

Supporting Children & Young People through their Experiences

Professionally or personally there will be times: when we know children are experiencing Domestic Abuse, suspect children are experiencing Domestic Abuse, or are totally unaware children are experiencing Domestic Abuse. Many children 'cope' with Domestic Abuse so well that it often goes undetected by the adults they are in contact with. However many children display signs of Domestic Abuse - but these signs often appear to be the result of 'something else' so Domestic Abuse remains undetected. As service providers we need to look beyond the labels society sticks on young people. The responsibility to improve their position belongs to us all.

Over the years 100's of children & young people have told us how living with Domestic Abuse affected them, their behaviour, their education and their emotions. In our experience young people are well aware of society's apparent need to focus on outcomes whilst failing resoundingly to recognise or identify the 'real' problem. Far too often we have supported young people through other adult intervention and witnessed first hand a pre requisite that the child changes something over which they have little or no control.

It is largely through listening to children and young people and survivors of abuse that we can begin to understand the effects of domestic abuse on children.

The following samples of art work and children's words enable young people to have a voice

MY LETTER

When I talk PLEASE LISTEN TO ME -
When you listen PLEASE HEAR ME -
When you hear me PLEASE DON'T JUDGE ME -
When you don't judge me YOU AND I WILL BE FRIENDS -

Your problems became mine
But my problems stay my own

Until someone notices -
Until someone cares -
Until someone helps -

I belong in your world
But you can't see me

I live in your street
But you're too private

I sit in your class
But you're too busy

Please.....SOMEONE.....notice

from the quiet girl

Things Children & Young People have said to us...

"I wish I could have a dad like my pal Sean 'cos his dad is kind even to other children that's not even his and my dad is kind to none of us."

"My mum and dad was fighting and then my dad smashed up my play station and said he was goin' to put us all out if my mum didn't watch it."

"One night I thought it was people breaking into the house because there was shouting & my mum was screaming & I went down the stairs & my dad yelled at me to get back to bed & I was the scariest I've ever been"

"I can't ever remember when it was different but my mum says it used to be different before....but I can't remember it."

"It's as if we don't exist. They can catch you if you don't have a telly licence but they can't catch you for behaving like that to a human being. My mum has no life."

"One time he hurt my mum so hard that she had to go to the hospital but usually he just hits her not as hard."

"Nobody cares what happens.... the neighbours know but they act like nothing is going on.... how can they hear it and pretend like they don't.... they're just as bad as him....they could do something, but they don't."

"The worst thing was not being able to tell my pals we was going, but that was maybe better because I think I would have been dead embarrassed telling them."

"The panel says they'll be watchin' me, that's a joke they should be watchin' him he's the one that's screwed all our lives up. No way am I goin' to that school...I don't care what they say."

"My mum was crying last night because she's got no furniture to put in our new house."

"If people could just know what he's like. He should be locked up for the things he's done to my mum."

"The teacher told the class my name & they was all to say hello and my legs was shaking."

"I'm scared about when we have to leave the refuge because then I'll have to go to start another new school again."

"It's o.k. some of the time but I miss my pals & I just have to go around on my own all the time now."

"It's hard when you don't know anybody. When I try to join in my words don't come out right so I just shut up."

"My mum says I just I have to forget our old house 'cos we can't ever go back there, but I keep on thinking about it and sometimes I can't get to sleep for it."

"Why is this allowed to happen?"

Children & Young People Speaking Out...

My Problem is being shouted at

I stayed in my room
but I got shouted at for that
I came down the stairs and watched TV
but I got shouted at for that
So I used to just stay out all the time
but I got shouted at for that
I get right fed up when all you get
is shouted at shouted at shouted at
Then I feel bad all the time
I dont ever bring my pals round my house
because he is always shouting
so they dont have me round their bit
I wish the shouting would stop
I just wish the shouting would stop



AFTER THE FIGHT

DONT ANSUR THE DOOR

so we hav to be quite and not be moving
and wait till they go



DONT TELL ANYBODY

so we have to not tell anyone and watch who we
talk to and watch what we say all the time

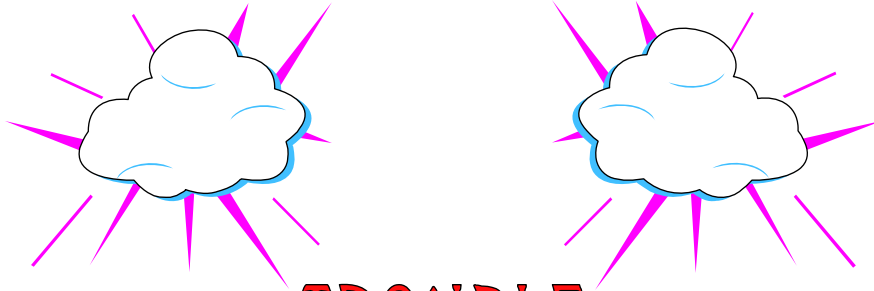


DONT WORRY

so we hav to kid on wer ok and no scared



We all need to question our understanding of the issues involved
and the role that we can play....



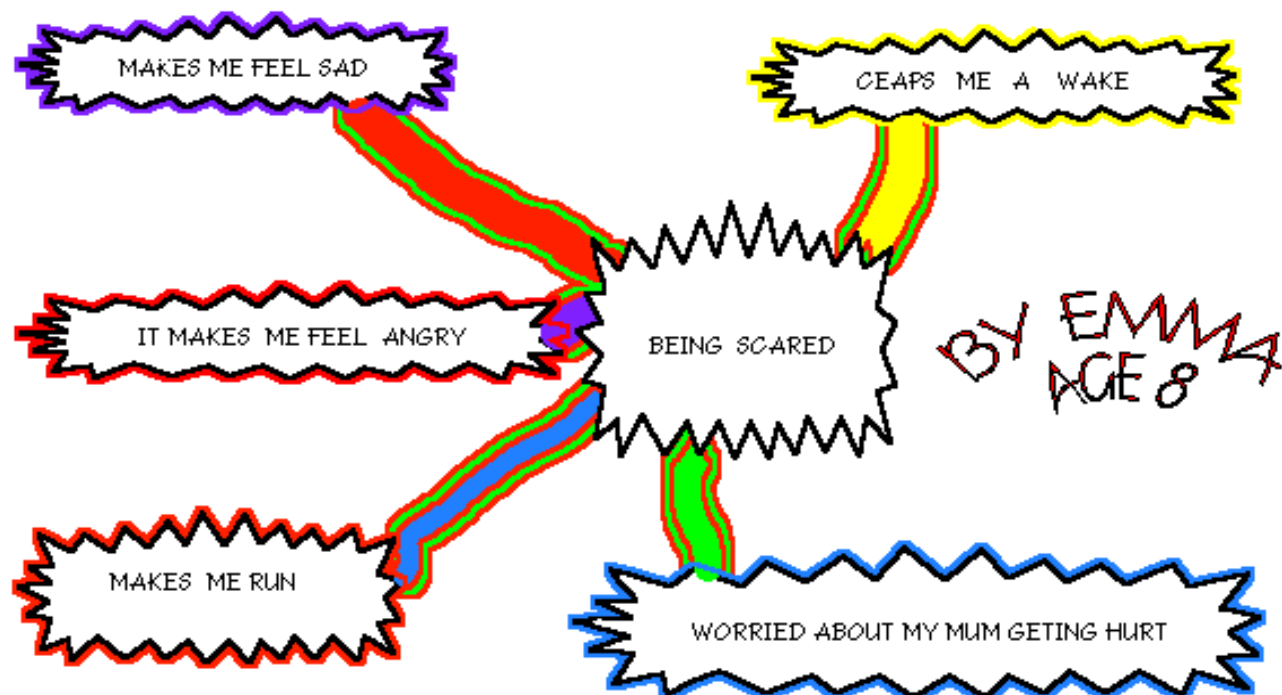
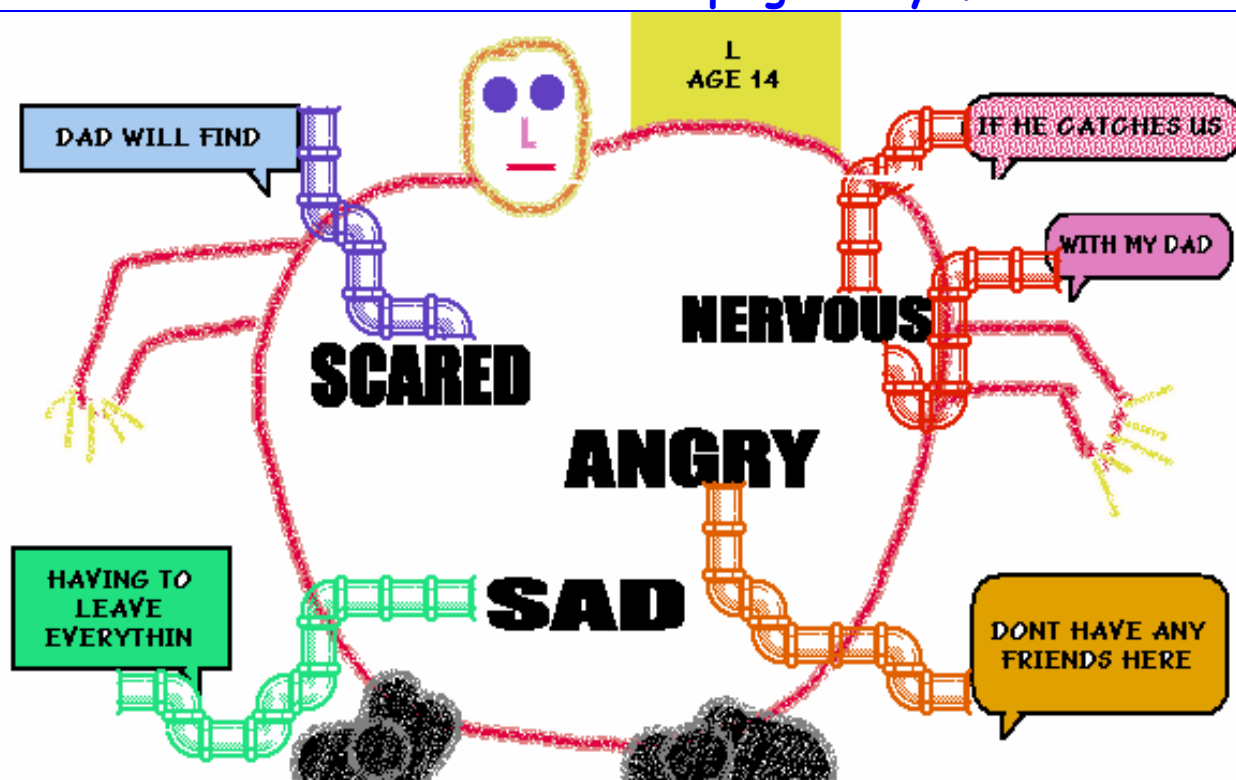
TROUBLE

**The trouble with trouble
Is that it just causes more trouble
and then the first bit of trouble
gets hid and the new bits are
what everybody goes on about
and the thing that caused all the
trouble in the first place gets
ignored as usual**

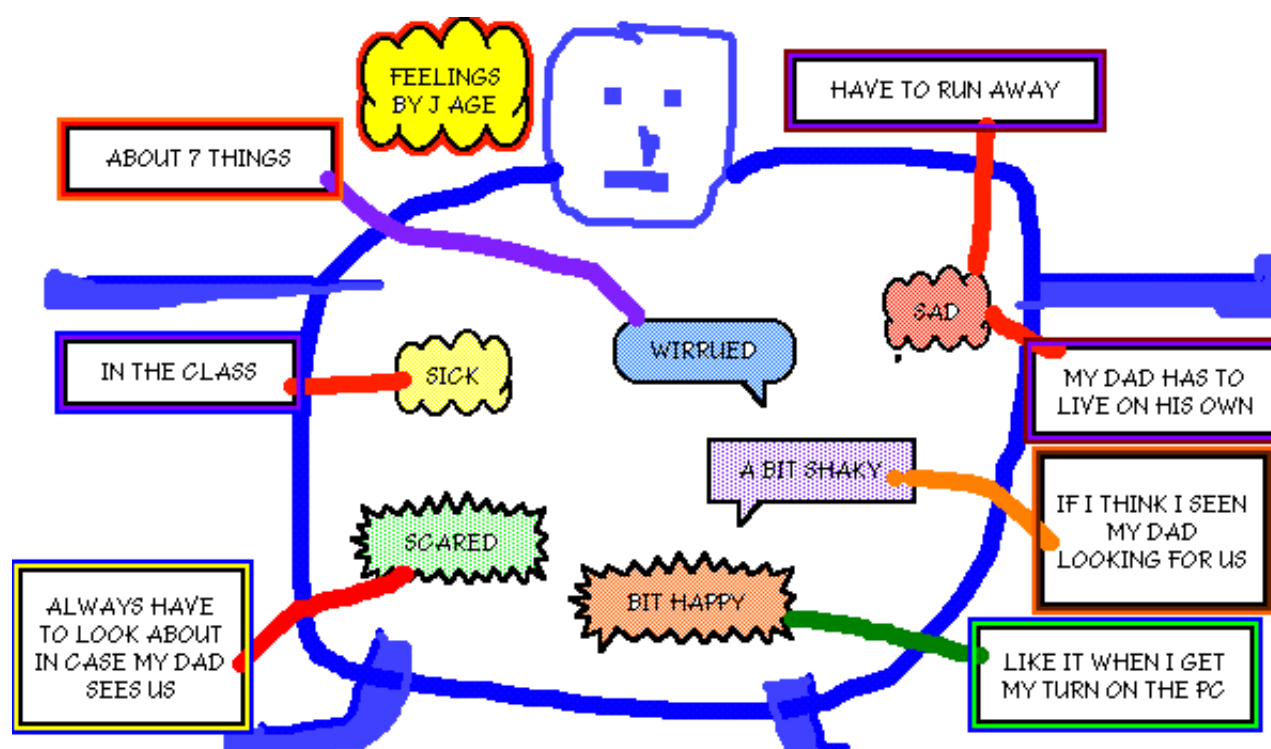
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age 14*



We need to consider what 'coping' really means....

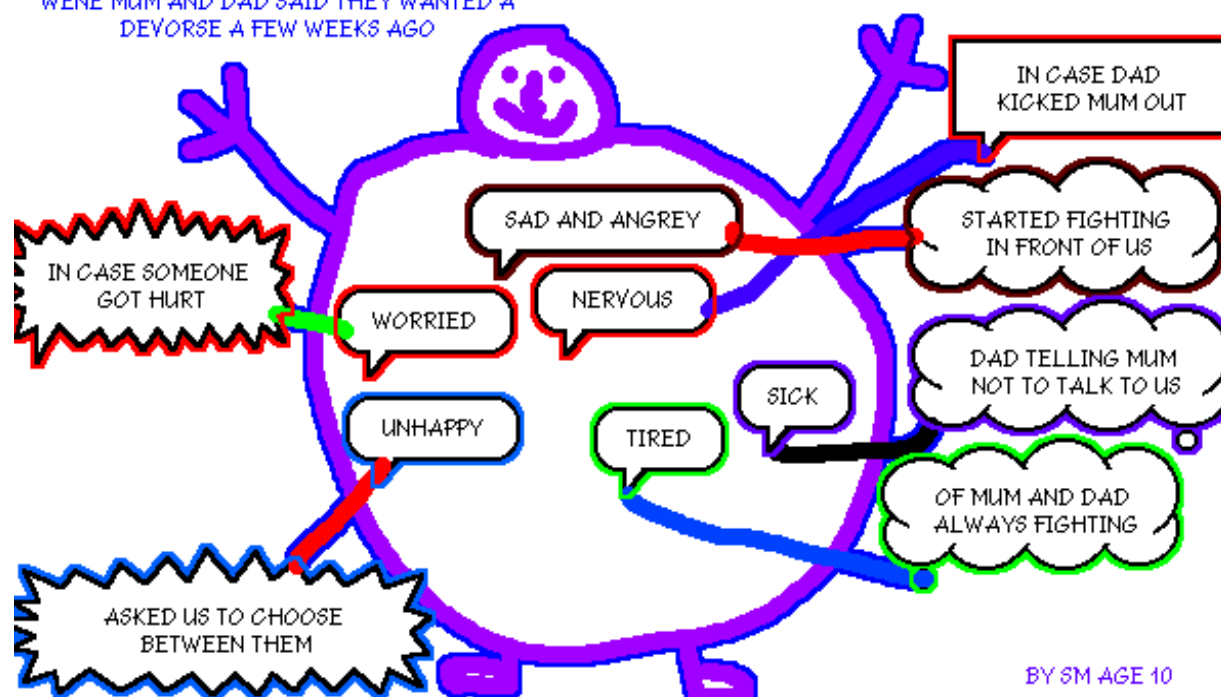


We need to acknowledge the complexity of Domestic Abuse...



Written by a young person living in South Ayrshire Women's Aid Refuge

WENE MUM AND DAD SAID THEY WANTED A DEVORSE A FEW WEEKS AGO



BY SM AGE 10

We need to consider the importance of training....


CHILDREN

- RIED WHEN I GOT BACK TO THE REFUGE
- ELPED ME A BIT
- FELT LONELY
- IED BECAUSE I WAS SCARED
- ONT UNDERSTAND WHAT MY LIFE IS LIKE
- OOM WAS SCAREY
- EVERYONE LOOKED ANGRY
- ERYOUS ABOUT GOING
- CARED TO GO AND SCARED TO TALK

PAINE

- RETENDED I WAS OK
- LL THE TIME I WANTED TO RUN OUT
- OT SURE WHAT THEY WERE SAYING
- VERY TIME I WENT I WAS SCARED
- OOKED AT THE FLOOR






K
AGE 15



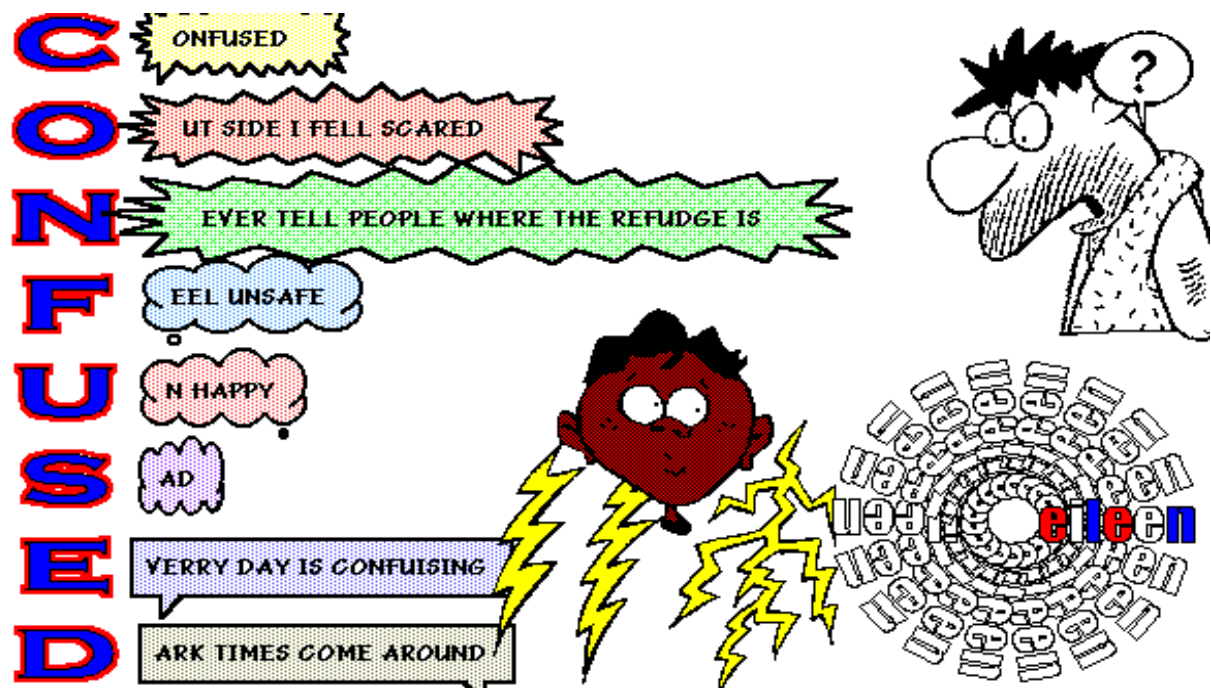
QUESTIONS

- UP AND ASK ME A QUESTION
- WANT TO KNOW TO MUCH
- VERYBODY WANTS TO ASK ME QUESTIONS ALL THE TIME
- O MANY QUESTIONS
- HE QUESTIONS ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY
- HAVE QUESTIONS THAT YOU DONT ANSWUR
- N ABOUT STUFF ALL THE TIME
- OSEY PEOPLE
- TOP THE QUESTIONS

I HATE NOSEY PEOPLE BY AG AGE 14

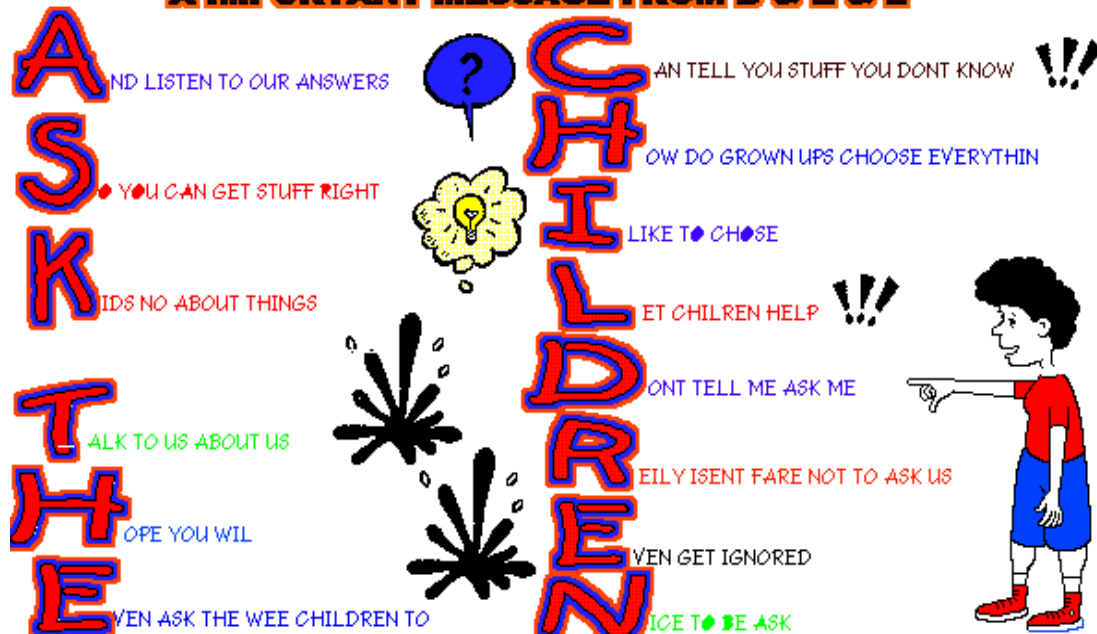






We need to evaluate our service provision...



We need to consult the right people....

A IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM B & E & L



Words & Art by 3 Children living in South Ayrshire Women's Aid Refuge

We need to reflect upon the impact we make as individuals....

Things I will do when I grow up

BUY MY MUM NICE THING

I WONT SHOUT AND SCARE
CHILDREN

PLAY A GITAR

BE CIND TO POEPL

HELP CHILDREN THAT CANT DO THE
HOME WORK

GET MY OWN DOG

NOT BREAK MY MUMS STUFF ALL UP

GO A PLANE TO A HOLIDAY

BY R
AGE 8



We need to remain positive...
leaving an abuser is a process...not an event

H

AVING A MUM THAT JUST CRIES A LITTLE BIT

A

LL THE OTHER CHILDREN KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE SCARED

P

LEASE DON'T LET HIM FIND US

P

LANNING ABOUT OUR NEW HOME WITH JUST
MUM AND MEE AND MY WEE SISTER

Y

OU CAN STOP BEING SCARED ALL OF THE TIME



FEELINGS

You can't see them,
You can't hear them,
You can't smell them,
You can't taste them,
But feelings are ALWAYS there.

Even when you are sleeping you dream
And in your dreams you can get really scared.
And when you are watching telly you see things that make you
remember and your feelings come back.

When you are hanging about with your pals
You kid on that things are OK so they won't notice.

The only time you don't have feelings is when you're dead

I used to think that would maybe be better.
The man on telly says its good to talk
But not everyone wants to listen.
Women's Aid don't just listen to women
They listen to children as well
They should change their name
So that everyone knows they care

Thanks WOMENS AND CHILDRENS AID