

There is another story

PEEL SAYS
NO TO
VIOLENCE

STORIES OF HOPE FROM THE PEEL SAYS NO TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

We can all
make a
difference ...



Recognise

behaviour that's causing harm to you or an older person you know.



Listen

to their story, let them know you understand what they are saying and how they are feeling.



Level of urgency

Is it an emergency? What are the threats? Is there a possibility of them hurting themselves or others?



Plan

If at risk, tell them you are concerned and call the Police. If it is not immediately serious, talk to them about a safety plan and where they could go for help.



Refer

Let them know you are there for them and help them find services.



Document

Keep a note of what you have done.



GETTING HELP - EMILY'S STORY

"It's easy to judge people, but it can happen to anyone."

I was actually in a violent relationship, in a toxic relationship, before I even knew it. It started way before things got physically violent. There's the control a lot earlier in the relationship, the early warning signs.

It's easy to judge people but it can happen to anyone. It's so hard to deal with and the way people treat you during those times can make things a lot worse. It knocks you when you're trying to yourself get out of this thing and someone says "well, why didn't you just leave him". It's like you're walking a really thin line and it's taking everything you have to get to the other side. So, when you're taking ten steps backwards and you're quite fragile, different people's words affect you because you're trying to find your own - you're actually trying to be a new person.

If more people tried to understand they could watch out for the signs a lot earlier on instead of shutting it out. People say when you're in a relationship sometimes you have to take the good and the bad and that's just a bad thing. If he's controlling, if he's looking through your phone, maybe he's just jealous - it's not OK. Just jealous can go so much further. Jealousy has caused people's lives to be taken from them. If people were aware they would not say those things.

I remember going to a rally one day and the lady saying she went to a doctor and she was trying to express how fearful she was because her husband was so controlling and her doctor said, "well, that's just what men do."

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GETTING HELP - EMILY'S STORY

"What you need to hear is that you can be safe."

If that language, if that message being sent to other girls was different it could change so many things.

People need to know you can be safe. When you're in domestic violence situations you just feel like that's it, this is my reality and I'm never going to get away from it. Even if I physically get away from it, I won't emotionally.

You need to know you will be safe – even if it's not today, tomorrow, a week or a month – there will be a time where you can sit and feel at peace. If you start expressing your fears you shouldn't be told that's just how it is, that's what life is or to just leave them. Just leaving them can cause more issues. What you need to hear is that you can be safe, that it is actually an option even though a lot of people don't feel like it's an option.

Emily, 33, Mandurah

Three years after leaving her partner, staying in Pat Thomas and moving to various locations to find safety, the woman in this story now lives with her children in a long-term stable home.

DISCUSSION TRIGGERS

As a health professional, it disturbs you to hear that a woman who went to the doctor reported that her doctor said, "That's just what men do". How could health professionals respond more helpfully to this disclosure?

A friend has asked you for advice as she is worried about her relationship and its future, and wondering whether she should leave or stay with her partner. How would you approach this?

You are worried about your daughter as she seems to be in an abusive relationship. She is starting to withdraw and not see the rest of the family and her old friends. You have tried to talk with her, but she won't discuss it. How could you deal with this situation?

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

It can be hard to understand why someone would stay in a relationship if they are being treated so badly. You might think that the abuse is partly her fault because she puts up with it, or that she is weak or stupid if she stays. From the outside, it may seem easier to leave than it actually is. It can be very difficult to leave an abusive partner and can be quite dangerous. The abuse may continue or increase after she leaves.

Many people worry that they will be 'interfering' if they get involved, or that it is a 'private matter'. But it is equally worrying if someone is being abused and you say nothing. Your support can make a difference. It is unlikely you will make things 'worse' by expressing concern.

Don't make her feel that there is something wrong with her because she hasn't left. This will only reinforce her low confidence and feelings of guilt and self-blame.

When talking to someone who is being abused, some things may NOT help.

Don't blame her for the abuse

or ask questions like, 'what did you do for him to treat you like that?', 'why do you put up with it?'... these questions suggest that it is somehow her fault.

Don't criticise her partner

Criticise the abusive behaviour & let her know that no one has the right to abuse her (e.g. your partner shouldn't treat you like that. Criticism of her partner is likely to make her want to defend him.

Don't be critical

if she says she still loves her partner, or if she leaves, but then returns. Leaving an abusive partner takes time and your support is really important.

Don't pressure her to leave

or try to make decisions on her behalf. Focus on listening and supporting her to make her own decisions. She knows her situation best.

Who can help?

Emergency

For emergency & life threatening situations, contact emergency services;

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Crisis support

Pat Thomas House

Mandurah

www.patthomashouse.org.au

(08) 9535 4775

Counselling

Allambee Counselling

Mandurah

www.allambee.org.au

(08) 9535 8263

Peel Community Legal Service

www.peelcls.com.au

(08) 9581 4511

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

www.dvrcv.org.au

Help & advice

Free toolbox resources

For free resources to share with your community, club or employees, go to;

www.peelsaysnotoviolence.org.au/resources/

All of the stories we share are local stories from local people, shared with the permission of each research participant. Names & images have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

To read the research report, go to;
www.peelsaysnotoviolence.org.au