

A Note to Families with a History of Domestic Violence

If there has been domestic violence in your relationship (physical, emotional, or sexual), against either a parent or a child, please consider the following thoughts.

First, use these two outstanding websites for immediate help.

- HelpGuide.org: http://helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: www.thehotline.org/. (You can call this Hotline at any hour of day or night at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**. You can also call your local law enforcement or prosecutors office, a local domestic violence shelter or program, or a local attorney for assistance.)

Second, we think **you must seek domestic violence counseling for yourself with a suitably trained domestic violence therapist**. In our view, there are no exceptions to this. Sorting out the past, present, and future after any episode of domestic violence (whether against oneself or a child) is almost always too confusing to do alone.

Third, counseling can help you decide which of the ideas, possible Commitments, and Exercises on UpToParents.org would really work for you. Remember there is no grade on the website and there is no “correct” number of Commitments you should endorse. Pick only the ones that would be helpful and appropriate *in your circumstances*. Certain pledges of courtesy and close cooperation may not be best or safe when family circumstances have been dangerously abusive, so choose what you and your counselor believe would be right for you and your children.

If you or your counselor finds that some of the written Exercises on UpToParents.org are not appropriate for your circumstances, you can still complete the website and receive a Certificate of Completion by answering those Exercises with the words, “I believe that abuse in our circumstances makes this Exercise unhelpful.”

We wish you the best.

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