



# BUILDING RESILIENCY: YOUTH EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## CREATE SPACE FOR YOUTH TO UNDERSTAND THEIR EXPERIENCES

Many young people have grown up and lived in homes where domestic violence was present. They may have seen, heard and have been a part of abusive moments since early childhood. Create space for youth to understand their sometimes complicated experiences by validating and believing them, offering your support and providing helpful information.

## BALANCE OFFERING NURTURING SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGING SELF-AGENCY

Developmentally, youth are in-between being children and being adults. They are in need of safety, encouragement and guidance, as well as appropriate freedom, trust and space to build their independence. Find balance in offering nurturing support and in encouraging self-agency when caring for young people.

## ENCOURAGE SAFE WAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO EXPLORE THEIR IDENTITY

Young people are often in the process of discovering who they are as individuals. In their exposure to domestic violence, sometimes youth may feel that their experiences may define who they are. Find ways to encourage them to safely explore the different parts of their identity, including their gender, sexuality, culture and relationships with others. Provide a listening ear, share resources and be mindful of your own judgments when offering guidance or advice.

## INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE YOUNG PEOPLE

Often youth exposed to domestic violence are put into positions where they are taking on adult roles and responsibilities. These youth are typically at-risk of experiencing more stress and anxiety. Make attempts to interrupt these patterns by creating opportunities for young people to enjoy their adolescence and by giving them age-appropriate tasks that support their growth and development.

## HELP DEVELOP THEIR ABILITY TO ADAPT TO ADVERSITY

In their experience of seeing, hearing and being a part of domestic violence, sometimes youth use unhealthy skills, unsafe behaviors and potentially harmful thinking patterns to survive. Promote opportunities for them to learn healthy coping strategies and problem-solving skills that will strengthen their ability to bounce back from tough situations.

## SUPPORT THEIR HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Young people prioritize their friendships and relationships with their peers at this age. Find ways for young people to safely spend time within their healthy friendships, believe their concerns regarding dating violence and create space for them to learn about safe dating relationships. Support young people being educated on teen dating violence (TDV) prevention by helping host TDV prevention workshops in your community.