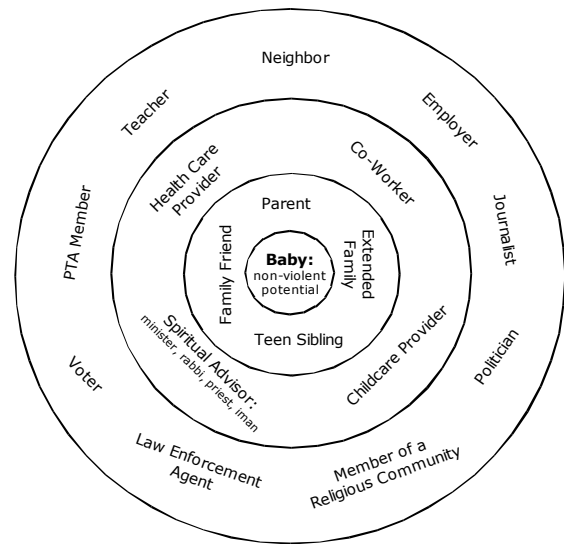


Your Role in Preventing Family Violence

Everyone has an opportunity to help prevent family violence. Unfortunately, many do not know this. Some wrongly believe that because family violence occurs behind closed doors prevention is beyond our grasp. Others wrongly believe that law enforcement alone is best equipped to handle family violence. In fact, we all share a responsibility for preventing family violence.

Prevention, most simply, includes every influence that helps a new born baby grow up to be nonviolent. This diagram shows you many of these influences. Use it to see how many roles you play, and how many ways you could become an active violence prevention practitioner.



Prevention Strategies for Everyone

Parents:

- Give children consistent love and attention. Every child needs a strong, loving relationship with a caring adult to feel safe and secure, and to develop a sense of trust.
- Ensure that children are supervised and guided. They learn important social skills by interacting with others in well-supervised activities. Unsupervised children often have behavioral problems that can lead to violence.
- Do not hit children. Physical punishment sends the message that it is acceptable to hit others to solve problems. Nonphysical methods of discipline help children deal with their emotions and teach them peaceful ways to handle problems and conflicts.

Teen Siblings:

- Make a commitment not to contribute to violence in any way. Do not bully, tease, or spread negative gossip about others. Respect others and value differences. Avoid alcohol and drugs and the people who use them, as there is a strong link between the use of alcohol and drugs and violence.
- Take the initiative to make your school or community safer. Join an existing group that is promoting non-violence in your school or community, or launch your own effort.

Extended Family:

- Model appropriate behaviors, as children learn by example. Discuss problems with them, and help them learn nonviolent solutions to conflict and problems.
- Teach children ways to avoid being victims of violent acts. Stress personal safety, including what to do if anyone tries to hurt them and how to call 911.

Family Friends:

- Take care of yourself, stay connected with your community, and make sure that those closest to you do the same. Isolation increases risk of child abuse, elder abuse, and intimate partner violence.
- Men: Approach gender violence as a men's issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexist men's programs. Lead by example.

Co-Workers:

- If a co-worker is abusing his partner, or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general, don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. Or if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, a parent, a professor, or a counselor. Don't remain silent, especially if you are man.
- Be a support to co-workers stressed out by child or elderly care demands placed on them.

Childcare Providers:

- Try to keep children from seeing too much violence in the media. Limit television viewing time, and talk with children about the violence they see in movies, on TV, and in video games. Help them understand how painful violence is in real life and discuss its serious consequences.
- Be consistent with rules and discipline. Children need structure for their behavior, including clearly stated, logical consequences for not following the rules.

Spiritual Advisors:

- Educate church members about family violence issues. Mention it in sermons and prayers. Publish domestic abuse program phone numbers and hotlines, and display reading materials about the subject.
- Clarify misconceptions about faith requiring individual stay in abusive relationships. Use marriage preparation classes to discuss abuse issues.

Health Care Providers:

- Establish and use protocols to identify and help victims of domestic abuse.
- Display family violence information in easy to see locations.

Employers:

- Display family violence information in easy to see locations.
- Create a family-friendly workplace that supports employees responsible for children or elderly family members.

Journalists:

- When covering family violence, do not talk only to law enforcement and criminal justice officials and experts. Be sure to include public health experts who can provide violence prevention data, research and resources that readers and viewers can use to prevent these types of violence.
- Work to tell these important stories about crime: everyday violence costs communities millions of dollars on police and medical costs; family violence is the hidden part of the huge problem of violence; and people are developing predictable, effective ways of preventing violence.

Members of a Church, Synagogue or Mosque:

- Unite with like-minded concerned citizens to discuss problems or concerns of violence in your community, and set a community norm that family violence is not acceptable.
- Reach out to elderly individuals who do not have a sufficient support network. Isolation increased the risk of elder abuse.

Politicians:

- Adequately fund violence prevention programming and family support services.
- Support laws that hold perpetrators of family violence accountable for their crimes.

Law Enforcement Agents:

- No tolerance of family violence applies not only to civilians, but also to law enforcement officials. If a fellow officer is abusing his partner, don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, urge him to seek help.
- If an officer perpetrates family violence, do not provide special treatment; treat the officer as you would any other perpetrator of family violence.

Voters:

- Write an editorial for the local newspaper, hold a petition drive, speak before a school board meeting, or send a letter to your legislator to voice your opinion and gain support from decision makers for violence prevention programs in your community.
- Work with other concerned parents, teachers, and community members to influence local, state and even federal decisions that affect the education, safety, and well-being of children and families in your community.

PTA Members:

- Advocate for school violence prevention plan that includes policies that foster a bullying-free environment and promote nonviolent strategies and specific strategies to teach nonviolent practices.
- Raise funds to purchase violence prevention training and resources for school personnel.

Teachers:

- Integrate social and emotional learning into the curriculum. Teach children of every age that feelings are normal (even feelings of anger or hurt); however, violence is not an acceptable method for expressing anger, frustration, and other negative feelings.
- Do not tolerate bullying and harassment in the classroom. Consistently enforce consequences for such behavior.

Neighbors:

- Reach out to elderly individuals who do not have a sufficient support network. Isolation increased the risk of elder abuse.
- Men: Approach gender violence as a men's issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexist men's programs. Lead by example.