

Case study: Judy

Judy worked for many years as a counsellor and family worker. During this time she came into contact with many women who had experienced intimate partner family violence. She did not have a true understanding of it until she had experienced it herself.

“The thing about family violence is that it builds slowly by weakening you little by little, so you don’t even realise it’s happening,” says Judy.

“My boyfriend’s jealousy and possessiveness was very subtle, as he could be very charming and caring. At the time, I thought, *‘He loves me so much and wants to spend all his time with me.’*”

“He’d often put me down about my appearance and what I was wearing, and never wanted me to spend time with my friends. Looking back, it didn’t seem like much of a problem, until I didn’t want to do as he asked.”

“When I finally spoke to my friends about it, they said they’d noticed a change in me, but had been waiting for me to say something first. I really wish they’d said something earlier.

“When I attempted to remove him from my home and my life, the abuse escalated into violence. It was a terrifying couple of weeks. I was scared, I was walking on egg shells because I was afraid that if I said the wrong thing I would be assaulted. I felt trapped in my own house.”

“He became violent one night. He damaged my house extensively and threatened me with a knife. I thought I was going to die. The neighbours called the police.”

“He escaped before they arrived. I sought refuge at a friend’s, changed the locks, took out an intervention order and laid charges.”

“I found out later that he had abused and assaulted other women, who were too frightened to lay charges,” Judy says.

“By pressing charges, he now has a conviction, which I hope gives him and others the message that you can’t get away with family violence.”