

My name is [REDACTED]; I was in an abusive marriage for approx. [REDACTED] years.

It took a long time for me to build the courage to leave and once I had left to stay away and not go back to give him "one more chance".

We separated & gave it "one more try" & separated [REDACTED] times over [REDACTED] years.

We have a [REDACTED] together & when we met in [REDACTED] I was unwell with chronic depression and struggling to maintain work.

This has since changed & since leaving my ex husband I have moved out of government housing in to the private rental market, I have put myself through [REDACTED] school & currently work casually as [REDACTED] & have just started a degree in [REDACTED]

His life is still a bit unsettled and no real difference with multiple jobs & problems with alcohol-which I believe is currently improved for the last few months.


My experience is when looking back at the start of our relationship I now see very clear warning signs that should have alerted me to a controlling partner but at the time didn't see it.

Our relationship was very volatile, it started off with big verbal arguments & things such as plates, cups etc. being thrown across the room in anger when we would argue.

None of which was ever reported, police never called & excuses made to any visitors about the latest dint in the wall (from plate marking the plaster).

The fights over time escalated to my ex husband becoming angrier and angrier at times punching holes in the walls & doors... rarely was this reported to police.

Whilst this occurred we lived in government housing. I would call maintenance to repair the damage which I would pay for but no questions ever where raised



into my welfare or that of my ex-husband by the department of housing as to why these holes were there. (Perhaps this should be something that the department flags and makes a general welfare check?).

Eventually things would start to become physical in grabbing my arm tightly and pushing me out of the way.

These things I did start to report to a local GP where he kept record of my bruising but again nothing ever was brought to attention of any welfare services. (Where do you cross that line of patient confidentiality & patient's welfare)?


I was in a vulnerable position at this time still with depression.

Slowly I was isolated from my friends, when I did get work trouble was caused by my ex husband's jealousy and possessiveness to the point the little outlet I had to go to work and be around others & too earn my own money became too much of a headache.


Whilst friends at work could see what was happening and did raise concerns and the usual "you should leave him" I was not mentally strong enough to do this & how could I afford to do this?

Over time things got worse, the emotional abuse was far more damaging than the physical.

Yes you lose your friends as the offender paints them all in a negative light, you lose yourself confidence & you eventually lose who you are.

His drinking became worse & with the increase of his alcohol consumption () so did his aggression and his self loathing.

You become dependant on that person and every time you break up you beg and plead for it to just work, they make empty promises of changing and you give it another go for the sake of your child & knowing if you go it alone how will you manage financially, no job, little friends, little support, who will help



care for children when your at work? Child care costs money outside of school hours that is very pricey.

It ended in disaster every time.

One day after [REDACTED] text messages I made the foolish mistake to let my ex husband pop around to talk about things.

That day little to my knowledge prior he had spent the whole day at the pub up the road drinking and then drove to my home.

Is the pub negligent for serving him alcohol ALL DAY & then leading to what happened next... Yes I would say they are.

Whilst alcohol doesn't cause violence it does decrease the ability to be rational when high level are consumed and control ones self.

That evening my ex husband appeared at my home, instantly he was rude & his behaviour far from desirable.

He was asked to leave immediately and upon leaving pushed me back into my home & beat me 8 times to the head whilst our [REDACTED] slept in bed.

This was in [REDACTED] to be precise at approx. [REDACTED] to be even more precise.

A time and date forever etched into my mind.

I called 000 & they responded promptly with AV, I cannot fault the VicPol members that crowded my lounge room that night or the wonder AV members that conveyed me to hospital & sat with me until a bed was available in E.D.

I was in deep shock as this was the first time he had punched me, I was a mess & my face had dreadful injuries.

We did reunify months after this but not for long.

Since finally separating from him my life and our [REDACTED] has been better but by no means has it been easy.

[REDACTED]

I went to my local court at the time ([REDACTED]) in [REDACTED] & requested to apply for an IVO after we had an argument & he had threatened to physically harm me again.

I was turned away by the court registrar and told I had no grounds to apply for one. This was very damaging to me.

If I couldn't get the court to help protect me on this occasion that I felt another order was needed what would I do? Who would help me? Who could I turn to if police & the court can't/won't help?

It is not an easy task to go to the court and apply for an intervention order, to fill out all the paperwork, go through what has happened with the registrar who in the end actually has no say as to whether it will be approved or not!

Then if you get the order you're not covered until the person is served and if they make it difficult for VicPol to catch up with them to be served you have little protection for what can be months.

I walked away that day from the court very distressed. My ex husband knew where I was, knew [REDACTED] movements with schooling, knew where my family lived & there was nothing I could do to protect myself and our [REDACTED]

One morning a few weeks later on 774 ABC radio, Jon Faine was doing talk back with ex Commissioner Ken Lay.


[REDACTED]

Within 24 hours [REDACTED] I had an interim order awarded by the court.

It took VicPol [REDACTED] months to serve this on my ex-husband despite their calls & texts to him as his response to police was less than welcoming.

I currently have a [REDACTED] year Ivo that protects us.

We needed to move and whilst there was some assistance available many of the place I turned to for help I was greeted with the same answer "we have no



funding” or “we have already used our funding for the month” (a few days into the start of the month).

We got enough help to secure a private rental but only just and it also came at a debt with Centrelink for doing a little bit of work casually to put together with other assistance just to secure the property.

There were no funds available to help move or to set up with new furniture or any of the basic things that are required when you move.

The biggest and really only support that we received was from WAYSS.

Whilst funding was limited for this service they provided much needed support & my case manager understood what I was going through.

She understood the psychology of it & this was invaluable to me & to me escaping the relationship.

I could write pages & pages of issues that surrounded the whole psychology of the relationship, where and when things potentially went wrong but I think in summary it is best I write what I found to be lacking with support & should any further information be needed or elaborated on I am happy to do this.


Key issues I found were;

*lack of understanding by VicPol of the psychology of family violence-why the AFM stays & goes back, the anxiety & stress of making reports & keeping charges, Ivo's in place

There seems to be an attitude with a lot of VicPol members that it's “just another domestic” without knowing the background. –Attitudes of members seem to be very different once I point out that my ex punched me to the head 8 times.

This should not matter when it comes to requesting VicPol assistance.


*Huge lack of funding for services to help AFM leave the relationship & if need be relocate.



It has taken me two years to be able to only JUST get on top things & still I need things from moving but just don't have the money.

*Funding for things like; moving van, finalising utility bills as often we are left in big debts as the money is not controlled by the AFM & with a debt with a utility company or Telstra it is almost impossible to get reconnected at a new property.

*Funding for things like if schools have to be changed, the cost of uniforms & school fees, camps etc. so that the child/children can fit in as best as possible at the new school without being out of new correct uniform, missing out on excursions because you simply can't afford it.

This affects the child a lot & causes further anxiety to them & makes it so hard to fit in. – Speaking from experience when moving my  to a new school.

*Handover of case management when moving from one area to another.


We moved out of one catchment to a new one & had and still have no idea who to turn to if we need help.

*A need for dedicated people at the courts who can support the victim, show them where to go, what will happen, why it will happen. Explaining the process.

*Some how for better waiting areas in the court. It is very daunting knowing you are walking in the same door as the perpetrator, you may see them in the carpark before or after court, then there is the anxiety of waiting in the long line to let the court registrar know you are there again with the perpetrator free to be in the same line or close proximity.

Then once all this is done you are expected to sit in a very small area to wait for your hearing to be called whilst the perpetrator is sitting metres away from you free to antagonise you staring at you.

This is more stressful than anything else in the whole matter.





I am a very well educated put together woman but put me in the court waiting area with my ex husband and I am a mess. I have anxiety attacks; I feel nauseated, get diahorrea, tremble & feel frightened.

Police are too busy to assist as they have to focus on the 30 briefs they have for the day. If you're lucky there may be one volunteer to help 20 women.

*More assistance with assessing the perpetrator for access visits.

I have called child protection on many occasions asking for some form of help that they could just do an assessment on my ex having access and the suitability of what this should entail.

Every time I was told I am the protective parent it is my responsibility to make that assessment and should I make the wrong assessment my child could be removed from me or worse something happen to my child.

This put ME in a very awkward position as I had to facilitate access to keep the relationship going between father and  I would be subject at times to put downs, insults, power games, him turning up late, turning up drunken etc. then if I cancelled the access I am the bad person in  eyes not dad.

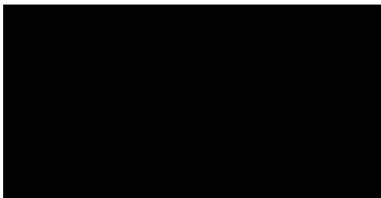
It put me in a vulnerable position of being subject to my ex's moods, him still having that close contact to me & still having some insight in to my life.

That made it very hard to move away from the marriage and heal-something I am still working on due to PTSD from the relationship.

*I cannot get legal aid & can't afford a private solicitor so I try to manage the situation best I can but it is exhausting & his power games don't stop.

*There needs to be specialised assistance for family law court with this if you cannot afford a lawyer.

*I think education in schools about family violence & just general what is an acceptable way to treat someone & what's not.



*Teaching children at an early age it's not ok to berate another or push another, it's not ok to accept being treated this way & if you witness it what you should do.

I think this is paramount to start at an early age before kids become cemented in there values as teenagers.

*More funding to support children affected by family violence. [REDACTED] was seeing a social worker & got a lot from the program but had to stop as government ceased funding & the government was shut down.

This was through Family life.


*Earlier intervention FV relationship and for all perpetrators to be regularly monitored for a set time to monitor and insure adequate rehabilitation and monitoring is provided to the perpetrator such as;

- Men's behavioural programs
- Drug & Alcohol counselling
- Liaising with the AFM

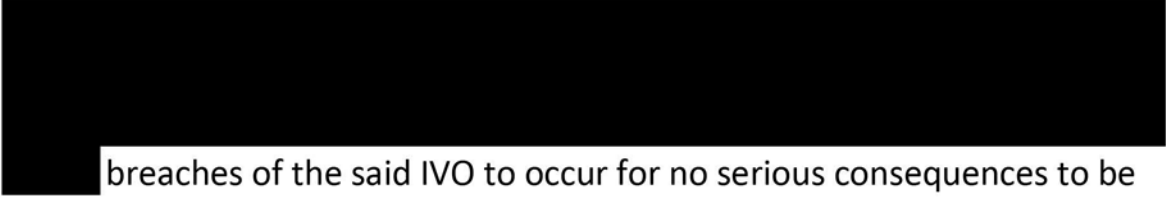
* A computer program needs to implemented where all agencies i.e. DHS, VICPOL etc. All have access to the same information; this must also include the different courts.

When I reported a breach of IVO in [REDACTED] I was informed by [REDACTED] VicPol that I had no active IVO. Upon me pushing the matter with a senior VicPol Member and after two weeks of them looking into the matter it was found, my IVO with full conditions that protects me until [REDACTED] hadn't been uploaded onto the system despite this being three months after the IVO had been made as a final order by [REDACTED] Magistrates Court.

This created a lot of undue stress and anxiety on my part that could have been avoided if the IVO had been loaded onto the system correctly and the information was shared by all services.



*Tougher, shorter, sharper bursts of laws and consequences need to be introduced and the Magistrates actually implementing them need's to occur.



breaches of the said IVO to occur for no serious consequences to be issued by the court sends a very clear message to the perpetrator and other offenders of family violence that this behaviour is and will be tolerated in our society.

Kind Regards,

