



EMOTIONAL CONCUSSIONS LEAVE UNTOLD DAMAGE

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

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In our world today many children experience what is known as an emotional concussion. Emotional concussions can be just as lethal, and sometimes even more so, than a physical concussion.

Emotional concussions occur when young children live in dysfunctional homes controlled by alcohol, drugs, explosive tempers and homes full of stress. They happen when children live with dysfunctional adults and with people who are physically, emotionally, and/or sexually abusive. Divorce can also be a major cause of an emotional concussion.

From the [ACEs Too High](#) website we find,

“The life-in-dysfunction emotional concussion is a day-in-day-out brain bludgeoning by stress-induced hormones of adrenaline and cortisol. It wires developing brains for flight, fight or freeze. It can set people up to pass on the family legacy of dysfunction.”

Very few people pay any attention to the emotional concussions our kids are saddled with on a daily basis. Even though the kids who live in the middle of these battlefields and are injured emotionally everyday of their young lives, most of their cries go unheard.

Unlike a physical concussion where a coach or someone checks their pupils to see if they are dilated, holds up 2 or 3 fingers to make sure the kid isn't seeing double, and asks them a few questions to make sure the child is cognizant, no one checks the kid who has an emotional concussion. There is no concern that the child has another new dad in the home. No one checks to see if the child is home alone late into the night because mom has to work two jobs to make ends meet. No one notices it is the same kid who is in trouble all the time.

Also, unlike a physical concussion where a kid is taken out of the game and must have a doctor's permission to return, a child with an emotional concussion is sent right back into the emotional mayhem. There are no do overs or time outs for these kids. Most of them have no coach or outside adult who will oversee their wounds. Mostly, they are just patted on the head, told to stop their unruly behavior, get themselves straightened up and get back in the game.

Emotional concussions cause a lot of damage to a child. Many become dysfunctional early on and carry that dysfunction into their adult lives. As teens they may





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- Contemplate or succeed in committing suicide
- Get involved in drugs
- Become alcoholics
- Become active sexually early on and end up as pregnant teens
- Become cutters
- Bully other kids
- Drop out of school

Many children of divorce have emotional concussions. And, like physical concussions can run the gambit of being light or severe, so do emotional concussions. For the child of divorce who has a support system and concerned adults outside the home they will not have a severe emotional concussion.

For kids who have warring parents, no support system outside the home and are stuck right in the middle of the war zone, their emotional concussion is more severe. Some kids will never completely recover and will carry the scars of the emotional concussion with them for the rest of their lives. It will affect everything they attempt to do.

What can we do?

Children with emotional concussions need the church to step up and love on them. They need a safe haven where they can rest, relax and get a dose of Biblical truths to help heal their souls.

These kids need help controlling their emotions and their behaviors. From [Kidlutions](#) we read,

"The more out of control a child gets, the more she looks to us to demonstrate a sense of calm. When our behavior starts to mirror that of the child who is on a slippery slope to emotional mayhem, there is little hope left to assist her."

While there are no quick evaluations such as holding up 3 fingers to see if the child with an emotional concussion is seeing straight, we can be there for the child. We can be interested in their lives outside the church. We can offer hope and encouragement. We can remember scriptures that speak to such things as hope.

"Hope deferred makes a heart sick..." Proverbs 13:12

In the long run, emotional concussions can be just as severe as a physical concussion. They can leave a child crippled emotionally for the rest of their lives.

What kind of long-term damage have you seen from a child who has an emotional concussion?



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Linda Ranson Jacobs is one of the forefront leaders in the area of children and divorce. She developed and created the DivorceCare for Kids programs. DC4K is an international program for churches to use to help children of divorced parents find healing within the arms of a loving church family. As a speaker, author, trainer, program developer and child care center owner, Linda has assisted countless families by modeling and acting on the healing love she has found in Jesus Christ. Linda offers support, encouragement and suggestions to help those working with the child of divorce. She serves as DC4K Ambassador (<http://www.dc4k.org>) and can be reached via email at ljacobs@dc4k.org. You can find additional articles from Linda on her blog at <http://blog.dc4k.org/>.

Free articles and devotions for single parent families in your church can be found at Linda's website Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids (<http://www.hlp4.com>).