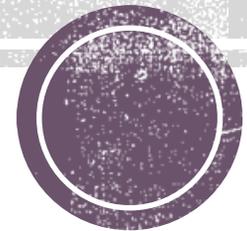


Children Who Witness

& Helping Their Families Heal



Who Am I?

Savannah Williams
Youth Advocate
The Advocacy Program at Umbrella



Question:

Why do you think it is important for families to have opportunities to heal together?



Learning Objectives

- Explain the effects of domestic violence on children and youth
- Examine the signs and indicators of domestic violence
- Define 'families' and ID why it is important to supporting the healing of families together
- Identify what helps children, adults, and families heal
- Increase understanding of trauma informed approaches to support family healing
- Strategize creating safe spaces
- Discuss ways to build program capacity to support the healing of families



Who are we talking about when we use the word 'family' in our work?



Factors Affecting the Impact of DV

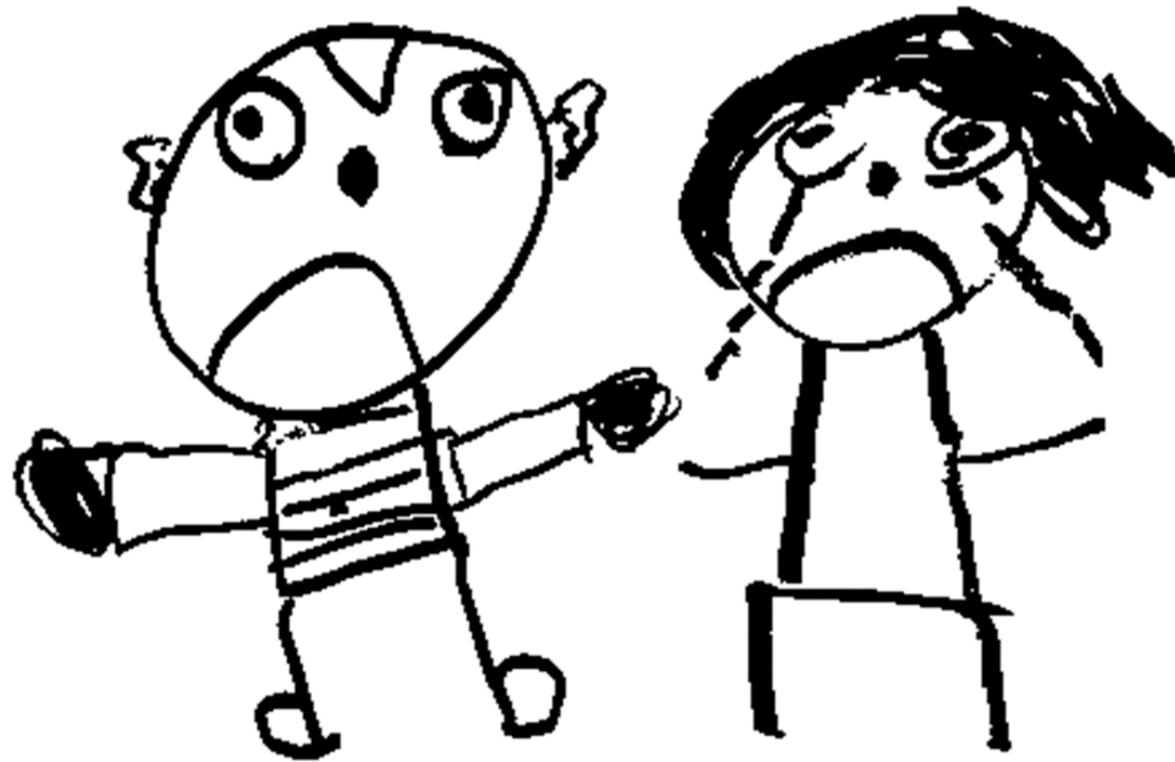
- Relationship of child to the abuser
- Birth Order
- Gender
- Age
- Development age and stage
- Child's own character, self-esteem and capacity to cope
- Level of exposure to the violence – when, how often, type and severity of the abuse
- Strength of relationship between child and non-offending caregiver
- Existence and strength of other family and community supports

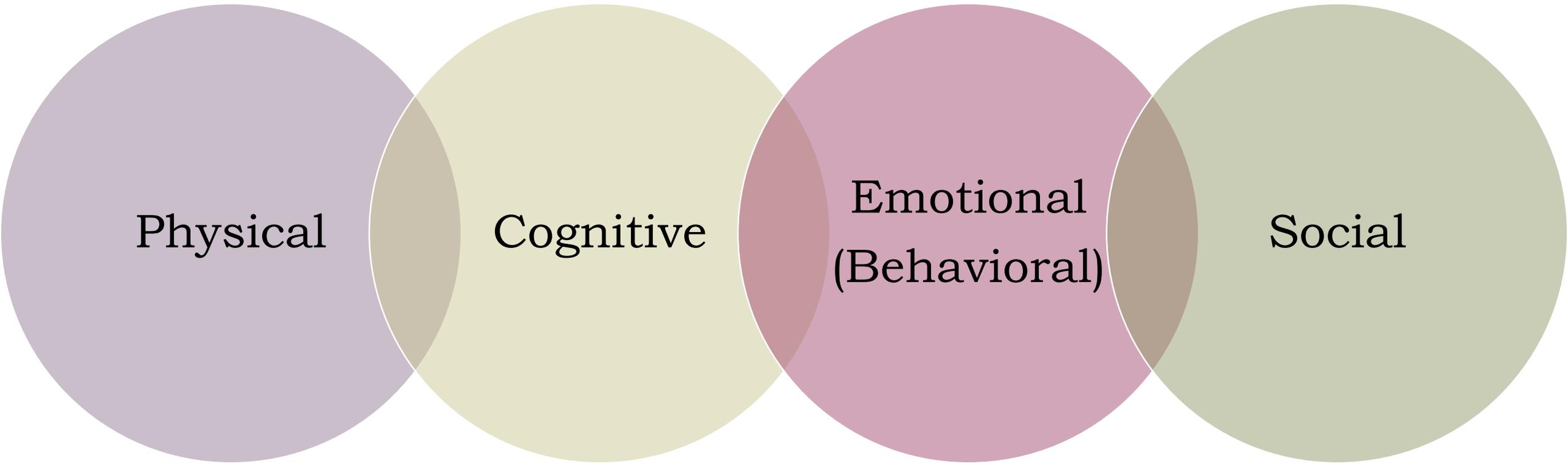


DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES



How Does Domestic Violence Effect Them?





Physical

Cognitive

Emotional
(Behavioral)

Social

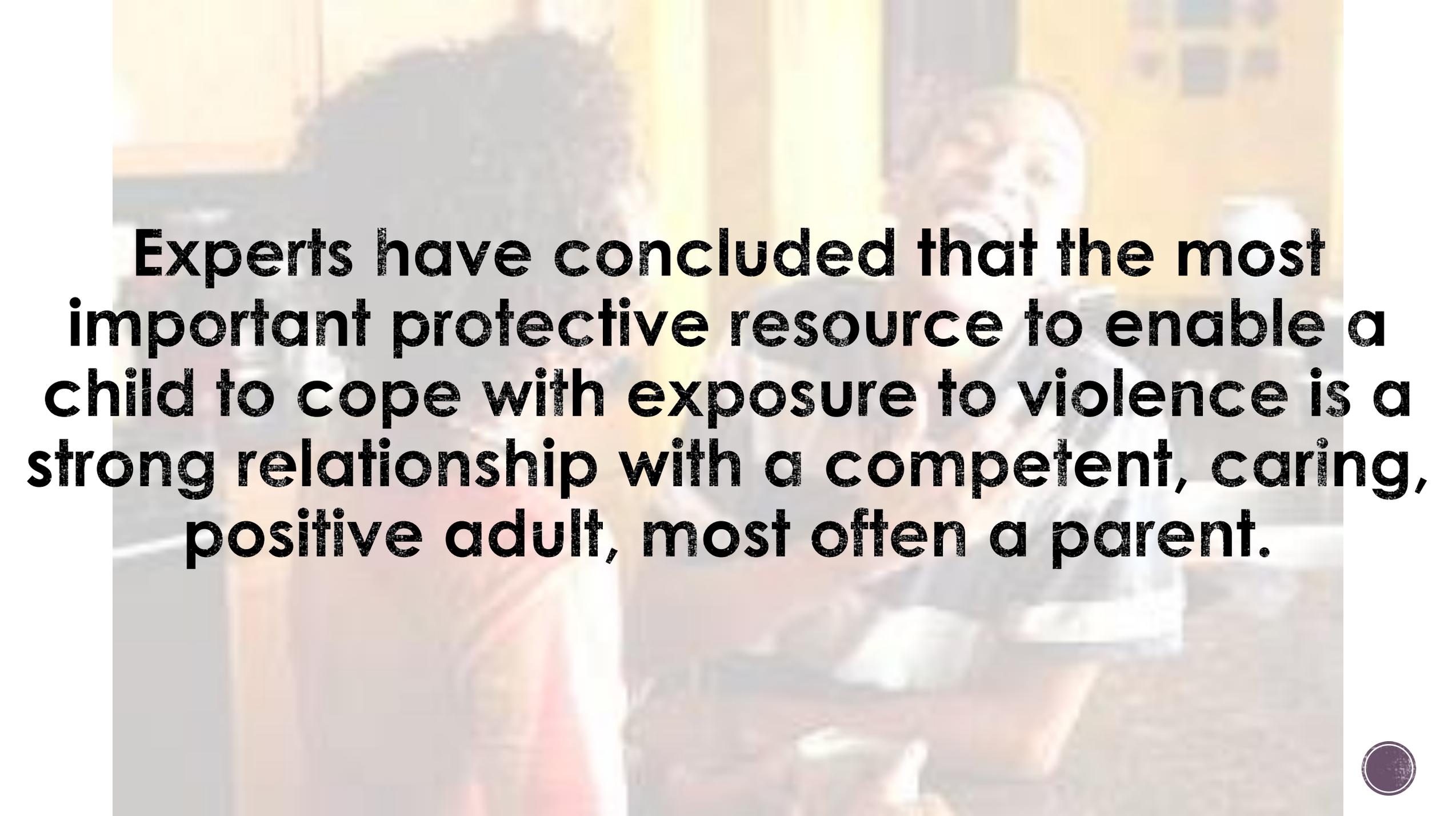


What Helps Children/Youth Heal?



- Strong bond with non-offending, supportive caregiver or other significant adult
- A Sense of Safety
- Structure, limits, predictability
- Strong community and familial relationships including with siblings
- Support for feelings, validation, counseling, support groups
- Not feeling responsible for the abuse



A blurred background image showing a woman in a white shirt holding a young child. The text is overlaid on this image.

Experts have concluded that the most important protective resource to enable a child to cope with exposure to violence is a strong relationship with a competent, caring, positive adult, most often a parent.



What Helps Adults Heal?

- Safety
- Family and social connections
- Reestablish balance/control
- Support
- Routine
- Free to express feelings
- Validation
- Hope



Resiliency

- The ability to recover from traumatic events
- Factors that increase resilience/healing:
 - A strong relationship with at least one caring adult
 - Feeling connected to a positive role model
 - Having talent/abilities that are nurtured and appreciated
 - Feeling some control over one's life
 - Having a sense of belonging to a community, group, or cause larger than oneself



How Might Trauma be Connected to Supporting Families?

Responses of parent/survivor to trauma/crisis?

- Past traumatic experiences
- Exposure to traumatic reminders
- Children may mimic abuser's behavior
- Current parenting stress
- Need time to self and connection = overwhelmed

Responses of children/survivor to trauma/crisis?

- Past traumatic experiences
- Response to reminders
- May be hyper aroused
- Out of control
- Behavior that results may be hard to manage or understand = needs lots of support, understanding and connection





Potential Opportunities

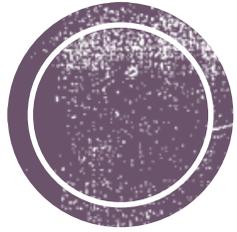
- Individually
- In Families
- In Groups
- As Activists



Creating Safety

- Allow individuals to make decisions about how they participate.
- Ask ahead of time what helps individuals cope when they have a strong emotional reaction to something.
- Maintain solid and accessible referrals for crisis and longer term mental health services.
- Discuss safety planning.





16 Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based Recommendations for Working with Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence



1. Understand that children of all ages are vulnerable
2. Establish a respectful and trusting relationship
3. Let NOC and children know that it's OK to talk about what has happened.
4. Tell children that violence is NOT their fault.
5. Foster children's self-esteem.





6. Help children know what to expect
7. Model and encourage good friendships
8. Use emotion words
9. Recognize that when children are disruptive
10. Incorporate the family's culture into interventions



11. Actively teach and model alternatives to violence
12. Involve NOC in conversations
13. Discuss child development
14. Help NOCs teach their children how to label their emotions
15. Address parenting stress
16. Work with NOCs to help them extend social support networks



Pair & Share: Capacity Building

- Think about your program's strengths and identify opportunities to change and grow.
- Think about a family you are currently working with and how you might support their healing together.



MAKE

*things
Happen*

