Abigail Ministries

Empowering Abused Women ~ Educating Communities

Talking To Your Child About Domestic Violence

If you are the parent of a child who has experienced domestic violence:

- Encourage your children to talk about their feelings. They are usually aware of the violence and may be feeling scared or responsible. It is common for children to feel responsible for what is happening in their home. Let them know that they are not responsible.

- Tell your children the truth about what occurred. Answer their questions honestly, but in a way that's appropriate for their ages.

- Let your kids know that the abuser's behavior is not acceptable. Acknowledge the abuse and acknowledge the loss they may be experiencing. Let them know it is okay to love or miss him.

- Do not discuss with others the specifics of the situation or your feelings about your partner in front of the children. Have adult discussions only with other adults.

- It is okay to be sad or cry in front of your children. This lets them know that feelings are normal and gives them permission to express their own.

- Talk with your children about a safety plan for themselves and what to do if there is fighting. (They could leave the room or house, go to a neighbor or friend, or call a designated person on the phone).

- Teach your children to call 911 and what to say to the dispatcher. Talk to them about how they can make the call more safely.

- If you are not living with your children's other parent but there is visitation, arrange visitation exchanges to occur as smoothly as possible. The exchange can sometimes be done in a public place or through a third person.

- Do not let your children be messengers between their parents.

- Discuss safety options for them when they are visiting an abusive parent.