

# There is another story

PEEL SAYS  
**NO**   
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.



## LEAVING IS NOT EASY - ANGELA'S STORY

*"... I did think many, many times about going back with him in order to give my children "a normal family" ."*

I left my ex-partner two and a half years ago. It was very difficult for the first 6-8 months. He kept trying to get into my house, trying to live with me again, harassing me and all these things. To be honest, I did think many, many times about going back with him in order to give my children "a normal family", but it is impossible to live with a person that is violent and tries to verbally abuse or physical abuse you.

I had the support of my family, my parents. Fortunately, my mum, she gave me all her support. My dad, he was a little bit hesitant to start - he did blame me, saying that it was sort of my fault, but after he saw my situation and how my ex treated me, he realised that it wasn't really my fault and that it was necessary for me to start over again.

When I left I wasn't a permanent resident here in Australia and I had to really, really think and make a clear decision about what I wanted to do because my immigration situation could have been jeopardized seriously if I had left completely. My ex-partner used to threaten me by saying he will send me back home and my children would have to stay here. I used to ring the police. In the middle of many, many things that happened my ex-partner took my children away from me one time after I left and that was devastating. I felt I couldn't leave him but I got lots of support to just rise above this situation and really stand up for myself. And three days later, when I was living in the refuge, I had my children back.

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## LEAVING IS NOT EASY - ANGELA'S STORY

*"You need to learn that this is not love & you are stronger than you think..."*

The main challenge is to not go back. Women who have lived through domestic violence are very insecure. We believe that if it's not that particular man, then it's no one. We think that we cannot love anymore and no one is going to love us - and we are really sure that he loves us. You need to learn this is not love and that you are stronger than you think and that you can do it by yourself. That is the problem that makes you go back to the same man. He apologises, he's so, so skillful, so caring at welcoming you back into his life and just to make you feel good for five minutes - then the cycle starts all over again. You are insecure and believe that you need a man and it's just not the case. It took me two years to understand this. It doesn't happen from one day to the next, not overnight. It takes time.

*Angela, 32, Mandurah*

*The woman in this story now lives with her parents and children. She received help from Pat Thomas House, Legal Aid and the Police.*

## DISCUSSION TRIGGERS

*Some women of faith will feel that they took marriage vows for life, "for better or worse" and their faith teaches forgiveness. How can you respond to this?*

*If someone is thinking about leaving their relationship, how can they prepare themselves to do so?*

*Fear for safety, fear of isolation, and societal and financial pressures might prevent a person from seeking help. How could friends or family help this person?*

## WHY WOMEN FIND IT SO HARD TO LEAVE

### Isolation from others

- Fear of being alone, or that no one will help or understand you
- Fear of being rejected by friends or family
- Fear you will be 'outed' or no one will believe you if you're in a same sex relationship

### Pressures about children

- You believe children need 2 parents
- Fear of being deported or your children taken out of Australia
- Fear your children will be taken away from you
- You provide the lifestyle they're accustomed to

### Fear for safety

- Fear of his reaction
- Threats to harm or kill you, your children or others
- Threats of suicide
- Fear you won't be able to care for yourself or children

### Cultural & religious pressures

You want to try to keep the family together and live up to your religious commitment to remain with your partner

### Pressure from friends & family

You feel ashamed, embarrassed & humiliated - you don't want anyone to know what is happening.

### Partner promises

- You believe things will get better
- You believe that no one else will love you
- You believe others will think you're stupid for staying as long as you have

### Financial dependence

You are financially dependent on your partner for shelter, food and other necessities and you don't know how you would cope alone

### Legal issues

- Fear of losing your children in a custody battle
- You're worried about going to court

## Who can help?

### Emergency

For emergency & life threatening situations, contact emergency services;

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### Crisis support

For urgent and 24-hour support contact:

**Lifeline**  
lifeline.org.au

**13 11 14**

**The Samaritans**  
thesamaritans.org.au

**13 52 47**

### Support & refuge

**Pat Thomas House Mandurah:**  
www.patthomashouse.org.au  
**9535 4775**

**Allambee Counselling Mandurah:**  
www.allambee.org.au  
**9535 8263**

## 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