

Violence and Depression

Experiencing and/or witnessing violence can negatively impact a person's mental health and put them at greater risk for developing depression.

What you should know

- Women who have experienced partner violence are almost twice as likely to experience depression compared to women who have not experienced any violence.
- Children are especially vulnerable to the effects of violence. Being physically, sexually or emotionally abused or witnessing domestic violence in the home increases their risk of developing depression throughout their lives.
- Armed conflict, genocide and gang warfare are examples of "collective violence," a form of trauma which can frequently lead to higher rates of depression in communities.
- People who have been exposed to violence will often experience a variety of reactions including: anxiety, stress, helplessness, fear, irritability, anger, inability to concentrate, loss of appetite and nightmares.
- Being exposed to violence can also increase a person's risk of suicide.



REMEMBER:
Violence can affect anyone. Support those experiencing violence by listening and linking them to help.

What you can do

- If you believe someone you know is suffering the effects of violence, make yourself available to listen, without judgment. Do not force them to talk.
- Validate their experience. Let them know that what they are feeling is a normal response and not their fault.
- Maintain the person's trust by keeping what is said to you confidential.
- Offer them information on available resources for safety and support. Assist them in seeking help if and when they are ready.
- Take care of yourself as well. Seek help if you are feeling overwhelmed.