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**Stand Up! Don't Stand By! Protect Children from Domestic Violence**

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Most of us know someone who has experienced domestic violence. It could be a friend, family member, neighbor, co-worker or even yourself. The recent media coverage of incidents involving sports teams, and the immediate call to action by various women's groups, corporations and non-profits, has moved this issue to the forefront of public consciousness. The NYSPCC supports this movement and is launching our "Stand Up! Don't Stand By" campaign, to help protect children who live in homes with domestic violence.

Domestic violence shouldn't be thought of as just a "woman's" issue. It impacts men, women and children, and cuts across each segment of our society. Domestic violence occurs in all age, racial, ethnic, socio-economic, sexual orientation and religious groups.

According to the National [Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#), nearly 20 people per minute are victims of physical violence by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men. On a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines. Domestic violence is characterized as the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, withholding needed finances, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity can vary drastically.

According to the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), children who experience domestic violence can also be emotionally, psychologically or physically harmed. They may experience depression, fear, anxiety, have difficulty in school and in relationships with peers. The impact can be quite severe and

continue into adulthood. And, witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is also a strong risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next.

These facts are staggering. So, adults need to get involved. It's everyone's responsibility to protect children.

But, I imagine that most people are not sure what steps they can safely take to help a person being abused. Similarly, even fewer adults are sure of what to do if a child is being impacted by domestic violence in the home. The safety of the children is usually linked to the safety of the adult who is being victimized. By supporting the adult experiencing the violence, you are also helping to protect the child.

It's been my experience that most people are hesitant to get involved for different reasons. They include: fear of making a mistake about whether or not it is a serious situation, fear of retaliation by the perpetrator, fear of making the situation worse, or, they assume that someone else will get involved to stop the violence. Understandable, but I'm going to encourage you to learn about how you CAN help.

[The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children \(NYSPPC\)](#), with support from the [Avon Foundation for Women](#), has launched the "Stand Up, Don't Stand By -- Protecting Children from Domestic Violence " campaign, to teach the general public safe steps to take to protect children in these homes with violence. You can view it on [www.nyspcc.org](http://www.nyspcc.org). It provides information and suggestions for adults, who know someone involved in a domestic violence situation, on how to safely intervene in a way that feels appropriate to them.

Here's a quick overview of the curriculum:

- Overview of domestic violence statistics and dynamics
- Description of its impact on children
- How you would recognize domestic violence in your family, workplace, apartment building
- Ways to safely intervene to support victims and children
- Video clips provide examples of domestic violence situations and describe various ways that an adult bystander can help.
- Resources to call for more information if you have concerns about someone involved in domestic violence, but need direction and support on next steps.

Basically, what it comes down to is making a decision to get involved. I encourage you to "Stand Up" to promote the safety of children, the safety of the family. If everyone tried to take just one step, it could make an impact. Perhaps you could challenge someone, on-line or in person, who is making sexist or derogatory comments that contribute to the condoning of domestic violence. Or, you could raise the discussion in your workplace about what one can do to help children or co-workers who may be experience domestic violence. Another positive step is just becoming knowledgeable about community resources and hot-line numbers that can help.

Here are some helpful websites/resources:

- ["See the Signs and Speak Out"](#) a project funded by the Avon Foundation for Women.
- [No More Campaign](#)
- [Safe Horizon](#).

If you are experiencing domestic violence, or want information to help someone else, the National Coalition against Domestic Violence recommends these hotlines:

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- The National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-4673
- The National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline 1-866-331-9474

We **must** work together to create a culture where domestic violence is not tolerated. Join The NYSPCC and Stand Up for Children!

For more information on keeping children safe, visit [www.nyspcc.org](http://www.nyspcc.org).