

ROYAL COMMISSION SUBMISSION

7/05/2015

I have worked as a Case Manager for Safe Futures foundation for 21 years and have myself been a victim of Domestic Violence when I was a young mother of 20 .

I have in my career assisted hundreds of women and children to become empowered, often, after too many years in an abusive relationship.

My journey has been an amazing one and I would like to submit my thoughts on a proven way of assisting women in the journey that it takes to leave a relationship that is abusive.

The abuse that I was subjected to was verbal and controlling not physical, however my husband had an alcohol addiction that escalated in later years.

In the early years I did not recognise that I was subjected to Domestic Violence.

I turned to a group called Al-anon specifically for support in living with a person that I loved who drank too much.

In this group I learned to look at how I was handling the situation and used the 12 step program to find a serene way to eventually leave my husband.

I would like to propose that the commission look into implementing a 12 step program that would have specific steps that relate to Domestic violence where women can come for group meetings long before they leave the relationship or who have had the courage to leave the relationship.

Al-anon and Alateen are world wide groups that meet almost any night or day. There is no cost. The group is run by people like myself who have been through the journey. Rooms are made available from other community services free of costs .A coin donation is asked for the leaflets and small books available that empower women and inform women about their rights.

The groups are confidential and the leader for the night reads out a welcome and confidential rights and rules of the group.

Each person in the group is invited to share what they are going through if they feel able. No one must interrupt. Advice is not given but the 12 steps and many other slogans are used.

The benefits of these groups are that women will find only others who are being subjected to D.V. As each person listens they find they are not alone. It also may reflect how they are dealing with the situation that precipitates change as denial is one of the biggest hindrances to making change.

If a Domestic Violence Anonymous group was available many women would become informed, learn their rights, regain their self esteem and be referred to specialist D.V assistance. This would be a preventative measure giving women assistance to plan a supported exit from a progressively dangerous relationship.

I believe that this would be a cost effective venture that if well marketed would prevent escalation of violence, mental health ,death and family crisis through children being subjected and affected by Domestic Violence .

Please contact me for any further assistance that I maybe able to offer

Yours truly

Antonia Williams

