

Domestic Abuse

case study



Dave's Story

I didn't actually realise I needed help until I had left my ex-partner. I kept my children as she gave me some cause for concern and the next thing I knew she was round my house trying to smash the windows in and banging the door down.

The police came round and they removed her from the premises, sent her home and then sat down to ask me a few questions. It was only when the police had finished asking their questions and they said, "look I have to refer you because you've been a victim of domestic abuse" That was when it hit me. It didn't even register until that point that it was abusive. It just seemed normal.

I always just thought that there was something wrong with my ex-partner, something psychological or something that was a fixable problem. I wanted to find out what that was and work with her and help her but you don't think it's abuse until somebody says it.

When I was with I wasn't able to have a job or a career of my own, if I wanted to go to work it had to be the job that she chose and worked around her needs. We used to have strangers coming to live with us, and I never had a say in that, even though some of them were unsavoury and we had the kids with us too. There were also times when she threatened me with knives and she hit me. There was a point when I gave up, I just took the punches and let her get on with it.

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Since the separation people have said that they saw that behaviour. Friends have said they saw her kicking me they saw her hitting me, they saw her controlling me. I couldn't even wear what I wanted to wear. My clothes had to be all chosen for me. I couldn't have my own money, it was given to me. They didn't say anything because, in some way, they just thought it was a normal thing.

It's now been 12 months since I left my ex-partner. I started with despair and thinking I wouldn't survive and sleeping in my car in a layby and feeling like I'd let my kids down because they'd been victims too in all this. In the 12 months I've moved from self-pity and fear to hope and happiness and it's because of the support. It's because these guys [Glow] have been there and shown me that I can do things I didn't think I could, and I can do them on my own.

I always thought there were certain things, such as days out with the kids – if I take them by myself I'm going to struggle because I need an extra adult – but they've helped me to realise that actually I can do this. Me and my kids are doing really well together. But I don't think I ever could stop blaming myself for what the kids went through. The group sessions with other male victims at Glow have been great.

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The first thing you notice when you walk into the room, you think you're going to turn up and it'll just be you and two counsellors and then there's 5 or 6 guys all sitting around a table, so instantly you think I'm not alone here. From there you start hearing stories about how other men across the country have had nowhere to go and deal with it. There is quite a high suicide rate for males. You start to think, if only they had walked through the door and seen half a dozen blokes sat saying "Yes, we've been through this."

