

As a child and later woman, I'm a victim of domestic violence.

The aim of this document is to share my insights as to the cause and possible prevention in future;

THE CAUSE:

Alcohol:

- Excessive consumption. My father would drink to excess every weekend and hurt my mother.

Values: My Father thought it was ok to hit my mother and she thought it was ok for him to hit her and not do anything about it. **We need to EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY – MEN AND**

WOMEN (NOT JUST MEN) that domestic violence is NOT ok.

Embarrassment: We never told anyone about it because we were embarrassed and scared. People think this is a BLUE COLLAR crime. It's not; it impacts all socio economic groups.

Fear:

- The fear of retribution for reporting this crime to police, family or friends

Lack of financial assistance:

- In our household, Dad was the breadwinner. For mum to leave, our lives would have changed significantly. In her mind, she stayed for us kids. In our minds, we'd prefer she left him. Fear

of financial stress is a big cause for women staying. This then leads to BETTER EDUCATION for women to stand up and survive themselves

LACK OF LAW

ENFORCEMENT:

- My Father continued to assault our family because he could get away with it.
- When police were (eventually) called by either my Mother or neighbours, the police would always believe him. He has a lovely Irish accent and manipulative way. My Mother/we would be emotional and at our wits end. But the Police would always believe him.
- He always blamed mum as the cause for domestic violence
- But the bruise evidence doesn't appear until the next day when it's too late

THE PREVENTION:

- **The Only thing that ever stopped him was the law enforcement rule (In QLD where we later moved) that if Police attended a domestic violence incident you were automatically on the record.**
- **Whilst his threats continued, he never made contact because he knew a second strike would see him serve jail time**
- **The moment the 2 year “no hit” period passed, he hit her again.**
- **LAW ENFORCEMENT IS THE SOLUTION.**
- **FAMILY EVIDENCE NEEDS TO BE PART OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT EVIDENCE SOLUTION.**
- **Men need to know that domestic violence is a crime, but WOMEN also need to be targeted to understand it's a crime. Not acceptable.**

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

Law enforcement.

- Men must understand committing domestic violence is a crime and will result in jail time

WE NEED TO CREATE A SOCIAL MOVEMENT THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS NOT OK.

- *“I SAY NO.....to Domestic Violence”*
- *This must target MEN & WOMEN*
- Educate how this is possible. This is a complicated crime and people can make a difference in just a small way. They don't need to take on the entire problem on themselves.....
 1. Call Police if they see/fear someone is being harmed
 2. Tell HR or a Superior at work if they suspect a colleague is being harmed
 3. Educate women on the signs of Domestic Violence. It's not just physical. It's emotional by cutting off friends and family, cutting off finances, emotional put downs. Teach women to see the signs and leave before it's too late
 4. Educate women on how to deal with an emotional man who will cry and promise not to repeat again (but who does).

- 5. Encourage donations to social services such as the Salvation Army who can assist families in financial need**
- 6. Help educate women so they can be financially independent**
- 7. Showcase strong women 'WHO SAID NO' to domestic violence. Women do not need to be victims. This needs to cover women from all socio economic groups**
- 8. We need a high profile media and social campaign. Unfortunately we have role models such as Rosie Battey [REDACTED] But we need to see other role models who have said no and walked away only to become successfully independent (and not unfortunate victims of such a hideous crime).**

The Consequences:

- **My sister suffers from alcoholism. A result of her abuse at the hands of our Father**
- **I suffer from anxiety. But I use my anger to better myself and my life. I never want to ever rely on my father for anything. And I vow to never treat my family like he treated us**
- **My Mother stays in an unhappy marriage. Too scared and guilty to leave**
- **We never leave our children at their home for fear he will treat our children like he treated us.**
- **It's never spoken of because of embarrassment and guilt. Nobody knows what we went through as family. We're ashamed to discuss or share it**
- **Anger and frustration. Once my Father threw a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at my Mothers head and knocked her out. As her head bled, my Father would not let us call an ambulance. We too we're scared of the consequences if we disobeyed him. We were terrified our Mother would die. WE HAD NO-ONE TO TALK TO.**

Lastly, sincere thanks for this Royal Commission. A chance to share my frustrations, anger, possible solutions and hope for a better future for women and children in Victoria xxx.

If I can assist in any other way, I'd love to.

[REDACTED]