



Voices of Experience

**Liberty and
violence**

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

His violence, threats and coercion have, and continue to, compromise my liberty and the liberty of my children.

We have had to leave our home several times and go into hiding. I had to move my bedroom after he had thrown a brick on the roof above my bed. My daughter could not go into the bedroom where she used to sleep without becoming hysterical. We all slept together in a small office as a bedroom.

Now I can't move as he would still find me, it's too disruptive for the children and I love the home I have made for us. I still have grab bags at the front door and in the boot of my car. I have had to change my mobile number; I have a panic button, sensor lights, CCTV, a dog and an alarm.

To get a good night sleep I go and stay with friends in the country or in a hotel. I can't take the children to the park on my own, I am constantly watching over my shoulder. I do not use social media, tell anyone of my weekly commitments or tell people if we go away or where we go. I use indirect routes and change my travel patterns regularly. It is a challenge balancing working and caring for my children vs after school care and babysitters. I cannot justify spending money on myself. I often don't visit the doctor or the dentist etc. when I should.

I have been too nervous to venture into the dating world in case he becomes violent. Friends explained they didn't invite me to dinner as it's too 'intense' if I talk about the violence. It ruins the atmosphere. I became the coffee friend and stopped talking about my situation. I just asked questions and kept smiling knowing if I stopped I would fall apart. Socially people have shied away and feel embarrassed to talk about it; as if I am 'damaged goods'; I have been cut off; people have expressed their disbelief, I must have 'made it all up'. It's like a partner dying except it's much worse as they're still alive, stalking me, harassing me, frightening me, the violence is debilitating. No one wants to know, or hear about it. It's 'too terrible' Its's not just the terror, it's the ever present threat of violence which consistently undermines and constrains my liberty. The number of friends I have has decreased considerably. However, those I have, believe me, defend me, and love me.

At the end of the day, I used to feel relieved myself and my children had survived it – I felt this every day and to an extent I still do.

This text is an excerpt from
Sally | Voices of Insight
www.insightexchange.net/voices-of-insight

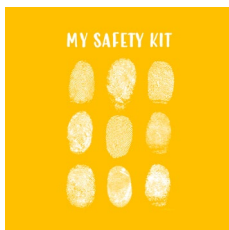
“...The threats from his systematic brutalisation of all aspects of our lives were not just threats to my safety and to the kid’s safety but equally threats to our liberty. The vast majority of responses we have had from service providers and from family and friends were from people who did not understand Domestic Violence. Their responses often minimised the violence.

I needed and still need the support of the system but the system has continually failed to adequately respond and support me. This has left me with the burden of responsibility to maintain our safety, wellbeing and liberty in the face of his continuing escalation of violence.

My fear is that he will hurt or kill me or the kids. He’s still around.”

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/

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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.

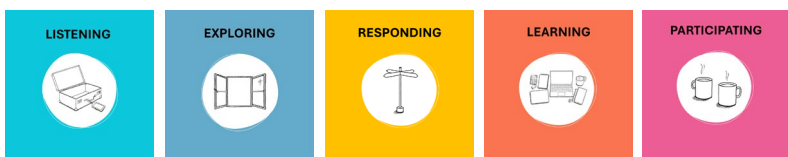
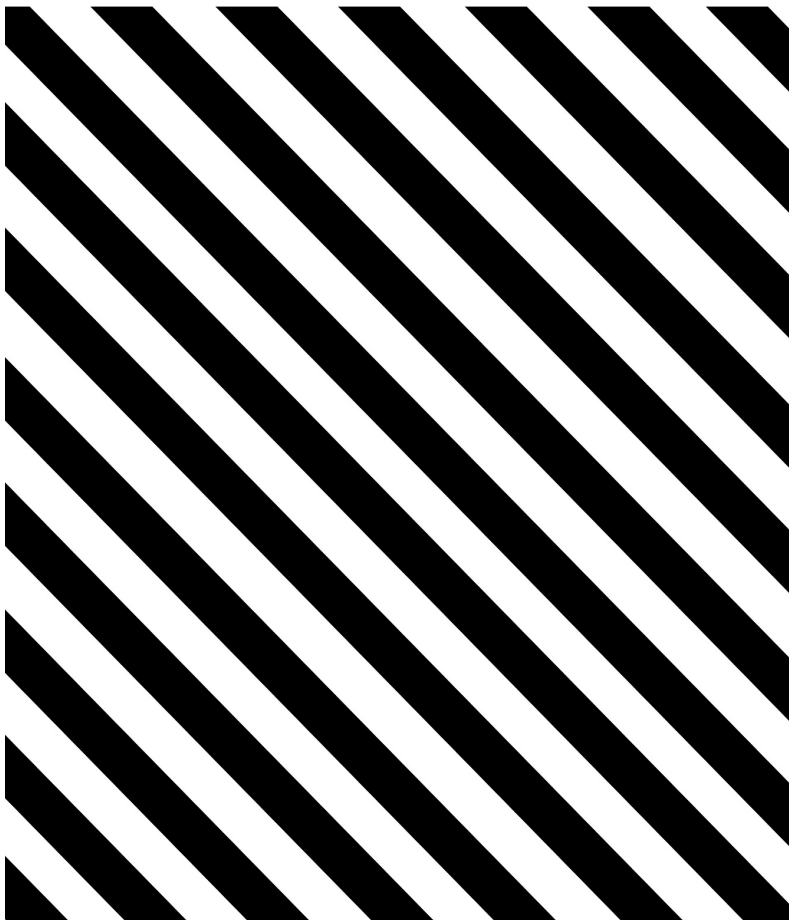
Insight Exchange provides free (donated) information, insights and reflection materials to people in any community, service or system.

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

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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.

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Scan the static QR code to explore

www.insightexchange.net

(website has a quick-exit button)

