

Voices of Experience

**Dear Australian
Police Officers**

INSIGHT EXCHANGE

DEAR READER,

The **Voices of experience** are de-identified descriptions of people's lived experience of domestic, family and sexualised violence and other adversities. They have been developed by the author, assembled with Insight Exchange and are designed to affirm agency, uphold dignity and support safety.

The insights reveal the ways in which the person has resisted and responded to the violence used against them. The descriptions reveal some of the context in which the violence has occurred, how people, services and systems responded and how these responses were helpful, unhelpful or harmful.

Our thanks to every person who contributed insights for the benefit of many.

We acknowledge that despite our best efforts to listen to lived experiences of violence and abuse, we can never fully understand all that a person's experiences mean to them now or through their life. We understand that lived and living experiences can never be fully represented in language or any other form.

THANKS

“Dear Australian Police Officers”

My name is XXXX. Not like that's relevant. But today I write to you, as I've heard you wanted to hear from young women on how to handle sexual assault cases and abuse better?

First off, I want to thank all police officers as a whole, for always striving to better the community, and basically being real life super heroes. I secretly aspire to be like you all one day.

There's no easy way to explain this. I'll stick to the facts. 2 years ago, I was 14 and I had been sexually assaulted. 2 days later I found myself getting tested at a hospital, with police officers attempting to explain to my parents of what had occurred. I get it's not an easy job. But I wish an officer had stayed by my side, instead of leaving me in a room with my parents.

I wish an officer had asked me if I wanted to face my parents. Not all adolescents go to family for comfort. I wish I had a choice. As I was still struggling to process on what was happening. As I was stuck in that empty room with my parents, I began to get blamed on for the incident. Imagine getting lectured and blamed by your parents, 2 days after being raped, in a hospital, with police officers standing by the closed doors. That night it felt as if all control had slipped through my hands, I felt like I had no privacy, I felt that I had to comply with whatever was said, or even suggested. Understand I was never the one who alerted authorities about my situation.

My sister alerted the deputy at my school, at around 9am on the XX of XXX. Please someone tell me why it took almost 6 or 7 hours, for police officers to arrive to my school and take me to the hospital to get checked out.

After spending hours at the hospital, I got home super late. And I was expected to get up early to have my statement recorded. No worries. I thought.

Here's where it gets complicated. Its hard imagining and having to recall on such a traumatic event, as it's something nobody wants to think of, talk about, explain, or even go into detail with. But I get that we have to.

It's annoying having to repeat yourself when someone can't hear you. Right?

That's exactly what it felt like, no matter how many times I explained what had happened, no matter how many times I delved deeper into detail. Questions were repeated, so I had to repeat many answers. It felt as if you guys just didn't hear me, for some reason.

I felt obliged to use certain terminology. Instead of being able to say, "He put his dick in me"

I was encouraged to say "he had inserted his penis into my vagina"

Then after repeating that a couple of times, I was then asked "how are you sure he put his penis in your vagina?" And as a 14 year old all I could think of was "what the actual \$#@%"
Moving along...

Once I started going back to school. Police officers were attempting to collect evidence, and they would call at quite inconvenient times, where I'd be in class. They would even call multiple times throughout the day, where I've had to walk out of class and try to explain to the teacher afterwards on why I had to pick up the phone. Kind of awkward right? They knew I was in school, but they called constantly anyways.

Apart from all the above, there are however some things you guys handled well.

I get you are very busy, but you tried your best to email me regularly to make sure I was doing okay.

You helped me find services that could also help me, like counselling services.

You took time to read and reply to my long and painful emails.

I want to specifically thank Constable XX-XX XX-XX.

When court came up, XX-XX gave me a ride there, stayed by my side the whole time, constantly tried to reassure me, saying I wasn't going to get hurt, that it wasn't possible. Before the session began, he even took me to the café across the street and got me a hot chocolate.

He sat on my left to make sure I couldn't view the offender.

After giving my victim impact statement, he commended me on my bravery during the intermission.

XX-XX tried his best to make me feel as safe and somewhat comfortable throughout the whole process.

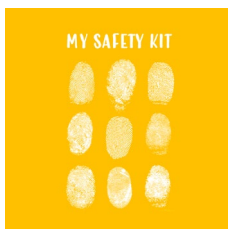
I hope what I have written will be taken into consideration. I hope this improves your perspective as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to read.

Sincerely
XXXX 😊

My Safety Kit

'[My Safety Kit](#)' is a reflection resource designed to support people who are, or may be, experiencing domestic, family and sexualised violence.



www.insightexchange.net/my-safety-kit/

Follow My Lead

'[Follow My Lead](#)' is a resource designed to build on the understanding of people responding to control, abuse and violence.



www.insightexchange.net/follow-my-lead/

INSIGHT EXCHANGE

www.insightexchange.net

Insight Exchange centres lived expertise of domestic, family and sexualised violence. It is designed to inform and strengthen social, service and system responses to violence and abuse.

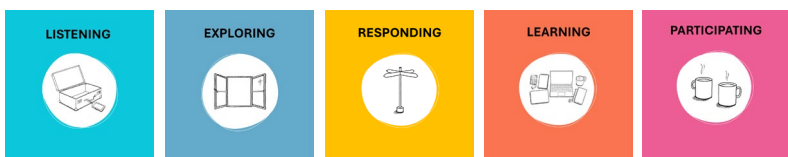
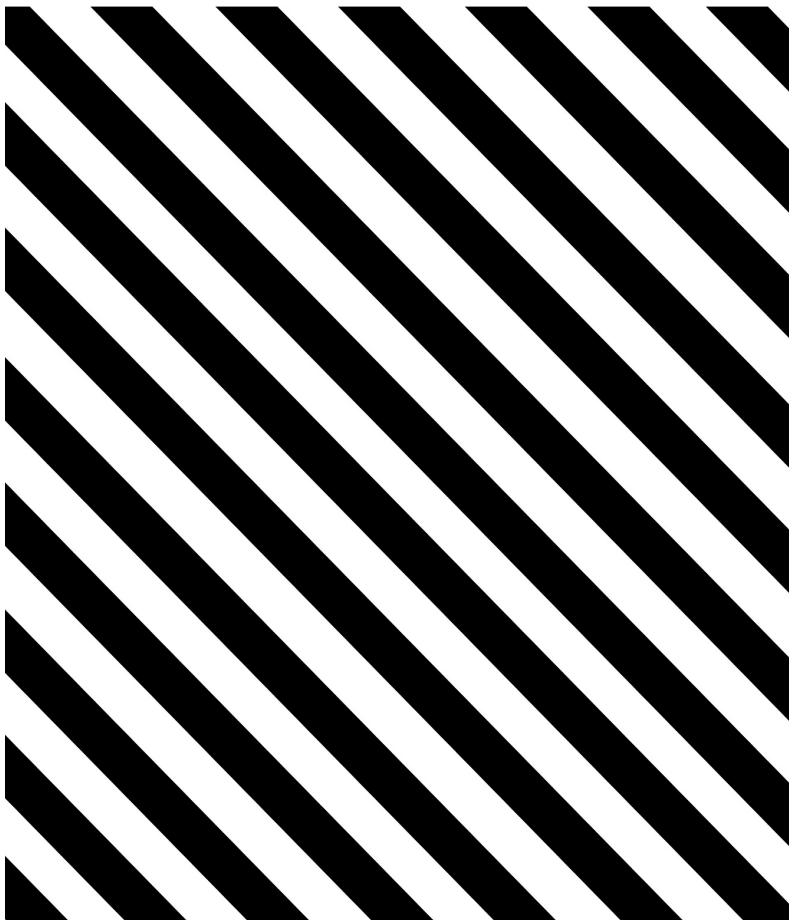
Insight Exchange provides free (donated) information, insights and reflection materials to people in any community, service or system.

Read more about using Insight Exchange:
www.insightexchange.net/guide-using/

© 2025 Insight Exchange.



Insight Exchange acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work and services operate and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend this respect to all First Nations peoples across the country and the world. We acknowledge that sovereignty of this land was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



The menus in the Insight Exchange website include listening, exploring, responding, learning and participating.

INSIGHT EXCHANGE

Scan the static QR code to explore

www.insightexchange.net

(website has a quick-exit button)

