

The [REDACTED] response to an employee experiencing domestic violence.

I was employed by [REDACTED] when I became victim to domestic violence. I confided in my team leader at the time. I lived in an environment where I was constantly yelled, screamed at. I could never do anything right which included cleaning the house and stacking the dishwasher, buying the right foods. I was told I was leeching off of him, even though I paid all the bills and food (because my wage was higher) I was constantly criticised and even controlled with how I spent my own money and was not allowed to buy clothing. I was limited to how much time I could use household appliances for I was banned from using the clothes dryer (which resulted me in going to work in damp clothing once),\ even though I paid the electricity bill. I was not allowed to change the air conditioner mode and he used to hide the remote controls so could not use the heating or cooling unless he was home.

I was isolated from my friends and family. I had to miss birthdays and weddings. My Grandpa once fell and broke his ribs. He lived 3 hours away and I was not allowed to go and visit him until I had cleaned the house. I wasn't allowed to have pets; he threatened to injure the animal if I got one.

I was also constantly told that I was wasteful for using too much toilet paper, glad wrap and too many utensils when cooking. I was called an 'F**&* retard regularly' and if I got upset I was told I was childish. . I struggled daily I wanted to leave several times but did not have the money. Some days I would struggle to get to work on time or at all. I took several sick days as I was so stressed and crippled emotionally.

I had a bad case of the flu and was expected to still run the household and do the shopping, cooking and cleaning. I was told that being sick was an excuse for not doing household chores. This resulted in not being able to recover for months and I constantly relapsing.

He once said that he would call the police on me and have me removed, he liked to frighten and intimidate me. He had been smoking marijuana since he was 15 and I am sure that this contributed to his aggressive behaviour towards me. I was physically injured once, when he pulled the roller door of the shed down and hit me on the head with it. It almost knocked me out and he laughed. I know he used to come close to hitting me, but took his aggression out on furniture instead. I was sexually harassed by one of his friends; he didn't care and laughed about it.

My team leader took adverse action and placed me on a performance plan only about 4-6 weeks after getting a pay rise and rated a "3 fully effective" in my yearly performance review. I was denied any overtime opportunities and was made to resign from the social club where I was health and wellbeing representative.

The team leader strongly encouraged me to resign on several occasions. My job was basically being dangled over my head for 10 months of performance management. In that time I left the situation and was diagnosed with PTSD, I have sought help from my GP and EAP. Although I had gone through DV and was suffering from PTSD they continued to heavily performance manage me to the point where I felt as though I was being bullied which caused me to become suicidal. I did mention to management on several occasions that I was trying to keep myself out of hospital.

The team leader went against Fair Work Australia guidelines and the APSC guidelines which included principles from the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women. A circular was put out which stated that:

“The Australian Government and the Australian Public Service is committed to providing a fair, flexible, safe and rewarding workplace for all employees. The provision of such a workplace is especially important for Australian Government employees who experience domestic or family violence. We are all responsible for upholding this commitment and we can all help to ensure that our colleagues and staff who may be affected by domestic or family violence are always treated sensitively and respectfully at work”

This was certainly not the case for me. I almost threw myself in front of a train due to management’s response to my disclosure. I doubt that they ever believed me. I approached the National Secretary at the time he was working on the “Enough” campaign for awareness of DV within the workplace. He just breached my privacy and notified my TL that I had spoken to him about my situation and being performance managed.

As a result of the performance plan I passed 3/6 capabilities after 10 months of intensive performance management, left the DV relationship and found myself homeless.

I was then demoted from an [REDACTED] with about a \$6,000 pay reduction. This also affected my superannuation and other insurance benefits. I am now financially disadvantaged for life.

In December that year, I was awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Business Excellence. I was confused how I could be demoted and then receive an award a few months later.

[REDACTED]

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