

21.04.2015

Royal Commission into Family Violence

To whom it may concern,

After working with woman for the last three years as a Domestic Violence case worker/counsellor I have found a few issues arising systematically with woman.

Intervention orders

1. When a woman applies for an I.O she should not have to pay to protect herself, some lawyers make a great market out of woman who do not have a pension or health care card yet are struggling financially due to domestic violence.
2. Reporting to police a breach of the intervention order; a lot of women have stated to me that its very confronting, time consuming and that they feel like they are held accountable for the perpetrator's behaviour. Once the breach is reported a woman would need to be informed what stage the police are at in their investigation rather than telling the woman nothing, this does not encourage reporting breaches, it enables a woman to feel she is wasting her time reporting as nothing seems to be happening.
3. Police arresting the perpetrator especially after assault against the woman, then releasing the perp on bail the same day due to the magistrate not being very educated about intimate partner violence or as usual holding the woman accountable.
4. How can a man apply for an intervention order against a woman if he has been charged for abuse???????

5. MEDIA

The Warrnambool Standard Newspaper names and shames criminals in the newspaper. The standard has big write ups regarding what a perpetrator done to the woman. The standard then allows the whole community to know who the victim is by naming the perp. Many woman are so ashamed of this and cannot feel safe reporting to police due to perp naming in the newspaper she may have children who don't need to be shunned publically by the community because of what a perpetrator has done. Its not about protecting the perp its about protecting the woman and children's rights to privacy.

6. Department of Human Services Child Protection:

Major issues with woman having their children removed by DHHSCP and then DHHSCP putting the children in the care of the perpetrator (even perpetrator's who have been charged with assault against the woman are given the opportunity to exert their power and control over the woman, how this happens is beyond my understanding) . Why would this be happening? The perpetrator is very good at being Mr perfect who does not wrong, Mr Charismatic who persuades the system to his side. The best interests of the children are important however if a child is removed and the woman states she is a victim of domestic violence then at least Child Protection practitioners need to move aside their personal beliefs and investigate further to meet the best interests of the child. Why are DHHSCP practitioners not taking a stand against Domestic violence? Why are these key workers not

educated about domestic violence? Why do they not do CRAF training when it comes to risk assessments they are working closely with all other agencies so it is a failure in our system.

Family Law

7. Men assaulting women being charged then family law orders which allow the perpetrator to have unsupervised access to his children (great role model pretty obvious that this is not at the best interests of the child it's the best interests of the perpetrator) and allowing the man to use his children to continually abuse his partner.

8. CALD Populations

It should be compulsory for all government organisations to use an interpreter.

Centrelink: should be policy that they always use an interpreter. I have the perfect story for an example. A woman from a non English speaking country is granted a sponsorship visa to live with her partner in Australia. The partner interprets for her at Centrelink and low and behold continues to abuse her financially. The woman had no idea she was receiving benefits from Centrelink (how on earth can a government agency be allowed to contribute towards her abuse)

Office of Housing; An example; Perp excluded from his office of housing property due to an intervention order , the property manager continues to request the woman work out when she is going to VCAT to have perp's name removed from the lease, the woman can't really understand English very well and is asked so many questions that she is in tears and very confused. Answer use an interpreter!!!

Police: should not take statements using a friend they should use an interpreter (this is so obvious that I as a worker had to ring all three above agencies and educate them that using an interpreter allows the woman to speak in her words. I personally have done R.A assessments with an interpreter and found differences in the statement made to police to the actual event.

Yours sincerely

Case worker

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