

Domestic Violence Input – Royal Commission

From: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

My daughter [REDACTED] and granddaughter [REDACTED] moved in with us November 2023, victims of violent domestic coercive violence, being thrown out of home with the clothes on their backs by a violent partner. There is a current Intervention Order preventing him from making any contact with either our daughter or granddaughter. We needed a police escort to retrieve some basic possessions from the home.

It should be noted that the police presence at the home, when [REDACTED] wanted to collect some belongings, was only because the police needed to speak with the abusive partner about his previous outstanding warrants for assault and damaging property. The police pointed out [REDACTED] had no legal right to enter the property if the abusive partner had objected. Whereas if it was the male partner wishing to enter the property, he has every right to enter the property and cannot be denied entry.

They both have been living in our spare room since [REDACTED], it is fortuitous that they can live with us and start to build their lives again from scratch. We have provided continued financial and emotional support throughout their stay with us and will continue to do so.

[REDACTED]: was an emotional wreck when she arrived, she could not answer her phone to unrecognised numbers, we had to always lock all doors and gates to the property. [REDACTED] would have panic attacks if a strange, unknown vehicle or stranger approached the house. She would not venture out in public without being accompanied by either my wife or myself for fear of meeting her violent partner. We home schooled [REDACTED] and bunkered down for the first 6 weeks of School Term 1, [REDACTED] until the Intervention Order was in place. [REDACTED] has gradually regained her confidence over the months and is gradually dealing with her financial and emotional situation.

[REDACTED] did apply for and obtained an Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) of \$5,000.00, which has proved to extremely valuable in helping [REDACTED] get back on her feet and keep a car roadworthy to get [REDACTED] to and from school. The Department of Social Services were extremely helpful providing us with support and advice on family and domestic violence (FDV) with a special mention for [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Because [REDACTED] was not responding to unknown numbers appearing on her phone, she missed the initial phone contact from the EVP, which could have jeopardised the issuing of the grant. A subsequent phone call from [REDACTED] to the EVP made contact and the grant went through. We would suggest email contact in the initial stages of EVP, when the victims are most vulnerable and under stress to verify the authenticity of contact. Also, the initial contact was abrupt and brusque when [REDACTED] was particularly sensitive emotionally and highly stressed.

On several occasions [REDACTED] had cause to approach the South Australian police, from the initial reporting of the domestic violence, through arranging for a police presence to collect some essential belongings such as clothes and toys, to establishing ownership of her car for insurance purposes, which the violent partner had written off in a road accident. The responses varied depending on whether the police officer had domestic violence training or not. On the one hand the police officers with domestic violence training were empathetic, helpful and supportive. Those with obviously no domestic violence training were evasive, off hand and unwilling to get involved in what they said was a “domestic issue” and a “civil matter”.

For example: [REDACTED] discovered that her violent partner had crashed the vehicle registered in her name, writing it off completely in a road accident. When approaching the [REDACTED] Police Station, the officer refused to reveal where the damaged vehicle was located, even though the vehicle was registered in [REDACTED] name, stating that it was a civil matter. The brother of the violent partner eventually located the wrecked vehicle and informed [REDACTED] as to its whereabouts and [REDACTED] could proceed with an insurance claim.

[REDACTED] continues to receive professional trauma counselling as part of a health plan.

[REDACTED]: As previously stated, [REDACTED] came to us with her Mother having been violently ejected from their home by the coercive, violent husband. Things in the home had progressively gotten worse over a lengthy period, culminating in an extremely violent argument, physical assault, and being thrown out of the house with only the clothes on their backs at 6.00pm, in November [REDACTED]. It was coercive violence towards [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], financial, physical and emotional.

Because their home was close to the school and the husband continued to be hostile, My wife, [REDACTED] and I (a retired [REDACTED] home schooled [REDACTED] for the first six weeks of Term 1, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] initial behaviour during this period was aggressive, petulant, argumentative, confrontational, questioning authority, refusing to respond to reasonable requests. [REDACTED] was prone to bed wetting and incontinence and would spend time hiding under her bed, dining table or coffee tables and hiding in cupboards. With our intensive intervention as retired teachers during the home-schooling period [REDACTED]'s behaviour and attitude improved markedly. [REDACTED] also organised a program of ongoing professional counselling including 'Play Date' to address some of the many issues [REDACTED] had.

During the early period of separation, prior to the Intervention Order, [REDACTED] was still communicating via telephone with her ex-partner [REDACTED] and negotiated several unsupervised visits with [REDACTED] and her Father? When [REDACTED] returned from these visits her behaviour regressed and her stress reactions returned displaying the petulant, argumentative, confrontational, questioning behaviours especially towards [REDACTED] her mother. When [REDACTED] stopped these visits via an Intervention Order [REDACTED] became more settled and less stressed and less aggressive towards her mother.

We are now in August [REDACTED], [REDACTED] behaviour has improved to a level that can be considered normal for a [REDACTED]-year-old, she is a happy and contented, intelligent child, socialising well with her cousins and school mates, who enjoys her schooling, especially maths, at [REDACTED]

On one occasion most recently, we were discussing the repairs needed to [REDACTED] car to make it roadworthy, [REDACTED] talked about her father doing “donuts” with her in the cars that they owned.

Regards

