



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

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Addressing Violence in the Home Transcript

FEMALE SPEAKER: Violence in the home can crush the world of a child.

GIRL: I started hearing my mom scream in the middle of the night. And I walked in, and he was beating her.

BOY: There was always violence, since we were born. It would kind of build up and, like, something big would happen. I was scared. I thought I couldn't do anything.

JESSICA NUNAN, LMSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CAMILAR LATINO, ATLANTA, GA: Sometimes people will focus on just the physical abuse when they think about domestic violence. They forget about the impact that occurs with the kids that are exposed to the violence.

JANE F. SILOVSKY, PH.D., PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, SAFECARE EVALUATION, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER: For the children, that becomes traumatic, scary, confusing.

JEN DIERINGER, MSW, THERAPIST, SOUND MENTAL HEALTH, KING COUNTY, WA: Kids might have a gamut of symptoms. Some of our kids hold all of their pain on the inside.

JULIE PERILLA, PH.D., CO-FOUNDER, CAMILAR LATINO, ATLANTA, GA: They start to feel that it's their fault. They doubt themselves; many of them get depressed.

JESSICA NUNAN: Especially with the younger kids, you'll see them complaining about stomachaches, headaches. And then we have externalizing kids who often use that outward behavior to show their feelings—picking fights with other kids at school. We see kids who are getting into fights with their siblings, or even getting into fights with the non-abusive parent, and doing the same type of behaviors that the perpetrating parent did. The earlier you can get a child intervention, the better.

ADVOCATE: How old are your children?

JOYCE N. THOMAS, RN, MPH, PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT, WASHINGTON, D.C.: All persons who have access to children should have the knowledge of what agencies should be involved and they should know how to communicate with those agencies. There has to be a system of coordination. And just keeping that communication going between what services are available really makes a big difference because you have a lot of silos, and there really has to be more cross-communication.

KELLIE ROGERS, PROGRAM MANAGER, YWCA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES, SOUTH KING COUNTY, WA: The way we approach it in our program is that it is a collaborative effort between domestic violence agencies and mental health providers. We have children's advocates on the team, as well as law enforcement and CPS.

HON. ELIZABETH J. BERNS, SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE, KING COUNTY, WA: They're sharing information and really collaborating on the proper protocol and practices necessary to address the needs of family.

MAN: How do these conversations allow me to bridge these systems that we're all part of?

JEN DIERINGER: Everybody gets together in the same room and we hash out what needs to happen so it's the safest for the families.

LAILA DAUD, MSW, PROGRAM CONSULTANT, WASHINGTON STATE CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION: Being part of this group has made me look at things from a different viewpoint.

SCOTT DUNGAN, MSW, COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICER, KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, WA: We in law enforcement were so much more focused on the batterer, but we didn't know a whole lot about survivors and their children. By having these close relationships with the team, we were able to provide more effective followup, and much better information about the effects of the violence that happened in the home on the children.

ELIZABETH BERNS: They're making a difference for not only those families coming into the courtroom, but those families that are in our community on a day-to-day basis experiencing domestic violence.

JOYCE THOMAS: Many times when we talk about victim services we focus on the individual, but in situations of domestic violence, the entire family may be in crisis. There should be flexibility to make services culturally appropriate, gender specific if necessary.

JULIE PERILLA: Doing domestic violence interventions, it's always about what makes sense for this particular family. What is going to create a better living environment for the children. For Latino families, it's impossible to think about the wellbeing of the mother alone, because the mother is going to say, "What about my children? Can I bring them? They're having problems."

JESSICA NUNAN: We originally started Caminar Latino because we realized that there were a lot of Latina women who were going through domestic violence,

but that there were no Spanish-speaking support groups at that time. The women told us that we need to work with their children to address the violence that they were witnessing, that was going on in the home.

WOMAN: Does anyone want to give a quick definition of self-esteem?

JESSICA NUNAN: A lot of the time, what we see is the kids not knowing how to handle the situation and how to deal with their feelings, and what to do if violence occurred in the house again.

JULIA PERILLA: We have structured curricula for the children.

JESSICA NUNAN: We have five age-specific groups, and we provide them a safe space where they're able to talk about what's going on at home.

CAMILAR LATINO YOUTH PARTICIPANT: When I first started coming to Caminar Latino, I was about 13. My mother and my father were having problems at home—domestic disputes, fights. Once we started coming here, I kind of started getting the hang of how to deal with it more.

MAN: She's saying, "Things would be better if there was no violence."

JESSICA NUNAN: We work with the youth at all ages because we recognize that the earlier you can get to them, the easier it's going to be to change that behavior and change it for the long term.

CAMILAR LATINO YOUTH PARTICIPANT: It's kind of a release valve coming here. If ever we have a problem, a situation, the mentors and the volunteers who come are always here to help us handle what's going on.

JESSICA NUNAN: The women were the ones who said, "It's great for us to know about domestic violence, but will you start working with the men?" Telling us that cutting the men out of their lives just wasn't realistic. The majority of the men are sent to our program by the court.

JULIE PERILLA: A lot of the men that I work with, their whole lives have been lived in a very traumatic and violent environment. All of them say, "If I had had this growing up, when I saw that happening in my home, I probably wouldn't be here right now."

JESSICA NUNAN: What we have found is that having the comprehensive family approach, where you have programming for each part of the family, seems to be an effective way to really work with the Latino community.

JOYCE THOMAS: When you are able to use different approaches, reaching out to families, observing parent-child interactions and documenting this in a structured way, you can say that these kinds of interventions can be effective.

DWAN MCDONALD, PROGRAM MANAGER, NORTHCARE, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA: In situations where there may be domestic violence or other risk factors in the home, early identification is critical, just because the sooner you can get in there and help the families, they can get linked to the appropriate resources and receive help. We reach out to those families that have domestic violence, mental health, physical disabilities, anything that would cause additional stress for the family.

JANE SILOVSKY: The home visiting program can teach the caregivers better parenting skills and raise awareness about family violence and the impact to the kids.

DWAN MCDONALD: In-home visitation is a crucial part of what we do—the provider going to the home, meeting with the family in their environment—instead of being in an office. Sometimes, the most stressful times of the day is just those regular, routine situations. We have a set curriculum, but we adapt it to that individual family. We model the behaviors and the changes that we want to see the families make. The families practice, and then we give feedback. So it's very hands-on. We talked about starting the PAT module today, or the Planned Activities Training.

SAFECARE PARTICIPANT: With this program, my life has improved tremendously. It's helped me out with my parenting skills, how to discipline my daughter. It's helped me communicate with my child and come closer to my child. You want to play? Get your Legos!

JANE SILOVSKY: Families involved in the program are less likely to be referred to child welfare in the future for child neglect or abuse. And they have lower rates of recidivism.

DWAN MCDONALD: And you follow through, which is great.

SAFECARE PARTICIPANT: Oh, yeah.

JANE SILOVSKY: When you engage families that are vulnerable and teach them skills and protective factors in the home, you're ultimately preventing family violence.

DWAN MCDONALD: You're doing such a great job of talking to her about what she's doing. It is a lot to have someone come into your home and to educate you on some of the most intimate things in your life, like parenting. Seeing where the family is at the beginning, and then helping them realize that, "Hey, I can do this," is some of the most beneficial work that we see with the families.

SAFECARE PARTICIPANT: I like that.

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