

## Talking to Your Kids About Violence

Children can see violence happening to others or be hurt by it themselves.

It is hard to talk with children about violence. But it's often the best way to help. Adults find it hard to talk to children about violence for many reasons. Have you had any of these thoughts below? If you have, you are not alone.

- I don't know what to say.
- I've tried but they won't listen.
- I feel uncomfortable.
- I'm scared to bring it up.
- I'm embarrassed.
- It might make things worse.
- It's over now. Why talk about it?

It's ok to have these thoughts. You may not know exactly what to say. You may feel uncomfortable. But talking is the first step toward healing.

Here are some ways to start:

- Talk to someone you trust, like your doctor. They can help you plan what you want to say.
- You may have been hurt by the same violence as the child. It's OK to feel upset when you remember. It's scary for the child, too. Once you start talking, you may feel better.
- Take a deep breath. Talking about violence is tough.
- Begin by asking the child their thoughts about what happened and how they feel about it.
- Listen. Don't assume you know what the child is feeling. Children often see violence very differently than grownups.
- Be patient. If the child doesn't want to talk, try again later.

You can find more age-specific tips on how to talk to children about violence in the booklet "Healing the Invisible Wounds: Children's Exposure to Violence." You can access the booklet at <http://cart.safestartcenter.org/>

If something about your relationship scares you or you are worried about your children and you need to talk, call us.

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)  
1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

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

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages.  
All contact with the hotline is confidential and at no cost to you.