

The Boogey Man: Not Always A Child's Imagination

Monica Bryant,
Family Violence Prevention Coordinator
Marion County Children's Alliance





Marion County Children's Alliance

Mission:

To improve the lives of Marion County Children

Our Workgroups



For more information, go to
www.mcchildrensalliance.org

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

Stop the Hurting

OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ Definitions
- ❖ Statistics
- ❖ Child Abuse and Neglect Categories
- ❖ Indicators of Abuse
- ❖ Your Role and Responsibilities
- ❖ Effects of Abuse
- ❖ Helping Children with Recovery
- ❖ Mandatory Reporters
- ❖ How to Make a Report



Stop the Hurting

Domestic Violence in Marion County

Statistics:

- **1 in 3** teen relationships will be violent
- **1 out of every 4** women is, has been or will be abused in her lifetime
- **1 in 7** men in the United States has experienced domestic violence by their partner in their lifetime
- **60%** of children who grow up in abusive homes are more likely to repeat the behavior becoming the abuser or the victim

Domestic Violence Reported Cases

Ocala Police Department

2020: 914 domestic violence cases and 200 dating violence cases (Total 1,114)

Marion County Sheriff's Office

2020: 2,818 domestic violence cases

Domestic Violence Homicides:

2018 – 2021: 31 Domestic Violence Homicides



Stop the Hurting

Florida Statue 39: Proceedings Related to Children

- ❑ Provides for the care, safety and protection of children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.
- ❑ Ensures secure and safe custody
- ❑ Promotes the health and well-being of all children under the state's care
- ❑ Prevents the occurrence of child abuse, neglect and abandonment.



Stop the Hurting

National Child Abuse Statistics

- Every **10** seconds a child abuse report is made.
- **1** in **4** children will be victims of child abuse and neglect by age 18.
- **1** in **4** girls and **1** in **6** boys will be victims of sexual abuse by the age of 18.
- **4** children die every day in America as a result of child abuse.



Stop the Hurting

Local Impact:

DCF Central Region – Marion County

Investigations received in 2020 as of March 1, 2021

19 maltreatments (categories of abuse and neglect)
tracked = **4,066** investigations

No indicators: Means that there was little to no evidence or observable behaviors to indicate that the maltreatment was occurring in the home.

Not Substantiated: Means that we have information that something happened, but we don't have a substantial amount of evidence or information to support that what was alleged occurred.

Verified: Means that over half of the information we have collected shows that what was alleged actually happened and we have the evidence to support it.

** numbers do not add up to the number of investigations because sometimes there are more than one maltreatment to an investigation or there are investigations that come with the same allegations that results in a duplicate case or some cases fall under non-jurisdiction i.e a child over 18, non-caregivers, federal property, etc.*

Stop the Hurting

Top 3 Reported Maltreatments in Marion County

Substance Misuse:

includes alcohol, illicit and prescription drugs and substance exposed newborns

Findings: 1,390 or 22.7%

No indicators **419**;

Not substantiated **733**

Verified **234**



Stop the Hurting

Top 3 Reported Maltreatments in Marion County

Household Violence

includes intimate partner violence (domestic violence) and family violence that threatens child

Findings: 1,278 or 20.8%

No indicators: **336**

Not substantiated: **792**

Verified: **146**



Stop the Hurting

Top 3 Reported Maltreatments in Marion County

Physical Injury

Findings: 923 or 15.0%

No indicators **592**

Not substantiated **289**

Verified **37**



Stop the Hurting

“Abuse”

means any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual abuse, injury, or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child’s physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired.

Abuse of a child includes acts or omissions.

***Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child. But, it does have detrimental effects on the intellectual development of the child. Exposing the child to corporal punishment have been linked with changes in the brain structure and the child's performance at school.*

Source: DCF



Stop the Hurting

“Corporate Punishment”



Although corporate punishment does have detrimental effects on the intellectual development of the child. Exposing the child to corporal punishment have been linked with changes in the brain structure and the child's performance at school.

Stop the Hurting

INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- Unexplained bruises, broken bones, burns, bites, black eyes, etc.
- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation of their injury (and by parents too)
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence of school
- Repeated patterns of injuries
- Behavior indicators such as extreme aggression or withdrawal
- Seems frightened of the parents or afraid to go home
- **Poverty is not abuse or neglect.**



Stop the Hurting

INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Shaming, humiliating, name-calling
- Terrorizing, threatening, isolating, or confining
- Ignoring or denying emotional responsiveness
- Delayed in Physical or Emotional development
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Permitted drug or alcohol abuse
- Parents – Constantly blames or berates the child.
Is unconcerned for the child or refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems. Overly rejects the child.



Stop the Hurting

INDICATORS OF SEX ABUSE

- Advanced sexual knowledge or behaviors. Sexual acting out/sexual harassment
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Sudden change in appetite
- Runs away
- Sexually explicit drawings or writings
- Regression after being potty trained
- Parents – Overly protective of the child, limits the child's contact with other children. Seems secretive and isolated. Is jealous or controlling with family members.



Stop the Hurting

“Neglect”

occurs when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of:

-- necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment

-- or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired.



Stop the Hurting

INDICATORS OF NEGLECT:

- Torn, dirty clothing, clothing unsuitable for the weather
- Frequently absent from school
- Untreated injuries, illnesses, ailments, or psychological conditions
- Unkempt or not bathing frequently
- Hoarding food or eating excessively in one sitting
- Inadequate supervision: states no one is at home to provide care.
- Lacks needed medical and/or dental care
- Parents seem apathetic or depressed, suspected of abusing alcohol or drugs.



Stop the Hurting

“Abandoned or Abandonment”

a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child or, in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the caregiver, while being able, has made no significant contribution to the child’s care and maintenance or has failed to establish or maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the child, or both.



Stop the Hurting

Victims of Child Abuse and/or Neglect have an increased risk of:

- Alcoholism and Drug Use
- Domestic Violence and Criminal behavior
- Depression, anxiety, anger
- Suicide attempts
- Dropping out of school or having learning disabilities
- Teen Pregnancy
- Health problems including heart and liver disease.
- Lack of trust and relationship difficulties
- Core feelings of being “worthless” or “damaged”

Children with foster care history are:

4 times more likely to receive food stamps

17 times more likely to be homeless

3 times more likely to be in prison or on parole



Stop the Hurting

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

RECOGNIZE:

-- It's important to recognize the signs and indicators of abuse

REACH OUT:

-- Do's and Don'ts if you suspect a child is being abused or neglected.

REMEMBER:

-- Important things to keep in mind if you suspect a child is being abused and neglected.

REPORT

-- Know how to report child abuse or neglect in Florida.



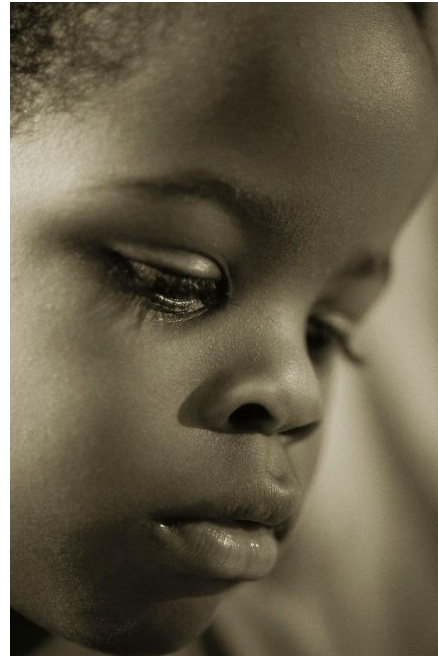
Stop the Hurting



A child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behaviors from one generation to the next.

Stop the Hurting

Children exposed to domestic violence may have many signs of the abuse



Remember each child is an individual, so their reactions to violence may be different



Stop the Hurting

0 - 2 years old

- Poor health
- Excessive screaming
- Poor sleeping habits
- Loss of appetite
- Slowly progress in exploratory behaviors
- Separation and attachment disorders



Stop the Hurting

2 to 6 years old

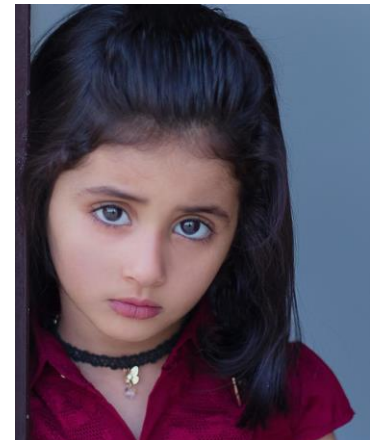
- Self blame
- Social isolation
- Lack of confidence
- Lower cognitive development
- Delays in verbal development and or motor abilities
- Stomach aches, nightmares, fearfulness



Stop the Hurting

7 to 12 years old

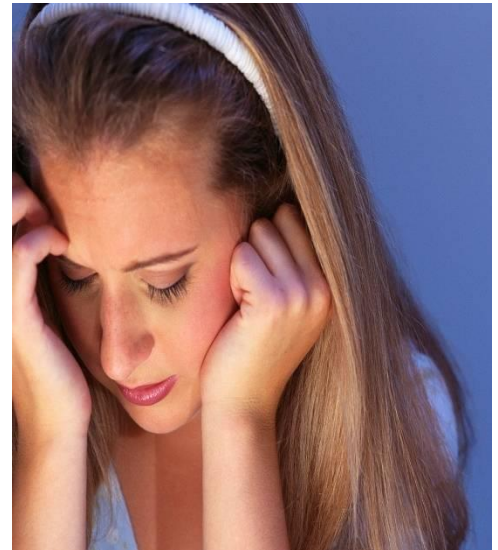
- Sleep disorders
- Headaches, diarrhea, enuresis, and ulcers
- Poor school performance, truancy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fighting, rebellious, uncooperative
- Depressed
- Sex roles begin to develop



Stop the Hurting

13 to 18 years old

- Poor grades
- Low self-esteem
- Negative coping skills
- Hostility, Violent Outbursts of Anger
- Violent Delinquent Behavior
- May become abusers and or victims



Stop the Hurting

How to approach a child you may be concerned about

- **STEP 1: FIND A QUIET ENVIRONMENT**
Provide the child with a quiet, safe environment where they can talk freely.
- **STEP 2: ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**
Ask limited, open-ended questions.
- **STEP 3: OFFER SUPPORT**
Support, believe, and reassure the child.
- **STEP 4: WRITE IT DOWN**
Write down the child's exact words when the conversation is over.
- **STEP 5: SEEK GUIDANCE**
Seek help and guidance from other professionals.
- **STEP 6: REPORT**
Report any suspicions of abuse and neglect.



Stop the Hurting

DON'T:

- Make assumptions or promises to the child.
- React with shock or other strong emotions.
- Put words in the child's mouth.
- Show a sense of judgment about or towards the abuser

REMEMBER:

- You're not the investigator.
- When you report abuse, you're not making an allegation. You're requesting a professional investigation be done.
- It's not your job to determine safety decisions.
- You do not have to prove abuse is occurring. But if you have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused, abandoned, or neglected, you must report it.



Stop the Hurting

HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD RECOVER AFTER WITNESSING OR EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

You can help children by:

- ❑ **Helping them feel safe.** Children who witness or experience domestic violence need to feel safe. Consider whether leaving the abusive relationship might help your child feel safer.
- ❑ **Talking to them about their fears.** Let them know that it's not their fault or your fault.
- ❑ **Talking to them about healthy relationships.** Help them learn from the abusive experience by talking about what healthy relationships are and are not. This will help them know what is healthy when they start romantic relationships of their own.
- ❑ **Talking to them about boundaries.** Let your child know that no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable, including family members, teachers, coaches, or other authority figures. Also, explain to your child that he or she doesn't have the right to touch another person's body, and if someone tells them to stop, they should do so right away.
- ❑ **Helping them find a reliable support system.** In addition to a parent, a school counselor, a therapist, or another trusted adult can also provide ongoing support. *School counselors are required to report domestic violence or abuse if they suspect it.*
- ❑ **Getting them professional help.** Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of talk therapy or counseling that may work best for children who have experienced violence or abuse. CBT is especially helpful for children who have anxiety or other mental health problems as a result of the trauma. During CBT, a therapist will work with your child to turn negative thoughts into more positive ones. The therapist can also help your child learn healthy ways to cope with stress.



Stop the Hurting



CAN CHILDREN RECOVER FROM WITNESSING OR EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR ABUSE?

Each child responds differently to abuse and trauma. Some children are more resilient, and some are more sensitive. How successful a child is at recovering from abuse or trauma depends on several things, including having:

- A good support system or good relationships with trusted adults
- High self-esteem
- Healthy friendships

Although children will probably never forget what they saw or experienced during the abuse, they can learn healthy ways to deal with their emotions and memories as they mature. The sooner a child gets help, the better his or her chances for becoming a mentally and physically healthy adult.

Stop the Hurting

MANDATORY REPORTERS

Everyone must report abuse in Florida. It is no longer limited to teachers, law enforcement and health care professionals.

April 2012, Governor Scott signed Florida House Bill 1355 making all citizens of Florida mandatory reporters.

Individuals who fail to report suspected child abuse, abandonment or neglect, commit a third degree felony, which is punishable as provided in Florida Statutes 775.082, 775.083 and/or 775.084.



Stop the Hurting

If a child discloses alleged abuse to YOU...



YOU

are the mandated reporter!



Stop the Hurting

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

The Florida Abuse Hotline accepts reports 24 hours a day/7 days a week of known or suspected child abuse, neglect or abandonment and reports of known or suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.



1 (800) 962-2483

1 (800) 96-ABUSE

TDD 1 (800) 453-5145



www.reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us

Stop the Hurting

INFORMATION NEEDED WHEN MAKING A CALL

- Child's Name and address (home and school)
- Name and age of parents/caregivers and siblings
- Name of person alleged to have abused student
- What happened to the child (What the child reported)
- Description of injuries, harm or threat
- Who else is aware of the alleged abuse (names, contact info)
- Description of Child functioning (Documented disabilities, ESE, etc.)
- Description of Adult Functioning

***Remember, make the abuse report even if you DO NOT have all the information.**



Sources:

Department of Children and Families
Kimberly's Center for Child Protection
Prevent Child Abuse America
Family Violence Prevention Fund
Office of Women's Health



Questions?

Contact Information

Monica Bryant (352) 438-5993

Monica@breakthesilenceonviolence.org

