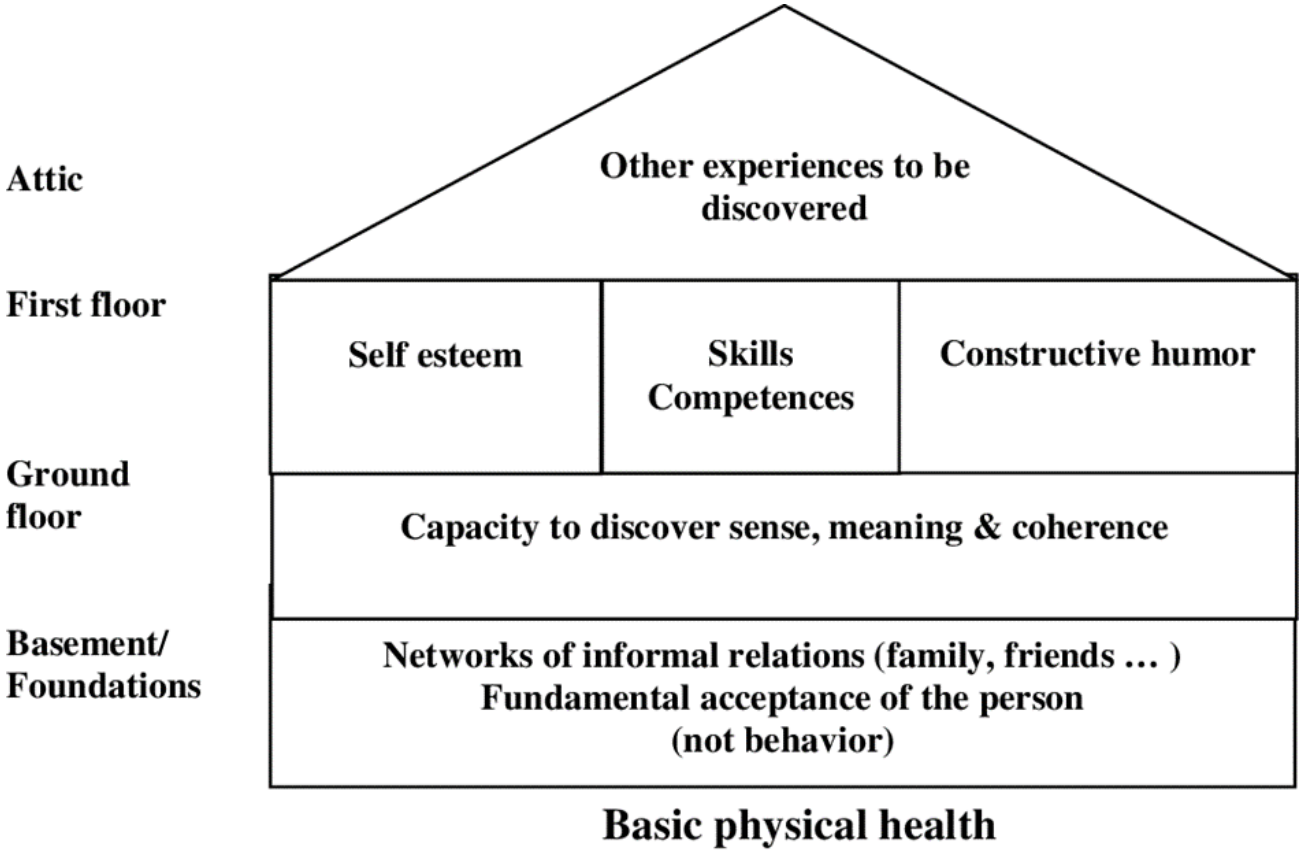
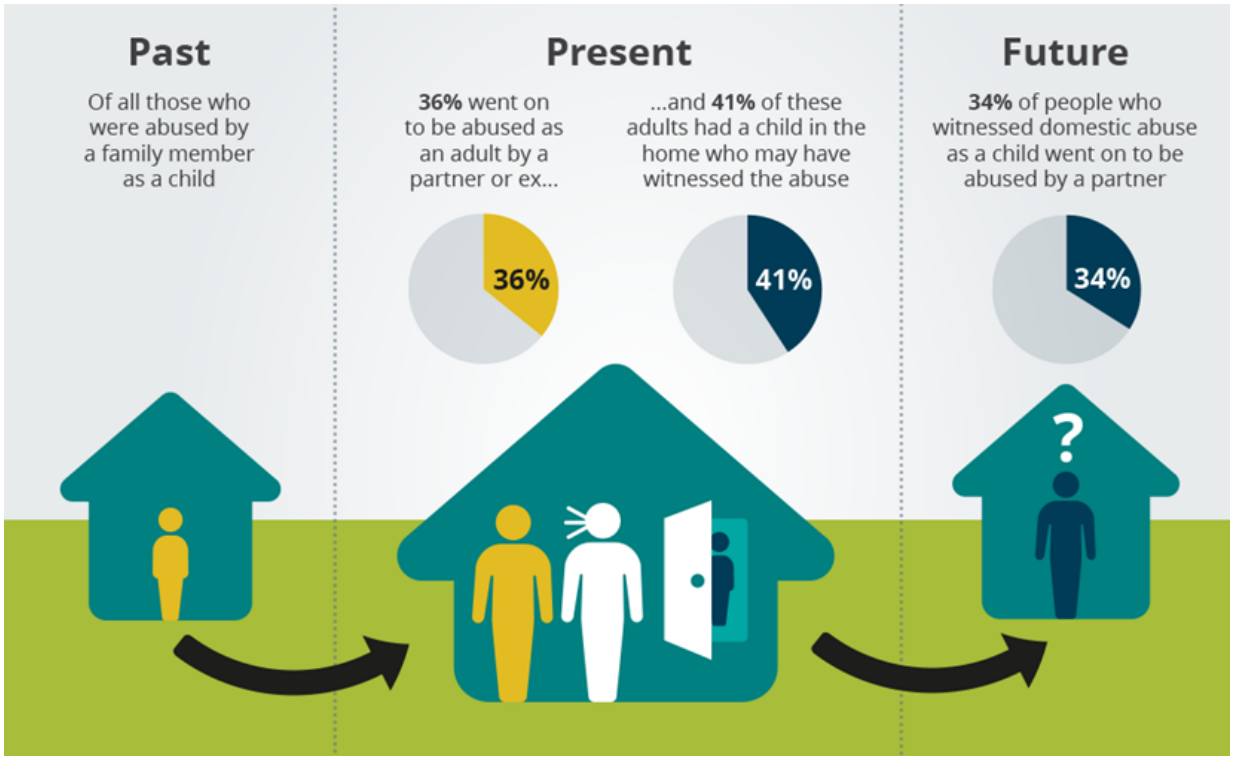


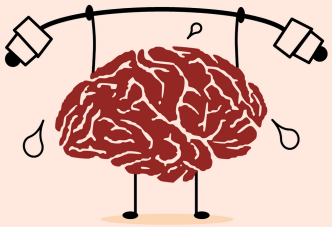

Figure : The Casita model Resilience building. Source: Stefan Vanistendael (cited in Monroe & Oliviere, 2007, p. 120).




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https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/peoplewhowereabusedaschildrenaremorelikelytobeabusedasanadult/2017-09-27



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# TRAINING ACTIVITY 1:

***Please, think of a case of your own practice, supported by Casita Model try to reply the following set of questions***

Next set of questions suggest assessment template supporting better understanding of the resilience approach.

You may not answer some of the questions. Please under supervision try to understand why you couldn't answer.

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# TRAINING ACTIVITY 2:

***Group Exercise:***

*Participants are divided in 2 groups. Each group receives a case. In 30 mins discussion each group supported by a template of Casita Model and Hint questions from the above give suggestions how to solve the cases.*

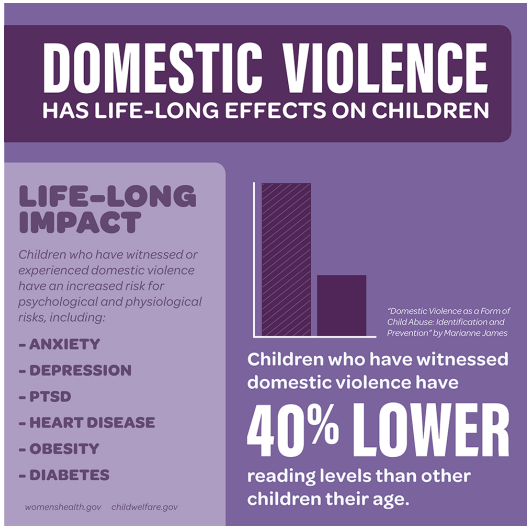
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# IMPACT ON THE FAMILY







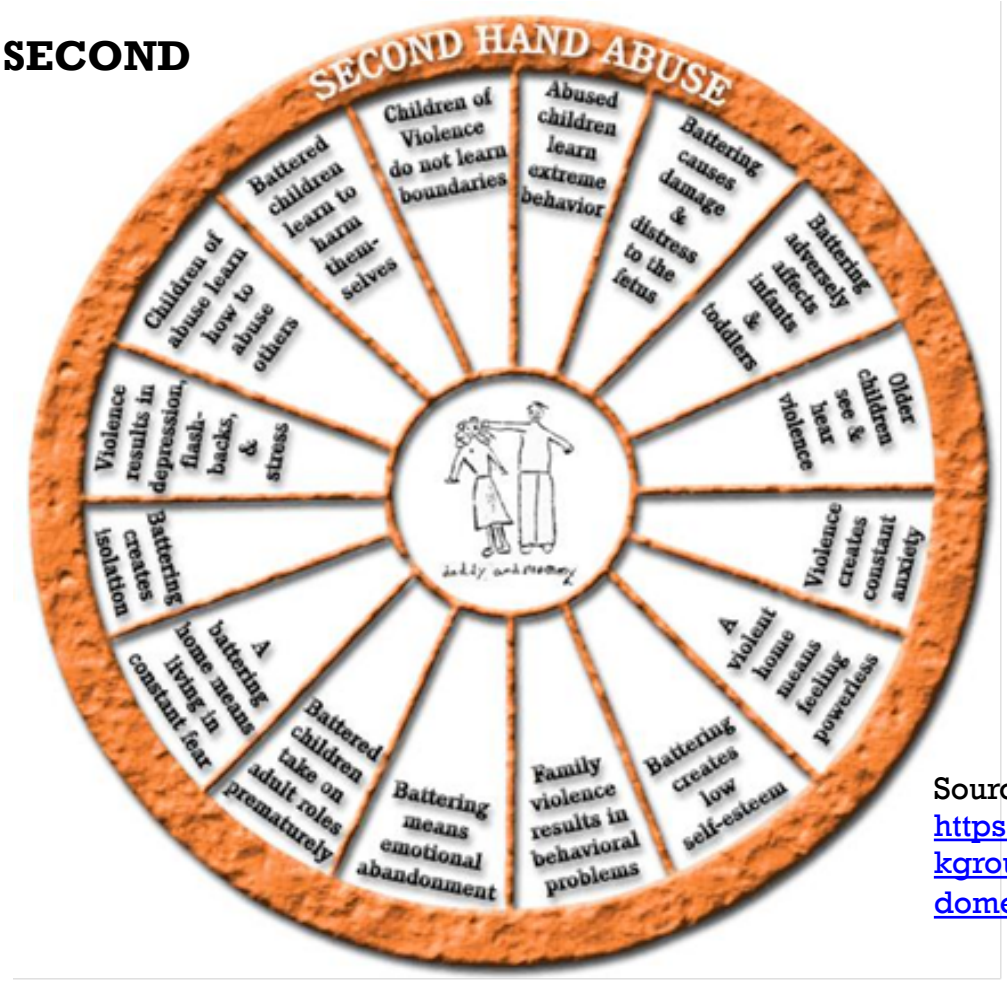



Source : https://www.safeshores.org/2020/10/30/domestic-violence-impacts-the-entire-family/

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# CHILDREN OF ALL AGES CAN BE DEEPLY AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## CONCEPT OF SECOND HAND ABUSE




Source: https://dvcc.delaware.gov/background-purpose/dynamics-domestic-abuse/

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