

* THIS NARRATIVE INCLUDES DESCRIPTIONS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE. *

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

Anika

Family is the place where you're meant to be your safest. Exposing the fact that the institution of family is unsafe, is something that our society is not ready to do. This silence and secrecy is why child sexual assault perpetrated by family members is really difficult to talk about. I am a survivor of child sexual assault. The perpetrator was my father. My father abused me from the ages of 7 to 15. My father used control in his relationship with my mum. Whatever his behaviour was, it was excused. It was mainly excused by the structure of marriage. I don't recall my father ever physically hurting my mum. I don't recall seeing evidence of that. But I do recall how terrified we all were in my house. I remember my father's temper - he would either go from being very explosive, or he might just not speak to us for a week. He would just give us the silent treatment. But I have school friends, I have family members, I have a range of people in my life who have always seen me and my father as just a normal happy family. My parents were also capable of being lovely people that have done some great things. They volunteered and they helped people in the community. My mum was an accountant and she was really great her job. My father ran a cleaning company. Perpetrators are just people who are in all of these positions in the community and the community is complicit.

My father chose to abuse me in the same household that my mother and my siblings were living. He was quite opportunistic. He would always choose times when my mother and siblings were not at home or in the evening or at different points in time where no one really knew what was happening

I went into protection mode for Leila, who is my younger sister. I would insist that she sleep in my room every night. I would sleep quite lightly, and I would listen closely for any noises in the night.

to me. To this day, I still believe that no one in our household knew exactly what he was doing to me. My father's abuse went on for years. I noticed that my behaviour changed as I got older and as his abuse continued. I learned so many ways of protecting myself. At ages seven, eight, nine, and ten and all the way up to 15 years of age, I had to be strategic. I developed a blueprint of ongoing resistance and ways of refusing abuse in the future.

As I'm gathering these elements of my whole lived experience, and putting it all together, it shows the real power of my resistance as a child. I remember lots of little glimmers of my fight back and of these moments of really standing in my power, for what could have been five minutes as a child, or as an adolescent. Right from the beginning, I would resist my father's abuse by freezing my body – somehow, I just knew how to do this. In response to my father's violence, I went into protection mode for Leila, who is my younger sister. I would insist that Leila sleep in my room every night. I would sleep quite lightly, and I would listen closely for any noises in the night. I knew exactly how to protect Leila and that was one way of

“Why does it matter? Terrible stuff has happened to me here in this house and no one does anything about it. So why would it matter if some stranger does stuff to me?”

vulnerable. It was me yelling at the top of my lungs at her. The context for the argument was that I wanted to go on a date with a man who was a few years older than me. My mum was telling me that “it is really unsafe for you to go on this date”, and that “all these things will happen to you”, and it was a “terrible idea”. I blew up and said, “why does it matter? Terrible stuff has happened to me here in this house and no one does anything about it. So why would it matter if some stranger does stuff to me?” My mum started to ask me a whole lot of questions, and while I can’t remember her exact words, the questions were along the lines of, “has he penetrated you?” and “has he had made you give him oral sex”? It was as though she was assessing the level of sexual abuse. For my mum, these of violence were the two things that would mean that she would need to do something about it. But because I said “no” to those two questions, and that was the truth, that was it for my mother. It was like she was stuck on some imaginary scale of physical abuse, like, “if it's past a number five, then it's bad. If it's past number five, and if the perpetrator is a coach or a teacher and its past number five then it's really bad, or if the perpetrator is a parent and the abuse is a number three then it's not that bad”. I thought this was a ridiculous response. I remember my mum briefly considering the implications for herself, “What about divorce? what would I do? Where would I go?” But she never asked me what his abuse meant to me or about what I wanted to happen. I looked at her and I remember thinking, “you are a really capable woman, you've supported our family. You've done all the work. You are more than capable, and people get divorced all the time”. She seemed to make the calculation quickly, “well, you gave me this information. I have weighed up the odds. Do I pull my kids out of this family and go through with a divorce? No, I won't do that”.

My mum could see that I was distressed, and she suggested that I see a counsellor. I don't believe she understood how wrong that suggestion was even today. So, my mum sought out a counsellor for me, and that was it. She sent me to see a male counsellor who was pretty much the same age as my father. He was a stock standard terrible counsellor. He didn't ask any questions about

resisting my father's violence. This resistance was also a way of continuing to protect myself. I took pride in my relationship with Leila, and I am proud that I helped create safety for her.

There's a big age gap between me and Leila. She's also always suffered from immune problems. Even in the peak of my teenage years, when for most teenagers, the last thing you want is a younger and often very unwell sibling following you around, but I didn't push her away. I always brought her into my fold. I was always thinking of protecting her. When I was 15 years old, I found my voice. I spoke up to my father and told him to stop, and he stopped. I didn't say anything to anyone about it. About a year after I told him to stop, I was having an argument with my mum. I told her about his sexual violence and abuse against me during a massive argument with her. I wasn't calm or

I remember my mum briefly considering the implications for herself, “What about divorce? What would I do? Where would I go?” But she never asked me what his abuse meant to me or about what I wanted to happen.

I thought “this is bullshit, I am not doing this anymore”. So, I wrote the counsellor a letter and told him he had fixed me and that everything was great.

me getting in trouble at school or asked me any questions. We didn't talk about anything important at home – it was all just swept under the carpet. After I disclosed to my mum, Leila wasn't often left alone with my dad, she was always either with me or my mum. The only other response to me speaking out about my father's abuse was to send me to counselling to fix “my issues”. Every time I expressed my distress, grief or anger about what my father did to me, my mother and father both made it very clear that it was my problem. They would encourage me to “go work out what your feelings are about”. My mum made it clear that I was never to tell my sister and that if I told her, all of that hard work of maintaining our happy family would crumble.

I knew that Leila was in danger because no action was being taken against my father. I knew something needed to happen. But we continued to play happy families, there wasn't really any other choice. For the next 13 years we lived in that household of, “everything's fine, because we're just not going to talk about it”. It was very clear to me that if I wanted family, I needed to maintain the lie that was that our family was fantastic. It is only just in the last few years that I've been able to say, “well, actually, I don't want that version of family anyway”. The reality is, that it has taken a really long time to come to this conclusion.

So, I finished high school and started my career. I got married, and my father gave me away at my wedding. When my first child was born, I had a complete meltdown. I noticed disconnection from physical affection and a range of other things that were coming up for me. It was at this point that I really started to question the institution of the family home. It all started unravelling for me, and I sought my own counsellor that specifically worked with sexual abuse survivors. I was able to work through my experiences of sexualised violence and looked at how that was weighing on me as a parent. So that was a very a difficult experience but a really positive one because I was supported. I had sexual assault counsellors that knew exactly what I was talking about and that was helpful at the time. Over the years I have worked with different people at different points in time. For me, speaking with other survivors has always been

abuse, and I didn't tell him either. It was awful. I definitely did not feel safe, or able to be vulnerable with him. I didn't feel like I could say, “I need help and I don't want to be in this situation, and what do I do to not have to live in this house?” That was never really even on the cards to discuss. I do remember consciously making the decision that I didn't want to go back to counselling. I thought, “this is bullshit, I am not doing this anymore”. So, I wrote the counsellor a letter and told him he had fixed me and that everything was great. So that was my first experience of any kind of formal “support”.

I once shared an aspect of the abuse I was experiencing while I was at school. I got in trouble for something and I said, “my home isn't safe for me and if I got in trouble about this, it would cause more issues for me at home”. I still don't know if the school actually called my home or took any action. My father's abuse was not discussed within the family. No-one at home said anything about

It is only just in the last few years that I've been able to say, “well, actually, I don't want that version of family anyway”.

more helpful than speaking with psychologists and counsellors. Don't get me wrong, I've worked with some incredible psychologists and counsellors. I have connected with therapists the most when they have shared their own lived experiences of violence and abuse - it creates a level of human connection. Otherwise, there is this us and them divide. Like there's something wrong with me for being a survivor and something wrong with me because something happened to me. Many psychologists and counsellors have shown me that they think it is their job to sit and to observe me and make comment and provide advice. But when I know that the therapist is person has some form of lived experience, it just breaks down that barrier. I'm pretty sceptical of therapists who aren't survivors, to be honest, especially when they try to give me advice. I'm like, "no, you have no idea what I'm talking about".

I have always had this very beautiful relationship with my sister. But there was also a real toing and froing of knowing that I hadn't been truthful with her. I also watched her have the exact life that I wanted to have because I was creating that safety for her. Leila had the relationship I wish I had had with my father. Because she did not experience his sexual abuse, she didn't know who he really was - so she loved him. I wish I had been that safe. That's a different type of grief again.

When I was in my 30's and I just thought "I can't do this anymore. I can't continue living like this". My younger cousins still had a relationship with my parents at this time. I remember it was nearing my younger cousin's birthdays, and I was trying to work out how old they were turning, "was it 6 or 7 years old"? As I was trying to work that out, it started to dawn on me that they were right in that age bracket that I was when my dad started abusing me. I remember feeling this whirling on the inside. I wasn't sleeping well. I just started feeling really uneasy, I wondered "what is going on?" Then the penny dropped, and I realised that my cousins were in danger.

I wasn't sure how often my cousins saw my parents or whether or not they had sleepovers with them. But I was very concerned that my father would have access to and abuse another generation of young children. Especially because the whole family were pretending that everything was fine. That worried me, and I thought, "I need to just put this on the table and say this house is not safe". I also wondered "if we are going to still live in this house, how can we make it safe? How can we discuss my father's abusive behaviour and say that it's not okay?" I also didn't want to pursue the criminal justice system. I didn't want to tear everything down. I simply wanted to make sure that my young cousins were safe.

“We can't control how other people think and react. But what we can control is, what you choose to do now and who you choose to stand with”.

I sent a letter to my parents and my siblings explaining that I was no longer going to keep dad's violence a secret; I said, "I'm planning to disclose to Leila, if you'd like to be present for that, so there isn't a 'he said, she said situation', you're welcome to be there. But I don't want to live like this anymore. If we're going to do any kind of real healing, we need to be talking about my father's abuse openly. We can't do that without including everyone in this family". I didn't get a response from my father, which wasn't surprising.

Up until this point, my mother never explicitly told me to be quiet. But when my mother received my message, she called me and said "please don't do this. We've all just tried to get on with things for so long, why now?" I completely understood why she was so distressed,

because I was about to unravel everything. But at the same time, I had said to her, "I can't do this anymore. Why do I need to carry this secret? The responsibility to keep silent should never have been put on me".

My brother, who is a couple of years younger than me, offered his support and said that he understood where I was coming from. But he also let me know that “I am having my graduation and I just need to focus on that right now” I said, “no problems, but I'm not coming to it – because our parents will be there and I'm not pretending anymore”.

My initial idea was that I would travel and meet with Leila who lived interstate in Western Australia. Both my parents and my brother immediately decided that they wouldn't come to Western Australia with me. I thought “no problems, I'll go on my own”. Before I left, I had a few very hard conversations with my mother, and I explained to her that I was really hurt and disappointed because of the decisions she had made when I was a teenager and by her inaction. I was very conscious that if she chose to continue to align herself with my father, that there wasn't really much I could do about that. I said to my mother, “there could be people that hear this story and would be disgraced and horrified by your actions. We can't control how other people think and react. But what we can control is, what you choose to do now and who you choose to stand with. You can choose to support me, and you can choose to be honest now”. My mother said she would continue to stand with my father and made it clear that she wasn't leaving him. So, I told her that I was choosing to estrange myself from her and my father, who I was pretty much estranged from anyway. It was really sad. After that discussion and I went to Western Australia to see Leila.

I found out later that while I was on the plane, Leila had called my mother, and she was in a panic and started to tell Leila everything. Leila stopped mum halfway through the conversation and said “wait, Anika is coming here to tell me, I just don't think that I want you to say any more. She's made the effort to come here, and it's her story to share”. I had all this pent-up stress and apprehension as I was going to meet Leila. As soon as I saw her, she said to me “I already know”. Her words opened the conversation. It was interesting because the reality is, my mother was the main person who worked so hard to keep my father's abuse quiet and this time, she was the person who exposed it. So, Leila and I sat and we talked and talked.

Some years earlier I had shared with her that I had been abused as a child, but I didn't say who the perpetrator was. I remember the moment she went to really press me for more details, but she could tell that I wasn't ready to say who it was. Leila had suspected the perpetrator was our dad for about a split second, but then she let it go. As we talked, she said it all started making more sense to her. She said, “I never really understood why I had a great relationship with dad, but you didn't, and that everyone was always okay with the fact that you didn't, and no one ever asked questions or tried to make it better”. She is still working her way through what was real and what was not.

We still have those family memories, and we have years of really beautiful family photos and videos.

But the really dark undercurrent was always there all the horrible secrets about my father's grooming behaviour, which had been there from the get-go and his abuse and the all the silence.

About four months after meeting Leila, our family did get together face to face, for a family therapy session. Leila travelled from Perth over to Melbourne. I picked her up and we had to drive some distance to get to the family therapist's counselling rooms which were based on a large rural property. My mum, dad and brother arrived separately. Like a lot of family therapy sessions, each member of the family had spoken with the therapist privately over the phone in the weeks before we arrived. When we all met, we were sitting in the same room together; the therapist, my father, my mum, my younger brother, my sister and me. During this session, I spoke directly to my mum and said to her that I was disappointed in her responses to me after I told her what my father had done to me and that I as a parent now would not have made the same decisions as her. I said I was really hurt by her decisions back then and also how she continued to stay with him. I asked my mum,

“I never really understood why I had a great relationship with dad, but you didn't...”

“Why didn't you do more?”. As I was speaking, my father who was sitting next to my mother, jumped up, he yelled at me, “how dare you speak to your mother like that... she has done her best”. When my father raised his voice, everything went really still. I looked at him and I thought, “what's wrong with you? You're yelling. Why are you yelling? I wasn't speaking to you. I'm not yelling at her. I'm telling her how I feel. It actually has nothing to do with you and you are yelling at me, I'm no child anymore”. I looked at him and said “wait, what should happen? I wasn't even talking to you.

“I'm not a child anymore, and you don't hold any power over me”.

I'm not a child anymore, and you don't hold any power over me. When you're ready to speak to me like an adult and stop yelling, we can continue this conversation. But I think you've forgotten that you don't have any power anymore. You can't scare me into apologising to my mum about something that is really valid for me to say to her. I was not having a go at her I was just telling her how I feel and why I'm choosing not to have a relationship with her anymore”. In that moment I was

speaking for all the younger versions of myself who didn't have that power. I also realised he was still stuck in his old way of relating to me. Because no one had ever held him accountable for his behaviour, and I think he still thought that he could still throw his power around.

Prior to this family session, I had not described any of the physical details of my father's abuse to my family members. The details are too distressing for me to talk about and I didn't want them to have to experience visualising that. But in that moment, I shared one detail of my father's sexualised violence against me. This was one example which made it clear why the family could not continue pretending that everything was fine. I turned to him and said, “if you think that putting me through that abuse and saying that you should not have to take responsibility or be accountable for your choices and actions, well then what are we doing here?” My father responded with some crocodile tears and said that he “wanted to change” and that “he needed all of our support”. He was specifically talking to my siblings and to my mum. But then turned to me and said, “you know, you too, I need your support too”. I said, “that's not on the table”. The psychologist jumped in and said to my father, “that's actually really not appropriate. I need you to not to address her in that way. Anika has said that she doesn't want to continue having a relationship with you and that is not why she's here today”. It was a really helpful response and she consistently checked in with me asking, “are you okay?” The psychologist made sure that I was the main focus as the survivor.

It was a pretty powerful feat. It was an exhausting, massive few days. We had never talked about this as a family before, so to do it in any setting was huge. But after this therapy session, I doubled down on being estranged from my parents. It was very clear that any additional therapy sessions, any opportunities for restorative justice would be a waste of time because my father refused to take any responsibility for his violent and abusive behaviours.

After the therapy session, I forged an estrangement. This is the hardest thing that I've had to do as an adult - to choose to estrange myself from my parents. Like the conversation about parents as abusers, choosing to estrange yourself from your parents, it's not something that people talk about very often. All the usual family celebration times are hard. Like on Mother's Day, I don't call my mum. I don't even send her a text. It's right in front of her face. Her choices are showing her where she's landed. I've chosen to put a boundary in place, and I've chosen to take a big step back because my mum has not chosen to step forward, and my father has not chosen to be accountable. Mother's Day is a tough day. I do have the joy of my kids buying me things and bringing gifts from school and all that stuff. It's bright and I love it. I try to make my kids my focus, because if not, it could be a really hard day.

In recent years, thanks to a much broader understanding of family violence and coercive control I can understand my mum's responses in the context of my father's use of coercion and control. Before understanding coercive control, I would have just labelled my mum as complicit, and that would have been it. I think the more that I've started to understand her through the lens of family violence and coercive control, it's become very clear to me that she has been controlled by my father for a very long time. I'm not excusing her decisions or her behaviour, but I do have a lot more empathy towards her and why she is still with my father. But it's very clear to me that because they spent decades pretending that everything's fine, that it was easy for them to go back to pretending everything's fine. I don't think my parents' lives have changed all that much. My siblings have had to work out where they sit because they have very different relationships with my parents. I don't know that my younger cousins are as safe as I'd like them to be. I'm very conscious of how opportunistic perpetrators, like my father, are. Because my father, doesn't take responsibility for his behaviour it would be very easy for him to perpetrate again.

It's very clear to me that because they spent decades pretending that everything's fine, that it was easy for them to go back to pretending everything's fine. I don't think my parents' lives have changed all that much.

So that's my ongoing survival and resistance. But holding those boundaries in place is exhausting. I am also grieving all these relationships too. I am grieving family and people that are still alive, and that I could easily visit if I wanted to. There are times in my life, moments of excitement where I might get a promotion at work or something exciting happens and I want to tell someone, but I can't share these details with my parents. The crux of it is that nothing can replace the connection you have with your family. I also really struggled to find other survivors who have had experiences that resonated with my own, especially here in Australia. I've been looking for a sense of community with survivors. That has been one of the biggest challenges recently. I reached out to a few people with experiences of family sexual violence who are based overseas. But, like here the survivor community is very temporary. I love and I'm so grateful for the support that I gained through the small community of adult survivors of child sexual abuse I am in contact with, but it's still not family. I have a handful of people that I trust, and I keep them very close. They're the ones that I share with, and I know that I can just be my vulnerable self with. I also have my own children and my own beautiful partner now. Even so, it's been a really, really long process to find a sense of home in myself.

I put a post up on social media about stopping child sexual abuse and said that I am a survivor of child sexual abuse. One of my relatives saw this and called me. I remember sitting at my desk and when I saw the person's name come up on my phone, I thought "what on earth is going on and who's died? Why is he calling me?" So, I pick up the phone and I just heard the words "I saw your post". What happened next was a three-hour conversation where he disclosed his experiences of childhood sexual abuse perpetrated by yet another relative. He said that he had called me because he suspected that the same relative that had abused him may have abused me too. He was shocked when he realised that it wasn't the same relative that assaulted him, but that the perpetrator was actually my father. He was also shocked as I told him about my mum's responses, how long she had known about my father's abuse and how she is still with him. My relative said to me "wait, what?" There were a few moments of almost being outside of myself and looking at it from the perspective, "oh, this is happening, this conversation is actually happening". But what was interesting was that he didn't actually ask me many questions about the abuse I survived. He shared with me how he was silenced at that point in time, and how he spent 52 years carrying the truth of the abuse on his own.

I felt such heartbreak for the decades he had been silent for. I tried to hear what that was like for him, especially belonging to an older generation. Ever since I was a child, I was always told to just stay away from this relative because “he is nothing but trouble”. Hearing about his experiences of child sexual assault, made me realise “his truth exposes all the family secrets and lies that have protected and enabled perpetrators in this family for decades”. I experienced a range of emotions during this conversation, obviously, I know what it is like to be silenced by your family. Towards the end of our conversation my relative said to me “I've had 50 years of my life where family have pretty much told me to be quiet, and you were the only person that has listened”.

For days, he would call me to share more details of his experiences, there was a lot of information, it was a massive disclosure to make. One day, I spoke to with his partner, and I said something to her along the lines of, “I know that our family is really complicated, and you guys have been on the outer. But if you ever need anything, I've created my own little family and my own little island where I keep everyone really safe. I have very clear boundaries of what's safe and what's not, and so just know that if you ever need anything, you are always welcome”. She just burst into tears and said, “I'm really sorry I just didn't realise that we had family”. I was like, “yes, I know what it's like to have a family, but also feel like you have no one”. In another conversation I said to him really clearly, “if you need to speak to people about this, or you choose to share my experiences, I want you to know that I'm not hiding anything”. What I didn't anticipate was that my relative would start speaking out about the abuse by my father against me very quickly to many family friends and family members.

One day, I saw his name pop up on my phone, and I knew I needed to go into a work meeting. I was like, “I can't answer this because I don't have three hours right now”. So, I didn't answer the call. Towards the end of my day, and I looked at my phone and saw that I had so many missed calls. I was like, “oh, no, the floodgates have opened”. The missed calls were from different family members and family friends. Some were really angry that my relative had shared my experiences on my behalf”. I was like, “well, I gave him permission for him to do it”.

I was like, “I'm not ten anymore”. They were like, “what do we do?” I just said, “nothing because you can't go back in time and rescue me. So why don't we just make things safer moving forward”.

I wasn't ready to answer all the calls I received. When family and friends called me, I said, “I'm not silencing this, I'm not reaching out with a megaphone, but if someone contacts me, I'm happy to have the conversation”. It was really fascinating to see the different reactions of different people, especially people I was really close with. A very close person in my life almost went into ‘knight in shining armour mode’. I was like, “I'm not ten anymore”. They were like, “what do we do?” I just said, “nothing because you can't go back in time and rescue me. So why don't we just make things safer moving forward”. Everyone was really uncomfortable with that, and many people asked me “but what are we doing now?” I replied, “I'm not telling you that you have to estrange yourself from my parents. But I am telling you that if you decide to invite them over and you invite me too – you will now know why I don't show up. If I do show up, I show up for you, and I choose that I am in the right mindset to be in that environment. But if you don't provide me

with that level of transparency, then family gatherings are not safe for me”. Since then, many family members have just defaulted back to what they've always done. Sometimes I see their posts on social media about my parents at a family gathering. I'm like, “oh, yes, I wouldn't be comfortable having lunch with them”. It's actually easier for my family to put me on the outer and make me

uncomfortable than it is to change the entire family system. The reality is, we know that it is easier to sacrifice us as survivors than it is to hold perpetrators to account and to change the system.

If you look at the childhood sexual abuse data, it's very clear that many adults have experienced this form of violence. But as a society, there is still this misconception that the perpetrator of child sexual abuse is the guy down the road who looks suss, and we're still teaching children 'stranger danger'. But the fact is the perpetrators are often fathers, stepfathers, uncles and grandfathers. Survivors often feel the most shame about these close familial perpetrators.

Criticising the structure of the family institution, naming that institution of the family is unsafe and exposing family sexual violence is something that is almost unheard of. Family is central to a real, genuine human need to belong, but how do we dismantle the family when it isn't safe?

I know that there are many, many survivors that have similar experiences to me. It really breaks my heart to think that they might be feeling as alone as I did for such a long time. There is a pervasive shame that clouds the topic is child sexual assault and no one wants to talk about it. My main goal in sharing my lived expertise is so that this may resonate with someone else. So that they know that they are not alone in that lived experience and in their ways of survival. I just keep showing up, fighting wholeheartedly to stop child sexual abuse and to expose the institution of the family for how unsafe it can be.

Family is central to a real, genuine human need to belong, but how do we dismantle the family when it isn't safe?

Acknowledgement and thanks

Insight Exchange would 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.

Handle with dignity

You have been reading a carefully assembled excerpts of peoples lived experience of domestic and family violence. These are not simply another 'story', 'sample' or 'case study'.

Whilst consent has been obtained to share these accounts, we ask that as the custodian of these copies that you uphold the dignity of the people who shared them as you distribute and store them. 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

Further resources and support

My Safety Kit is an Insight Exchange resource for any person who at some point may be reflecting on their own relationships and experiences of domestic and family violence. The resource may also have benefits for people who are:

- Supporting friends and family who are (or might be) experiencing domestic and family violence
- Working as a service responder to people experiencing domestic and family violence

[My Safety Kit](#) includes contact details for services across Australian states and territories that may be able to support a person in their next steps. It is available online at www.insightexchange.net.

Copyright: © 2022 Insight Exchange www.insightexchange.net. Insight Exchange gives permission for this resource to be photocopied or reproduced provided that the source is clearly and properly acknowledged. Insight Exchange does not grant permission for the artwork to be separated from the narrative, nor repurposed, or sold.

Disclaimer: This Voices of Insight is a carefully assembled excerpt of a person's lived experience of domestic and family violence. Details of this person's identity have been altered to protect their safety. Whilst great care has been taken to do no harm and to contribute to improved understanding of and responses to domestic and family violence, Insight Exchange assumes no responsibility for how the resource is used by other parties.
