

CASE STUDY: Angela

Angela was only 14 years old when she experienced family violence from an older boyfriend.

“Soon after we started seeing each other, my boyfriend began to abuse me verbally, physically and emotionally. He would frequently threaten me, or tell me that he would kill himself if I was to leave him,” she says.

Eventually, Angela decided she’d had enough and ended the relationship.

“I still remained friends with him because I was afraid of what he would do to me if he didn’t think he had any power over me.”

Angela had been broken up with her boyfriend for three months, when he approached her to get back together.

“I had just started year 11 and been voted VCE leader. I was feeling more confident and felt that I didn’t need to depend on him to gain my own self worth. So when he asked me to get back together with him, I refused.

“When I said no to him, he bashed me so brutally that I was left with a severe axonal brain injury. I spent eight weeks in hospital, five months in rehabilitation and just over two years in a nursing home before I was well enough to return home to my family.

“The brain injury has left me relying on a wheelchair to get around and has caused me to have to learn to talk, walk and retrain my memory and thinking again.

“The injury has had a devastating impact on my life, but with the help of my friends, family and therapy team I’ve been able to keep soldiering on, even though it hasn’t been easy.”

Angela now works with young people to help build their self esteem and choose healthy relationships and campaigns on women’s and children’s rights.

“I am very excited about the new family violence laws and hope they will give women the protection, assistance and security they need and deserve when they find themselves in a family violence situation.

“I also hope that everyone who hears my story takes the right kind of power in their lives, keeps it real and isn’t fooled.

“I want everyone to know that the violence is never the victims fault and I encourage everyone to spread the message that violence is never acceptable.”

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