



# The Link Between DV, Child Abuse, Cancer and Heart Disease

DV PREVENTION CAN SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES  
& TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS

**Webinar for DomesticShelters.org**

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# A Mother's Gift- A Personal Story

# Historical Lessons from Fighting Smoking

Lung cancer was rare before tobacco marketing

Early research linked smoking to cancer

Not all Cancer caused by DV, Child Abuse or Smoking

Advocates wrote to President Kennedy

1964 Surgeon General's Report highlighted dangers

# Public Health Campaign to Prevent Smoking

Led by Cancer Society, Heart Association, CDC

## Strategies included:

- ▶ Tobacco taxes to deter youth
- ▶ Public service commercials
- ▶ Bans on smoking in public areas
- ▶ Regulations on tobacco companies
- ▶ Living with the consequences



# Results of Anti- Smoking Efforts



Substantial decline  
in smoking rates



Over 8 million lives  
saved



Trillions in  
healthcare and  
other costs avoided

# Consequences from Exposure to— Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



Stress, Anxiety,  
Depression,  
Suicide



Cancer



Heart disease



Mental health  
issues



Poor Health and  
Social Problems

# How Does Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Cause Cancer and Heart Disease?



Chronic stress impacts developing brains and bodies



Toxic Stress Leads to lifelong health problems



Prolonged Stress weakens immune systems

To Avoid  
Consequences  
from ACEs  
Children Need

Safe, stable, nurturing  
environments

Trauma-informed  
support and play  
therapy

Community  
accountability for  
abuse



# Needed: Coordinated Community Response – Just Like Smoking

Public Awareness and Education

Professional Training in Trauma and ACEs

Unified Response Across Sectors

- Family Court
- Law Enforcement
- Health Professionals
- Religious Community
- Media
- Educators

# Custody Courts Are A Critical Barrier



# Coordinated Community Responses

- ▶ **Law Enforcement:**
  - Prioritize DV and child protection
  - Learn DV dynamics
- ▶ **Health Professionals:**
  - Screen for ACEs
  - Offer trauma-informed care
- ▶ **Religious Community:**
  - Support survivors
  - Challenge harmful norms
- ▶ **Media:**
  - Raise awareness- using correct language
  - Promote evidence-based solutions
- ▶ **Educators:**
  - Understand ACEs
  - Ask not what is wrong with the child, but what has been done to the child?

## Benefits of Treating DV and Child Abuse Like Smoking

Longer, healthier lives for our  
Children

A light pink arrow pointing downwards from the first box to the second box.

Reduced crime and  
violence

A light pink arrow pointing downwards from the second box to the third box.

Fewer mass shootings

## Benefits of Treating DV and Child Abuse Like Smoking

Massive savings in  
public funds



Huge Brake (slow  
down) on the  
Economy

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