

Critical Thinking Essay

Sample

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TOPIC:

What is the effect of domestic violence on children's mental health?

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What is the effect of domestic violence on children's mental health?

Introduction:

Domestic violence, a form of violence is prevailing in society by leaps and bounds. There is a significant ratio of children who are the victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence not only affects the physical health of the people but also the mental stability of the children.

This brings us a research question that states - to which extent does domestic violence affect children's mental health?

The primary purpose of this paper is to explore domestic violence and how it impacts children and their mental health.

Domestic violence:

The term 'domestic violence' refers to the relationship between perpetrator and victim. The victim is dependent on the perpetrator. Domestic violence concerns physical, sexual, and psychological forms of violence. Women are the largest group of victims (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2002).

But men, children, and the elderly are also victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence occurs in all layers and groups of the population. There may be intentional assault, but this is not always the case. Sometimes people can no longer handle the care for their loved ones or clients. In such a situation, their behavior can derail, resulting in abuse.

There is always a power difference between perpetrator and victim. Research shows that perpetrators choose the most vulnerable people as victims. Another characteristic of domestic violence is the circumstance that perpetrator and victim (including underage victims) nevertheless – and sometimes out of necessity – remain a permanent part of each other's living and living environment. This is related to the fact that domestic violence often has a systematic character and there is a high risk of recidivism. Violence in the family often goes hand in hand with other problems, such as the tension between spouses, unemployment, or addiction.

Types of domestic violence:

Domestic violence can be divided into the following categories:

Partner Violence

Domestic violence occurs in most cases (60%) between (ex) partners. Violence can start innocently but escalate seriously. Stalking or threats can also be forms of domestic violence. There is often a dependent relationship between perpetrator and victim, which means that physical and/or emotional abuse can continue for a long time. Victims who have experienced (long-term) partner violence may feel that they have lost themselves physically and emotionally. The cycle of domestic violence is generally difficult to break. Children who grow up in an unsafe home situation run the risk of also using violence in future relationships. To break the pattern of domestic violence, both partners often need help.

Child Abuse

When children are emotionally and/or physically abused, this affects the further life course of children. Abuse often affects the physical and cognitive development of children and adult victims of child abuse suffer from attachment problems, severe insecurity, or feelings of depression. Even when children themselves are not abused but witness violence between parents, this can have a major impact on how a child develops.

Honor-related violence

Honor-related violence is violence committed to protecting family honor. Think of forced marriage, repudiation, or forced abortion. Because honor-related violence is common within the domestic and family sphere, there is a lot of overlap with domestic violence.

Symptoms of domestic abuse:

Witnessing violence can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder in children (Khufman, 2000). It can be characterized by sleep disturbances, nightmares, memory and concentration problems, excessive vigilance, and periods of reliving the events. Other

psychological symptoms may include restlessness, conduct disorders, aggressive behavior, learning disabilities, anxiety, depression, avoiding social contacts, regression of development (Hornor, 2002).

The consequences of domestic violence

Domestic violence can lead to strong emotional problems. Victims often become isolated. They lose their resilience and self-confidence and can develop a negative self-image. Feelings of guilt and shame usually play a major role in this. This can lead to depression, stress complaints, and physical complaints. People who were victims of domestic violence as children are more likely to lose confidence in themselves and in others.

They are more likely to have problems with intimacy and sexuality and find it more difficult to form relationships. Research has also shown that many victims of domestic violence also have other problems, such as problems at work, housing, and financial problems.

Children who witness domestic violence, such as (ex) partner violence, can be confronted with this in all kinds of ways. For example, they see or hear violence and conflict between their parents or are confronted with the consequences, for example, injuries to one of the parents or having to flee to a safe place.

Partner violence and child abuse often go hand in hand. The child is then not only a witness to violence in the family but also a victim. It is estimated that between thirty and sixty percent of children have not only witnessed the violence but have also been victims of violence themselves.

For children, the consequences of witnessing domestic violence are comparable to the consequences of being abused yourself. Growing up in a family where there is violence between parents is a violation of the basic conditions of existence. Safety, self-confidence, contacts with peers, and trust in others are compromised. Children who experience partner violence grow up in an unsafe situation, both physically and psychologically. They can be injured themselves in violent incidents, for example sitting on a parent's lap or trying to intervene.

Violence between parents often evokes strong emotions in children. They find it confusing and painful when parents are both a source of safety and fear. They also grow up with fundamental doubts and confusion about the meaning of love, intimacy, and violence. The

most common reactions of children are sadness, fear, anger, and powerlessness. As domestic violence becomes more frequent, children live in constant fear of another clash between the parents.

About forty percent of children who regularly experience violence between their parents at home develop post-traumatic complaints as a result. Children who witness intimate partner violence between parents grow up with violent behavior as the norm. This has many consequences for the way in which they themselves, as a child and later as an adult, deal with conflict. This can affect the child's later partner relationship, but also increase the risk of criminal and violent behavior later in life.

Consequences for education

Domestic violence can lead to problems in education. The consequences of partner violence for the children often only become clear to parents once the violence has stopped. After partner violence, parents can struggle with their children's problem behavior and their discipline. Often the parental role has suffered from violence in the family through lack of attention and love for the children, through neglect, acting out, and being too indulgent. It can be difficult for parents to deal with this and to restore the children's confidence.

Many parents find it difficult to talk to their children about what happened. Often there is no support from the environment. Violence between parents affects parenting. In the case of intimate partner violence, there are many strong and disruptive emotions among the parents. Often parents are no longer able to provide the care and security that the child needs because their own problems are too much for them. Parents usually think that children notice little or nothing of the violence and underestimate the impact that violence has on their children.

It is also possible that one of the parents tells his/her story with one of the children so that that child becomes the mainstay of that parent. Then we speak of parentification. Parentification is a phenomenon in which children, as it were, assume the parental role in

situations where parents cannot or do not want to. The child takes care of his parents instead of the other way around. This harms the development of the child.

Solution:

Treatment of domestic violence often requires broad measures and cooperation between different authorities (Borowsky, 2003). In acute situations, the doctor treats the physical injuries, guarantees the safety of the child, and refers the family to the appropriate services. The physician conducts a comprehensive child psychiatric evaluation to arrive at a reliable assessment of the effects the violent events have had on the child.

Domestic violence always means a crisis situation for the family. The first step should therefore be crisis management. First, there is a conversation with the adults, and then the children are heard, preferably first without the adults. The child must be able to freely tell what he has experienced, seen, or heard, and what feelings this has evoked. It should also be given information about the planned assistance and the procedures to be followed. The child is often very concerned about what will happen to the family. That is why it must be stated emphatically that the help will be there for the whole family. It should also be explained to the child that his/her safety will be guaranteed and that a youth care service will monitor this.

In serious cases, the police, judicial services, and victim support will also be involved. If necessary, the perpetrator of the violence can be temporarily or permanently prohibited from entering the house and a perimeter can be established within which he/she is no longer allowed. Sometimes shelter in a refuge can also be arranged.

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