

I preface this with all information provided is to the best of my knowledge and without prejudice.

I believe that if either partner, [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]'s partner and [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]'s partner, becomes aware of this information there would be retribution to the families particularly the mothers of the children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Growing up as a child into my teenage years I was a witness to the many beatings received by my sister, [REDACTED], at the hand of her violent alcoholic husband, [REDACTED]. Like many women my sister believed this was her lot in life and that there was nothing she could do about it as she was not financially secure and was so embarrassed about her situation that she could not go to anyone for help. They had [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who also saw these many beatings while my sister tried desperately to get them into a locked room whilst she was being hit. It wasn't until my sister had to stop the father from trying to get to [REDACTED] to beat them that she knew she had to do something about it, she was not going to see her children beaten as she was.

Thankfully a friend of many years told her she was self sufficient financially, as her husband was drinking the majority of his employment money; she quickly packed [REDACTED] [REDACTED] up with the help of the friend and shifted out while her husband was at work.

For many months they hid from him in fear of their lives.

These events took place [REDACTED] years ago and it is now with an extremely heavy heart and as a desperate mother of a daughter, [REDACTED] now [REDACTED] years of age, who has been in an abusive violent relationship for the past [REDACTED] years that I write in the hope that further constructive actions will be taken to assist those who are being physically and psychological abused.

Upon meeting our daughter's future partner some [REDACTED] years ago I was wary as I could see an alcoholic problem along with his arrogance and assertive manner. But 'Love is blind' and our daughter was head over heels in love.

At first, some [REDACTED] years into the relationship, he would take to punching holes in walls and doors when angry or he had too much to drink. Outside of these times he would control where [REDACTED] went and how long she was out making phone call after phone call asking when she would be home until she would say I better go. I would say to her for goodness sake you're out with your mother and sisters why is he calling you so much to come home.

After [REDACTED] years their first child was born and then [REDACTED] years after that. They both adored the children and after the [REDACTED] child it seemed to me this was another method of him controlling [REDACTED], keeping her at home where he knew she wouldn't be out mixing with family or friends or the possibility that she may also get interested in someone else as he was an extremely jealous person.

Even though we, my husband and I, felt he wasn't the person he portrayed to be we accepted him as part of our family trying to help them as much as we could.

As the years went by we saw stronger evidence that our daughters relationship was in trouble the drinking problem for starters, as he was drinking every night on his way home from work and when he got home. His behaviour was becoming more abusive towards [REDACTED] and at times the children, with him blaming one of the children if an argument broke out between [REDACTED] and him.

After child number [REDACTED], who had a [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was told not to have any further children as her life would be on the line. This did not seem to dissuade her partner as he raped her. (I am uncertain how many times through the relationship this occurred but am aware it was definitely more than once.) This resulted in pregnancy and a birth where the Doctors and midwives told us they do not understand how she is alive [REDACTED]. It is our view [REDACTED] survived by the grace of God.

The psychological abuse and control also become physical violence with our daughter was hiding a lot of it from us as, like so many she was embarrassed and humiliated believing she could change him even after [REDACTED] years of trying. The relationship was declining and after each bout of abuse he would say he would change he would give up the alcohol and he would be good.

It wasn't until [REDACTED] when after an incident which our daughter will not tell us about that she called DHS to protect the children. It was at this stage the partner gave up alcohol and turned to valium to help out. He started taking too much valium impacting them financially as he couldn't work for days and weeks on end. His working full time had always been an issue but it was now placing them behind in their mortgage and their bills. Call me suspicious if you wish but in my view this was another control mechanism on his part to control [REDACTED].

For approximately [REDACTED] years I received phone calls and had conversations with both [REDACTED] and her partner about their relationship. There were many times our daughter would phone me crying extremely distress pleading with me to come and pick her and the children up. I would hear her partner screaming at her that he would not let her or the children out of the house. Prior to phoning me she would have tried to get out of the house but he would take the car keys and hide them and slap her in front of the children.

After the Black Saturday Fires, [REDACTED], her partner never worked for many months. [REDACTED]. Any funds they received, [REDACTED], were spent on the mortgage, paying bills and feeding and providing for the family, now [REDACTED] children.

Our daughter was beside herself after [REDACTED] months of this as she was doing all the work to run the household endeavoring to juggle money to pay the bills and having no help only abuse and violence from her partner. One night after an extremely bitter argument she

said she was going to leave. He went and got the gun he owned and put it in his mouth threatening to pull the trigger if she walked out the door. She stood up to him and said even if she stayed their relationship was over. He pulled the trigger. The gun was not loaded but [REDACTED] did not know this it was once again a psychological ploy a control mechanism to try to manipulate her.

The abuse and violence went on for another [REDACTED] months before our daughter phoned one day and said I have had enough can we come and stay with you for a while. Her sisters and neighbour had talked to her and convinced her she didn't have to live with violence and abuse and the next day when he went to work she packed enough clothing for herself and the children and came to live with us.

It had taken [REDACTED] years for her to realize nothing was going to change this mans behaviour and that she didn't have to live with it that she was never going to be able to change him.

She knew the road ahead was going to be tough but not as tough as it has been. Her partner shifted out of the family home [REDACTED] weeks after they shifted in with us and [REDACTED] returned home but the psychological and physical abuse has not changed even with the IVO for herself and finally the children in [REDACTED] after physical violence to the [REDACTED]. On one occasion [REDACTED] he was so drunk he was punching into his new partner. All of this occurred in the presence of the children. The police were called but again said nothing we can do about him it is all in hand now we have quietened him down.

Her partner continually sends [REDACTED] text messages, phones her and sends message through the children. She knows she should not respond to him but feels if she doesn't it will get worse. She has spoken to the police about it saying he was breaching the IVO and knowing she has responded which is also a breach but fears the retribution if she does not respond to him. The police response has been there isn't a breach or that there isn't anything they can do about it.

Our daughter contacts DHS about the continual alcohol and the many abusive and threatening messages her partner sends through the children. [REDACTED] is scared to report the far too many instances where the children have come home and told her about his alcoholic bouts and violence when they are in his care as she doesn't want him to take retribution out on the children. DHS on one hand says this is what you should do to protect the children but while you are doing something such as the IVO for the children you do not need our help as you are acting protectively so we won't step in. What a contradiction!!!

After threatening to kill [REDACTED] [REDACTED] times [REDACTED] was give an indefinite IVO by the courts in [REDACTED] or perhaps [REDACTED]. From our experienced there many instances it seems they are not worth the paper they are written on as the police have to date not acted upon breaches that have been brought to their attention.

■■■■■ stays in contact with ■■■■■ the family violence police officer at ■■■■■ police station who has so much work it often take many days before she can contact ■■■■■ with help and support.

Her partner made a commitment when they separated to pay part of the mortgage, pay child support and assist the children financially. Has he kept his word NO !!!

■■■■■ has been paying the mortgage, ■■■■ years, now not just the Interest but the total monthly payment. No one advised her just to pay interest only until she recently found this out as part of going through settlement. Even with all the mental stresses she has to deal with she works extremely hard to keep up with the finances.

Her partner owes around \$■■■■■ in child support, he often borrows money from the older children which he doesn't pay back and regularly doesn't give the children birthday or Christmas presents because he says he is broke. He asks ■■■■■ to purchase clothing and shoes for the children saying he will pay her back and never does.

As part of settlement he provided an Affidavit to the court where he, in my opinion, used reverse psychology to say ■■■■■ had been controlling him and had been abusive and violent to him. Our daughter was devastated. Like many in her situation they have little self confidence, suffer from depression and self worth after the many years of abuse. This mentally destroyed her and in my view was yet another form of his continual psychological control and financial abuse. He claimed he was not a violent man and he had changed. Court records at ■■■■■ Magistrate court will show that he and his new partner had IVO's on each other while they lived in the same household due to physical violence between both of them. He has also, sadly, tried to commit suicide ■■■■■ on another occasion.

These matters can be confirmed by ■■■■■ and ■■■■ police reports and the ■■■■■ Hospital ■■■■■.

The IVO for the children, which went for ■■■■ years and was applied for by the police with the support of DHS, was due for extension in ■■■■■, ■■■■■. ■■■■■ went to ■■■■■ Magistrates Court where the judge said he would place it down for a directions hearing on ■■■■■.

In the meanwhile their eldest child was turning ■■■■ and there was a party ■■■■■

When he arrived at the party he had a huge black eye and a cut beneath it. ■■■■■
■■■■■
■■■■■ This violence all from a man who said in an affidavit he is not a violent man!!!

On the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went to court taking with her information from [REDACTED] the Family violence police officer from [REDACTED], the prior charges from police on their son some [REDACTED] months prior and a number of reports from DHS on his behaviour.

[REDACTED] stood in disbelief as the judge said he wasn't interested in any of the information from DHS or past records, he was only interested if the police had been any breaches in the past [REDACTED] months. [REDACTED]'s spirits were dashed because there weren't recorded breaches as the police had not intervened when asked. The judge then went on to say words along the lines that he believed the IVO for the children, which was one that stated the partner was not to be intoxicated while the children were in his care, was a hammer over the mans head and that DHS shouldn't be involved in any of this as they often only make matters worse and that the IVO extension was denied.

Once again 'The Judicial System' contradicted DHS, destroying any support for the children and to a mother who had NEVER denied access to the father as long as the children were in a safe environment. An alcohol free environment which assisted in trying to uphold the safety of the children.

Our daughter if she wasn't totally feeling alone and unsupported before by "The System" felt totally abandoned. DHS would not assist her as long as she was doing everything she could to protect the children and here she was trying to do this with the court not assisting and no physical support by anyone at DHS. [REDACTED] the policewoman is so overworked she couldn't make it to court.

I can only say what a SYSTEM. Living through this as we have, we understand but do NOT agree with the fact that those who feel frustrated and totally abandon sadly take to other methods to release themselves of the situation.

I must now go on to another instance of a young women who we also try to support who has been in a similar circumstance to our daughter over the years and [REDACTED] months ago left her partner taking their [REDACTED] children from the family home and shifting in with her parents until she could find a place to rent.

Her Partner has gone to the extent of physical violence with [REDACTED] verbally abusing the father and another brother. He went to the police and said [REDACTED] had hit him he also said that [REDACTED] had been physically and verbally abusive to him controlling him. All of this was totally untrue but as he had gone to the police first, the police believed him. [REDACTED] went to court to get an IVO and her partner was so convincing that the judge gave an IVO to both of them. [REDACTED] was not happy that she now had an IVO placed her not to go within [REDACTED] of him but said I have to live with it because at least I have one on him.

The IVO didn't make any difference on him as he would come around to the parent's house harassing her to come home and harassing the children to come and live with him and ultimately his aggression to the children was more than the children aged [REDACTED] [REDACTED] could take so they told their mother.

██████████ in the meanwhile was being told by police that he was going to be charged with assaulting the partner and he was beside himself with stress so much so that he developed a ██████ problem.

He went to the ██████████ where the assault took place and asked for the video recording of what went on that night. Once he watched it and he could clearly see that it was the partner who had hit him he went to the police and told them they should go and watch the recording.

It took the police approximately █ weeks to go and see the recording. Up to this stage they believed everything the partner had been saying about the relationship and the brother. Once they watched the recording they started to change their minds about what was going on.

██████████ ended up going to the police about the breaches where she was initially not listened to and finally the police realised the situation was the other way around it was the partner who was violent manipulating and controlling.

When the children told the mother about how the father was being aggressive towards them because they didn't want to live with him she spoke to ██████████ the ██████████ family violence officer who then spoke to the children and DHS was immediately called in.

As I understand ██████ went to court about child access and the judge said the partner could have access whilst DHS said in writing at the same time that she should not let him have access until such time as he had been mentally assessed as they believed there may be mental health problems.

Once again a contradiction within the system on one hand DHS trying to protect children and the courts doing the opposite.

As I understand trying to assist our daughter with the Settlement, the court only takes into account the financial affairs of the couple.

The suffering of any type of abuse is NOT taken into account as a deterrent as the victim is yet again victimized.

Within our systems those people who have been treated violently are compensated why doesn't this not occur at settlement? The victim is treated as an equal to the perpetrator as it is only about finances, finances that could assist someone to care for their children instead of being thrown onto the street as all too often occurs. This equity is a non equity under the circumstances.

I hope that the Panel will take into account the following points that would most certainly in my belief and experience help in assisting those getting out of these types of relationships make a difference is starting a new life for themselves and their families.

1. Recommend to the judicial system that IVO breaches not matter how trivial they may seem are acted upon and penalties are applied in line with the breach/s.
2. That judicial, child protection and DHS decisions and systems do not contradict each other rather they compliment each other.
3. Family settlement takes into account proven physical/psychological violent behaviour as a percentage of financial settlement giving equality to the victim for what they have suffered while in the relationship. In most instances the relationship has broken due to this behaviour and the perpetrators actions are therefore realised as part of the settlement process.
4. In instances of proof of violent behavior, either through DHS, courts or other agencies, the partner who is the guardian of the children should not be put out into the street from the family home but is allowed to live in the family home until the youngest child is of an age where they can care for themselves and then the property divided between the parties. This is not cart Blanc, the guardian needs to be able to support themselves and the children with the partner providing child support.
5. Police investigate actions of both parties involved once an incident/s is reported rather than jumping to conclusions, conclusions that have no evidence provided.
6. Affidavits require provision of substantiating evidence.

I am more than willing to speak with the Panel if required.

Yours sincerely

