

### **Case study: Jennie\***

Jennie had been married for a number of years when she noticed her husband's bad temper gradually becoming worse and his controlling behaviour intensifying.

"From the outside, we had a wonderful lifestyle - a big house, swimming pool and tennis court. But, nobody knew what our relationship was really like," says Jennie.

"He'd get very angry over the smallest things and take days to calm down."

"Apart from physically assaulting me, he was also verbally, emotionally, financially and physically abusive. He became paranoid about me speaking to other people and even asked me to choose between him and my family."

"I became very careful about everything I did. It was like walking on eggshells trying to predict what would make him snap. Looking back, I realise it didn't matter what I did, nothing would have been good enough."

Jennie's husband became more controlling after the birth of each of their children.

"I had low self-confidence and post-natal depression from dealing with his behaviour," Jennie says.

"When he tried to kill me one night with my one-week-old baby in my arms, I knew we had to leave. I didn't want my daughter growing up in that environment. So, in the middle of the night, I took my children and stayed with a friend.

"We stayed with my parents while he continued to live in the house. He emptied our bank account, so all we had left were the clothes we had with us."

Jennie says it's been difficult to start again and get back on her feet.

"There's been a lot of stress associated with the costs of part-time work, childcare, the court system and raising my children. He also made it harder for me by telling lies about me to the authorities," she says.

"Despite everything, I made the right decision in leaving the relationship because I was living in fear. I don't have to be scared anymore."

*\*Name has been changed*