

Book Review / Compte rendu

Jaffe, P., Wolfe, D. A., & Campbell, M. (2012). *Growing Up with Domestic Violence*. [Grandir dans un contexte de violence conjugale.] Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe. ISBN: 978-0-88937-336-5, 76 pages

Reviewed by: Lisa Corkum-O'Grady

ABSTRACT

Growing Up with Domestic Violence examines the progress made over the last 20 years by those working with children who have been exposed to intimate partner violence within their families. The authors expertly demonstrate why it is crucial for clinicians to possess an understanding of the consequences of exposure and to develop effective assessment and intervention skills. Along with a review of relevant research, assessment considerations, and current theories, clinicians are provided with an exploration of practical, evidence-based treatment guidance. These guidelines include suggestions around methods of treatment for both individual and group intervention. Barriers to carrying out treatment are addressed, as well as efficacy and prognosis after intervention. *Growing Up with Domestic Violence* offers a good combination of research, theory, and clinical information in a easy-to-read and very concise format.

RÉSUMÉ

Growing Up with Domestic Violence (Grandir dans un contexte de violence conjugale) examine les progrès accomplis au cours des 20 dernières années par ceux qui travaillent avec des enfants qui ont été exposés à la violence conjugale au sein de leurs familles. Les auteurs démontrent de façon experte pourquoi il est crucial pour le clinicien de posséder une compréhension des conséquences de l'exposition et de développer une évaluation efficace et des compétences d'intervention. Avec un examen de la recherche pertinente, les considérations d'évaluation et les théories actuelles sont fournies avec une exploration des conseils pratiques de traitement basé sur des données probantes. Ces lignes directrices comprennent des suggestions sur les méthodes de traitement pour les interventions individuelles ainsi que les interventions de groupes. Les obstacles à la réalisation de traitements sont abordées, ainsi que l'efficacité et le pronostic après l'intervention. *Growing Up With Domestic Violence* offre une bonne combinaison de la recherche, la théorie, et l'information clinique dans un format facile à lire et très concis.

Twenty years ago, Jaffe and Wolfe—both psychologists, educators, and experts in their field—published *Children of Battered Women*, their first look at the research and clinical practice guidelines for those working with children exposed to parental violence. In *Growing Up with Domestic Violence*, they have collaborated with Campbell, a research coordinator and consultant, to highlight the progress that has occurred in the field over the last two decades. This new book lays a clinical foundation for both new and seasoned clinicians who work with or encounter children who have been exposed to violence within their families.

Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a term that acknowledges and reflects a broader definition of exposure. It has been shown to be a complex phenomenon that disrupts healthy child development and thus requires clinicians to possess the knowledge needed to effectively assess and intervene. The book expertly demonstrates that it is imperative that clinicians acquire an understanding of the consequences of exposure so they are better able to appreciate each child's unique experience and develop more specific interventions. To further this goal, the authors offer practical, evidence-based treatment guidance as they review relevant research, assessment considerations, current theories, and treatment interventions.

Growing Up with Domestic Violence provides current, useful, and clear information on the experience of children caught in the collision between parental violence and child abuse. Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of current definitions for what constitutes the experience of "exposure." It explores how legal definitions and terminology have been changed to reflect our present understanding that children are not passive "witnesses" but are actively experiencing and living with the consequences of parental violence. Prevalence rates are briefly discussed to impress upon the reader the significance of the scope of the problem, with an acknowledgement of the cultural and socio-demographic factors that are associated with increased vulnerability. Along with a succinct look at course and prognosis, the authors present an overview of the impact of exposure to IPV on children and youth, as well as identifying both familial and societal risk and protective factors. The need for differential diagnosis is highlighted with the recognition that children exposed to IPV may have underlying issues and/or develop symptoms that may meet diagnostic criteria for a number of disorders (e.g., PTSD, ADHD, Conduct disorders).

In Chapter 2, readers are provided with brief, yet sufficient, summaries of the four theories and models that are most often used to understand the adjustment difficulties that children experience as a result of exposure: Developmental & Traumatology, Cognitive-Contextual Framework, Social Learning Theory, and Feminist Theory. Each theory's strengths are highlighted. The reality is that no one theory is able to adequately make sense of the wide range of outcomes experienced by children. Most helpful was the authors' presentation of a compilation of each theory into an overarching "ecological model" that considers individual, family, community, and societal factors that all influence how a child is impacted by IPV. The pictorial representation of the model provides an easily understandable and visual summary of how these many factors are intertwined.

Chapter 3 explores diagnostic considerations and highlights the psychiatric system's focus on specific disorders, while recognizing that such a limited focus does not incorporate or allow for a broader analysis of family or societal factors that may be influencing symptoms. A recognition of the potential for serious and lethal consequences makes the need for adequate risk assessment and safety planning very clear. Although a few specific risk assessments tools are mentioned, this was the only section in the book from which I found myself wanting more in-depth information. However, the reader is given useful assessment questions that can be used to guide the assessment and treatment plans.

In Chapter 4, the focus is on interventions specific to child exposure, rather than specific psychiatric diagnoses. The discussion highlights that in order to ensure safety and optimal effectiveness, clinicians must use a multifaceted intervention with both children and parents. Suggestions around methods of treatment for both individual and group interventions are offered. The benefits of group interventions are explored, and examples of manualized group treatment programs that are currently being implemented in a variety of settings are provided. I specifically appreciated the highlighting of both the issues that children often bring into treatment and the critical areas to address in treatment for different age groups. A section on intervention programs for parents highlights the need to focus on strengthening the parent-child relationship, to provide support to address the violence, and to improve communication between parents who still have contact. Lastly, barriers to carrying out treatment are addressed, as well as efficacy and prognosis after intervention.

The final chapter takes an illuminating look at specific clinical interventions. The authors draw on case studies from their own professional backgrounds to demonstrate the complexity of the problems faced by children and their families. Each case study walks the reader through background information, assessment, and a brief summary of the clinical intervention provided. The case studies highlight the multidisciplinary and collaborative nature of interventions. The authors also provide the reader with a short list of further readings, and a list of tools and resources that clinicians can access. Both will be helpful for those wanting more in-depth knowledge.

I highly recommend this book for both students and experienced practitioners looking to gain an understanding of how to intervene in cases of intimate partner violence. The book provides a good combination of research, theory, and clinical information in a well-written, easy-to-read, yet concise format. Having worked specifically with children exposed to IPV for a number of years, I particularly appreciated the comprehensive index and useful marginal notes that allow for easy reference. The authors' wealth of expertise and experience is evident in their ability to titrate down such a complex issue into a format that leaves readers feeling as if they have a solid understanding of what needs to be considered when providing any assessment or intervention. Overall, an excellent foundation is provided from which those interested can pull all of the necessary pieces to both assess and intervene, as well as to develop a clearer understanding of the complexity of exposure to intimate partner violence.

About the Author

Lisa Corkum-O'Grady is a psychotherapist working in Ottawa in a community adult mental health agency. Her interests lie in the areas of expressive arts therapies, anxiety, childhood trauma, and ethics.

Address correspondence to Lisa O'Grady, 63 Beaver Ridge, Ottawa, ON, Canada, K2E 6E2; e-mail <lisacorkum@hotmail.com>