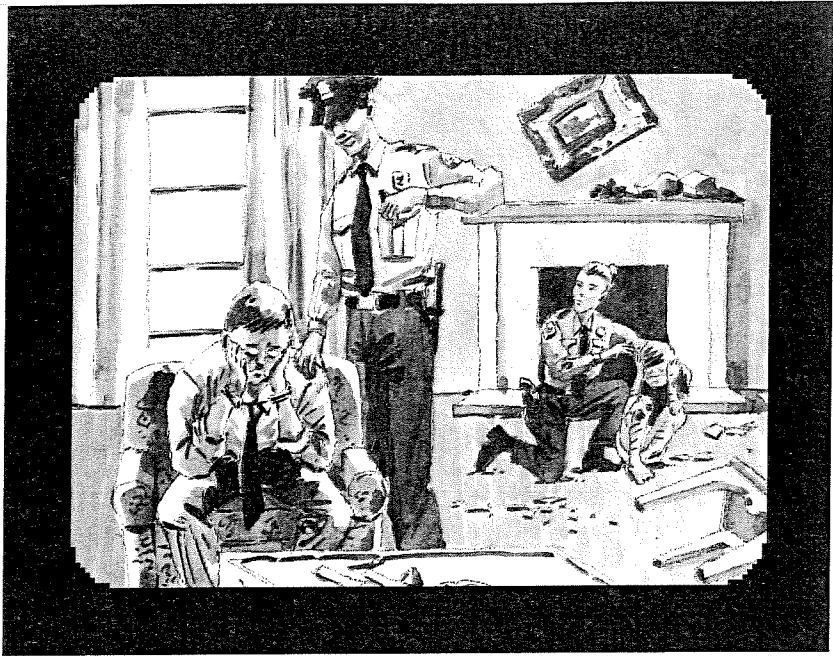


Chapter 16

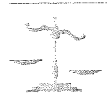
What's a Family Violence Crime?

Jim B. was an engineer. He and his wife had three children. Jim and his wife started abusing drugs. Pretty soon, they would use drugs every night after work. When the children returned from school, if they did not do their chores or homework properly, they would receive a beating. The drug abuse got worse and so did the beatings. Jim and his wife lost complete control of their behavior when abusing drugs. One night, Jim hurt his youngest daughter so badly that she died. He had thrown her against a wall. She died from an injury to the head.



CHECK vocabulary words in bold.
LOOK UP word meanings in the glossary beginning on page 92.

Jim B. was found guilty of murder. Neighbors were shocked because, to outsiders in the community, the family had always seemed to be perfectly normal. But a family that abuses drugs is never normal. It is also often violent. In this chapter, you will learn what the law says about family violence. It can happen in every kind of family, rich or poor. You will learn what help the law gives to victims of family violence.



CRITICAL THINKING
What do you think is the difference between punishment that is OK and a beating that is not OK?

Family Violence Law

The law used to say that a wife and children were like property that belonged to the husband or father. The father could do whatever he wanted and was the boss. Women and children had very few rights.

Today, things are different. Many states have family courts to deal with family problems. There are now laws that treat all members of a family fairly. It is illegal for anyone to be **abused**, or hurt. **Spouse abuse** occurs when a spouse is hurt by a partner. When children are hurt, we have cases of **child abuse**. The hurt can be physical or emotional.



Social worker Judy Z. says: "My family was attacked. One sister was raped and another seriously hurt. Yet, because our family is so close, I could get past the violence that had

made us victims. I always felt safe. Young people need to learn how to raise a family. Most teen parents do not have family life skills. They also teach violence at home without even knowing it. If a person grows up feeling unsafe, he or she grows up not needing to feel safe. He or she learns to live in danger. That is sad."

Child Abuse and Child Neglect

What is child abuse? Child abuse means harming a child's mind or body. For example, Steve R. became very angry when he heard his four-year-old son, Tim, cry. Steve would hit him to make him stop. One day he hit Tim too hard and broke his arm. Steve's wife, Jane, took their son to the hospital. Tim was crying and extremely upset emotionally.

When the doctor asked how Tim had broken his arm, Jane said that Tim had fallen in the playground. The doctor did not believe the story. He could tell the difference between a broken bone from falling and a broken bone from a beating.

The law says that the doctor must report suspected child abuse. Tim's doctor called **child protection** services. People from the services came to talk to Tim's parents. They wanted to work with them to make their home safe for Tim so he could return home. But first, Tim went to stay in a **foster** home for a while.

Sometimes, child abuse is not reported. Neighbors do not like to become involved. The child may be too young, afraid, or ashamed to tell anyone. One parent may not want to report the other parent who did the hurting. The abusing parent usually is too ashamed to tell anyone.

In the case of Jim B. and his family, although the parents were highly respected in the community, one teacher did remember seeing bruises on two of the children's faces a couple of times. The children would make excuses. They were too afraid to tell the truth.

At first, when the death of Jim B.'s daughter was discovered, nobody could believe that it. Child abuse and family violence can happen in any family. It does not matter where the family lives or how much money the family has.

How can you report child abuse? An abused child can tell an adult whom he or she trusts. This adult might be a teacher, a religious leader, or parent of a friend. The adult should then call the **child welfare agency** for the child. Most states have a hotline for reporting child abuse.

Will the abuser know who reported the abuse? The answer is no. This information is kept secret. A child-welfare worker will visit the family to find out what is happening. This person's job will be to decide how the family's problems can be solved.

The law says that friends and neighbors do not have to report suspected child abuse. By contrast, teachers, doctors, and social workers must report what they suspect is happening.

If a person lives with someone who is abusing a child, the law says that the person who knows but does nothing to try to stop it might also be guilty of child abuse. Often, women are afraid to stop the abuse of another family member because they are also being abused.

Child Neglect: Is child neglect the same as child abuse? The answer is no. **Neglect** means not taking good enough care of a child so that the child physical or mental health is harmed. Parents might leave a small child alone and uncared for. Children who are left alone might play with matches and cause a deadly fire that kills innocent people.

Some parents do not feed or clothe a child properly. For example, when the police came to Jim B.'s house, they found that the other children had not been well cared for. They were very hungry, their clothing was torn, and they had not had a bath for days. The children had been neglected. It does not take abuse to harm the health of a child.

CRITICAL THINKING
Homes with guns have three times the number of suicides as homes without guns. How would you explain this?

DID YOU KNOW? lawmakers in the state of Massachusetts decided that battered women often should be considered by the courts not as criminals but as survivors. In the future, the criminal justice system will have an even greater understanding of this problem. It has been named the Battered Women Syndrome.

EYE OPENER More women are hurt as a result of family violence than by any other cause. That is why 20 percent of people coming to hospital emergency rooms are battered women.

1. What did Jim B. and his wife start abusing? _____
2. What excuse did they use to beat their children? _____
3. What happened one night? _____
4. A family that abuses drugs is never what? _____
5. What will you learn in this chapter? _____
6. What did the law used to say about a wife and children? _____

7. Many states have what to deal with family problems? _____
8. When does spouse abuse happen? _____
9. The hurt can be physical or what? _____
10. What does child abuse mean? _____
11. What must a doctor report? _____
12. Who did Tim's doctor call? _____
13. In telling about child abuse a young child may be what? _____
14. Jim B. and his family were respected where? _____
15. Where can child abuse and family violence happen? _____
16. Who are some of the adults an abused child can talk to? _____

17. Who should the adult call for the child? _____
18. Who must report suspected child abuse? _____
19. Often, why do women not report the abuse of another family member? _____

20. What is child neglect? _____

Critical Thinking

(pages 76 & 77)

1. Is there ever a situation or time that it is ok to beat a child in a family? Why or why not?
2. What form of punishment is ok for a child?
3. How can teen parents learn about how to be a parent?
4. If a child grows up surrounded by violence, what kind of parent might they be? Why?

5. What do you think causes child abuse? Give examples.

6. How would you explain why homes with guns have three times the number of suicides as homes without guns?

7. Why do you think so many women feel its ok to be beaten at home?