

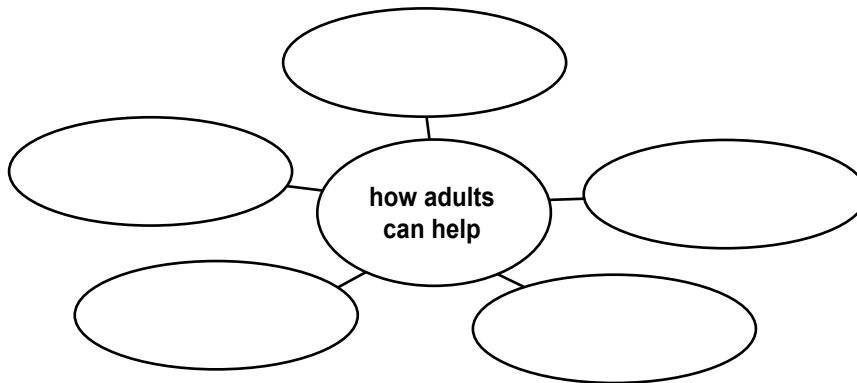
Shouting at children can be as damaging as physical or sexual abuse, study says

Level 1: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the question. Use the mind map to help you brainstorm more ideas.

How can adults help children grow up happy and safe?



2 Key words

a. Write the correct words from the wordpool to match the definitions below. Then, find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

abuse

drug

jail

shout

verbal

1. say something in a loud, angry voice _____
2. something illegal taken to change how you feel or act _____
3. where the police takes you if you break a law _____
4. treating someone in a cruel, violent, or unfair way _____
5. using spoken words _____

half

hurtful

negative

proud

twice

6. bad or harmful _____
7. two times or double the amount _____
8. 50 per cent; two equal parts _____
9. making you feel upset and offended _____
10. feeling positive and happy about something you did _____

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b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. After the basketball game, the parents told their children how _____ they were.
2. It is a very serious issue when people _____ children.
3. Can you please cut the sandwich in _____?
4. The cost of eggs has gone up again. It's _____ what it was.
5. Alcohol and _____ can hurt people's health.
6. Saying _____ things to children can affect them their whole lives.

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Denis Campbell

01 October, 2023

- 1 Parents who shout at their children or call them "stupid" put them at risk of hurting themselves, using drugs and ending up in jail.
- 2 People should see shouting at children as a form of abuse, experts say. According to experts, shouting and yelling can hurt a child as much as any other kind of abuse.
- 3 Verbal abuse happens more than other forms of abuse. It happens to about 40 per cent of children, and that number is growing.
- 4 Professor Shanta R Dube said that adults often don't know how badly shouting and negative words, "such as 'stupid' and 'lazy'" can affect children, especially if it happens to them.
- 5 One study included 20,556 people living in the UK. People who experienced verbal abuse were almost twice as likely (19.9 per cent) to use cannabis as people who did not experience verbal abuse (10.8 per cent). They had almost double the chance of going to jail (4.4 per cent).
- 6 One recent UK survey of 1,000 11- to 17-year-olds found 41 per cent said that adults often used hurtful words. 51 per cent said this happened weekly, and one in 10 said daily.
- 7 Children said the most hurtful words were, "you're useless", "you're stupid", and "you can't do anything right". The most positive things were "I am proud of you", "you can do it", and "I believe in you."
- 8 Professor Peter Fonagy said that children believe what adults say. So, if we use words to abuse instead of teaching, this can hurt children's health and keep them from being full members of their community.
- 9 He added that verbal abuse seriously affects children. It can cause problems with their bodies and minds. They are also more likely to have abuse later in their lives or repeat the abuse with others.
- 10 World Health Organization research found 36.1 per cent of children around the world experienced emotional abuse, including verbal abuse. That was many more than the 25 per cent who experienced sexual abuse and the 22 per cent who experienced physical abuse.
- 11 A study in the US found that 55 per cent of older school students were abused verbally at home.
- 12 Dube said that childhood verbal abuse is hard to stop because few adults understand that it is a common problem and that parents need to start speaking more positively to their children because their words matter.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What do the experts say about shouting at children?
2. Which form of abuse happens most often?
3. What two things were twice as likely to happen to children who were verbally abused?
4. According to the UK survey, how often do children hear hurtful words from adults?
5. According to the children, what were some of the most hurtful things they heard from adults?
6. According to the children, what were some of the most positive things they heard from adults?
7. According to Professor Dube, why is verbal abuse so hard to stop?

4 Key language

a. Read the word pairs. Choose whether they are synonyms or antonyms. Use a dictionary to help you.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. shout — yell | <i>synonyms</i> | <i>antonyms</i> |
| 2. negative — positive | <i>synonyms</i> | <i>antonyms</i> |
| 3. twice — double | <i>synonyms</i> | <i>antonyms</i> |
| 4. hurt — help | <i>synonyms</i> | <i>antonyms</i> |
| 5. danger — safety | <i>synonyms</i> | <i>antonyms</i> |
| 6. likely — probably | <i>synonyms</i> | <i>antonyms</i> |

b. Choose four of the words above and write personalised sentences using them.

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “Adults don’t understand how verbal abuse hurts children.”
- “Speaking positively to children helps them stay healthy.”

6 In your own words

a. Do some research about how to speak positively to others.

- *What are some things you can say?*
- *What kind of body language is helpful?*
- *How do you think there's a positive effect?*
- *What can you do to change negative behaviour?*

b. Report your findings to the class and share your opinion. Here are some phrases to help you when you describe the technique.

According to the experts, ...

One example is ...

A way to do/show this is ...

Another idea is ...

Here are some phrases to use when stating your opinion.

I think (that) ...

I want to understand why ...

From my experience, ...

I (dis)agree with ...