

Cornerstone believes that the way to end the violence that destroys families is to invest our time, energy, and resources in early intervention and prevention services for children and youth. The use of violence is learned and passed from generation to generation. Cornerstone knows that children living in a violent family are primary victims.

We also know that children and youth are remarkably resilient. We hear from parents, caregivers, and teachers who describe the positive changes they see in the children and youth we've served. We know that Cornerstone is making a difference in our community.

We are committed to helping victims become victors, survivors, and heroes.



In homes where domestic violence occurs, children are at high risk of suffering physical abuse themselves. But regardless of whether children are physically abused, the emotional effects of witnessing domestic violence are very similar to the psychological trauma associated with being a victim of child abuse. Each year more than 3.3 million children witness domestic violence.

Children living in homes where domestic violence occurs are at high risk of:

- abuse and neglect
- post-traumatic stress
- self-destructive behaviors

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Rebuilding lives, restoring hope.



Cornerstone implemented a comprehensive Family and Youth Program in 1992. Over the years, we have continued to enhance and expand our program services. Those services include:

Individual counseling:

Children and youth can talk with a Youth Counselor about the abuse and violence they have witnessed or experienced in a safe and confidential environment. We take special care to build a trusting relationship with each young client. We help youth develop personal safety plans.

Support Groups:

Youth participating in support groups have the opportunity to talk to their peers about their feelings. Group facilitators provide reassurance to youth, helping them to understand that they are not responsible for their parent's abusive behavior.

Youth and Family Therapy:

Individual and family therapy helps both the child and the parent gain a better understanding of how abuse has impacted their lives. The role of the therapist is to help clients make critical changes in their relationships.

School-based Violence Prevention:

Preventing Abuse and Violence through Education (PAVE) combines classroom education with individual and group counseling. The curricula includes units on Harassment, Young Men's and Young Women's Anger Awareness, and Gender Issues. Student Advisory Groups promote non-violence within the school environment.

Parenting Education and Support:

Individual counseling and educational groups encourage positive interaction with children and provide the opportunity for parents to discuss each child's unique behavior as a result of having lived with violence.

Mentorship:

Children and youth benefit from the opportunity to have a relationship with a caring adult. Mentoring is a key to preventing abuse and violence; making that critical connection before a child begins to act out or engage in self-destructive behaviors.

AWAKE and PHOENIX:

Our self-esteem building programs serve girls and boys, respectively ages 5-18. We strive to increase social skills and confidence through role modeling and social and physical activities. AWAKE and PHOENIX offer youth an opportunity to grow and learn in a non-competitive environment.

Recreational Activities:

Children who have experienced family violence often forfeit their childhood. They frequently assume adult roles and responsibilities. Cornerstone staff and volunteers make a difference for kids by taking them swimming, fishing, or camping. Trips to the zoo, a farm, or a ballgame are a special treat for the youth we serve.

Junior Volunteers:

This program encourages our young clients to volunteer. Volunteering is a great experience for kids and teaches them to place a high value on helping others.

Santa Shop:

Santa Shop is a holiday program that allows children and youth to experience the joy of giving. Area merchants, churches, civic organizations, and individuals donate new gift items and holiday wrapping supplies. Youth are able to "shop" for gifts for Mom and their siblings.

