

The insight component of [Insight Exchange](#) shares a person's lived experience of violence, highlighting a person's responses and resistance to violence and where 'social responses' were helpful or harmful. This reveals the roles that individuals, organisations and communities play in people's experience of violence.

The following 'Voices of Reflection' is from a person with lived experience of domestic and family violence. It shares their insights of how the threat of violence has been harmful to their safety and wellbeing and the safety and wellbeing of their children.

The threat of violence is violence.

He psychologically and verbally abused me every day; he would wake me regularly with a tirade of abuse, standing over me. I was terrified he was going to kill me, my 18 month old and my unborn baby. When I was pregnant with my second, he would regularly return home and lay his hunting knives out, near where my 18 month old was crawling.

I had to grab the baby and leave home on several occasions as I thought he was going to strangle me or stab me, putting my baby's car seat straps on as I was reversing out at speed, heavily pregnant, beside myself with fear. He never 'touched' my throat but his hands were close to my neck in a circle, he was standing over me. He's 40kg heavier than me and taller.

He gleefully recounted a story of a man who killed his toddler son because he 'heard his wife tried to leave him ...' He has sent letters and anonymous texts. He would call me 20 to 40 times a day threatening me. He would send messages to my extended family, 'presents' and 'gifts' to me in the post, my possessions would disappear.

When my 7 month old baby was very sick and was screaming in pain, in desperation I asked him to hold her for a minute. He responded by shouting in the baby's face and making motions like he was going to crush her. I thought he was going to kill her. He laughed it off afterwards – I'd 'never' hurt her.

We came home one day to our new house he was sitting in the dark in an armchair in my bedroom just waiting for me.

And people would tell me *“it’s not that bad he never hit you”*

This piece is an excerpt from a ‘Voices of Insight’ narrative which is available in PDF copy at:

<https://www.insightexchange.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Sally-My-Insight-Shared-Voices-of-Insight.pdf>

“...The threats from his systematic brutalisation of all aspects of our lives were not just threats to my safety and to the kid’s safety but equally threats to our liberty. The vast majority of responses we have had from service providers and from family and friends were from people who did not understand Domestic Violence. Their responses often minimised the violence.

I needed and still need the support of the system but the system has continually failed to adequately respond and support me. This has left me with the burden of responsibility to maintain our safety, wellbeing and liberty in the face of his continuing escalation of violence.

My fear is that he will hurt or kill me or the kids. He’s still around.”

Acknowledgement and thanks

Domestic Violence Service Management would like to thank the person with lived experience of violence who has generously shared their insights for the benefit of others.

We acknowledge that no matter how accurate the representation of someone’s experiences of violence and adversity, we can never fully understand all that the experiences mean to a person now or through their life. We understand that no one’s life experience can ever be fully represented in language or any other form.

Handle with dignity

You have been reading an excerpt of a person’s lived experience of violence and adversity. It is not simply another ‘story’, ‘sample’ or ‘case study’. Whilst consent has been obtained to share this account we ask that as the custodian of this copy that you uphold the dignity of the person who shared this experience as you distribute and/or store it. Tips for handling with dignity:

- Keep the copies in an envelope distinct from paperwork and reports
- Explain the importance and value of these accounts before distributing them

Collect any copies left behind by delegates/participants after workshops

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Disclaimer: This resource is a carefully assembled excerpt of a persons lived experience of violence. Details of this person’s identity have been altered to protect their safety. Whist great care has been taken to do no harm and to contribute to improved understanding of and responses to violence and other adversities; DVSM assumes no responsibility for how the resource is used by other parties.

A PDF copy is available at <https://www.insightexchange.net/follow-my-lead/voices-of-reflection/>
