



## Through Our Eyes: Children, Violence, and Trauma Videos and Resources

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### Community-Based Approaches Transcript

**JOYCE N. THOMAS, RN, MPH, PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT, WASHINGTON, D.C.:** Many children are witnesses to violence. Many children are victims of violence. The environment can be a risk factor, but it can also be a protective factor. The community worker really is the glue to helping particularly families with limited resources be able to reestablish themselves.

**JOYCE THOMAS:** In environments where victimization is commonplace, the community can make a tremendous difference. You might have programs, services, agencies, that are geared-up, and families that are geared-up, to protect children. Faith-based communities make a big difference. When an entire family is in crisis, an offering of friendly support can be very nurturing.

**KIM CLIFTON, MSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HALOS, CHARLESTON, SC:** HALOS was founded by a child psychiatrist and pediatrician because she saw child victims of abuse and neglect coming through her psychiatric practice. While the caregivers were trying very hard to provide a safe and nurturing home, they just didn't have the resources to provide things that all children need, not to mention children who were healing from the trauma of abuse and neglect. And the project grew pretty quickly. They developed a relationship with the local Department of Social Services, and so Charleston County DSS would tell them what children who had open cases of abuse and neglect needed.

**FEMALE VICTIM 1:** I was a rape victim. And, one day I got tired of the abuse. I finally told, and they did something about it. After I got removed from my mother's house, my granny got custody of me through the court.

**FEMALE VICTIM 2:** Being as old as I am, a senior citizen, and living on a fixed income, I was fighting it all by myself until I got into HALOS, and they have helped me quite a bit.

**FEMALE VICTIM 1:** HALOS helped me get my stuff for school. They just been a really good backbone for the family. I'm 18 and I have graduated from high school; I did a semester in college. You know, I feel like I got something to live for now. And, as far as HALOS, they helped me do that.

**JOYCE THOMAS:** You can't help children till you help their families. Parents really need a lot of support. They need information. And when we talk about trauma and trauma-informed care, we know we have to listen, we have to listen to that trauma story. So it's important that the parents are linked to service providers who can help them in a structured way.

**JAMES HENRY, PH.D., DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S TRAUMA ASSESSMENT CENTER, KALAMAZOO, MI:** ...and so somebody who you felt very loved and you could count on and be secure with wasn't there... We know that children, whether it's child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, even community violence—that parents aren't even aware of some of the ways they've been exposed to violence and trauma. And so we started the Children's Trauma Assessment Center to really help people understand the kids through a trauma lens. Our project, Project PERK, is about being able to support children in Kalamazoo and their families when they've experienced violence, providing parent treatment as well as child treatment to empower them to help their kids manage the impact of trauma and certainly to build resiliency.

**ROBERT T. EZELLE, CHIEF PROFESSIONAL OFFICER, BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF GREATER KALAMAZOO:** It's important that we have programs that are going to keep kids safe. When you have kids that live at or below the poverty line, along with that comes a lot of baggage and a lot of that baggage is exposure to violence. So if we can provide resources for the kids and their families that normally would not be available to them, we jump at the chance to do that.

**JOYCE ARMSTRONG, EDUCATION DIRECTOR AND PARENT COORDINATOR, NEW GENESIS, INC.:** Because we do have the afterschool program and we do talk to our parents a lot, there's a lot of trust, there's a good foundation already laid there to go out and get a group to come in and go through the workshop.

**JAMES HENRY:** We've developed a parent group curriculum helping them understand how the impact of violence has affected their kids in terms of their regulation and behavior and learning.

**JOYCE ARMSTRONG:** What did you feel was beneficial for you and your family?

**JAMES HENRY:** The child component is really helping them understand what's happening in their brain, to help kids learn how to regulate their affect and to manage stress.

**ROBERT EZELLE:** The kids feel confident that they can engage in meaningful conversation with their parents. Parents are getting more sensitive to the needs of their children. They understand the exposure to violence and how that impacts not only their children but how it impacts them as a family unit.

**FEMALE VICTIM 1:** With each class I was able to use more of those tools.

**JAMES HENRY:** One of the great things about having community partnerships when they are neighborhood centers like New Genesis and Boys and Girls Club is that people trust this place. A family coming here can experience connection and relatedness and a sense of safety.

**JOYCE ARMSTRONG:** The more you can get the parents involved, the community involved, to where you're all saying the same thing, using the same language, you're going to have greater results.

**JOYCE THOMAS:** In working with hard-to-reach families, cultural factors have come a long way in establishing trust with the community—people feeling comfortable, just to know that they are welcome and that they are not the unusual one or they don't belong here—a place to go for help, where you have an opportunity to take home messages.

**TAWNA SANCHEZ, FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTOR, NAYA, PORTLAND, OREGON:** NAYA is a youth services organization. And people did ask that question: Why would you put a domestic violence program in a youth organization? We work with families who either are on the edge of losing their children to the child welfare system or who have already lost their children. And until everybody deals with the anger, the hurt, the frustration, and the pain of all of those things, they're not going to heal. We started with culturally specific domestic violence services. As Native people and as a community, we try to help them stay connected with their culture. On Wednesday night, we'll have a sibling visit night, which is an opportunity for youth who are in foster care to maybe visit with other family members that they don't normally see. And so the hope is to be able to bring all of those siblings and family members together, share a meal together, share an activity together, and just be able to bond some as a family. Family culture night works because mom and/or dad, and grandma, and several children—they're engaging as an entire family. They have something to consistently participate in on a regular basis, and they feel connected.

**JOYCE THOMAS:** When we think about protecting children and violence, we really have to say it's everybody's responsibility.

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