

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON TEENAGERS ⁴



KEY ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Increased sense of self and autonomy from family

Physical changes brought on by puberty

Increased peer group influence and desire for acceptance

Self worth more strongly linked to view of physical attractiveness

Dating raises issues of sexuality, intimacy, relationship skills

Increased capacity for abstract reasoning and broader world view

Increased influence by media

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- accelerated responsibility and autonomy, positioning youth in care-taking roles and/or premature independence; family skills for respectful communication and negotiation may be poorly developed, so transition to adolescence may be more difficult and result in such challenges as parent-child conflict, early home leaving, school drop-out
- may try to stop violence; may use increased size to impose will with physical intimidation or aggression
- possibly more embarrassed by family resulting in shame, secrecy, insecurity; might use high risk behaviours to impress peers (e.g., theft, drugs); may increase time away from the home; may engage in maladaptive defensive (e.g., drug) and offensive (e.g., aggression towards abuser) strategies to avoid or cope with violence and its stigma
- view of self may be distorted by abuser's degradation of mother and/or child maltreatment; may experience eating disorder and use image management activities (e.g., body piercing, tattoos)
- may have difficulty establishing healthy relationships; may fear being abused or being abusive in intimate relationships, especially when conflict arises; may avoid intimacy or prematurely seek intimacy and child bearing to escape and create own support system
- "all or nothing" interpretations of experiences may be learned and compete with greater capacity to see "shades of grey" (e.g., everyone is a victim or a perpetrator); this style of processing information may be intensified by experiences of child maltreatment; may be predisposed towards attitudes and values associated with violence and/or victimization
- possibly more influenced by negative media messages re: violent behaviour, gender role stereotypes

See page 56 for ideas about helping teenagers



The Ontario Women's Directorate has prepared a "tip sheet" for adults who work with or mentor youth, to encourage positive influences:
www.ontariowomensdirectorate.gov.on.ca