

New online learning module gives children of domestic violence a voice

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Over half of the residents of battered women's shelters in the United States are children (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2010). Now, a new, innovative online training program aims to elevate children's voices, so that service providers may better hear, understand, and respond to the children and families they serve.

The project, called Honor Our Voices, www.honorourvoices.org, was created by the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse and the Center for Advanced Studies in [Child Welfare](#) at the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, with support from the Avon Foundation for Women.

Honor Our Voices presents information on child exposure to [domestic violence](#) by engaging participants with the voices and stories of children who have experienced domestic violence firsthand. The stories are composites of real [life experiences](#) and are told through a combination of [diary entries](#), pictures, and audio clips. Alongside each diary entry, the current research and effective practices related to the content of the diary are laid out with headings that detail an area of effective practice.

"This [learning experience](#) is informed by some of the best practitioners and researchers in the field," says Jeffrey Edleson, professor of social work at the University of Minnesota and one of the world's leading authorities on children exposed to domestic violence. "It provides a unique focus on the needs of children from the children's perspectives."

"With information gained from this site, professionals will be able to better respond to the needs of these children," he continues. "And it is freely available for those professionals working on the front lines to complete at their own pace while sitting at their desk or at home."

Carol Kurzig, president of the Avon Foundation for Women, said of the project, "Honor Our Voices will enable children's voices to be heard when they speak out about the domestic violence they have experienced, which is the goal of the Avon Foundation's Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program. We are so pleased that our funding has enabled MINCAVA to create such an innovative and essential tool."

Provided by University of Minnesota

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