

The Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project: A Call to Action



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A Call to Action

Objectives

2015 Annual Report

Content

Findings

Recommendations

Resources

Fatality Review Project

Collaboration between GCFV and GCADV since
2004

To closely examine domestic violence fatalities in
an effort to prevent future fatalities

12 years of findings and recommendations

Visit www.georgiafatalityreview.com for more
information

Domestic Violence in Georgia

- 141 domestic violence-related deaths in 2015
- Killed during the course of a domestic violence incident
- victims, new partners, bystanders, children and perpetrators (suicide or law enforcement intervention)
- Media monitoring
- Undercount

Are DV Deaths Increasing?

Data collection has improved

26 murder-suicides resulting in 61 deaths

- 27% of all DV-related incidents that resulted in a death

6 incidents where 3-5 people died for a total of 24 deaths (including perpetrators)

- 3 considered familicides

Trisha's Story

Impact of Exposure

As many as 7 million children are exposed to domestic violence in the United States.

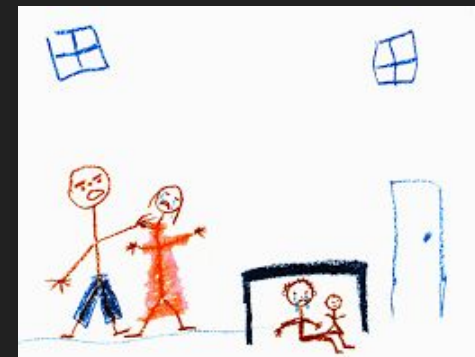
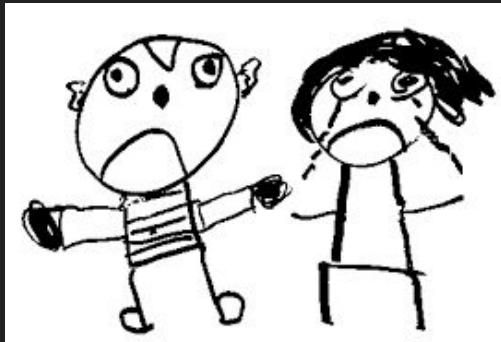
- In Georgia, 62,000 children were on the scene of family violence calls between 2010-2014.**
- Many more children exposed in incidents not reported to law enforcement.**

Breadth of DV Exposure

Exposure includes

- seeing and hearing the abuse as well as seeing injuries on their parents
- being used as a means of threatening, intimidating, and controlling the other parent
- being involved in domestic violence incidents and injured (accidentally or intentionally)

Often a recurring and frightening experience



Symptoms of DV Exposure

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

YOUNG CHILDREN	SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN	ADOLESCENTS
Age Birth to 5	Age 6 to 11	Age 12 to 18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep and/or eating disruptions • Withdrawal/lack of responsiveness • Intense/pronounced separation anxiety • Inconsolable crying • Developmental regression, loss of acquired skills • Intense anxiety, worries, and/or new fears • Increased aggression and/or impulsive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nightmares, sleep disruptions • Aggression and difficulty with peer relationships in school • Difficulty with concentration and task completion in school • Withdrawal and/or emotional numbing • School avoidance and/or truancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antisocial behavior • School failure • Impulsive and/or reckless behavior, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + School truancy + Substance abuse + Running away + Involvement in violent or abusive dating relationships • Depression • Anxiety • Withdrawal

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Ages and Developmental Stages: Symptoms of Exposure. Retrieved from <http://www.nctsn.org/content/ages-and-developmental-stages-symptoms-exposure>

Trauma and DV Exposure

- Some children will experience trauma from exposure
- Varies based on
 - child's age, development level and temperament
 - severity of violence, proximity to violent events, responses of caregivers, and child's internal and external resources



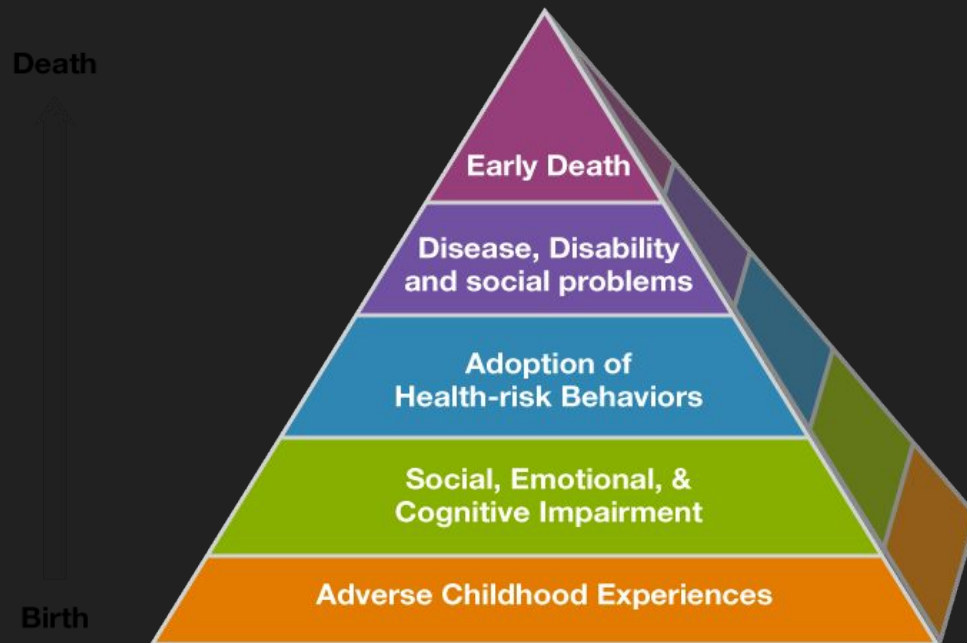
From a Child's Perspective



ACES Study

One of the largest investigations to examine the links between traumatic childhood experiences (adverse childhood experiences) and long-term health, wellbeing and social consequences.

Over 17,000 adults ages 19-60 receiving care at Kaiser Permanente



ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse

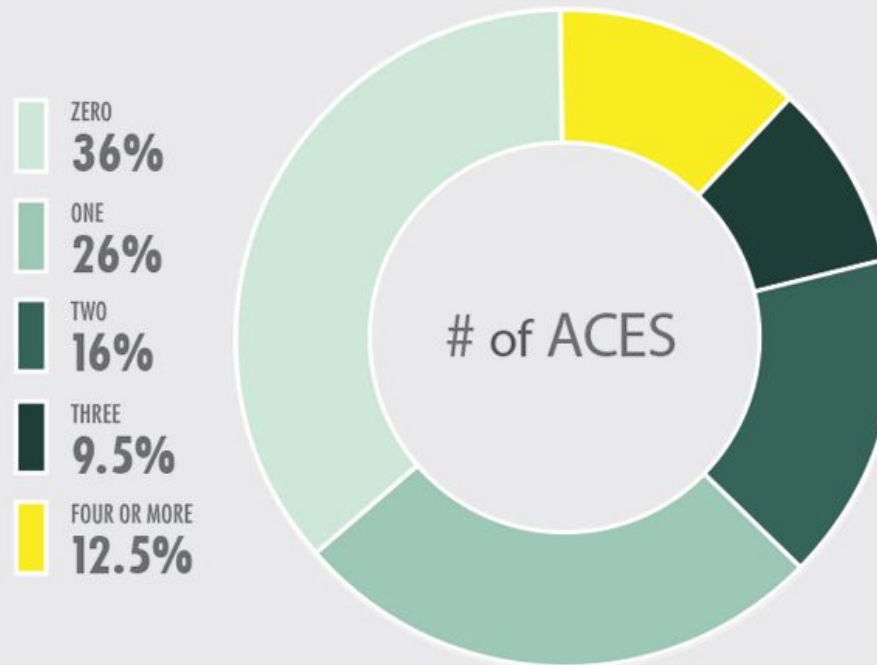


Divorce

ACES are common!

How Common are ACES?

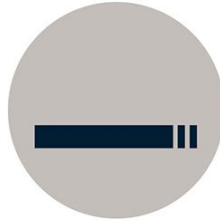
ACE Study



BEHAVIOR



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



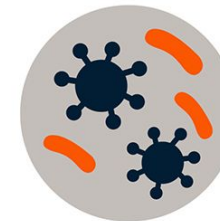
Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



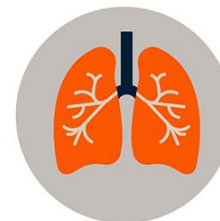
Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD



Broken bones

Best Practices with ACES

- **How does this apply to our work?**
 - **Children who are experiencing ACES**
 - **Adults (parents) who are raising children**
 - **Practitioners (us!) who are working with children and their parents or caregivers**
- **Normalize trauma and focus on knowledge, tools, and support available**
- **Connected Parents, Connected Kids**

There's an app for that...



Risks of Exposure

- **When compared with boys who have never witnessed DV, boys who have are:**
 - **4 times more likely to abuse in dating relationships**
 - **25 times more likely to commit rape as an adult**
 - **6 times more likely to commit suicide**
 - **1000 times more likely to commit violent acts against an adult partner or their own children as adults**

Risks of Exposure

Girls from abusive homes are 6.5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted and are more likely to become pregnant as teens

33% of girls who witness domestic violence while growing up will become victims of domestic violence themselves as an adult

80% of runaways come from home with domestic violence

Fatality Review Findings

50% of victims began their relationship with the person who eventually killed them when they were between the ages of 13-24.

40% of victims were between the ages of 35-44 when they were killed.

Longstanding relationships, often involving young marriages and pregnancies.

Impact of DV Homicides

- **Nationally, as many as 2,000-3,000 children lose a parent every year as the result of domestic violence.**
- **Many lose both parents at once - one to homicide, another to suicide or incarceration**
- **Many are on the scene or witness the homicide**
- **The lasting impact is immeasurable - but surviving families have revealed their struggles**

Fatality Review Findings

134 children lost their parent or caregiver.

30% of children witnessed the homicide of their parent or caregiver.

Other children found their parent deceased.

Many more witnessed violence in their homes prior to the homicide.

Impact on Families

- **Helplessness, Guilt and Grief**
 - Emotional impact affects their job, home, school, and family relationships
 - Negative impact on health, faith, and values
- **Frustration with Systems' Response**
 - Both prior to and after the homicide
 - Trial is hard for families and friends
 - Appeals and parole process, continues contact from prison
- **Economic Hardship and Parenting**
 - Funeral and crime scene clean-up
 - Parents or siblings take custody of victim's children
 - Challenges of raising children exposed to domestic violence

Impact on Children

- **Notifying Children of their Parent's Death**
A conversation for which most people are unprepared
- **Talking with Children about the Homicide**
Child's age and development will impact their understanding
Sibling groups may be at different stages
- **Identity Conflicts**
A victim-survivor and the child of a murderer
May be asked to testify

Impact on Children

- **Custody Arrangements**
Connections to both their extended families
- **Ongoing Support and Counseling**
As children get older, they continue to go through many stages of grief and have varying levels of trauma
Families may not be ready for services just after a homicide, follow up may be necessary, especially in murder-suicides

“The five-year-old grandson (who was 11 months old at the time of the homicide) does not remember his mother and father from before the murder. He has developed a relationship with his father through phone calls and visits to the prison. [The] 7-year-old granddaughter (3 years old at the time) believes that another man killed her mother, not her father. [The] 9-year-old grandson (5 years old at the time), unlike his siblings, refuses to visit his mother’s grave or visit his father in prison. In contrast, [the] 10-year-old grandson (6 years old at the time) is angry that his father is in prison and believes that he should not have been sentenced to prison.”

Marilyn Armour

Murder-Suicide

The homicide-suicide connection has been a key finding of our project for a long time

- 35% of perpetrators committed or attempted suicide after the homicide
- 36% were known to have either threatened or attempted suicide prior to the homicide

Annually, between 20-30 murder-suicides occur in Georgia, 4-9 additional attempted murder-suicides

- In 2015, 26 murder-suicides resulting in 61 deaths
 - 44% of all DV-related deaths, 27% of all DV-related incidents that resulted in a death

Familicide

The deliberate killing, within a relatively short period of time, of a current or former spouse or intimate partner and one or more of their children, which is often (but not always) followed by the suicide of the perpetrator

Neil Websdale

Familicide

- **Between 2010-2015**
 - 17 incidents of familicide
 - 52 deaths
 - Men perpetrated all of these incidents
 - Almost all occurred in the home
 - Children ranged from 6 months to 24 years old
 - Firearms were involved in 82%, responsible for 41 deaths
 - 9 perpetrators committed suicide
 - At least 3 children survived injuries sustained from the event

Resiliency

- Children exposed to DV are resilient - but need outside support and inner strengths to build their skills and resiliency, page 13



PROMISING FUTURES

PROMOTING RESILIENCY

among children and youth experiencing domestic violence

Almost 30 million American children will be exposed to family violence by the time they are 17 years old.^[2] Kids who are exposed to violence are affected in different ways and not all are traumatized or permanently harmed. Protective factors can promote resiliency, help children and youth heal, and support prevention efforts.

Research indicates that the #1 protective factor in helping children heal from the experience is the presence of a consistent, supportive, and loving adult—most often their mother.^[1]

PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT PROMOTE RESILIENCY

INDIVIDUAL

Temperament

Individual temperament or sense of humor



Understanding

Ability to make sense of their experiences

Relationships

Ability to form relationships with peers



Expression

Opportunities to express feelings through words, music, etc.



Mastery

Opportunities to experience mastery



Conflict Resolution

Development of conflict resolution & relaxation techniques



Culture

Strong cultural identity

FAMILY

Role Models

Adults who role model healthy relationships



Health

Healthy caregivers



Networks

Relationships with extended family members and others



Supportive Relationships

Positive child-caregiver relationships



Stability

Stable living environment

COMMUNITY



Access to Services

Basic needs, advocacy, health



School

Positive school climate and supports



Mentors

Role models & mentors, i.e. coach, faith leader



Neighborhood Cohesion

Safe & connected communities



Get started at www.PromisingFuturesWithoutViolence.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

National Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 77054

Promising Futures: Best Practices for Serving Children, Youth & Parents is a project of Futures Without Violence

FUTURES
WITHOUT VIOLENCE™

Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund

10 best phrases to teach resilience to your kids

1



Goal
Humour

Phrase
"Come on, laugh it off"

2



Goal
Contain thinking,
perfectionism and anxiety

Phrase
"Don't let this spoil everything"

3



Goal
Distraction

Phrase
"Let's take a break"

4



Goal
Handling worry and asking for help

Phrase
"Who have you spoken
to about this?"



Goal
Offering hope

Phrase
"I know it looks bad now but
you will get through this"

6



Goal
Positive reframing

Phrase
"What can you learn from this so
it doesn't happen next time?"

7



Goal
Acceptance

Phrase
"Don't worry – relax
and see what happens!"

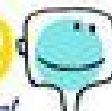
8



Goal
Perspective

Phrase
"This isn't the end
of the world"

9



Goal
Flexible thinking

Phrase
"You could be right. But have you
thought about ..."

10



Goal
Taking action

Phrase
"What can we do
about this?"

Recommendations, page 30

Resources, page 14 and 23

Statewide Resources

Implementation Initiatives & Toolkits

-law enforcement

-faith community

-workplace

www.georgiafatalityreview.com

Thank you!

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