

The following insights are from a person with lived experience of domestic and family violence focused on the financial abuse they experienced. The narrative highlights the **lived experience of violence and abuse** including their responses and resistance to violence, and where **social responses** were helpful, unhelpful or harmful. It has been assembled by the Insight Exchange team from the transcript of an interview conducted by [Rosie's Place](#).

## JASMIN

I was pregnant with my daughter when I went through domestic violence and I left my abusive partner when she was born. We'd been together about 11 months, so I didn't stick around very long.

Before I met him, it was just me and my son. I wanted a family and he knew that, so he played on that. He used to say to me that if he didn't move in, that we would never have the family that I wanted. Just to get him off my back, I said "ok" and he moved into the house. We lived together for about three or four months.

He was violent from the beginning and he played 'head games'. As the relationship got serious, it was emotional abuse, then came the verbal abuse, and then the financial side of things, where he would take my card without me knowing and I'd go to the bank the next day and there'd be no money in there. The next day, he'd show up wearing something different, something new, while my son had nothing. I'd question it. I'd question where he used to get all his clothes from, and I'd be stuck because I couldn't pay rent.

Financially, he'd contribute little bits - \$20 here and there for food and stuff like that. I had to pay rent. I had to put petrol in the car to take my son to school and bring him home. He took more than he gave. I was responsible for bills. When the phone bill and the power bill used to come in, I wouldn't see him for days after that because he knew that the bill was due. Sometimes I wouldn't see him for about two weeks. And then I had to pay it. Then he'd come back and do the whole "I'm sorry, I'll never do it again."

When it was just me and my son, I had a little car, but my partner wanted me to upgrade to a bigger car. He said that he would help me pay for the car, but he never did. I went and upgraded the car and he left me with about \$6,000 in debt because of it. It was really hard because he was still taking money off me.

I called the company about the car repayments. I explained to them what had happened, I said, "I understand if you want to take the car back, I'll go and get something else, something smaller," but they were really good. They said "no, whatever you can afford week by week," and it used to be like \$50 a week, and they said, "just put it on the car and we'll note it down in the system that that's how it is and if you can make more repayments, then do it like that," and that's just what I did.

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They were so good. I'm glad I called them because, I was going to put it off. I was thinking, "nah, put it off, don't call." But I'm so glad that I did call because it would've ended pretty badly otherwise. Now it's paid off and I still have that car. And it's a good car when you've got kids

But at that time, I had to get food vouchers because I wasn't eating anything, and my son was living off noodles. The charity that gave me food vouchers was really good. They helped pay for my power bill they helped get my rent back on track and they also gave me actual food, like hampers and referred me to counselling. There are some really good services out there.

I'm embarrassed that I stayed with someone like that. At the time I didn't see it like that. I just saw the opportunity for family. But now I look back on it, that's not how it was. He was good at selling himself.

When we got together, I knew that when he had alcohol in his body, he would become aggressive. I picked that up from day one and I said to him, "if you ever move in, you cannot have alcohol in this house." That was my number one rule. He respected that but he used to go out and drink and then come home drunk. That's when I used to shut the door on him. So that's where most of our money would go; on his clothes and on alcohol.

He had friends, but he used to complain about those friends and say that his friends were the ones who were bad influences on him. They used to take him to the pub and make him drink, and I'm like "well they can't really force it down your throat, can they?"

He's an only child and his Mum had died, and it was like he wanted me to be his mother. He would want me to make him lunch and make him stuff. I said to him early, I said "I can't do that, I'm not your mum." At times it's nice to get that pampering from your partner but he wanted it every day.

## He wanted me to go out and work, and I wanted to just to get away from him, but what stopped me was I wanted to be at home with the kids, because I wanted them to be safe.

And I just didn't want to do that. I mean I didn't have a dad growing up but I didn't expect him to be my father.

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money and I had to go to my Mum for money. I said to him, "I have to go to my mother," and he said "okay, do that, and can you ask for an extra \$100?" I just said, "no." I mean I probably could have, and she would give it, but that wasn't something that I wanted to do.

One time we had a really big fight because he had spent the rent

My Mum knew what he was like and she came around and had a few words to him. It kind of knocked him back in place, but then a month or two later it started back up again. He was pretty terrified of my Mother because she's real blunt and she just gets straight to the point. The last time she spoke to him she said if he ever does that again, she'd call the police. My Mum's real serious and she would've done it and he knew that.

When I found out I was pregnant, he just changed. He became much more aggressive towards me. Initially he looked like he was happy and then something different came out of him. He was angry all the time. If anyone else in the household was happy and he wasn't, he'd try and bring us all down.

He became physically violent towards me and my son. That's when I said to him, "you can't stay here." I had to kick him out. Then he started with the whole, "well we're not going to be a family," and I just thought, "well I don't want to be a family with you." But that wasn't when the relationship ended, that was just me telling him to go clean himself up.

I think I gave him too many chances. He calmed down a bit and came to accept that I was serious about him moving out and not coming back until he had got himself together. Even though he wasn't living with me, he still would come around and see us, and when he'd come around, money would go missing, or my card would go missing. And I'd be like, "have you seen my bank card?" He'd say, "no I haven't seen it anywhere."

It was a big struggle from week to week trying to get money for food and trying to get the money to pay the car, trying to get the money to pay the rent. I didn't want to ask my Mum again, I had already asked her for too much, but then she's seen that our cupboards were empty and she just went out and did a big shop for us, so that helped a lot.

About a week or two after our daughter was born, I just said to him, "I've had enough, I can't do it anymore." He hasn't seen her since she was three months old; she's two next month. He actually

## He said ... he wanted to do something bad to her.

said to me that he couldn't have anything to do with her because every time he's seen her, he wanted to do something bad to her because she reminded him of me. I'm really grateful

he told me that. I said, "I'm glad you told me," but I said, "if that's how you feel, don't ever come back," and he's never come back.

I work two jobs now. My kids are happy. I work during school hours and my daughter goes to my sister-in-law's and my son's at preschool so, we're okay. We're not behind in bills and I've got leftover money and we can go out and spend some money.

My kids have everything they need – and that's what makes me happy.

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### Acknowledgement and thanks

Domestic Violence Service Management (DVSM) would like to thank [Rosie's Place](#) for conducting these interviews and providing these transcripts to Insight Exchange to ensure the voices of lived experience are able to help inform and strengthen social, service and systemic responses to Domestic and Family Violence.

The initiative to conduct the interviews was from an informal pro-bono collaboration by Rosie's Place, WASH House, and the Mt Druitt Family Violence Team. The narratives were provided by the individuals for the benefit of others. The narratives were obtained through interviews with Rosie's Place and assembled by the Insight Exchange team.

DVSM would also like to thank the person with lived experience of Domestic and Family Violence who has generously shared their insights for the benefit of others.

We acknowledge that despite our best efforts to assemble with a person a more accurate representation of some of their experiences of violence, we can never fully understand all that their experiences mean to them now or through their life. We understand that no one's life experience can ever be fully represented in language or any other form.

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