

CASE STUDY: Judith

In the first five years of their relationship, Judith says there were telltale signs her boyfriend might become violent.

“He had extreme road rage and would sometimes jump out of the car and abuse people. He’d pick on teenagers on public transport. He got off on intimidating people. But, I ignored those signs because I wanted to make our relationship work,” she says.

“The abuse started with pushing. Then it progressed to beatings, having things thrown at me and smashing sentimental pieces my grandmother had given me. I’d tell myself that it was ‘okay’ and I’d glue the pieces back together or make a collage.

“I was with a man who was wild, intimidating and nasty. I felt trapped financially, physically and emotionally. I lost a lot of my self-esteem and self-respect.”

Soon after Judith discovered her boyfriend had a drug addiction, she decided she’d had enough.

“I left that relationship seven years ago. Although I’m still healing, I’ve learnt to care about myself again and I no longer live in fear. I have a voice now and I’m my own independent person.”

Judith, 54, says she wants to empower other women in violent relationships.

“My advice to other women in violent relationships is don’t stay, because it will only get worse. Ring the police if you are in fear. Tell someone you can trust. Plan your exit. Above all, remember the violence is never your fault.”