

Question 2 and 3.

In [REDACTED], I had only been with my partner for [REDACTED] years. I knew he was an alcoholic but believed his promise that he would give up for me. One day in early [REDACTED] I came home to find him drunk and a long kitchen knife beside our bed. I rang the police, they came, filled out an interim IVO and took him away. The court date was a couple of days later. He came to court drunk and the order was given. I was there on my own, no support services, no one advising me with me just sitting at the back of the court on my own. The police put him up at apartments behind a hotel. This did not help with his drinking problem. Within a few days my ex breached the IVO and within a few days he convinced me to stay with him overnight at the hotel. The next night he moved back to our house. He convinced me to go to court to revoke the IVO. I was not given any link or connect with any DV support services. I wasn't even handed a brochure I was very alone. He had pulled a knife, and yet no one contacted me to see how I was. No one contacted me to see how I was after he returned. Just because I had taken him back meant that I was on my own and to suffer my own consequences.

I am now part of a Facebook survivors group and find such support in this group. I believe if I'd shared my problems in this group at the time (if it had existed), I would have been advised not to take him back, to not believe his lies, that he wouldn't give up drinking. I wouldn't have been alone. I've even met up and had coffee with a member of the group, so it's been nice to listen to each others stories and understand. None of my family or friends really understand what I've been through.

In [REDACTED] I still had \$ [REDACTED] from my divorce, I was still [REDACTED] and my children were still okay and living with their father 50% of the time. But it took me another [REDACTED] years of putting up with abuse to have the final straw. By then I had lost all my money, had to pull out \$ [REDACTED] of my Superannuation to pay my legal bills, my children are still recovery from the trauma, I have PTSD, and I can't get back into [REDACTED].

In [REDACTED], I was put in touch with EDVOS in [REDACTED]. I was very pleased with the support and had a case manager. I was very relieved to be 'protected' in the special, secret women only room at the [REDACTED] Magistrates court, so I didn't have to sit in the same waiting room as my abuser. My [REDACTED] year old [REDACTED] was with me, so this was really important. As I waited in there before the IVO hearing, I talked to a young woman. She said, "He sounds like a narcissist". I didn't really know what one actually was. That night I went home and google it and I decided that my ex was a narcissist (or sociopath), and it set me on a path of learning more about it and how I got trapped into his web of lies. It helped me so much to realise how I'd been an empathetic person targeted by him. I wish I'd had such support as EDVOS in [REDACTED].

The new law including Financial Abuse as part of the Family violence is not recognised by police on its own. My ex breached the IVO by not paying our mortgage, by not giving me any money at all from our business accounts, took my name off our business accounts and also off our personal bank account linked to our mortgage and didn't pay any household utility bills (so that I risked having services cut) so that I was left unemployed and without any form of income to support myself and my [REDACTED] children. I had advice from Domestic Violence support services that this was a breach I had bank statements, It took me the effort to visit 4 police stations to get a statement. I couldn't give it then, but had to go back 2 hours later to get someone to sit with me. The policeman took 2 hours to take my statement. At the end he waived the piece of paper and said this is the first time I've done

one of these (financial abuse breach), and I hope it's the last. He said I don't think this will go to court. I said, but the law has been around for 5 years. He said he had never heard of any going to court and I would be the first. He said it would take a few months. This was [REDACTED] Police station. He had to send it off [REDACTED] police (where my ex was living) and it would probably go to the bottom of their pile and I might not hear anything for a few months. Every couple of weeks I tried to ring to follow up, but the policeman at [REDACTED] was either away, out or never returned my call. No one else could see my file as he had it on 'his' computer! Finally about 4 months later, I was rung to say that my ex refused to be arrested and that he sent the police a letter from his lawyer. I put in a complaint to the police about the handling of my case and how disgusted I was in the way I was treated by the policeman at [REDACTED] Police Station.

I think the whole process was a complete waste of my time. It only added to my distress and depression about my whole situation. I rang John Faine's ABC radio one morning about [REDACTED] and spoke on air to Ken Lay. I told him about my problem with the police and that non-violent DV is not taken seriously. I was put back to the producers and gave them my name and number. Someone from [REDACTED] Police rang me two weeks later and was able to look up my report on their system. He agreed that my ex should have been arrested and that [REDACTED] police did not follow through and made a mistake. He said things have started to improve. I am pleased now that my ex is at least on the system, but upset that he wasn't arrested. I believe if he was arrested, then I wouldn't have been led down the path of such a horrible Family court experience.

There was no coordination between both police stations. There was no communication with me (the victim). My abuser had the power, by using his lawyer as an excuse to not even be interviewed. Why did he have a choice? I was treated as though I was a nuisance and wasting the policeman's time.

My ex had also put an app on my iPhone called Find my iPhone. He had been tracking me without me knowing even after we separated. My [REDACTED] found it about a month after he left. I believe this is stalking and there is a separate law against it, but it's not taken seriously by the police.

My ex put his new phone services in my name without my permission so I got a huge telephone bill. Telstra called this fraud but the police did not. They said to me that it was a civil matter. It should not be a civil matter after a couple have separated. Why is it 'allowed' when it's clearly abuse! This was another thing not taken seriously by the police.

I had to put a secret password on all my services, bank accounts. Security by the services usually entails giving my date of birth and address which he knew. Services need to tighten up their security to stop 'fraud' against ex partners.

QUESTION 6 and 7

Quite often, as in my case, the abuser isolates the victim away from her support of friends and family. DV was never spoken about in my family, amongst my friends or in the profession of [REDACTED]. I had been in. I was grown up to think domestic violence was a man hitting a woman.

In [REDACTED], I started going to Al Anon meetings secretly once a week. I told my abuser I was seeing my psychologist. Even at these meetings, DV wasn't mentioned. The type of abuse were mentioned as events, but how it affected us as victims.

DV is not discussed as a topic of conversation in our society. Many women don't realise they are experiencing DV, like I didn't know. I only sought DV counselling after a friend at Al Anon gave me a number.

I coordinate [REDACTED] care [REDACTED] care and [REDACTED]. I care for some children who are victims of Family violence. I recently completed an online DV course through Lifeline to fill gaps in my knowledge. Now I am handing out EDVOS brochures to mothers. I have noticed one mother with bruises on her face. Her [REDACTED] sometimes runs away and hides. I never had DV training as young teacher! I am now reporting to DHS about children who have told me their father was hitting them. The principal also reported it. Yet when I rang the case manager to follow up, she said, "Oh no, there is no violence. It's just that the mother is too soft with discipline" I believe this 'professional' has been manipulated by the father as he's lied and of course not admitted and then blamed it on his ex wife. I believe many abusers are sociopaths/narcissists or psychopaths. Health professionals, lawyers, judges, police, ALL need to be educated about the common traits of these people. It might be harsh to say this, but I see my ex as the same personality as Adrian Bailey. He manipulate and lied and brainwashed many people!

I want to be more of a child advocate and help these mothers and allow them to talk out loud. I have one mother, separated [REDACTED] years trying to sell her house for [REDACTED] years. Yet her ex won't do it. I've told her this is domestic violence and handed her an EDVOS brochure. But she said it's not DV. I said yes it is, it's financial, emotional, psychological abuse if after [REDACTED] years, you can't get your own money from the house.

In early [REDACTED], we separated under the same roof due to his drinking. I secretly applied for a private rental through a real estate agent for myself and [REDACTED] children, but didn't get it. I had planned to move out of our 40 square house we owned together. He wouldn't leave. But I didn't have anywhere to leave, so I stayed. I didn't know what support services there were. I didn't want to disrupt my children. I was thinking if I kept quiet, then they might not realise how bad things were. But they knew!

The legal system let me down. I couldn't get legal aid because their rules were so strict. I wasn't able to get local legal advice due to us owning a business together. I tried every service I could but ended up going to a local lawyer. But the lawyer didn't support me and my ex ended up accusing me of stealing \$[REDACTED] from our business and filed in the Family court. I had to change lawyers, and pay \$395 an hour to compete with his \$600 an hour lawyer. If he had been charged with a breach of the IVO, then by the time we got to court, then it should have been acknowledged in court and should have been treated harsher in the Family court. Only temporary orders were given, and my ex was told to produce financial statements which he never did. Even though my barrister was speaking on my behalf, and my barrister asked for financials to be presented, the judge actually looked directly at me and said, 'Good, keep your powder dry.' What did that mean? In the end it meant nothing, as my ex contravened court orders by not producing the financials. I was told by my lawyer it would cost \$6,000 to contravene court orders. I visited the womens Legal service and they told me the same. My lawyer said, but your ex hasn't got any money, it won't be worth it. So how was he paying his \$600 an hour lawyer, how was he paying his \$[REDACTED] a week apartment, his \$[REDACTED] a month new car. I was so frustrated. I believe he lied to his lawyer, who told the lies to my lawyer, so everyone believed my ex and no one believed what I was saying, not even my lawyer! I believe abusers get

away with breaches and disobeying court orders because they can. There are no consequences. All along I felt that I was the victim and much worse off and he was treated favourably and given a soft chance! The fact that I had had three IVO's against this man was never considered in court.

The whole family court process was very scary and having never been in court in my life (only first in [REDACTED]), I was upset. My lawyer said she'd sit with me but was called away. I had to sit next to a man who was the case before us and listen to him talking over the top of the judge and it was extremely scary. I was not supported in the court at all! My lawyer told me I didn't need a friend or family with me. My ex sat behind me with his new girlfriend of a [REDACTED] and his female lawyer. It's no wonder women don't want to go to court. But I was on a rollercoaster I couldn't get off.

Questions 11

My [REDACTED] children are from my first marriage. The effect on the abuse from their step dad towards them and me has been huge. My youngest [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] was cutting herself. (I thought she'd stopped [REDACTED] years ago when he moved out, but I've recently found razor blades). My other [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] has just had a breakdown and been diagnosed as Bipolar. I've only just this week gone to the doctor and discussed that I might have PTSD and I'm seeing a psychologist next week. I had gone to a psychologist two years ago, but I didn't think she understood DV. I would like to think that all psychologists need to keep up to date with the latest in DV training. I still feel guilt, shame and hurt for staying and feel stupid, that I felt victim to my ex. But I don't feel there is enough 'therapy' for the victim. The abuser is supposed to go and get help but the effects of DV on women and children go on for years.

I see children in my job affected. School psychologist services have been cut. Parents are supposed to send their children to see a psychologist on their own. But one mother said she couldn't because her ex husband wouldn't allow it. Young teachers are not aware of support services for parents and are not advising parents of where they can go to get help. I mentioned child First to a young teacher last week but she wasn't aware of it. Another young teacher didn't recognise that a young child yelling, he's touching my privates all week is not normal. It wasn't until I told her that she went to the principal. Teachers need further training to recognise signs of abuse in children and services they can go to. Another [REDACTED] educator at an after care service didn't understand how to handle an intervention order. She didn't know what to do if the mother picked up the child even if the grandmother said it was okay. There are very strict rules about breaches but teachers/child care workers are not taught about IVO's. Teachers also need to feel confident and protected that they can professionally talk to mothers if they suspect abuse.

Question 17

I work with an [REDACTED] woman and a [REDACTED] woman. The [REDACTED] woman has no control over her own finances, has to work to keep her family's mortgage, yet her husband drives around in a [REDACTED] a month Lexus. She has worked in childcare for [REDACTED] years, yet doesn't know where her superannuation is going. She is very stressed and not well at times over money. Her husband is not willing to sell their house to move to a smaller, cheaper house or willing to sell his car. She puts up with this because it's their culture! It's all about having a good 'show' to show others how well off they are or to show to family back home. I feel I can't help her as these values are firmly entrenched. She would be better off leaving him, but she says he's a 'good' husband.

The [REDACTED] woman has a husband working overseas. She is working and saving her pay as she doesn't trust her husband. She says she has heard too many stories about what men have done to her friends. The only service their community has is a social worker near the local shopping centre who can direct them to services. Women need to know their rights in this country.

I would imagine that most of our police and courts mainly speak English and this would cause a problem with needing so many interpreters.

Question 20

I also believe that banks don't understand DV. I had to put in 3 complaints against my bank to get any help. I ended up going to the Financial Ombudsman. I personally went into docklands in the city to try and talk to someone personally to explain my situation. My ex was not paying our mortgage despite court orders to do so, yet the bank were saying I was liable too. I was telling them that I can't pay due to him taking away my source of income, but they just didn't understand. They thought they had more power than the courts. I went round and round in circles with the bank.

We owned a business together and had a family trust. I was an appointer and a beneficiary. He walked into a suburban branch, and just go a teller to take me off our business accounts and also off our joint account linked to our mortgage. I was signatory on the accounts, yet with the click of the mouse, the teller affected my financial situation with drastic consequences. I was not contacted to see if this would affect me, they just listened to my ex's lies about him accusing me of stealing money. Women need to have their bank accounts and assets protected by the banks. I advise women to have running away money. I was lucky that in [REDACTED]. I went to the [REDACTED] bank and got a loan for \$[REDACTED]. I still have this whole debt but it was there if I needed to get a bond and rent.

I found out through my lawyer that the Family trust hadn't been drawn up correctly. So even though I was part of the trust, my ex was 100% company director. That's how he tricked me and go away with 'stealing' our company. Women need to be encouraged to get legal advice when drawing up new documents with new partners. But I thought we were engaged and in love! I didn't even think to get a lawyer to look it. Up. I thought if the accountant does these all the time, he'll do it correctly. I was naïve.

Housing is a huge issue. Now I am trying to move to a cheaper rental but can't get one. I can't apply for Housing because I earn too much, (\$[REDACTED]), yet I now have to support my [REDACTED] with Bipolar as she isn't able to work much. The state of houses that are \$350 a week is appalling. I'm looking every weekend. I've seen asbestos open in laundries, urine smell in cupboards, 50 year old kitchens, old gas heaters that are dangerous. I also have a dog. Many landlords say no pets, or want over \$2000 in a bond. I've had to pull out more of my superannuation (I'm lucky I'm [REDACTED]!) so that I have enough to pay rent and bond.

I've gone from living in a middle class suburb, my children went to private schools, had overseas holidays, to renting an old cottage, having cheap meals, no holidays, paying high power bills, having shingles, having to see a psychologist, earning half of what I am qualified to earn, and having to work for another [REDACTED] years to catch up on my super. (My ex only paid me \$[REDACTED] super in our business in [REDACTED] years).

Short term responses have to be positive immediate responses from police.

I was very pleased the other day that my GP said he has noticed an improvement in attitudes of police in regards to IVO's