The Violence Intervention Program at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) promotes a “trauma-informed” approach to helping patients who come to CHOP’s Emergency Department or Trauma Unit for treatment after being involved in a fight or being assaulted and suffering traumatic stress.

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WHAT WE DO
A component of CHOP’s Violence Prevention Initiative, the Violence Intervention Program (VIP) provides client-centered, family-focused intervention services for assault-injured youth and their families during and after a hospital visit to promote physical and emotional healing and prevent reinjury.

After an upsetting event, youth may be more easily excited, re-experience the event in their heads, or avoid situations or locations where the event occurred. These feelings can be a normal response to a traumatic event.

However, if they last too long (more than a month) and impair functioning in everyday activities, then the youth may benefit from receiving treatment for their post-traumatic symptoms.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS
Post-traumatic stress symptoms may be triggered by experiencing or witnessing an upsetting event.

Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms include:
• Intrusive, unwanted thoughts about the event
• Re-experiencing the event through nightmares or flashbacks
• Distress at reminders of the event
• Having trouble concentrating or sleeping
• Feeling “jumpy” or “on edge”
• Avoiding things related to the event
• Feeling emotionally numb or detached

Other symptoms can include new fears, bellyaches, headaches, or feeling in a daze or “spacey.”

OUR TEAM HELPS WITH:
• Medical follow-up
• Victim’s assistance
• Peer support groups
• Emotional support for traumatic stress
• Trauma-focused therapy
• School advocacy
• Legal advocacy
• Housing referrals
• Parenting education and resources
• Enrichment activities
• Life skills training
• Substance abuse assistance

HELPFUL RESOURCES
• CHOP Violence Prevention Initiative chop.edu/violence
• Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) 800-233-2339
• Penn Center for Youth and Family Trauma Response and Recovery > 215-829-5467 med.upenn.edu/traumaresponse
• School District of Philadelphia Bullying Hotline 215-400-SAFE (7233)
• Pennsylvania Department of Education Office for Safe Schools > 877-730-6315
• National Child Traumatic Stress Network nctsn.org

“VIP HELPED ME SO MUCH. I USED TO BE SO ANGRY AND FIGHT ALL THE TIME. THEY HELPED ME LEARN TO TALK ABOUT MY FEELINGS INSTEAD OF FIGHTING. THEY HELPED ME FEEL LIKE I BELONG AND HAVE GOALS FOR MY LIFE.”

— 15-YEAR-OLD VIP CLIENT