

March Newsletter

But Kids are Resilient, Right?

Special Dates

- **March 2** -
3:45 pm
Volunteer meeting—
virtual
- **March 29** -
Strasburg
Pinwheel
Garden
- **March 30** -
Woodstock
Pinwheel
Garden
- **March 31** -
New Market
Pinwheel
Garden
- **May 15** -
Fashion Show
2-4 pm

Current Needs

- Gas cards
- Paper bowls
- Shampoo/
conditioner
sets
- Twin
blankets/
bedspreads



It seems that we read a lot about how domestic violence impacts adults—the causes, the different types of abuse, the aftereffects, etc. But a topic that is just as important, but more difficult to discuss, is how DV affects children. We know that 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence yearly, which means that approximately 15 million children live in families where IPV occurred last year.

But we know that kids are resilient, right? Well, yes, they are...but being resilient doesn't mean that there are no effects. Let's look at some of the most common ways that children may react to exposure to domestic violence.

- * **Emotional Reactions** - This is probably the most hidden realm of reactions, but the one with the most impact. Kids are often conflicted about their love for the abuser vs anger over the abuser's actions. Guilt and shame over not being able to stop the abuse is common, as is fear for the safety of their family. It is vital to recognize their feelings, and to accept and address them.
- * **Behavioral Reactions** - These can range from withdrawal, to aggression, to regressing to a younger age, to having difficulty sleeping. School age youth may have a drop in grades, decreased participation in school activities, or refusal to go to school. Acting out, or bullying behavior isn't uncommon.
- * **Physical Reactions** - Everything from headaches and stomach aches, to changes in eating habits, bedwetting, and increased asthma symptoms can be a result of exposure to IPV.

We need to keep in mind that each child reacts differently, depending on the type and severity of the abuse witnessed, what types of supports the child has, the age of the child, personality factors, etc. Before we become discouraged about the depth of these reactions, it is important to recognize that there are specific ways to support children who have witnessed domestic violence.

Talk with kids about their emotions and validate them by acknowledging that their feelings are real. Let children know that you are there to help them, or will find another adult to provide support. Have discussions about what healthy relationships look like, even if that is not what they experience in their family. Help kids develop a safety plan in the event of future violence. Reassure the child that the abusive situation is not their fault, and that it is not their job to fix the problems in their family. Maintain appropriate expectations for behavior of the affected child, while also recognizing the impact that IPV has on children's emotional, behavioral and physical health.

So it's a good thing that kids are resilient, but that resiliency is fostered by having supportive adults in their lives. If you have the opportunity to be that supportive adult, know that the effects of your help are immeasurable.

Survivor Story

Jade



Jade is a 33 year old woman who experienced significant domestic violence between her mother and stepfather for a period of 10 years during her childhood. The violence didn't end until the abuser went to prison when Jade was 15. In addition to the abuse that was constant in her home, Jade dealt with her mother's drinking after her stepdad was jailed; as the second oldest child, she took on the role of protector and assumed a lot of responsibility for her siblings, and also for her mother.

The coping mechanisms that Jade used as a child in a violent home have remained with her as an adult. After her 10-year relationship with her partner ended, she realized that her tendency to just shut down, and avoid all conflict comes from how she dealt with the abusive situation in her home. She didn't want to get in trouble or cause her stepfather to take his anger out on her mother or siblings, so she laid low and suppressed the helplessness she felt by avoiding the violence.

Jade now has a successful job, and she has spent a lot of time examining how she got to where she is today. She realizes that, statistically, most children who grow up in her situation do not achieve such success, and then wonders what she could have accomplished if she had experienced a better upbringing. But then she recalls her stepfather telling her that she would never amount to anything, and would end up with five kids on welfare. Jade believes that his attitude gave her the determination to prove him wrong, in spite of not having the support she wished for. The fact that so many people relied on her during her childhood helped to develop responsibility and resilience that Jade feels she might not otherwise have.

Jade still struggles with her self-confidence, and worries that she is not worthy of what she has achieved in life, but is also very aware of how events have shaped who she is. She says of her experience, "It's just a badge you always carry. I don't think it ever leaves you."

Around the Shelter

Water Damage



Just a quick update on what is happening with our building. As you can see from these recent pictures, it's a mess. The building has been dried out, but restoration can't begin until the insurance company coordinates with the construction team and also with the abatement team that will take care of any asbestos or lead paint issues. We still do not have any running water in the building, so we can't use the offices that were undamaged either, but we are hoping for that to be fixed soon. Unfortunately, it will most likely be at least 6-8 months until we can shelter clients in our building again.



Meanwhile, we are providing alternative shelter to clients in need, and are continuing all of our other services remotely; so case management, court and hospital accompaniments, individual and group support, hotline services, providing resources, and coordination of services are all in full swing. We have realized that adversity provides an opportunity for creativity, and we definitely have a creative team!

Our Resourceful Website

Have you visited Response's website recently? Although we revamped it a while back, we are continually adding information and resources. You can find information about our agency's services, events, staff and board members, newsletters, donation opportunities, etc. There is information about domestic and sexual violence, elder abuse, safety planning, links to helpful websites, and resources, like the teen dating violence info sheet shown here. You can find lots of photos of past events as well as information about becoming a volunteer.



Is there something you are looking for but can't find it on our site? Please let us know, as we are always looking for ideas to improve the site to make it useful for our community! Check us out at:

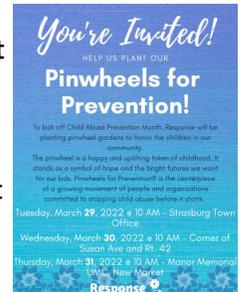
<https://www.responseva.org/>

Upcoming Events

Pinwheel Gardens for CAPM

Looking ahead to April, we will be recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month by "planting" pinwheel gardens throughout the county. And we are actually kicking it off at the end of March, so take note of the dates, because we'd love to have you join us! We plant pinwheels as a symbol of the bright futures we want for our children, and in an effort to stop child abuse before it starts.

Please join us in Strasburg on March 29, Woodstock on March 30, or New Market on March 31 at 10am as we plant these gardens to help bring awareness to the issue of child abuse in our community. See you there!



Spring Fashion Show



We hope you have saved the date for our Spring Fashion Show, because it's going to be a great event! Sunday, May 15 is the date to put on your calendars to head on out to the Woodstock Brewhouse to see local community members model their finest fashions. You will see folks such as Robin Shrum, BB Stewart, Ashley Showalter, Becky Wood, Samantha Cline, Patty Fadeley, Danielle Lutman, Courtney Cave, Cristi Coryell, Tim Taylor, Wayne Sager, Victor Green, George Pace, Jeremy McCleary, Larry Mace, Justin Thompson, Hodie Laughlin, Brandon George, and Russell Racey!

In addition to the fashion fun, tickets include a complimentary beer, wine, or soda, as well as delicious hors d'oeuvres. Tickets for a number of themed raffle baskets will be available at the event, too. Ticket prices:

Individual - \$50

Individual Sponsor - \$150 (2 tickets and recognition in the program)

Business Sponsor - \$300 (4 tickets and recognition in the program)

Gather some friends and come on out for a fun day! <https://www.responseva.org/upcoming-events>