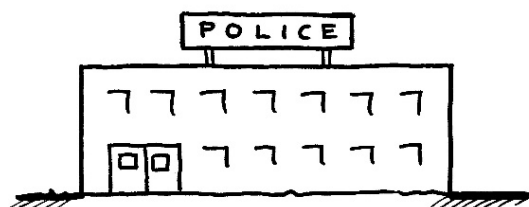


# FOLLOW MY LEAD



## Reflective questions to responders

- Please describe a specific example of what following a victim-survivors lead has looked like?
- What is one assumption, habit, or discomfort you have to manage in yourself to not take over, in order to follow the person's lead?
- All organisations and roles have constraints and limits. Have you found a way to follow a persons lead within the constraints/rules that you can't change. What do you think about when you do that?
- We won't ever know what our approach might have meant to the victim-survivor at the time, and over time, but what difference do you think this made 'in the moment'?



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**“And I think that’s really the beauty of following women’s lead, because they will assess what’s best for them in those moments and they just need someone who is going to validate and support those decisions as they go”**

I’ve had to overcome a desire for men who use abuse to be formally held accountable for breaches or just abuse in general. So, from working with victims-survivors I know really well that Police and the Criminal Justice System more broadly can be a really unsafe service to access. So, I make sure that if I am presenting that as an option for them, I do present it just as an option rather than as something they should do, um so as not to coerce them. If they express that that is an avenue that they don’t want to pursue, then I make sure that I present my understanding or I express my understanding. I know that victim-survivors are always weighing up their different options and if they felt that the Police were the best choice for them in that particular moment then they would choose that.

A client of mine, her ex-partner was escalating in his behaviour, and to me I had that reaction or response you know within me that felt like so there needs to be some sort of um, external ah, I suppose, intervention. Um because what she was trying to do to manage the situation whilst it was, whilst she was doing a lot, it was not as effective... well...he wasn’t taking any notice of her basically. And so, I had that urge of like “there needs to be something more”, “there’s gotta be something more”. But when I suggested you know “have you considered and AVO?” and I know we had talked about this in the past and she’s not particularly keen on the idea typically. But I suggested it again as an option because there is also that feeling of my own responsibility of needing to, you know, because if I am hearing about these things that are happening, there is a feeling as though I need to provide some options, and I can only do so much personally. And she just said “there is no way, um, you know that I want to have the Police involved because of these past experiences she’s had and I just said “that’s completely understandable and I completely support what your decision, you know to not involve the Police”. And then interestingly, a couple of weeks later she actually ended up contacting me and saying she would like to try to apply for an AVO.

So, there’s that shifting, like constant shifting and obviously the Police is something she actually doesn’t want to go down that path. But when the situation became to a certain point she understood when that point was then she said “actually I will consider this”. And I think that’s really the beauty of following women’s lead, because they will assess what’s best for them in those moments and they just need someone who is going to validate and support those decisions as they go.