

CASE STUDY: Meredith*

Meredith has suffered family violence most of her life. Her grandmother and mother were also victims of abuse. Meredith, who has survived two violent relationships, can now see the patterns and wants it to stop.

At just 17, Meredith experienced a violent relationship.

“On several occasions, I almost died after my boyfriend attacked me in jealous rages. He’d push me against the wall or try to strangle me. On one occasion he pushed me down the stairs. Usually these attacks happened in private, but it reached a point where he became confident enough to also attack me in public,” Meredith says.

“The most terrifying experience was when my boyfriend tried to kill me by driving towards a telephone pole, braking at the last minute. But, I never told anyone. I was so worried I’d be blamed and my children would be taken from me.”

Visits from Meredith’s father only encouraged her boyfriend’s behaviour.

“My father encouraged him to become even more aggressive. They convinced each other what they were doing was right,” she says.

“One day, after my boyfriend gave me a black eye, I gathered the strength to go to the police. But, my boyfriend convinced me to drop the charges, assuring me it would never happen again. I’m grateful that the police pressed the charges on my behalf.”

Meredith says she wants to speak out to help stop family violence in the community.

“I want the community to understand the damage abusive relationships and brainwashing can do to a woman’s confidence. It makes you appear unsure of yourself, but they need to take your story seriously,” she says.

“There is no excuse for anyone to physically hurt you, control your life or prevent you from accessing your own money. I want the world to know that family violence is unacceptable.”

** Name has been changed.*