

What About My Kids?

Keeping Kids Safe, Explaining Violence
and Surviving the Court System



If you're a parent with an abusive partner, the safety, wellbeing and future of your children are top of mind.

Escaping abuse is hard enough as an individual. When kids are involved, there's even more to consider; from explaining violence to kids, court battles and custody issues, watching for changes in behavior and healing from the trauma kids experience.

This toolkit will shed light on these topics and more. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful Articles & Lists
- Recommended Books
- Danger Assessments
- Survey Results
- Support Communities
- How to Find Help

Remember, even if violence is not directed toward children, research indicates that 90% of them are aware of it even if you think they are not.



There are hundreds of articles covering the many facets of domestic violence available on DomesticShelters.org. Here are links to those with information on escaping and healing from abuse with your children.

Articles

[Safety Planning with Kids](#)

How to go about ensuring the safety of you and your children.

[When Children Witness Violence](#)

They are more likely to abuse, unless an adult intervenes.

[Explaining Violence to Kids](#)

6 tips for talking to kids about domestic violence.

[How to Recognize Trauma in Kids](#)

What to look for in infants to adolescents.

[Moms: Protect Your Kids in Court](#)

Advice from a child custody lawyer to help you succeed.

[Protect Kids in the Court System](#)

Tips from a survivor who lived through a long custody battle.

[Spoiling Kids the Right Way](#)

Don't worry about increased nurturing after leaving abuse.

[He's Threatening to Call CPS](#)

These threats are a form of emotional abuse.

[Helping a Child Being Abused](#)

Intervening when partner violence and abuse coincide.

[Children Used as Pawns in Court](#)

When abusers use deceptive custody strategies.

[Kids Caught in the Crossfire](#)

Kids are also at risk of being abused, possibly killed.

[Spoiling Kids the Right Way](#)

Don't worry about increased nurturing after leaving abuse.

[Mixed Messages](#)

What to teach kids when one parent abuses another.

[When Kids Experience Trauma](#)

The after-effects may be mistaken for ADHD.

[Talking to Kids About Divorce](#)

How online Sesame Street-based toolkits can help.

[Caught in the Middle](#)

What to do when your abuser tries to turn your kids against you.

[Abusers Getting Kids in a Split](#)

How survivors are losing custody, and abusers gaining it.

[The SAFE Child Act](#)

New proposed legislation & what it means for protective parents.

[Are the Kids Really Okay?](#)

Children and teens may seem to be coping well after abuse.

[Abusers Make Mothering Harder](#)

8 ways controlling men make the task more difficult.

[Putting DV in Pictures](#)

Two authors pen picture books to explain violence to kids.

[Brain Changes](#)

Repeated exposure to violence can change a child's brain.

[Open Letter to Kids Seeing DV](#)

An adult survivor reminds kids that they are not alone.

[Building Up Kids After Trauma](#)

Don't let domestic violence steal away their self-confidence.

[18 Ways to Support Kids of DV](#)

Exposure to trauma can be adverse, here's how to help.

[5 Facts About Children of DV](#)

A violent childhood isn't forgotten as children grow-up.

Lists

[22 Signs of PTSD](#)

Know these warning signs so you can spot the symptoms early.

[16 Ways to Support Children](#)

Here you'll find a series of ways you can help your child.

[5 Myths About Custody & DV](#)

Don't believe these lie about DV and its youngest victims.

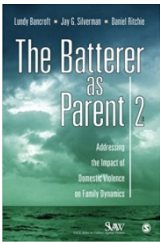
[16 Signs of Depression](#)

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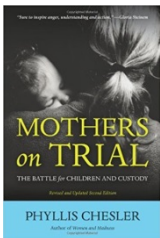


Reading books can be a helpful way to understand if you're a victim of abuse and understand the abuser's behavior.

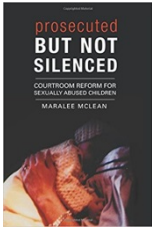
Here are our recommended reads:



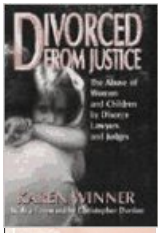
[*The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics*](#). This book takes into account the complex ways in which a batterer's abusive and controlling behaviors are woven into the fabric of daily life. This book is a guide for therapists, child protective workers, and other human services providers in addressing the complex impact that batterers—specifically, male batterers of a domestic partner when there are children in the household—have on family functioning.



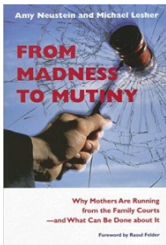
[*Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody*](#). This landmark book was the first to break the false stereotypes about mothers getting preferential treatment over fathers when it comes to custody. In fact, when both fathers and mothers want custody, the father usually gets it.



[*Prosecuted but Not Silenced*](#). A powerful documentary book about a mother and daughter's tragic involvement with the judicial system when there were allegations of child sexual abuse. This riveting book is a must read for all those working in the fields of domestic violence, child abuse, or child trauma so they can realize what does occur.



[*Divorced from Justice: The Abuse of Women and Children by Divorce Lawyers and Judges*](#). The author of this book explodes the myth that divorce laws were created to protect women and children financially and reveals how all women, from poor and working-class women to professional women of affluent means, are too often at the mercy of divorce lawyers.



[*From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts—and What Can Be Done About It*](#). This book chronicles cases in which mothers who believe their children have been sexually abused by their father are disbelieved, ridiculed or punished for trying to protect them. All too often the mother, in such a case, is deemed the unstable parent, and her children are removed from her care, to be placed in foster care or even with the father credibly accused of abusing them.



There are two well-known, free online assessment tools available that can help you understand the level of danger that may be present, but not always obvious.

[The Danger Assessment](#)

The free tool helps determine the level of danger an abused person has of being killed by an intimate partner. There are two parts to the tool 1) a calendar and 2) a 20-item scoring instrument that uses a weighted system to score yes/no responses to risk factors associated with intimate partner homicide.

[MOSAIC](#)

Using a series of questions, this tool assesses how similar a situation is to other situations that have gotten worse. After creating a confidential account and answering the questions, a detailed report is compiled immediately and tells you how a situation compares to others like it, rating it on a scale of 1 to 10.



A lot of lessons can be taken away from people who have been through it before. Check out the following survey results to learn from the experiences of others.

- [What's been the biggest challenge when it comes to custody issues?](#)
- [Do you believe spanking a child is an okay form of discipline?](#)
- [Have you felt like your abuser has tried to keep your children from you?](#)
- [Have you, or would you, involve your children in safety planning?](#)



Online forums and chats can help you connect with others who are in or have faced similar situations and find support and ideas from the survivor community.

[AfterSilence.org](https://www.AfterSilence.org) aims to help victims become survivors and to communicate in the recovery of domestic and sexual violence. It offers an active message board and chat room for rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest and molestation survivors. There are over 31,000 members and about 1,000,000 posts, including recent posts and many useful posts from days and months past.

[Pathways to Safety International](https://www.PathwaysToSafety.org) If you're an American overseas, your situation is different than 99% of your fellow countryman, and this site will be a wonderful resource for you. Among the services is a 24-hour response to emails, as well as international phone options.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Page](#) offers one of the most active places where domestic violence survivors. You'll find conversation, past experiences and unvarnished stories, and occasionally advice from professionals who have joined in on a topic.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Group](#) is a private group designed to be a safe space for domestic abuse victims, survivors, advocates and others affected by abuse to support one another through meaningful dialogue and helpful insight.

[Fort Refuge](#) is a clever, grassroots site run by survivors for fellow survivors as a safe place to come together and discuss their struggles and victories in healing from various types of abuse. Though the forum and chat do not boast the same numbers as some of the larger organizations, they are one of the more active conversation places on the internet currently. They also add new content to their site regularly.

[Love is Respect - National Teen Dating Helpline](#) focuses on teen relationships and can be accessed by phone, text or live chat. It offers real-time, one-on-one support by trained peer advocates who offer information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse. They also offer support to parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) offers confidential, private, one-on-one chats with advocates every day 24/7.

[OnYourMind.net](#) is a safe and anonymous place for teens to get information and support from other teens in an online chat room, covering topics such as relationships, school, depression, stress, suicide, parents, cutting, identity and health.

[Pandora's Aquarium](#) is an online forum with around 2 million posts and over 70,000 members, and is run by Pandora's Project, which provides information, support and resources to rape and sexual abuse survivors and their friends and family.

When accessing hotlines, chats or forums from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, please remember to take the necessary precautions to keep your activities confidential from your abuser. Learn more about how to stay safe online [here](#).

Also, keep in mind that local shelters may offer in-person or virtual support groups. You can find shelters in your area at [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org).



Another way to determine if you're experiencing abuse is to contact a trained domestic violence advocate near you or through a national service.

To search for domestic violence program staffed with trained advocates, visit [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) and type either your city and state, or ZIP code, into the search bar at the top of the page. A list of organizations and contact numbers near you will be displayed. To reach an advocate, reach out directly by calling the phone number listed. Most are open 24/7.

To speak to an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, also 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) to chat online.

It's important to know that your call is confidential and you can choose to remain anonymous when speaking with an advocate. To know what to expect when calling, read [this article](#).