

My FAMILY VIOLENCE STORY

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I used to live in n.s.w. I lived in a beautiful [REDACTED] house overlooking a forest with my daughter who was [REDACTED] and my partner. My partner and I [REDACTED] and did [REDACTED]

He was so lovely to me but ~~he~~ told me that he wanted a open relationship when we had been going out together ~~and~~ for about [REDACTED] months and I was pregnant. He told me he was in love with me but would run off and sleep with others and have intimate friendships with them.

IF I got jealous or had any feelings whatsoever ~~he~~ about the people he had intimate relationships with he would call me 'pathetic', a 'loser', 'stupid' and that I had no self esteem and ~~what~~ say 'whats wrong with you, you need to love yourself more! He would tell me not to wear makeup or buy myself pretty things as I didnt need to buy things and wear makeup to make up for my inadequacy, he would sleep with my friends so I had no one to talk to and if I said I was going to leave, he would seduce me back to him via - long massages, baths, home made meals, candles, incense, I was very in love with him so he could easily manipulate me. ~~later~~ I had no outlet and we had a [REDACTED] year old daughter, who heard me crying and witnessed some terrible things. He hit walls and spat at me several times calling me a 'pathetic dumbass bitch' if I showed any feelings of upset or jealousy towards his lovers. On one occasion he ~~he~~ strangled me against a wall, I fought back and threw a [REDACTED] at his head, our daughter saw this, I became so sad I lost alot of wieght and at one point I could not speak for 2 hours - became mildly catatonic

(2)

It all became too much and I think I had a nervous breakdown. It felt like (what I now know is a huge anxiety attack) felt like I was dying, I hid in a cupboard, I felt like I was trapped and so I reached out to a local service, counselling, but her words made me feel worse. She said "do you think he is in love with you?" and "why don't you leave!?" Well I did leave but he wouldn't let me, I left the house in N.S.W and was homeless in winter at one point, my daughter and I lived in a [REDACTED] on some abandoned land just out of town, walking up to snakes on the doorstep and rain coming through the top. He was at the house in front of the open fire when he called me and asked if I wanted to 'come home', of course I said yes, and although my daughter had a room I slept in the shed. I was so full of anxiety I wanted to leave but I felt like everyone thought I was crazy because to the outside he looked like the most lovely, perfect, gentle man. The abuse was inside doors, no-one saw I had no friends as they all had slept with him, he convinced me it was all my fault that I could not deal with his dallings. At one point he had a lover over while our child and I slept in another room, and I could hear but could not say or do anything as it was all my fault anyway, I just thought I was stupid. Eventually he went to [REDACTED] on a cheap flight deal to busk and I took the opportunity to leave and pack up, as I thought I cannot go through this constant cycle of despair, anger, abuse then

him manipulating me back into being with him, so I ⁽³⁾ moved to Melbourne with nothing but a backpack, and my little girl.

I lived in a great sharehouse ~~but~~ and fully finally broke up with him after a short stint of him finding me and seducing me back to being with him.

The sharehouse broke up and so I had to find a place for my daughter and I to live, I tried living back with mum + dad but they fight constantly and my dad hits my mum so I ~~g~~ couldn't stay. I needed money fast, so I began to work as a stripper, I got us a place then had to pay bills and rent all alone, so I continued working in the sex industry to pay rent, bills and buy clothes for my daughter and school excursion, education costs.

Services I could have accessed? -

I could have gone to seek help from a domestic violence (family violence service) but I did not recognise abuse - after I spoke to the counsellor who asked me if he loved me, and why don't I leave? I thought verbal, mental and some physical abuse would still be perceived as "My fault for staying" as "He must just not be in love".

- Isolation - these men isolate you, and break down your self esteem, resulting in you feeling too weak and broken and embarrassed to seek help "your pathetic" "your stupid". (embarrassed to be seen as a victim).
- Breaking the silence - (others knew, but no-one took me aside and said "you are being abused" "seek help - try this" (as they felt like it's not their business).

• There needs to be a wider understanding of what Family violence is. - eg - mental, physical, verbal, economic, —

So women can recognise that as many women think that Family violence is only physical violence.