



Domestic Violence will always be apparent in society, this submission is written from the perspective of:

A victim-survivor

Parent or a victim-survivor

A service provider

An educated professional (redacted)

A Person who has lived in a rural/remoter area

A person with a disability

A female aged under 40

A child-survivor

In contributing to supporting and sharing my personal experience, this has been extremely difficult, re-exposing me to horrible memories, and significant re-traumatisation but which is important for all demographics, and persons. My experience is only one of many, but I hope it can provide some insight to the failings current and historical within past and current governments.

I am in no means an expert, but my first hand experiences across multiple areas, places me in a position where I am able to share what happened, in the hope it can improve the outcomes for at least one other person, and future generations.

1. Prevention

Stop it before it starts!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

DV will always be around in society, sadly there is nothing which can be done to stop it, whilst there will always be factors that contribute to DV, ultimately it will always come down to the perpetrator and their intent to cause harm to the person.

A DV act is done with the intent to cause harm knowing it will harm the other person. The victim is the one who can choose which incident is threatening, Prevention of DV starts at educating the public on what it can or could look like. Education in schools on what a healthy relationship looks like vs an unhealthy relationship. Prevention can only occur through educating and supporting victims to tell their stories of survival.

As a victim-survivor, I have fortunately experienced first-hand, a demonstration from a loving man who has shown interest in wanting to increase his own

understanding and knowledge of what to look for, and has directly asked myself what it would like, acknowledging that they were unaware of what to look for. From the perspective of a victim-survivor that works [REDACTED] and from the perspective of a victim-survivor that grew up in a household exposed to DV, learning from a young age how to keep oneself safe has been critical, in being able to stop the violent behaviour before it got worse. As a victim-survivor being provided opportunities to keep myself safe was paramount, I was able to identify the risk, and at the same time protect both my children from harm, by ensuring they were safe from the probable risk.

My experience is not different from any other persons but I was able to physically keep myself safe by assessing the risk of harm, and identifying what the true risk was. With the size difference in my circumstance as a female, I am physically smaller significantly and further to that and impacted by a physical disability, limiting my ability to keep myself safe, but through knowing basic self-defence skills to keep myself safe gave me the ability to come out of the situation unscathed, unfortunately this is not the case for many. Whilst my personal experiences are not current the situation and risk of harm remains for many. I was lucky that I could pre-empt the risk and place barriers between myself, and utilise my own strengths and ability to escape, through continuous escape plans. Knowing the risk of impact should I have been struck and at what location. Taking a risk, knowing that if I had been impacted on the night, my survival would not have been likely.

Since the initial event that I experienced, I know my [REDACTED] children were saved from any further harm that night, and I was able to save myself, from being struck. Through knowing self-defence and how to block and keep myself physically safe from harm is what saved me.

2. Early Intervention

Listen to the victim, multiple attempts and requests for support made in including seeking assistance from SAPOL and services in place to support victims. A plan to escape had occurred long before the attack occurred, and barriers were experienced in regard to obtaining an intervention order, upon doing so the lack of knowledge and understanding from the services involved, placed the blame on me, and forced me to apologise to neighbours, who had opportunities to intervene but failed to do so. As a victim multiple calls were made to emergency services, with no body coming, instead I was told to perform first aid on my person who had threatened my life and safety. There was nobody who came to help me, I had to help myself, but the mistakes from all agencies can continue to be improved and better the situations for those who experience acts of violence

Early intervention starts at prevention, by preventing the initial occurrence of violence will increase and support ongoing prevention.

Early intervention is critical in all circumstances of domestic and family violence, not all that are in the midst of experiencing DV have the knowledge or understanding of what they can/can't do to keep themselves safe from violent attracts. The severity of these acts of violence can continue to reoccur across their life especially when/if retriggered.

The probability of a second opportunity to provide early intervention is unlikely, whether the person has been killed, or due to the mental health factors which follow. Suicide risk is high, as a victim-survivor, it is easier to give up and quit asking for help, because they see no hope or positive outcome or hope

3. Response

The first response is critical, and a failing on any level can and will likely result in impacting the individual from seeking support in the future. When a person first approached and asked for support, that person may not have another opportunity to ask for help. Should this not be met, the individual will be unlikely to request services and support again in the future.

From the perspective of as victim-survivor and the perspective of a service provider, requesting support has been a barrier and is still one which is faced today, particularly as the complexities worsen, with introducing internet-based crimes, where it is increasingly difficult to prove. As a service provider, believing the individual has proven critical.

There are many agencies and providers that show strength and skills with improved response strategies and working collaboratively. Historical incidences and errors are critical and remain relevant as it provides opportunities for improving the responses.

Believing the victim is necessary and it is not something to be taken light-hearted.

As a victim survivor who has experienced a variety of forms of DV across their lifetime, there are multiple issues which are faced, and if a victim-survivor is able to build rapport and connection with a provider, who believes them will make a difference. There remain significant issues within the current police system and roving DV, with many victim-survivors giving up, which can be life threatening.

The responses received from these services have and will continue to impact the individual.

4. Recovery and Healing

Recovery and healing can be lifelong, particularly there is a failing to understand the complexity of what DV looks like, or could look like. as it is not black and white, and the subsequent attached concerns will not be directly identifiable.

All Victim-Survivor's needs will vary depending on the additional complexities they may face, such as disability, health,

Housing

Support (employment, family, friends)

Basic fundamental needs such as gas water electricity, transport and telecommunications

Financial stability

Medical

Mental health Support

need (including children) need to recover and heal

Recovery needs will also come with potential additional issues, including but not limited to healthy and/or unhealthy coping strategies. And the victims may not know what they need at the time, or how to ask for their supports. Recovery and healing is not a single stepped approach, and will likely be lifelong, with no potential recovery in sight.

As a victim-survivor the resulting diagnosis of PTSD is no different to a returning war veteran, and their supports will need to be provided **for life**. Considering retriggering can occur from simple unknown events and accounts. In some circumstances it may be a single word, a behaviour, an action or lack thereof.

When a victim-survivor is re-exposed to triggers, their support needs will increase above all other needs

A child that is exposed to domestic and family violence will also require the same supports as the parent, including flexibility to re-engage with education. There is a potential these vulnerable children will also need additional understanding, as the trauma of what they have repeatedly been exposed to, will likely result in a number of learned toxic behaviours, with them perpetrating violent and aggressive behaviours towards their parent/guardian/caregiver. The children will require specialist supports to additionally encourage their own recovery as a third party to the abuse

There are universal needs, necessary for all victim survivors, however this becomes further complex depending on the variety of situations where the person may be subjected to repeat episodes of behaviours

This is individual to the person and/or person(s):

From the perspective of a service provider that is repeatedly exposed to re-traumatisation and vicarious trauma repeatedly exposed to others experiences of Domestic Violence, being able to separate oneself from re-traumatisation is extremely unlikely and will potentially require support to explore alternative career opportunities, this is not an easy task to achieve, particularly if the person has spent the majority of their career working within the field across multiple sectors.

DV is experienced in every domain in life and recovery will be included periods where one has good days and bad days. On the bad days of recurring trauma and re-exposure their support needs are likely to be extremely higher as there is no opportunity to get away from the repeated cycles of re-traumatisation.

From the perspective of a victim survivor, having opportunity to discuss what has happened, and what they experienced and what they have been exposed to.

If the person has repeatedly sought support from a variety of services, they are likely to feel a lack of confidence to approach services because of what has historically occurred.

With many victim survivors seeking support is a huge step forward and one which requires significant strength in which to do so. Requesting support may be their persons only opportunity to ask for support, meaning all services need to believe the person.

From the perspective of a victim-survivor that has worked within the [REDACTED] sector, confidentiality, is something which doesn't exist as, all services and sectors are somewhat connected., increasing the likelihood, that re-approaching those services to ask for support is unlikely to happen.

Domestic Violence is complex and is further complicated inconsistencies across all domains.

Because of my recurring traumas and triggers, including the multitude of harassment and acts of intimidation throughout the community I have struggled to maintain focus with completing this submission.

There are significant areas which are not covered within this detail, and factors which can and will improve outcomes for all people subjected to abuse. Unless someone has experienced it firsthand they will not know the true impacts felt.

To escape and survive DV is brave and I would not wish this experience on anybody else, and long to see improvements with supporting individuals in all areas, whether they be female or male, DV destroys lives. On the night that I escaped, I was terrified, and had left my work place prepared that I would not survive, knowing the risk of the person that was at home and had an alcohol addiction.

DV cannot be changed in one single submission, and I long for all governments to seek out the information and take guidance from those with first hand experiences, listen to the victims.

As a victim survivor with [REDACTED] years of lived experience, I believe I gave a lot to offer the Government in regards to strategies to support individuals, including developing and implementing programs to be put in place in schools, this is the only opportunity society has to support eradicate the horrendous experience of DFSV.

A apologise for any lack of detail not provided in this, but DV goes much further than a royal commission, and requires a life long approach.