

**The following analysis of an account was developed by the Penrith Women’s Health Centre [Practice Exchange](#) Participants.**

*DVSM would like to acknowledge and thank the author/s of this work who have donated their analysis to the Insight Exchange Language Lab for the benefit of many.*

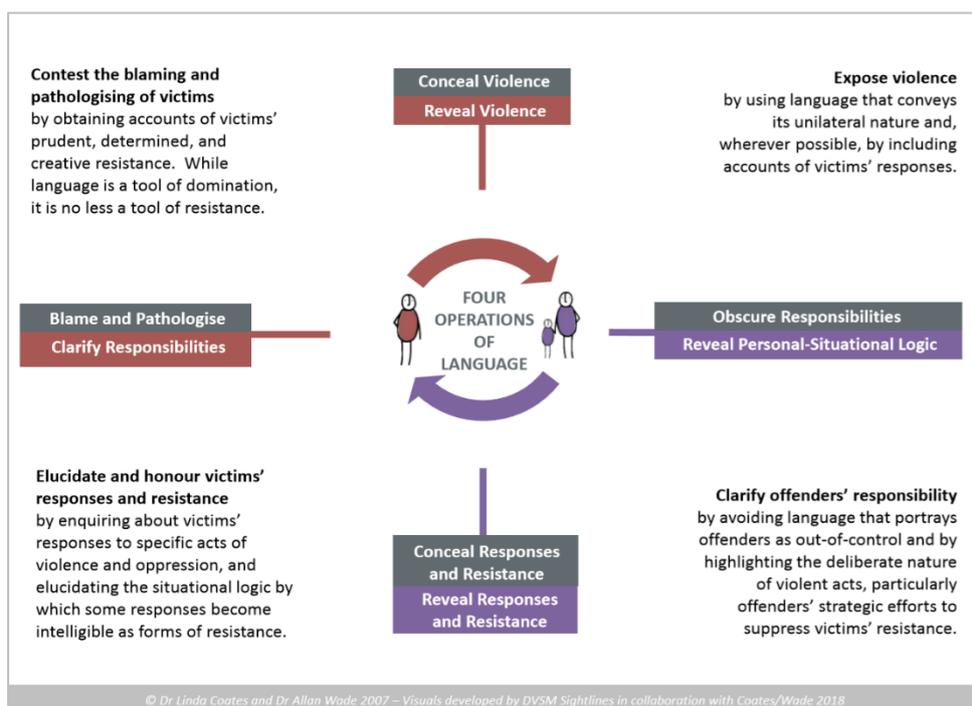
USING THIS RESOURCE: The information contained within this resource is for general information purposes only. DVSM and PWHC assumes no responsibility for how the information in this resource is used.

COPYRIGHT: PWHC & DVSM gives permission for excerpts from this resource to be photocopied or reproduced provided that the source is clearly and properly acknowledged.

The author has developed all 3 scenarios which are de-identified and has drawn on the existing materials in the Language Lab to inform the analysis.

In particular;

- This analysis draws from the [Language and Violence Resource Kit](#) which draws directly from the work of Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade: [The Interactional and Discursive View of Violence and Resistance Interaction. 2007](#) and work of the wider team from the Centre of Response-Based Practice team. Related resources within the kit are drawn from the DVSM Sightlines initiative Insight Exchange developed in collaboration with Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade: [www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)
- This analysis of an account mirrors the colour coding used in the four operations of language illustration within the Language Lab reasons ‘[The Fact Pattern](#)’ - an example of improved accuracy and evidence.



## Background to scenario:

A woman was referred some time after leaving multiple relationships where she was a victim of domestic violence. She was referred for support and case management to a support service for women involved in the criminal justice system.

---

## Scenario A:

At the time of the violence the woman attended hospital seeking treatment for her wounds. She reported the following account about her attendance to hospital at that time. She later reported hospital staff were suspicious and stated this but didn't do anything further than medical treatment.

*"I went to hospital and reported I fell on glass and cut myself to receive treatment. I initially went to the medical centre and was refused treatment so went to hospital and received stitches."*

## Scenario A - Analysis

This account identifies some of her injuries however it conceals:

- the violence that occurred
  - the responsibility of who perpetrated the violence
  - her resistance to the violence
  - her protection of herself and her children
- 

## Scenario B:

After engaging in support service for some time, the woman first disclosed being a victim of violence from an abusive partner and enduring a relationship where she experienced domestic violence for many years.

Following is the version of events that the woman initially gave to support staff when she disclosed an incident of domestic violence, after engaging with the support service for some time she disclosed she was experiencing domestic violence from the partner...

*"We had been living together for some time and had two kids. One day we got into an argument which turned into a fight. I was injured and had cuts to my body. It took me 2 days to get to the hospital to get treatment where I needed stitches. We stayed together for a long time after that."*

## Scenario B - Analysis

This account while has more details than the account she gave to the hospital conceals the violence and/or obscures responsibility and does not represent her resistance to violence or the role of social responders in this account. Please see specifics below colour coded to the account above:

- Conceals the violence and /or obscures the responsibility
- Mutualising language
- Resistance to violence is missing
- Social responder/responses is missing

---

## Version C:

During a subsequent meeting I spent time building rapport and exploring the situation with the woman. I used open ended questions, looked at the sequence of events, resistance to the violence, history of violence. I asked questions such as: What happened next? What did he do? What did you do? What was going through your mind at the time?

I was very conscious not to comment or make judgements about what she said but rather posed a curiosity to understand her experience, trying to pick up on subtle cues and reflect these back in her own words. Where I could see that she seemed to be doing something to resist the violence and protect herself or her children I gently asked her further about that for her to hear in her own words and thoughts of the actions she did take and her quick thinking, ingenuity and perseverance to resist violence, protect herself and her children including the efforts she took to get medical treatment.

She reported that this was the first time she really thought about what she did to protect herself and her children rather than what was done to her or what she did to “deserve it” (according to others). It was the first time she felt heard and had a felt understanding that she did not “deserve it” it was not her fault or responsibility that the violence occurred. It was the first time she really felt that it was his choice to be violent but he tried to shift this blame to her and other social responders in her life at that time validated his shifting blame, concealing the violence and his responsibility.

Through this line of curious questioning and reflections and the woman’s responses we created the following account of events:

---

*“I had been living in fear for a very long time. One afternoon was high on ICE and **insisted on taking my key card**. I knew it had the last of the money for the kids for the week and I knew I needed to buy food for them. **He said “I will kill you if you don’t give me the card”**. I said **“No I need the money for food for the kids”** and continued with my tasks. I saw him go to **grab the broom** and I knew the kids were in the room so I quickly ran out of the room to take the situation away from the children. As I was running, **he was hitting me on my arms and legs with the broom handle violently**. He was still yelling **“I’m going to fucking kill you”**. I tried to protect myself and covered my body and head by getting into the foetal position. He was repeatedly yelling **“You can’t leave me”, “You’re not going to leave me”, “I’m going to fucking kill you”**. I tried to tell him that I wasn’t going to leave him and I loved him to make him calm. **He grabbed a knife** from the kitchen bench and **lunged at me whilst I was still curled up on the kitchen floor**. I continued to try to protect my body and face as **he waved the knife violently towards me**. **He cut me** on my arms and legs and I ended up with multiple lacerations. I was bleeding from the many lacerations and knew that I needed medical help. Throughout this, I was trying to calm him to stop the violence by telling him what he wanted to hear, reassuring him by saying **“I love you”, “I will never leave you”, “let me cook you dinner”**. The pain was excruciating but I had to stay focused.*

*He slowed down and stopped. I knew **he wouldn’t let me go to the hospital**, so I tried to do my own first aid as quickly as possible to attend to the children, check they were okay and keep him calm. I kept thinking about the kids and was worried so I made the effort to check on them regularly and cooked dinner as usual so they would be less stressed. Keeping the kids calmer would also keep all of us safer as*

*it is less likely for him to reignite the violence if they cried, were loud or got upset. The pain was excruciating however I had to manage this in silence to keep him happy and settled. I didn't want to reignite the violence again and acted normal and extra loving towards him.*

*I waited to the next day to start to ask permission to go to the doctors and seek medical help. I knew I had to wait until enough time had passed that he would trust me enough to allow me to see a doctor. I started to plan how to go about getting medical attention. I started with subtle suggestions and built on that to include stronger suggestions such as going with his sister so he knew I was not going to escape. He trusted his sister and knew she would monitor me and report back to him. I assured him that I was going to tell the doctor that I fell on glass and would not disclose anything else. I told him this numerous times throughout the day in slightly different ways. It took 2 days for him to agree for me to get medical assistance chaperoned by his sister. He drove me to his sisters. During the drive he had the car doors and windows locked so I could not get out. When we arrived at his sisters he grabbed me by the arm took me out of the car and put me in his sisters car before he let go of my arm and locked the car door. I knew I needed medical treatment so did all I could to keep him calm and happy to get to the doctors. I did everything he asked without question and reassured him of my love and affection for him doing this for me. That I would prepare his favourite meal that evening.*

*His sister took me to the local medical centre where I told them that I fell on glass. The staff insisted that this did not happen but I had to stick to my story as his sister was right next to me, so the doctor refused to treat my wounds. I convinced his sister to take me to the hospital as they will treat me and I showed I would stick to the agreed story. She drove me to the hospital where I told them I had fallen on glass and received over 60 stitches, my wounds were cleaned and dressed and I was given antibiotics to reduce infection. The doctors stated they did not believe my story however I insisted that I only fell on glass. His sister stayed right next to me during the entire time so I was very careful what I said knowing she would report back to my husband. If I had said the truth I knew she would tell him and I would be in more danger and the children would be in danger. If he did this to me over \$50 on a key card then what would he do to me or the kids if I disclosed the violence. I knew he would actually kill me and the kids.*

*I self-discharged as soon as possible, before the social worker came to see me and his sister drove me back to his home. I continued my life of fear trying to protect the kids and myself as best I could until I could find a way to escape with the kids."*

---

## Scenario C - Analysis

### Colour Coding

Please see specifics below colour coded to the account above:

- Conceals the violence and /or obscures the responsibility
- Mutualising language
- Resistance to violence is missing
- Social responder/responses

**Analysis Explained:**

- His unilateral-violent actions are recorded
- His deliberateness of the violence is evident
- He overpowers her resistance and prevent further efforts of resistance
- His deliberate efforts to conceal the violence
- Her resistance to violence and protection of herself and her children
- The role of social responders. In part with sister in law this colluded in concealing the violence and obscure the responsibility

**From this account it can be clearly seen that her husband was responsible for the violence:**

- Financially controlling
- By taking last of money depriving family of basic needs such as food for children
- He made efforts to get weapons to attack her with
- He followed her
- He physically assaulted and injured her
- He threatened to kill her
- He controlled her access to vital medical attention
- He controlled her social interaction – only with his sister who he could trust would collude
- He controls her choice to stay in relationship or leave by threats, coercion and limiting options through other forms of abuse
- He attempts to shift blame to her that she said no, the reasoning was that she didn't love him and she was going to leave him rather than his choice of violence

**This account clearly shows her deliberate efforts to resist violence and protect herself and her children she:**

- Clearly said “no” as money was needed for food for children
- Moved away from where children where to reduce exposure and risk to them
- Positioned her body to protect herself as best as possible against his physical assault
- Resisted the physical violence by cajoling him, telling him what he wanted to hear, counteracting his blaming, “I love you”, “I will never leave”, “I’ll cook your favourite meal”.
- Resisted controlling violence by reinforcing what he wanted to hear and cajoling him that in essence “I will lie for you and blame myself so you are not exposed, I will keep this concealed”
- Protected self and children by concealing violence in short term to access medical support and reduce the frequency and degree of physical violence

**This account clearly shows the role of social responders:**

- Sister in law colludes in concealing the violence and in essence is condoning the violence
- Medical centre refuses basic medical treatment – if she had not convinced sister in law to attend hospital her condition would have not been treated and her injuries would have been worsened
- Hospital stated they did not believe her but still treated her wounds so she had her medical needs met