



# Living In Fear: The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

JENNIFER SAMARTANO

NORTHERN REGION PREVENTION  
SPECIALIST

[JSAMARTANO@PCAILLINOIS.ORG](mailto:JSAMARTANO@PCAILLINOIS.ORG)



**Prevent Child Abuse**  
Illinois™

# Prevent Child Abuse Illinois

- Private non-profit started in 1990
- Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America
- Primarily focus on public awareness and education
- Literature distribution program
- Annual Conference
- **APRIL** Child Abuse Prevention Month
- Healthy Families Illinois - Home Visiting

**Prevent Child Abuse  
Illinois™**



## PREVENTION TRAININGS

Prevention starts with education. All trainings are offered *at no cost* virtually or in-person and can be adapted to small or large groups. Reach out to us today to schedule your training. Together we can create and sustain #greatchildhoods for all children!

**INFANT CARE AND SAFETY**

- Shaken Baby Syndrome
- Happiest Baby on the Block
- Safe Sleep for Babies

**CHILDHOOD TRAUMA**

- Trauma 101: Understanding the Impact of Childhood Trauma
- Understanding ACES: Why the Body Doesn't Forget
- Addressing Secondary Trauma: Prioritizing Our Well Being
- Effective Engagement
- Building a Road to Resilience
- Poverty: Cycles of Risk

**SUBSTANCE USE**

- Identifying Drug Endangered Children: A Collaborative Approach
- Moving from Awareness to Action

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION**

- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Stewards of Children
- Child Abuse Prevention 101
- Childhood Neglect Basics
- Building Protective Factors
- Building a Culture of Support for Families

**OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

- Parent Cafés
- Paper Tigers
- Documentary Screening
- Resilience Documentary Screening
- Perinatal Mood Disorder Support & Prevention



CLICK HERE TO  
LEARN MORE  
ABOUT  
TRAININGS

Contact us to learn more or schedule a training:

Kristin Kaufman, Director of Programs  
Belinda Farr, Cook County  
Jennifer Samartano, Northern Region  
Abby Behrens, Central Region  
Rachel Chruszczyk, Southern Region  
Brittney Hale, Home Visiting Specialist

[kkaufman@pcallinois.org](mailto:kkaufman@pcallinois.org)  
[bfarr@pcallinois.org](mailto:bfarr@pcallinois.org)  
[jsamartano@pcallinois.org](mailto:jsamartano@pcallinois.org)  
[abehrens@pcallinois.org](mailto:abehrens@pcallinois.org)  
[rchruszczyk@pcallinois.org](mailto:rchruszczyk@pcallinois.org)  
[bhale@pcallinois.org](mailto:bhale@pcallinois.org)

[www.preventchildabuseillinois.org](http://www.preventchildabuseillinois.org)

# PCA Illinois has a podcast!



Each episode will dive into the work we do at Prevent Child Abuse Illinois through conversations with statewide experts!



We hope this podcast will help you learn about child abuse and neglect prevention and leave you feeling empowered to get involved in this cause. Whether you're looking for parenting tips, you're a professional in the field looking for resources, or just want to learn more about child abuse and neglect—we hope you'll join us!




# Objectives of Training

- Learn about the cycle and dynamics of domestic violence
- Understand dangers and risks to children
- Know warning signs of child abuse
- Recognize impact of DV on children
- Learn about childhood trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- How professionals can help



# My Background:

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- Licensed Teacher in the State of Illinois
  - Former Sexual Assault Prevention Educator for a local Rape Crisis Center
  - Former Domestic Violence Child Counselor for a Domestic Violence Center
  - Training developer for our Domestic Violence Center's Children's Program
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This subject can be hard to talk about and hard to think about. Please feel free to move around, stand up, step out, or whatever you need to do to take care of yourself.

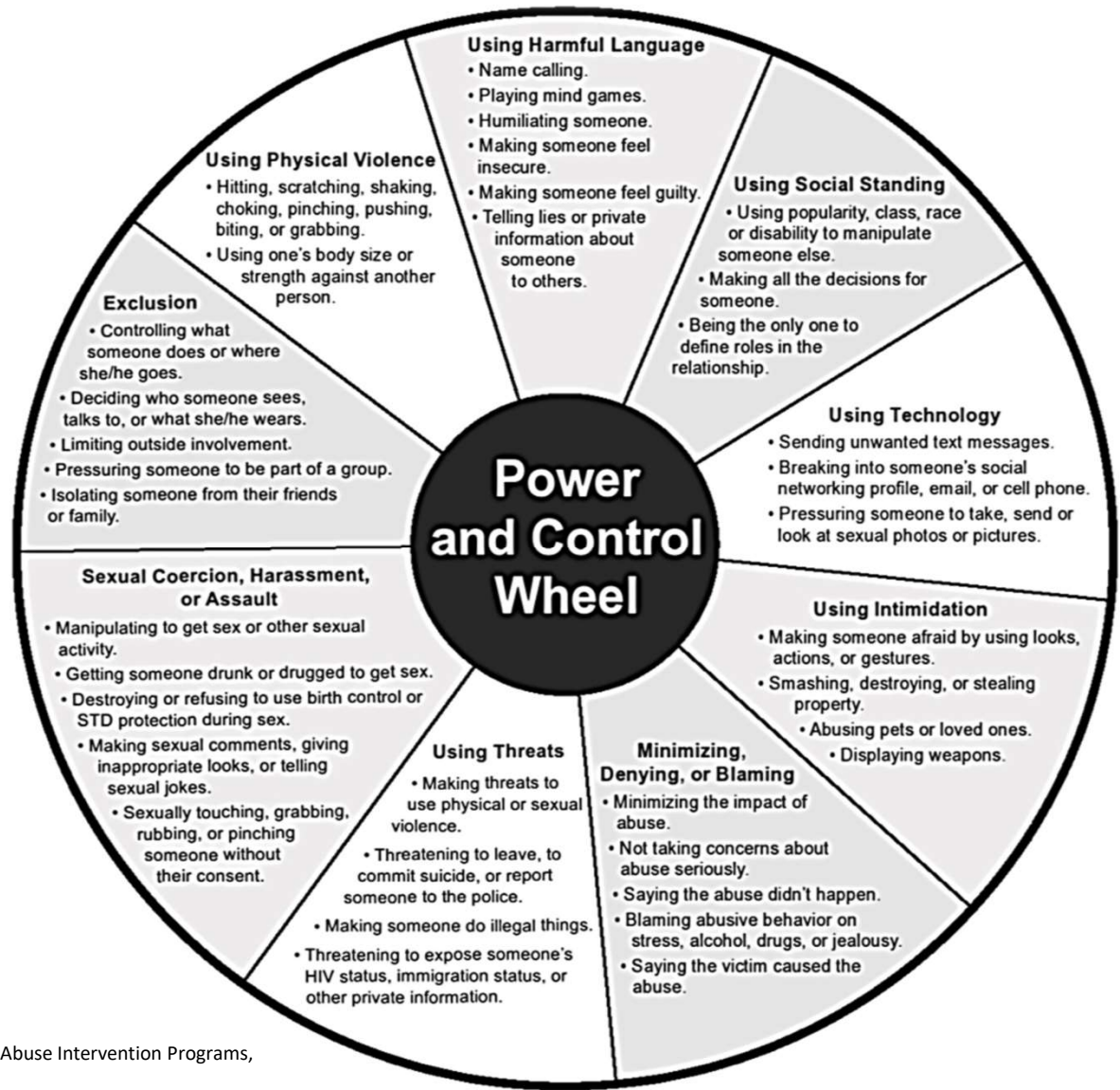


# What is Domestic Violence?

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Domestic violence is a ***pattern*** of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.

Domestic violence is about **power** and **control**. Its purpose is for the abuser to control the victim in whatever form(s) it takes.



The Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs,  
Duluth, MN



# Who Are the Perpetrators and Who Are the Victims?

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## Perpetrators

- At least 85% of domestic violence cases, women are the victims and men are the perpetrators
- 30 to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household

## Victims

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.

# Cycle of Violence



# Characteristics of Abusers

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- Witnessed abuse as a child or was abused as a child
- Low opinion of women
- Jealous and possessive
- Demanding of partner's time and attention
- May be socially charming
- Does not take responsibility for his actions
- May use drugs/alcohol
- Treats partner and children as possessions
- Undermines partner's parenting abilities and authority
- Manipulative
- Unreasonable demands
- May have a criminal history
- May be loving and kind at times

Substance use may influence the severity of the violence during a violent episode, but it **does not** cause domestic violence.

# Why Does the Victim Stay?

- She loves him
- Hope for change
- Isolation
- Lack of resources
- Fears no one will believe her
- Afraid of losing custody of children
- She has tried before
- Abuser has threatened to kill her and/or the children if she leaves
- No support system in place





On average, it takes  
a victim 7 attempts  
of leaving before  
she leaves the  
abuser  
permanently

Leaving is a process  
for the victim, not  
an event

Largest Predictor of  
Victim Leaving:  
Economic  
Resources

<https://www.breakthesilencedv.org/beat-that-seven-times-statistic/>

# #WhyIStayed

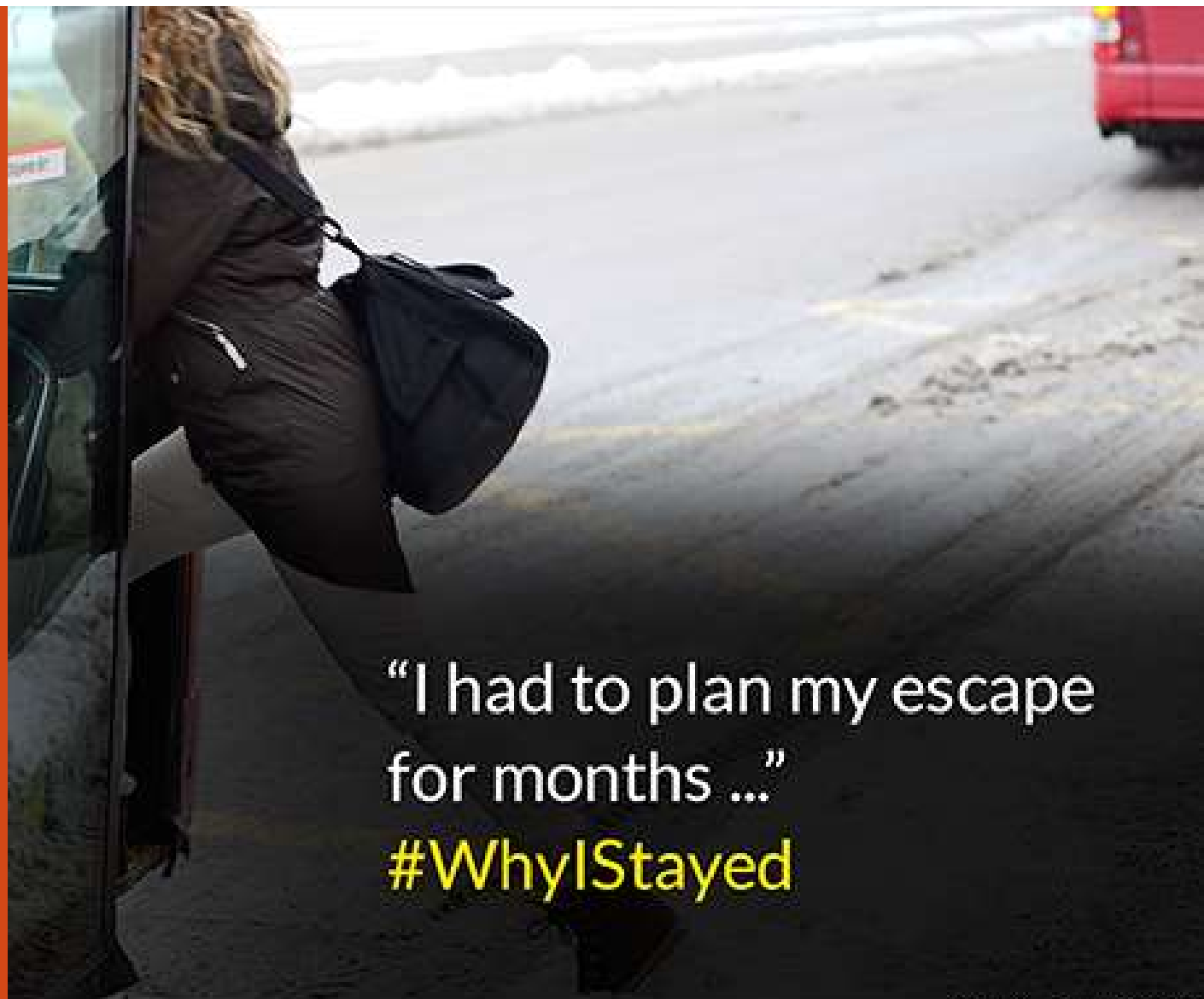


Violence against women and children may escalate at the time of separation.

Women are most likely to be killed when attempting to leave the abuser or after they have left.

Up to 75% of domestic assaults reported to police are made after separation.

<https://www.thehotline.org/resources/statistics/>



“I had to plan my escape  
for months ...”  
**#WhyIStayed**

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

# Domestic Violence: A Link to Mass Killing

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- **68% of mass shooters** between 2014 and 2019 either killed family/intimate partners or had a history of domestic violence.
- Mass killings by family members occur **every 3.5 weeks**, often within homes.
- There is a term for men who abuse and then kill their family: **Family Annihilators**
- **Robb Elementary Shooter** grew up in a home with domestic violence
- **Pulse Nightclub Shooter** abused his ex-wife
- **The Sutherland Springs Shooter** had been court-martialed for assaulting his wife and stepson.
- Police reports document that the **Highland Park Shooter** had made threats to harm his family

# Children and Domestic Violence

- Witnessing violence between parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behaviours from one generation to the next.
- Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.
- Those who grow up with domestic violence are 6 times more likely to commit suicide and 50% more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol







# Children and Domestic Violence

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- The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect suggests that **domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect.**
- 30 to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household.
- A child witnessed violence in 22% (nearly 1 in 4) of intimate partner violence cases filed in state courts
- There is a common link between domestic violence and child abuse. Among victims of child abuse, 40% report domestic violence in the home



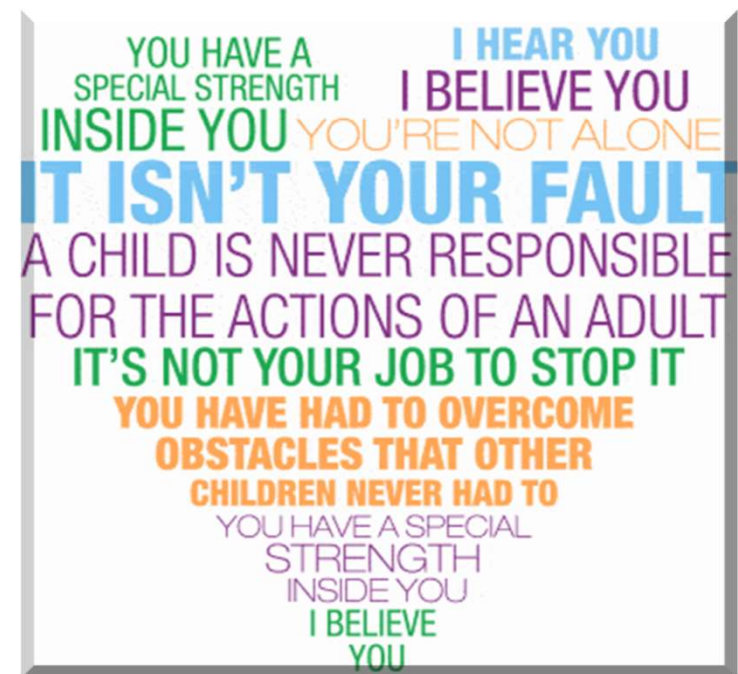
# Effects on Children

- Feelings of guilt and shame
- Feeling responsible for abuse
- Violence may become a coping mechanism
- May keep secrets → lying becomes a learned behavior
- Self-abusive behaviors
- Sleeping pattern changes
- Frequent illnesses or health problems (somatic responses)
- Isolation
- Taking on parenting roles
- Depression and anxiety

# Physical Dangers to Children

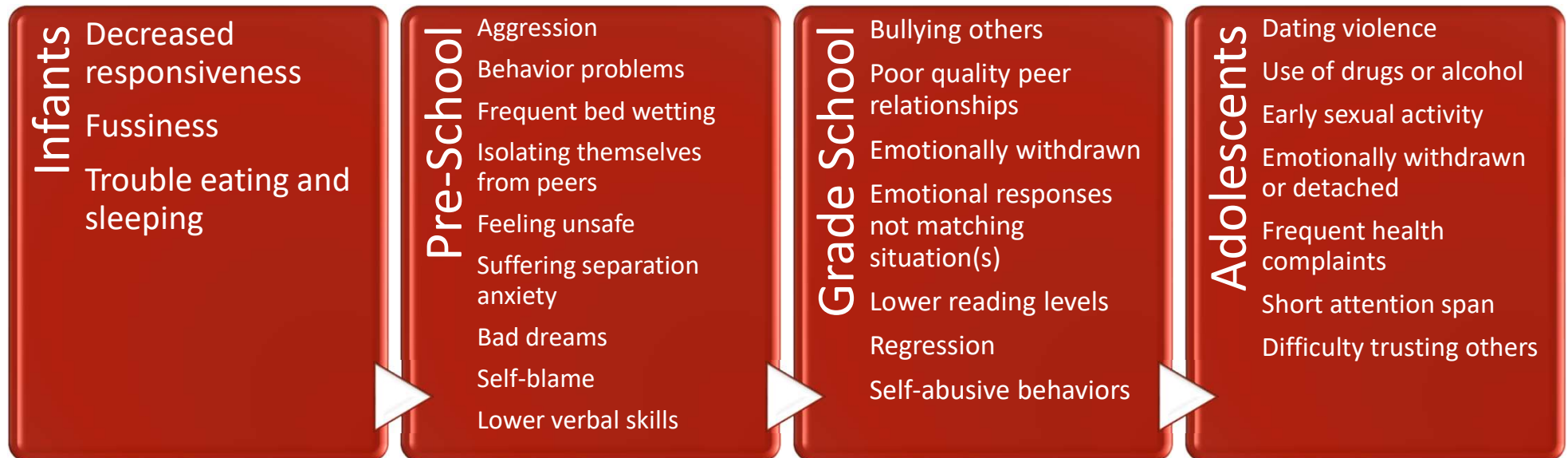
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- Injury
  - Intentional
  - Accidental
  - Manipulation tactic
- Abuser's who threaten suicide rarely die alone, will kill someone else before killing themselves, including children

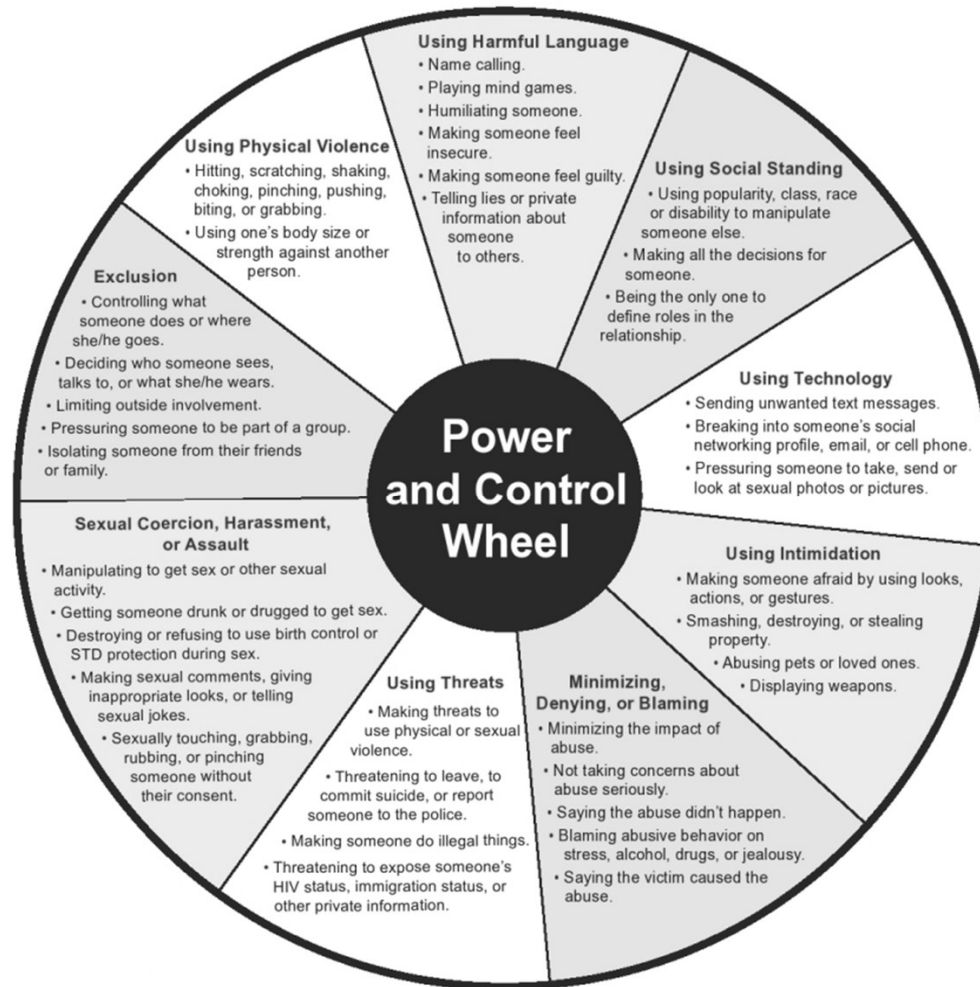


# Warning Signs of Abuse in Children

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# Pets & Domestic Violence

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Survivors may stay with an abusive partner **up to two years longer** because they won't leave their pets behind for fear of their pet being harmed.

Nearly half of victims stay with an abuser rather than leave their pet behind.

52% of survivors in shelters leave their pets with the abusers.

**48 percent to 71 percent** of abuse survivors have pets that also have been abused or killed by the woman's partner.

As many as 25% of survivors will return because the abuser is using their pet as a means to get the person back.

Animal abuse is a form of family violence, also a child welfare issue.

Animal Abuse is an Adverse Childhood Experience.



Think about the relationship between children and their pets...

Pets are a crucial part of the family as well as a source of emotional support and healing for many survivors, both during and after their escape.

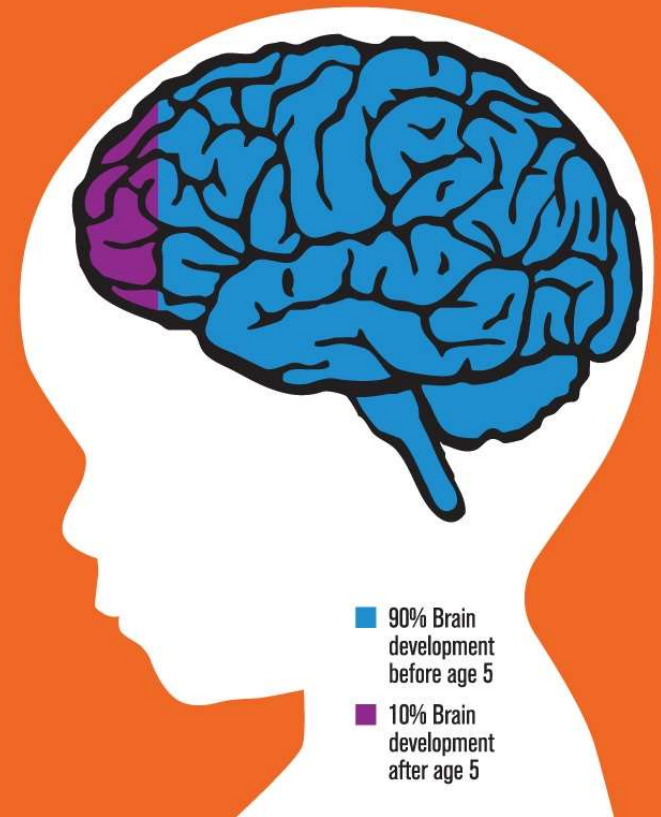


# Childhood Trauma

- By age 3, the brain has reached 90% of its adult size
- Experiences of childhood define the adult
- Children reflect the world in which they are raised

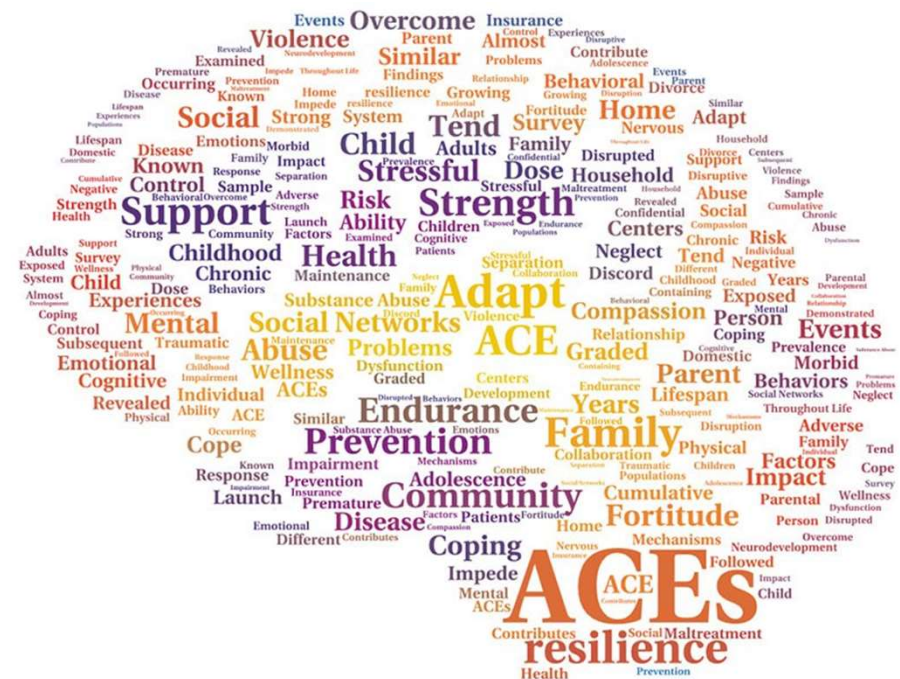
**90%**  
**of a child's brain  
development  
happens  
before age 5**

Source: Harvard Center for the Developing Child



# Trauma is Unique

- No uniform response to living with domestic violence
- Children's responses vary greatly
- Children within the same family can be affected differently
- Each child's experiences and reactions are unique





# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

## Adverse Childhood Experiences

Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing



People with 6+ ACEs can die

**20 yrs**

earlier than those who have none

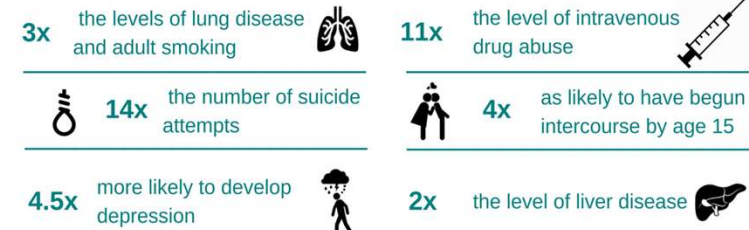


1/8 of the population have more than 4 ACEs



[www.70-30.org.uk](http://www.70-30.org.uk)  
@7030Campaign

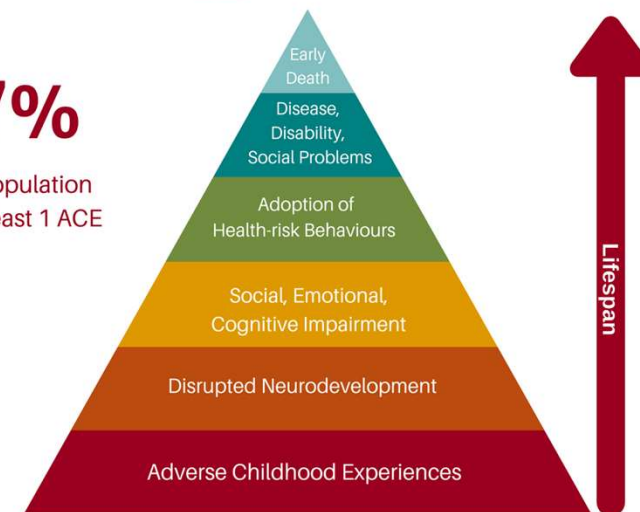
## 4 or more ACEs



“Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today”

Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**67%**  
of the population have at least 1 ACE





Did a parent, step-parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?	YES or NO	Was your parent, step-parent or another adult who was helping to raise you: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at them? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?	YES or NO
Did a parent, step-parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?	YES or NO	Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?	YES or NO
Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal or vaginal intercourse with you?	YES or NO	Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?	YES or NO
Did you often or very often feel that... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?	YES or NO	Did a household member go to prison?	YES or NO
Did you often or very often feel that... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?	YES or NO	Did you often, very often or sometimes feel that you were treated badly or unfairly because of your race or ethnicity?	YES or NO
Were your parents ever separated or divorced?	YES or NO	Did you see or hear someone being beaten up, stabbed, or shot in real life multiple times?	YES or NO
		Did you feel unsafe in your neighborhood some, most, or all of the time?	YES or NO
		Were you bullied by a peer or classmate all of the time or most of the time?	YES or NO
		Were you ever in foster care?	YES or NO

The Philadelphia ACE Survey is used with permission from the Health Federation of Philadelphia and Philadelphia ACE Research and Data Committee. <http://healthfederation.org/ACEs>

Note: The Philadelphia ACE Survey responses were collected using a scale rather than simply yes or no answers. We have simplified this for our purposes to yes or no responses.

# ACEs increase likelihood of:

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- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence
- Poor academic achievement



# What Children Need to Know

- They are not to blame for the violence
- It's ok to feel angry, but not ok to hit
- Learn alternatives to violent behavior
- They are not alone and other families sometimes have the same problems
- Help is available to keep them safe



# What CAN Victims Do?

- Make plans to leave
- Talk to family or friends
- Develop a Safety Plan
- DV shelter
- Police
- Order of Protection
- Counseling

FREE. 24/7. CONFIDENTIAL  
NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**HOTLINE**

1 (800) 799-7233



**the network**

**ILLINOIS DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE HOTLINE**

1-877-863-6338

# Mandated Reporting

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- Provide details (name of child/parents/guardians, birthdate, siblings, etc.)
- Identify if mandated reporter
- Describe specific event
- Laws protect confidentiality of mandated reporters



**If you suspect, call!**

**1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)**

**OR**

**<https://dcfsonlinereporting.dcf illinois.gov/>**

**(not to be used in the case of an emergency)**

# How Professionals can Help

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- Knowledge is power
- Coordinated planning
- Seek out trainings
- Encourage victim to contact local DV shelter or programs
- Always hold the abuser accountable

Learn about and admire the countless efforts that abused women make to protect their children from exposure to abuse, rather than assuming that mothers don't care or aren't trying, which is rarely the case.

"When Dad Hurts Mom," Lundy Bancroft, 2004



# How Professionals can Help

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- Refer the abuser to a Batterer's Intervention Program, **not** anger management
- **Do not** recommend an abuser and the victim participate in couples counselling:
  - It jeopardizes the woman's safety
  - It is not an effective therapeutic approach when dealing with domestic violence issues
  - Tends to be victim-blaming
  - It assumes that both parties are responsible for the violence



# Resources

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- ❖ National Domestic Violence Hotline - [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)
- ❖ The National Sexual Assault Hotline – [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)
- ❖ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence – [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)
- ❖ Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence – [www.ilcadv.org](http://www.ilcadv.org)
- ❖ National Child Abuse Hotline – [www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)



# Further Reading:

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- **Why Does He Do That?**- Lundy Bancroft
- **Surviving: Why We Stay and How We Leave Abusive Relationships**- Beverly Gooden
- **Transgender Intimate Partner Violence: A Comprehensive Introduction**- Adam Messinger & Xavier Guadalupe-Diaz
- **LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence: Lessons for Policy, Practice, and Research**- Adam M. Messinger
- **If He's So Great Why Do I Feel So Bad?: Recognizing and Overcoming Subtle Abuse**- Avery Neal
- **See What You Made Me Do: The Dangers of Domestic Violence That We Ignore, Explain Away, or Refuse to See**- Michelle Stevens
- **No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us**- by Rachel Louise Snyder
- **But He Says He Loves Me**- Dina L. McMillan
- **M.E.A.N Workbook**- Paul Colaianni – Love and Abuse Podcast

# Questions and Discussions

Thank you for attending!  
Please take our survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GC9NS88>

Jennifer Samartano, MS  
Northern Region Prevention Specialist  
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois  
jsamartano@pcaillinois.org

