



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO CONTINUE

*A Collection of Stories
about Transforming
Family Violence
(an Education Resource)*



“It Doesn’t Have To Continue.”

**A Collection of Stories about
Transforming Family Violence
(An education resource)**

**Compiled by
Judy Wivell and Mandy Pentecost**

from

**Ehrhardt, P., Little, G., Marsters, M., Nauer, G., Pentecost, M., Stockdale-Frost, A.,
and Wivell, J. (2013). *Report on effectiveness of services delivered by
DOVE Hawke’s Bay Inc.* Napier, New Zealand: Eastern Institute of Technology**

Copies of this booklet may be downloaded for educational purposes from
<http://www.eit.ac.nz/itdoesnthavetocontinue>



EIT
Eastern Institute of Technology
Private Bag 1201
Taradale
Napier
New Zealand

© EIT, 2014

ISBN 978-0992256-46-3

All rights reserved.

Reproduction in whole or part is permitted for educational purposes only.

Copies of this booklet may be downloaded for educational purposes from
<http://www.eit.ac.nz/itdoesnthavetocontinue>

Photography by Elliott Childs
Designed by EIT Reprographic
Printed by EIT Reprographic

www.eit.ac.nz

Thank you
to the people who shared their stories
so others could learn from them.



Acknowledgements

DOVE Hawke's Bay.

The Research Team: Penny Ehrhardt, Gaylene Little, Maryanne Marsters, Geoffrey Nauer, Mandy Pentecost, Ariana Stockdale-Frost and Judy Wivell.



Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
Narratives	3
Everyone has a story	
– Woman's narrative	5
I'm not sugar, I won't melt, I only get wet	
– Man's narrative	9
I want to be a good father	
– Man's narrative	13
Sharing the light at the end of the tunnel	
– Woman's narrative	19
A better father and a better man	
– Man's narrative	23
DOVE has supported me: I support DOVE	
– Woman's narrative	27
Violence relocated	
– Man's narrative	31
It has never been far away from me:	
Wanting to be a good husband and partner	
– Man's narrative	35
Fear doesn't live here no more	
– Woman's narrative	39
Questions and Suggestions	
for use of the Stories	41
References	45



Introduction

Transforming family violence is complex and multi-stranded. The stories in this booklet capture the complexity of the transforming journeys people take as they deal with violence in their lives. The narratives in this booklet were collected as part of an evaluation of the services offered by DOVE Hawke's Bay, and were initially published in *The report on effectiveness of the services offered by DOVE Hawke's Bay Inc.* (2013). They are reproduced here with the full permission of DOVE Hawke's Bay.

DOVE Hawke's Bay is a community-based agency which works with individuals (men, women and youth) and families, victims and perpetrators and those who shared their stories. They provide programmes, support and social work to assist people heal from the impact of family violence and develop strategies to have safer, nourishing and enjoyable relationships. DOVE Hawke's Bay, along with other agencies, works to develop communities that say "no" to family violence and "yes" to creating positive and supportive environments. There are high levels of family violence in Hawke's Bay and therefore evaluating the efficacy of DOVE's family violence intervention services was an important step to take (Ehrhardt et al., 2013). A key area of evaluation was the research into whether or not DOVE's services resulted in long-lasting positive changes for individuals, families and whānau.

These are the stories of four women and five men representing a range of ages, backgrounds and ethnicities. Some attended DOVE programmes as part of a Court order while others attended voluntarily. The idea behind interviewing nine participants individually was that they would share something of their experiences in the area of domestic violence. All participants had been part of a DOVE programme, although the timeframes for their involvement and completion of programmes varied. One had first used DOVE's services up to 10 years ago. Others had attended DOVE very recently. Some participants or their family continue to be involved with DOVE (Ehrhardt, et al., 2013, p. 5). Full ethical approval for the research, including the collection of Narratives, was granted by the EIT Research Ethics and Approvals Committee prior to its commencement. Further, an Advisory Board comprising researchers and DOVE staff met regularly to monitor the process. Ensuring the safety and rights of all participants was paramount. All steps were taken to obtain informed consent and maintain privacy. All Narratives were taken back to the participant several times until they were happy with the story and gave permission for it to be made public in the report and in this document.

The narrative enquiry process was used and involved asking open-ended questions as a tool to invite participants to share their experiences. It is based on the assumption that, “narration is a major way in which people make sense of experience, construct the self and create and communicate meaning” (Chase, 2002, p. 79). The narratives are rich and detailed and evoke strong and distinctive images of the participants and their contexts.

As the researchers unravelled the spoken stories to form them into concise and meaningful short written narratives, there was the ongoing awareness that, “as part of everyday lived experience, narratives themselves are messy and complex” (Chase, 2002, p. 67). The stories have many dimensions and perspectives and narrating one incident would lead to the telling about another event. Estes, a traditional Mexican American storyteller, talks about the way his people answer questions with a story and this leads to another story and how, “a sequence of tales is thought to offer broader and deeper insight than a single story alone” (Estes, 1993, as cited in Speedy, 2008, p. 45). The participants in our study were generous in the telling of their stories. They each had their own interconnecting stories which individually and collectively have provided thoughtful and thought-provoking material.

The process of gathering the stories and developing them into short narratives involved the researchers being the listeners and allowing, “the participant the freedom to talk and ascribe meanings while bearing in mind the broader aims of the project” (Noaks & Wincup, as cited in Silverman, 2007, p. 129). The full transcriptions were distilled in order to capture the essence of each narrative. The process involved taking the condensed narrative back to the participant, sometimes up to three times so they were able to rewrite parts, or tell again aspects of their story. Reading their stories took participants considerable courage. For some it was poignant and emotional. A number said that if their story would help someone else or DOVE, then this work had been worth the time and effort.

Chase (2002) suggests, “We need to think about who could benefit from, and who needs to hear, *our* research narratives” (p. 83). The stories have the potential to challenge, encourage and inform a range of audiences as within each story there are the threads of despair and hurt, anger and brokenness which are juxtaposed by the threads of possibility and potential, achievement and strength in the face of overwhelmingly difficult circumstances. The researchers were encouraged to consider making these stories available for the use in the education of people who work with people. With students in such programmes in mind we have written some general and practice

based questions to accompany the stories. These questions follow the collection of narratives.

We thank those who have let us use their stories. They agreed to share their stories because they wanted to make a difference. It is our hope that they will be used to inform practitioners' understanding, skills and empathy.



Narratives



Everyone has a story

– Woman's narrative

Physical abuse didn't happen often but when it did it wasn't very nice. Disagreements turned into put downs, put downs turned into physical stuff. I didn't talk to my own family about it because how do you talk about bad behaviour when that is exactly what had happened in my own family. My husband and I were married for a number of years.

I was really looking forward to our next baby. In the beginning the baby was unexpected but I had learned how important my role as a mother is to a newborn in their first year. I wanted the baby to know that they were loved and wanted. I had plans of spending a lot of time with our baby. Their name was chosen as soon as we knew the gender and we referred to our expected child by name. As time passed my husband would become disappointed I was pregnant as he didn't want to be 'tied down' by the baby. I would put his hand on my tummy and he would just pull his hand back. That was very hurtful for me.

One day I felt that something wasn't right with the baby and we went to the hospital. I held both monitors until my hands cramped because I was determined to find the heartbeat. No heartbeat. Our baby was born still two days later. This triggered a lot of depression for me. I found it really difficult to cope with. I wish I didn't but I did.

My husband started to become quite aggressive and abusive to our children when I wasn't around. The children were threatened not to tell me. After about a year the children started telling me about it but they would say, 'don't tell or we'll get into trouble.' Then there was one major incident when I heard a funny squealing noise. My husband had our child in a stranglehold. It was a turning point for me seeing that. My husband said that it was my fault because if I had of dealt with my child's behaviour appropriately he wouldn't have had to resort to that.

He used to ask if he could have other women and still be part of the family unit. At this point I asked him to do something for me: 'Stop hurting our children.' He agreed. But there was no change, so I said to him our home is our safe place for our children: 'Time for you to go.' He became angry and told me I had become unattractive and he didn't want me anymore. He said he didn't want to be intimate with me anymore.

After my husband left we kept our joint bank account. One time he was so angry that when my salary came in he withdrew it all and left us with nothing. It was a real scary time as we had to survive with very little. I couldn't even ask my family for help.

When he left he wanted to take some valuables. I saw something in his body language that said he was going to really hurt me bad so I just let him take it. The Police and a lawyer gave me advice about getting the stuff back without him knowing. He would have smashed my teeth out and broken my arms if he had found me after I reclaimed my stuff.

Child Youth and Family were very helpful. Matters went to court. My child had to testify. I was scared. I was terrified because there was just so much stuff around it, like in the grief for the loss of our baby, the grief and the loss of a marriage, the grief about the abuse that he had done on our children. I was wondering how I got here.

The Police and my church as well as Child, Youth and Family were very supportive. I also had a great doctor. There were times when I would feel so low and unable to stop crying. I would make an appointment with the doctor. I would turn up embarrassed with red eyes unable to stop the tears. I would apologise and tell her, 'I don't know what's wrong with me, I don't feel good and I can't stop the tears and I don't know what to do or where to go.' She would reply I did the right thing by coming to see her and she supported me and helped me look at ways of coping. My colleagues were great supports too.

At one stage one of my children was in a bit of trouble and was ordered to go on a DOVE programme and that is how I came to go on one too. In the beginning I was really nervous. Just felt really vulnerable. You kind of feel that everyone can read you and see your story. At the beginning of the DOVE course all I could do was say my name. The other ladies helped me. As they said their name and they started to tell their story I started to feel more confident and then by the third session onwards I was talking and having a lot of input and asking questions. It was really really brilliant. It has been a real life changing experience for me.

My children would say, 'Why you are going on a DOVE course? You don't need to go on a DOVE course.' I said, 'I need to learn more about what is okay and what is not okay so I can teach you.'

One very profound part of the DOVE course was that we had a Māori and European facilitator. I felt that for me the Māori facilitator had these very important connections to my wairua. She had a gentle, kind and sincere approach and would acknowledge me calling me Whaea. I interpreted this as a deep respect for who I am as a woman and the aroha she had for me. When you hear your language it does something to you, it pierces you to your heart and you feel like you can relax, you can let go whatever is on your shoulders. This made our meetings feel like a whānau sharing our life experiences – making sense of them and having our eyes opened to what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

I really enjoyed it when we would do activities and were asked to pick a special object from a collection. The facilitator would chant a small karanga. It made it very special. It made me think of my mother who had passed on. I wanted to break down and cry – but I didn't because I feared I would not stop. I thought I had lost this part of me – the part that feels. The karanga and mihi had woken my wairua to feel again.

DOVE also gave me a perspective on myself growing up and on my family home as a child and that it was abusive. It actually brought to light the abuse that did go on physically and sexually and also emotional neglect. You were seen and not heard. I just remember from a young age falling, hurting myself and knowing that no one is going to come and so I am going to have to take care of myself. The abuse happened within our home and all of it was by family.

As a child I think church might have saved my life. I learned and I watched other people and I started to excel. Maybe I was trying to be good, trying to cover up for the reality of what my family was like, maybe I was trying to hide. Church taught me good principles but I knew that they weren't happening in my childhood home.

I had grown up with no boundaries. Everything crossed over. Growing up, I couldn't really be myself – didn't even know who she really is. What I really used to do is analyse and observe other people's behaviour and just try and blend in. As a girl my goal became to leave my family home and try to make things work the best I could. But in my marriage I didn't have anywhere to go or anyone to talk to. I lost myself and all the attention was put on my husband.

DOVE gave me a sense of hope and helped me to feel human. I see more clearly now and when you see clearly you can make better life choices. I have gained priceless skills. Something clicked for me when each woman would speak and share their experiences. I would look at them and say to myself I will never see you the same way again and my heart would explode with compassion for them. To the beautiful women who shared their story with me I will be forever grateful to you – you gave me the strength to speak, participate in life and trust again. Everyone has a story.



I'm not sugar, I won't melt, I only get wet¹ **– Man's narrative**

I tell you, I don't know why I got grumpy.

When I was a child in my home country, I asked my mum, 'Can you please tell me what love is?' Mum says, 'I don't know.' Then, months or years later she tells me, 'Love is when you care about a person, when you share with this person, when you worry about a person, when you lift them up. It's a lot of things to put into one word, all together.'

I would be very respectful to women back in Europe, and very respectful to the girls at school. I still know those girls now. I will talk on Skype with them and it is like we are again twelve years old, laughing.

But in the country I grew up in, I always see how the men treat the women. Men just go to work and women must look after kids. And if something goes wrong, men go sort of grumpy and abusive, you know.

I am over forty years old now. I lost my job due to ill health, and I started drinking, having misunderstandings, and having trouble with debt collectors. I thought my life was finished. I thought I'm not a man anymore.

When Angie, my ex-partner lost a baby, she did not cope. I didn't try to make her feel guilty however I saw that women could be high maintenance.

Friends would come and drink and say 'fuck her, don't worry about her.' I used to think they were right; she's just a woman.

I'd buy a dozen beer. Angie wanted \$3.50 for a hair dye, but I'd think she doesn't need that because she looks beautiful to me. I never saw that she wants the colour for her, because she looks in the mirror and feels ugly. And I'd spent our ten dollars.

I'd just go in a cycle all the time, using Angie like a punching bag because I felt in pain. Then when I wake up in the morning I would say 'what have I done!'

Police come and arrest me don't know how many times, and take me to the Police station and send me back home in the mornings. The Court directed me to go to the DOVE course.

I should have done a DOVE course when I was 20, but I can only change from now. It's taken me 25 years to get to this stage.

I had a good listen at DOVE. The facilitators tell where they have been

1 Names have been changed in this narrative.

in their lives. They've not just done a degree or something. They've also come from a hard life and they come to us and they help us. They believe lives can be changed. People build from there, follow that lead.

I've recognised that old ways have changed from when I was younger. It's been in the past a long time. Now woman and husband – it's like equity.

I talk with the facilitator because I always get grumpy and argue on the phone with my parents. I have kids from previous relationships. My parents say bad things about them; don't talk about them the same way they talk about their other grandchildren. Then I'd go and have a go at my partner, because I'm angry that my parents do not love my kids. The facilitator has a similar situation. She says 'don't get grumpy. This is your parents' loss.' It was like some switch was switched on in my brain. Now I'm looking on everything different.

And guess what, I'm enjoying my life. Now when I call my parents I say 'How's your day? How's your health?' If my mum tries to say something bad about my kids, I just say 'I've got to go now. I love you, Mum.' I'm not hurt by the dirty words. I just finish and carry on having a good afternoon.

Now I recognize life is beautiful, it is what we create inside us. No-one can come to me and say, you must smile today and be happy. I'm building this pyramid, like in Egypt, and that takes time.

I'm in a new relationship, but I know how to build this pyramid. I recognize my partner, Cath, is not just who I go and have sex with. With your partner you're in bed for maybe 8 hours – sex and sleep. What do you do in the other 16 hours? You must like to be together. With Cath I see she works hard. If she's doing her paperwork, I come and start helping her. When she worries I say, 'Love, what happened?' One day I saw a shop with clothes on sale. I text Cath up and say 'what size are you?' She was like, 'don't buy me clothes.' But I want to buy her something, so I bought her some hair dye. She comes home and says 'thank you, you shouldn't have done that'.

About two weeks later, after we sit down for tea, I tell her why I did it. I tell her what happened with me before. I cannot hide my past, and I tell her, if I'd not done the DOVE course, I would not have bought her that gift.

And I'm friends with Angie now. I see she is a good mother, looking after our daughter. I try to send her twenty dollars to help. When Angie introduced me to her new boyfriend on Skype she tells him I'm not like I was.

I'm still not on big money, but I find money is not everything in life.

To make sure we are happy and we look after each other, this is more important.

I used to wake up and say 'bloody rain.' People used to say 'hello, good morning' and I'd groan. Now in the street, when it rains, I say 'I don't care, I'm not sugar, I won't melt, I'll only get wet.' If we all smile and be happy, maybe there'll be no rain.

I'm in this position now like I'm the good guy, everybody loves me now. No-one calls me grumpy arsehole or whatever.



I want to be a good father

– Man's narrative

I'm in a drug free life and barely drink alcohol so my job's good and relationships a lot better. Me and my partner talk a lot more about things. I'm actually doing a lot better now. I still get angry every now and again but it's about checking yourself and trying to control yourself. I never used to question or stop myself from doing things like fighting. There used to be a lot of verbal abuse as much as fighting. It's got a lot better and my partner is a lot happier with me. When I had that shit in my life it was hard, very hard, like a never ending story going on and on and on. Just drugs and alcohol and abuse. It was mentally draining, made me anxious, depressed, really unhappy. I couldn't really cope, trying things like suicide. Hurting other people, like robbing people, just robbing things to get more money and stuff because I never had enough money. I thought about drinking and going out all the time and I thought about going to jail.

I didn't have a job: that was the hardest time. With my partner at the time it was not good. It was an abusive relationship. Never struck my partner, though it could have come to that. I was punching walls, throwing things and slamming doors. I was actually intimidating without even realising it. We couldn't talk about anything. It wasn't till I changed later on that I realised it must have been even harder on her. There was no understanding on my behalf. Drugs and alcohol sort of fuelled all that.

When I was twelve I got into drugs and alcohol. They were always around me. My step-dad's friends were junkies, they used to leave spoons and things lying around the house. At eleven or twelve I started smoking quite a lot of pot, and then it was cigarettes and drinking. During that period it was confusing. My mum was always beaten up by my step-dad. He was always in jail. There was just me and my mum and he came back and dealt to us. Took all my mum's money, fucked off again, got out of jail, came back. Just that never ending cycle, growing up with my mum I wasn't even allowed to see my father, my step-dad stopped that. I just had devotion towards my mother no matter what. I loved my mother, no matter what. Now I don't even see my mother. She never actually helped herself. I'm quite bitter with my mother, but back then I absolutely loved my mother and hated my step-dad.

When I was a child I got moved around heaps of primary schools because we were always moving away from my step-dad. I didn't really have any friends. I would be at school and my mum would come and take me out of school and I would never go back there again. When my

mum finally got away from my step-dad I had been to many different schools. Got picked on a lot, so I retaliated with physical violence. I was a big guy so kids would always pick on the big guy so you hit them and you look like the bully.

In Standard 4, I robbed school, I stole shit that I didn't even need just because my step-dad did it. My principal sat me down and I was crying, he put in a good word for me and said I was good at English and things like that and I was able to go to Intermediate. I started drinking and fighting all the time; don't know how I got through that. Mum was always drunk. The only thing that saved me at Intermediate was music and jamming with people. I wanted to learn guitar you know so when I got into Intermediate I learned the songs I knew that if I was at parties people would always sing. Went to Intermediate for music. I became that good at it that I didn't even sit the test. It was cool.

I got to High School and it was different. I hated it. I wasn't an athlete, I didn't play rugby anymore and if you weren't a sportsman you were not really respected. I found that really hard because people that were really good athletes got pushed and pushed, but I wanted to be a musician and there wasn't much for them so that was the big bum out for me. I did well at English and computers; I think I left at about the beginning of the fifth form, just dropped out.

A lot of my ideals, what I thought was right my whole life, completely changed when I met my new partner. We had been brought up in different ways. One example of this is I was brought up by my step-dad to hit the dog if it doesn't listen to you. When I got into a relationship with my partner I got a pit-bull. I would give him a smack in the head and my partner would get upset and yell at me. I would always think, 'it's a dog', but now I'm starting to realise that's not how you go about doing things. You don't smack kids if they don't listen. Why would you do it to an innocent animal? Now it makes me realise how stuffed my childhood really was. Just crazy the things that I heard and saw. Now I don't ever want to expose my kids to that sort of stuff. I never got shown how to do the simple things in life that people need to grow up with, like budgeting. It's been a big wake-up call to be with my partner, learning from her. She's usually right.

I started working down the road and it was just such hard work. The work was awesome, got me fit, but it was the mental abuse, the way people talked to you. There's no communication, really hard, 4 in the morning till 5 at night. I never got to see my partner. I was always angry, frustrated with my job. What made it worse I'd seen a few deaths when I was a child and a recent suicide brought up a lot of shit for me. I became real angry and I was also trying to stop taking drugs

and alcohol as well at the time.

I'd had a partner who killed herself when I was 18. They said it was suicide. I was a completely different person when I was a teenager. I was a control freak, I drank all the time. I was abusive to my partner, not so much physically, I never hit her, but with my mouth was really cruel. It started to come back into this current relationship - that person I never wanted to be. I got angrier. It was just really hard.

Someone dying makes you really wake up and I questioned everything I did. As I turned into a man, I became more aware. One of the major things, I realised that I needed to help myself. I didn't want to turn into the person I hate the most and that's my stepfather. I'd been brought up with women my whole life. I never wanted to be someone who would hurt or upset a woman, children or animals but I was slowly heading that way.

My partner said, 'why don't you do this DOVE course?' I rung up to do it. It was awesome. I'm glad I did it. I wish I'd done it sooner. It's like going to rehab, you go there for the right reasons or because you got problems. When I went it was really refreshing because everyone else had similar problems. It just helped me heaps.

I did the 16 week course and I was stoked. I think I was one of the only ones that I did one hundred percent. I was pretty keen on learning as much as I could; it was cool. The things I never thought about, like body language. One of the biggest shocks was about rape. They showed us a video where a male made his wife feel so bad and low. She felt like she had to have sex with him just to not argue, like another form of rape, actually sort of intimidating making someone feel guilty enough that they feel like they have to do something like that to make you happy.

The safe time out thing helped. Sometimes I'd be a little bit drunk and I'd go take the dog for a walk just to get away from the situation. The main thing I learned was questioning and voicing everything in my head that I was about to say and do in a conflict. Instead of going 'fuck you,' I'd think if I say that I'd start a fight so I might as well just get out for a while. It's just little things like that but it makes a big impact.

During my time at DOVE it got easier and easier. My partner was quite happy. I was happy about going. I was quite proud of myself: I'd actually stood up and said I've got a problem and should get some help.

I still struggle every now and again to take everything on board all the time. It's about keeping good company, staying away from drugs, not slipping back into the same routine. I went from hanging out with people that were taking drugs every day and drinking to working with

people that don't drink. They're really good people and they have more fun. Hanging out with these people has been a bit of an eye opener. I've just got into more music, things that I stopped doing for a while. I've stopped drinking quite a lot. I think it's been really good. I want to have a normal family. It's taken a long time but I am slowly starting to respect myself a lot more. Even in work it's like: I am worth this, I do a good job, I deserve this so give it to me. It's taken me ages but I'm getting there.

I actually paid money to do the course to help myself. I needed to change, DOVE helped me. We'd talk about our childhood and I'd say something like, 'being starved because you've been naughty' and people would turn around and go 'Bro, that's not fucking right!' For someone else who's had a bad childhood to say that's bad, it made me sort of feel that, 'Yeah, it's not normal.' I found it really easy to open up. I give the facilitators big praise because I don't know how you can take that many people's problems and not go home and pull your hair out. They were very patient. I'd do the course all over again if I didn't have to pay. At school they don't teach you those things. They teach you not to hit, but not about the consequences. I'd wished I'd learned it as a teenager.

With me and my partner it's really good at the moment, we're looking at buying a house. We've been engaged since last Christmas and looking at getting married. She wants to have a kid. I've always wanted to have a kid but I just always worried about having children because I don't want to fall back into that trap. Its good having a partner that's honest with you as well instead of being scared. Emotionally I support her as much as I can but sometimes I do things wrong. If she's upset or sad or sick I'll help her. Lately I've been really tired but I try and cook and clean the house, do dishes, because if I don't and she's not home no one's going to do it. I used to think this is a drag, I don't want to do it. But you stay with a person because you care about them, so you need to work on it.

I was 24 when I started this course, I'd been molested as a child as well, so I've experienced a lot for someone even before the time I was twenty, compared to some. I have definitely had experiences that have made me understand a lot more and understand people more. I've always wanted to be someone that could help people, because I always wanted that as a kid; to have someone around to talk to, someone that wasn't under the influence. I just love being able to talk to people and help; there's nothing better than that; must be satisfying. I just find it fascinating as well. Everybody is so different. Everyone's got a different story. Everyone's had something happen to them. Everyone needs help.

I caught up late in life with my father and he still looks after me, helps me. If I could be half what my father is towards me I'd be definitely happy. I honestly think that the DOVE course should be compulsory. If I had done it earlier in my life I might have been a completely different person. I am happy where I am. I am glad life's worked out the way it is. It's definitely a learning curve.

I want to be a good father. I want to give my children everything I can, absolutely everything.



Sharing the light at the end of the tunnel – Woman's narrative

The worst situation in my relationship? Well, having to run to Refuge for help. That was pretty hard for me. Being brought up in a mob family, reaching out for help is called a nark. Whether it's to go to the police, which I did. I just had to do it for my own safety. The Police round here are actually ok.

I was just reaching out. I went to my partner's father and said, 'We need help. I need to make a stand and say, "I've had enough, I don't want anymore."' "

Strange thing is, my partner was brought up in a loving, caring environment. Whereas I came from a background of all violence, drugs, alcohol. Violence was done to me, violence was done around me. But I ended up being the passive one.

The altercations could be verbal or emotional, not just physical. It's still abuse. I'd rather get a hiding than be yelled at: 'you fucking useless black fat bitch' because it stabs you. It sticks in your head and then you become it and you are it.

Within myself, I wasn't very safe. I didn't deal with things the way I should have. I used to do some dumb shit like putting the kids down, telling them 'you're dumb, you're a little shit;' only because that's how I was treated.

The children were affected hard. I didn't realise how traumatising it is for children to see their mother bashed – that's gotta be real hard. They love their mother so much and then to hear them argue and put each other down.

It really affected them. I know because of their behaviour to each other and to the kids at school. One started stealing. I don't know if that was a way of dealing with anger – stealing from shops and family members.

When I seen DOVE's 'Whānau Wellness – Reaching Out' pamphlet around the neighbourhood with the Mongrel Mob emblem on it kinda put me off. I know what they're like.

But good on DOVE for being persistent and getting people to come on the course. We jumped on because we'd lost our kids through allegations others made. CYF had them. We had to prove ourselves to the system.

We did lots of courses. The facilitators on DOVE's Whānau Wellness course were different. Just their honesty. For people like me that's

where it really matters.

Whaea was awesome, probably because she's been in a same sex relationship. To be honest, they should have run a lesbian violence prevention programme – that many people on the course were in same sex relationships.

It was whānau oriented. Our pepeha had to be shared every morning. It brings everybody together. I know they had their plan but they pretty much done what they needed to do but gave it over to the students who were participating on the programme.

They let us speak whatever. Real personal stuff where you just don't blurt out to anybody. Over the weeks we all felt comfortable to share stuff. There was some really touching stuff that people thought they had dealt with, but hadn't really.

For me, my parents died in a violent situation. They were shot. That was the most horrific violence that I know that has happened really close to me. I was just a little kid. I didn't see it happen. Even to this day, it still bums me out that no one has actually sat down and told me about it; how they died, and who done it and stuff like that.

It's very hard to find people with that experience to be able to share it. Two of the facilitators had been through the hard life, gangs, drugs, ya know, all sorts of stuff. And the youth worker could share his history with a gang whānau, because he's related with them.

Just knowing the tutors have been there. There were some really empowering stories. I hold them close to me, because we were going through a rough time at that time and for five awesome people to come into our lives – they were there for the people – awesome as.

Now we have got our kids back. I wake up in the morning and say, 'I love you.' I get involved in how their day was. Before they used to come home and go to their room or go out roaming. Now we actually have whānau time; we sit down at the dinner table and talk. Self-esteem really means a lot. I just try to encourage them in that aspect of feeling safe. I feel a lot safer, a better parent.

Me and my partner are communicating now. Stuff like this, it's not stuff you can learn in an eight-week programme or a twelve week programme. It's something that needs to be an ongoing thing. We don't always agree on stuff, but not big blow ups, not physical altercations. We are actually taking an interest in each other and what we like and stuff. And having individual time with our own children, cos we're a step family.

Biggest changes for the kids are getting involved in sports, in the tamariki programme with the Refuge, just giving them space to be able

to understand that they can talk about stuff. There's some good korero going around in the community. With the teachers and our kids at school, they have seen their behaviour has changed.

I feel more confident in myself, being able to deal with the conflict that I might face during my days and stuff. I wanna get more involved in the community. One day I can see myself doing what that youth worker was doing; giving his experience to the community to show that there is light at the end of the tunnel. I want to let people know, it doesn't have to continue, there may be a way to break the cycle of violence.



A better father and a better man

– Man's narrative

DOVE changed me. It changed me a lot from when I was young seeing my father hit my mother, drinking all the time and big parties at home. All you saw was Mum and Dad drinking with their mates and then after that, arguing.

When I was an adult and working, all I thought about was being like my father – an alcoholic who goes to work comes back and goes to buy alcohol. On pay days he splashed it all on alcohol.

I hardly drink anymore. Mum and Dad after work all they wanted to do was have a beer. In the mornings they were off to work so my older brother he got me up. When we did see them, they had a bottle in their hands, were pissed and invited all their mates over to drink.

My brother was the one that took all the hits for me if anything went wrong. I was the youngest and Dad knew not to hit the youngest. When I did do something wrong he'd yell at me but he won't hit me. I smashed the front window. Dad came home from work and said, 'Who smashed the front window?' We sat there quiet; I didn't want to say I caused it. I was scared but my brother got up and said 'Yeah I did it.' He was the one that took all the hits for me.

I'm trying to block it all out. Every time me and my partner have a domestic it comes back. It's like a flashback. What I do is go for a walk and get those flashbacks out of my head. When my Mum and Dad were hard out on the booze she says something to him and he just *whack*. That was how my father was and that's how I thought about myself. Now it's changed. You touch your wife you go to prison. If me and my partner had a domestic I just hit her. I didn't have anything to stop me from doing it. I just keep hitting her, having flashbacks, remembering that my Dad used to do it so I got the right to do it. A year and a half back, when me and her had an argument and I touched her. It wasn't a very good sight.

I ran to my stepmother's house and asked her for help. She told me, 'you stand up, you stand on your own two feet and you go to the Police Station and you hand yourself in!' I did. I knew I did something wrong and that was put my hands on my whānau. If I didn't go to see my stepmother I would've run away from the cops. They arrested me and asked me my side of the story. I couldn't tell them that I had a flashback and I just told them that I hit her. I've never been to jail.

The Police told me that I have to go to Court. The judge told me to do a DOVE programme. I didn't know anything about DOVE. I didn't want to

go to DOVE. In my first session I didn't know what they were on about. I didn't want to be a part of this group.

In your first week you don't want to know anything. They were always wondering why I didn't want to say my side of the story. In my fifth week I started listening. I had no contact with my partner for at least seven to eight weeks. From the sixth and seventh week I started realising what I was becoming and who I was going to be. I was going to turn out like that man I didn't like.

I watched a video at DOVE. This person wanted a house warming party. He invited all his mates. He shops and mostly filled up the trolley with beers. This reminds me of me. His mates reminded me of my mates.

The first time I did the DOVE programme in my last week I wanted to keep going maybe for just a little bit more.

It is up to partners if they want to do something about it. My partner did. I'm glad she did it, really glad. DOVE did make us see a lot we didn't know was happening.

My boy, he's two and I don't want him to be like how I am. When his mother and I have an argument I just go for a walk. I don't want my son doing the same thing following in his father's footsteps. I don't want that. I can't even tell my son that his grandfather is not going to see him. He can see his Mum's papa but not my Dad.

I couldn't handle my alcohol. I was wondering why I couldn't handle it like I used to. I got on the piss with my mates and I just went nuts. Then I thought to myself better go and see a doctor. She told me that I was a diabetic. I'm Type 1, so now I'm on insulin, not very good. I knew that my mother and father had it.

I'm doing DOVE a second time. After the first time I did DOVE I exploded again, in front of my son. I ended up back in the Napier Police Station. This time there was no alcohol.

I still didn't want them to know my side of the story. Other people that were next to me were telling their story. What they went through made me think I should get it out or this is just going to build up and stay there. I got up and finally did it and I was sort of proud, I was very, very proud of myself because I've never told anyone else. I just kept it to myself. I didn't want to tell these people about my life. I was too whakamā.

At DOVE there was a person that had been there twice. I asked him what happened the first time. He said he exploded. I had done the same thing, I saw him and his partner and his kids going to the park. I was saying, 'Aw, too much!' The next day I thought I'll do that. My partner wanted to go somewhere else so I had to change plans. I'm

trying to help myself to be a better father and to be a better man.

I needed to make a change to myself. I was ashamed that I hit my wife. I didn't want to tell anybody that I hit my wife. I probably would've been inside if I hit a man but I hit my partner – still the same thing. It's worse if you hit your wife. If you hit your wife and you go to jail and you tell them that you beat up your wife, they love people in there who beat up their wife. That's what they say anyway.

It's not a thing to tell anybody else that you hit your partner. I felt guilty really, really guilty. I can't even talk to my wife's family cos her family knows what I've done to her. That's the same as my family; they know that I've touched my partner.

My step-mum said, 'You don't want to be following in your father's footsteps. That's what your father used to do.' I reckon she gives the best help of all. I couldn't run to my mates. If I go to my mates they'll pass a bottle saying 'Fuck her this, and fuck her that, who cares?' That's what mates do if you want to go and talk. If I go there, I'll be stuck there, just drink, drink, drink, hate, hate, hate and all those bad things come back.

I really love her as a step-mum. If I get myself into shit she'll tell me, 'Get your shit and go to the fucking Police Station.' She made me smile. I sit there and have a good talk. She doesn't want to talk about the bad things just the good things. I feel good. I've got to be strong. If I don't I'll probably be in the corner with a bottle but I'm not going to go that way – there's nothing in the corner.



DOVE has supported me: I support DOVE

– Woman's narrative

Two things led me to DOVE. I am a fixer – whether it be children or problems, I have to fix it or find a way to make it better that probably comes from the second thing; I grew up experiencing a lot of abuse and I have also been raped a number of times.

I was about three years old when I was first molested. I couldn't climb on the bed that is how I know I was little and I remember everything in the room, everything. The next time I remember I was about four years old. My mother's friend put me to bed and the next thing I know I am being abused by her. Neighbours molested me and so did my music teacher.

In my mid-teens an older man tried to get me to have sex with him and when I refused he dragged me into my room. He held my arms above my head and raped me on my own bed. I didn't realise it was rape because he was a friend and he just pushed me into having sex with him. I finally gave in because I didn't want him to hurt me and because I gave in that was sort of consenting to me. It wasn't until a couple of months later that a friend said to me he has raped you. I was asked if I wanted to press charges. All I could think about was being put on the stand and they'll make me sound like I'm to blame. I didn't want to go through that. I just wanted to forget it because it was disgusting.

I can remember every single person's name who offended against me except for those that hurt me when I was very, very young.

My mum never used to smack us. She would just put us in the room. We would come out when we were calm. When we did get hit we got strapped on the hand by our stepfather. We had to make sure all the housework was done, me and my brother: doing dishes, hanging the washing out, making the beds, vacuuming the floor, cleaning the bath, the toilet, the washhouse. We were about six and seven. Every single job we missed or didn't get perfect we got a strap on the hand. The belt was soaked in water. He would strap us because we were always naughty in his eyes, so he would send us to bed with no food. We got really, really skinny.

I am on antidepressants and have been for a very long time. My children ask me why I take antidepressants. I said I was so sad growing up my brain thinks sad is normal. I have to have tablets to help me feel normal and cope with things better.

When I was 16 years I met this guy. We got together and I was with him for six years. After I went out with him everything seemed to go

right. Never had any problems – my life got so much better. Best six years of my life. During those six years I was training, I got my truck license, at 18 I worked in orchards; I did a computing and business skills course. My goal was money and I didn't want to live in poverty like I grew up in, so I did everything in my power to work.

Not everything is permanent or goes the way you expect it. There was only one thing I hadn't done and that was move to Auckland. I had always wanted to go to Auckland because you can hide. There are so many people up, there they can't find you. I had that dream since I was 13 to hide and get away from people who hurt me.

I wanted to get away from the pain. I was sick of going into a fish and chip shop and seeing these perpetrators that had done this to me. I would freeze up and I didn't like having fear for my life every time I saw someone in a shop or going to my mother's shop and seeing the person who raped me sitting there having lunch.

In Auckland I applied for a job in a strip club behind the bar. I walked into this flash strip club and I was blown away with how beautiful it was and how clean and classy. There was money, there was beauty, and there was a social life. I ended up wanting to try stripping. I was fascinated. They got to wear these costumes and they were so gorgeous and I was just in absolute awe of this place and the girls.

I changed to dancing and stripping and absolutely loved it. I had been in it for about six and a half years and I had been to Japan, Sydney and the Gold Coast when I finished.

I had the two children to a guy who was on drugs and shit like that. He gave all that up and followed me back here to raise our babies. Sometimes we were together sometimes we weren't.

When we would fight he would yell in my face and spit at me. He is a big man. He would use his body weight to hold me down and abuse me. He fucked my mind over so much. When he would back me into a corner I became physically violent towards him. I punched him to get him off me. As soon as I punched he would say, 'I am the victim.'

I would call the Police on myself because when the police turned up the fighting would stop. I wasn't proud of this. It is not actually me. He twisted things around. I was lost. I was a mess. I was absolutely miserable and was completely broken.

One time the Police sent our information to an agency because we called them out three times in the month. The counsellor there helped me. I rebuilt myself and then me and my husband, we went for two years and never fought once. We were still distant but we got on so well. Then later something went seriously wrong again. I had slowly

forgotten the things the counsellor had taught me. I knew I needed to remind myself and couldn't remember how.

I accidentally fell into DOVE. One of my children has an explosive nature and hits out. The school put him into a DOVE course. They told me about DOVE's women's groups.

There weren't enough people for anger management and so they just did the women's support group. Quite a few of the girls were having the same problem, getting angry and snapping at the kids and exploding. I learnt about the cycle of violence.

As the weeks went on I realised I got up in the morning on the Thursday thinking I need to go because this is the only support I have. Everyone worked and so I was really quite alone. Once I went there it set me up for the rest of the week.

I gained so much from this course: information, education, understanding, knowing that we can actually make a change and a difference and there is a better way to do it. I totally believe there is a better way to have a relationship, a better way to do things.

Towards the end of the group we were asked if we would swap numbers with girls in the group to keep in touch. I don't want that in my personal life because I want to leave their problems there and my problems there. It is hard enough handling my problems let alone having text messages and having friends with problems come over.

I got more out of that course than I could possibly have imagined. Instead of saying 'oh my god I can't do this', say what you can do. The DOVE programme had lightness and fun.

Now the abuse from my younger days sits in the back of my mind. It impacts my daughters' lives. They don't go out of my sight. My daughter only just started biking to school for the first time at twelve. I am very, very protective, not just of my children but any children. I will do anything in my power to make sure the same abuse does not happen to my children. I have taught my daughters how to poke someone's eye out if they are grabbed. Once you stab someone in the eye it makes the person let go. I know those things that happened to me were wrong and that's not right. It should never be like that. No child should ever be put through that.

I truly believe that this should be taught in schools to my son's age group. Through the DOVE course my son has become a lot happier because he knows how to handle himself. He slams the door and goes to his room and when he comes out he's calm. He's learnt strategies. Now if I had learnt these coping methods when I was his age it would become a habit throughout my life. I am trying to work extra hard

to make this stick because this is a new learning. It is hard trying to remember things when you are older. When you are younger you are a sponge.

I have looked back at various times at my abuse and dealt with it. I started making myself remember the pictures in my head. Each time I remembered I would start forgetting what the picture looked like. It would just get blurrier and blurrier. I faced my demons. I faced them and I dealt with it. I know that a lot of what happened to me triggers responses in me now. The impact of DOVE is fantastic and has helped me marvellously. I have benefitted so much from it.

People will never get help until, like me – I really desperately want it. I realised I couldn't cope anymore. It shouldn't get to that point. There should be a lot easier access to the information.

I think there needs to be some form of advertising because I know how hard it was for me to find the information that I needed. I actually drew a picture to explain the cycle of violence to my ex-husband. I had done it in a way that was understandable – something like that needs to be out there on the walls to say 'hey we can help you with this'. We can help stop the wind up.

I start studying on Monday – Art. I know that will help me. It will help me express myself. I want a career this time. I am sick of not knowing what is happening in the future. Maybe do a degree. I lost out because mum couldn't afford school fees. I am going to have a career. I want to do what I love doing. I want to learn. I am getting excited. I have no idea if I will ever make money off it. It is a hard industry to get into but I think I will cope and I'll try, hopefully make an income where I can support myself and don't need the help of the government. I want to have sanity of mind as well.

If I can make some paintings and advertising for DOVE oh yeah– I am definitely pro DOVE.

Violence relocated

– Man's narrative

Before I met my partner, I was violent anyway. Not trying to sound like superman or anything, but I grew up with violence. I got a hiding all the time from my dad for no reason. So did my mates. If I got a hiding from my old man, I went around to my mate's, and I realised he'd been beaten too, that made it alright. Our fathers would nut out for no reason. You would be playing and they would say, 'Come here you!' And –. It was a reality. Seeing my friends getting beatings, I didn't think I had it so hard. We just laughed.

We were thinking everybody must get hidings. Even mums must get hidings, even though we don't like it. It used to make it easier for us to use violence. I learnt everything by watching and I seen violence. In my family, none of them really had an idea when it comes to relationships.

You see, I had this hurt inside. My hurt made me so angry that all I wanted was to rage back at the world. It started when I was really young. Offending was my way of dealing with it. I had good friends and they ended up being my co-offenders. I stole any chance I got. I was a regular in the Police Station.

I met my partner when I was put into care. I was 16 and she was 15. She stayed around the corner. One of my real close friends was going with her cousin. I liked her because she wasn't like the other girls. I was hurt inside, so there were things that were wrong with me. I couldn't actually be around people. I didn't know what to do around females. But I liked being around my partner. She understood me.

Then I started hurting my partner, thinking she'd been mucking around on me. I used to drink heaps and the alcohol fuelled my anger. I used to assault these guys because I thought she was cheating with them. But the reality is I'd cheated ten times before she'd done it once.

I used to do some freaky things to her. I didn't care if I booted her or if I killed her. When she left she thought I wouldn't find her, but I did. But I just didn't want her to be gone. I hated her at the same time. I used to turn up and kidnap her. I'd tell her 'Get in the car!' I never used to ring. I'd just tell her to get in the car. So she stopped running away. All her family and her were all scared of me.

A whole lot of my troubles were thinking of my past, my hurt, my father. It makes you go psychotic, that kind of thinking. When I was younger, any slight was an excuse for a fight. It was my way out. I wish I had actually talked about it. That was part of my problem: I hadn't learnt how to communicate properly. If I had learnt how to take

criticism, my life would have been better. They were only small things but they got bigger because nothing was done about it. You know criticism ain't bad, it just lets you know.

I chose to go and help myself because I hurt my partner one too many times. One time she was hurt, hurt real bad, someone had beaten her up, but I didn't know who'd done it. I accused everyone, asked the bros. It was me, eh! Too drunk! That had never happened to me before. I was already on probation for assaulting someone else, so you see my life was going around in merry go rounds. My kids were scared, eh. My partner was scared of me.

When I was younger, 19 or 20, I met a guy from a men's group just by chance. I was at the court house, just coming out. This guy told me to come on a course, cause we'd get to stay out in the bush. I gave up alcohol and went on this course because I didn't want to do any more harm. On this camp, we were all violent offenders; all assaulted our partners, or assaulted people on the streets.

Staying in the hut was what affected me most. That was awesome. I learned heaps. So the violence stopped for my kids when I was about 21. The violence wasn't gone. I just took it out onto the streets. Even when I used to swear at my partner, I could see the fear in the kids' eyes and I knew I had to turn away. I knew it was getting me nowhere, so I decided to go and see friends and always ended up in trouble.

It's funny how like attracts like. Out on the street I used to find people who just wanted to fight. I didn't go pick on them; they were having the same thoughts. Like, I'd walk to town and he was from the other side of town and, bang, we were fighting. Negative thoughts always attract someone negative, eh. So I was taking my violence to the streets.

A lot of the time I was in jail. There's a different set of rules. I'd done all the courses except anger management.

When I was away, it didn't help me because I always thought my partner was fucking around on me. I wasn't sleeping. After three days with no sleep, all it took was one little slight. All of a sudden all that hate is focused on one person, eh. I didn't get any satisfaction from it even. I always went away feeling empty, then that same thought came back. I would just suffer within that thought. I used to train all the time to get the thoughts to go away, just make me so I could survive if anything happened when I was inside.

I found it difficult to leave jail; I was stressing my partner out. My time was coming to an end. I said to one of the officers, I don't want to get out, cause I know I am coming back here for violence. I didn't want to

go home either, cause my partner was happy for me to be home, but she was stressing on me too.

I used to vent with my fists in jail, so I saw an anger management worker about that. She didn't work for DOVE then, but later she did. In jail I've seen her calm real violent offenders. I mean real violent offenders. I knew these guys and I wouldn't want to muck around with them. Like, I've been in the same lock-up area as them and things would happen and she just comes in and calms the situation. She kinda sees what's happening with the whole family. Not a lot of counsellors can do that. She could see a wider view.

I used to see this worker go out of her way for some of these offenders; guys who I didn't think deserved her time of day. I told her I didn't want to get out and hurt someone – that was my fear. So I caught up with her and started talking about things.

About four years ago, that worker was with DOVE. She helped my kids ... I got this phone call from the school because my boy had tried to hang himself.

He had been bullied while I was inside. These bullies were at high school – much older. When I got out, the retribution was not nice for the parents, or for those teenagers. I just went visiting. I caught up with one of the fathers in town and he knew straight away about my boy. I pulled him over and he just fell over - hurt himself. I knew I'd be straight back off to jail because I was already on probation. But I just didn't care. My boy talks about what happened a lot. I don't want to find him – you know – it'll wreck my life.

I don't think it's the courses that change people. It's the person realising it. That's why it's taken me so long. With my kids now, I'll boot them if they need it. I saw my boy take a swing at his Mum so I punched him. But I wouldn't visit violence on them like my dad done. They're a whole different class of children compared to how we were.

But at the same time, I want them to stick up for themselves. Not the old 'toughen up, boy.' It did nothing for me, being tough. Now I just don't want to hurt anyone. I'd rather my kids have confidence, if anything.



It has never been far away from me: Wanting to be a good husband and partner – Man's narrative

A defining thing that influenced me was growing up in an alcoholic family. My mum was an alcoholic. My parents split when I was about five. I had older brothers and sisters so I was the youngest. I grew up quite young knowing that my mum was drinking. I withdrew quite a bit. I can remember parties at different times, friends coming round, going to friends' places, sitting in the car at the pub. I remember waiting for her in the evenings often. She did a lot of drinking at home too. I have to say that I also have some amazing memories. I remember we always went on picnics to the river. A lot of good stuff mixed up in the bad stuff.

It is hard to know how, but looking through my life I generally seemed to make sensible decisions and never really got into much trouble. I never went looking for trouble. I was interested in sports at school and I was quite athletic. I had this real connection, being the youngest, with my mum.

I was a passive person and what I have learnt is that passive people can tend to be passive aggressive. We really need to be assertive. I saw the pattern of myself being passive aggressive. I would be very passive at home and see arguments and things happening and I would bottle it all up. Then I kind of explode. Just being a young kid it didn't happen very often at all. Once watching my mum and brother argue I just exploded and put a fist through a wall. That was sort of letting out steam. I didn't know another way of getting rid of it.

Another thread running through my whole life which has helped me a huge amount is just my belief in the Lord. From a young age, I knew there was a God. For Mum it was kind of weird, when she was drinking she knew that if she didn't stop something was going to happen and it wasn't going to be good. She kind of cried out to whoever was there and strangely enough some Christians turned up. Mum went for treatment and also attended AA. I think it used to have a Christian thread running through it. For Mum it was just amazing and it really worked. It was the beginning of a journey with the Lord.

It was kind of tough for me because I didn't drink, I didn't smoke, I believed in the Lord but I didn't have any Christian friends, so all the friends I knew were just kind of like normal Kiwi blokes. It was a tough time being a teenager because I kind of had a foot in both camps. I didn't really feel a bond anywhere so I just felt I didn't know where I belonged.

You hear that siblings or children of alcoholics will go either way, for what reason I don't know. All I could see was a crazy world: why would I want to have anything to do with it? I couldn't understand it so I kind of kept away from it. Being sporty as well, I think that even if my mum didn't drink I don't think I would be a drinker.

We shifted towns but my dad wasn't around. I went to see him as often as I could. I would hitch hike to his place. I would do whatever I could to get over there to see Dad. I ended up leaving school before the end of the fourth form. I really just wanted to get out and do something, so I sort of did odd jobs until I was about twenty years old.

I had an opportunity when I just turned twenty to go over to Europe. I had a girlfriend and she went over there to do her OE. I thought, 'this is my opportunity to get out'. I loved my mum but I think I just needed to get out. It was the best thing I have ever done. Overseas I taught myself to be a carpenter and I was in London about eight years. My girlfriend's and my relationship eventually ended. After a number of years of travelling I came home.

When I came back to New Zealand I worked in business. Eventually I started working for myself in carpentry and this has become a successful business enterprise.

I got married and my wife had her own personal struggles. Quite big things were happening. We had our house broken into and everything was stolen. My dad passed away that year and my marriage broke up too. It was pretty tough.

After this marriage break up there were some very tough times. I wasn't quite sure what I was doing and started to get a bit lonely. I got a little bit of depression at times. One thing that has got me out of that is my faith. What you tend to do in depression is a battle in your head really and it is just negative thoughts coming in and dwelling on them. That is what I just love about my faith is that you are kind of swapping your thoughts in a way. You're removing one and putting something else in there. I think it is a really positive way of tackling depression.

My second wife is pretty straight on things and sometimes we have different perspectives. We approach problems differently and very occasionally her approach triggered me. It was all about me, it wasn't about her, it was about me.

What I recognize is that I take things very personally and then I react. This was where it all led up to DOVE. All the stuff would just boil up. I would explode. It happened three or four times before I realised I needed to do something. A friend of mine told me about DOVE.

What was good about DOVE is it just makes you sit and think. Shows

you the damage you are doing and that it is all about your own choices not about anybody else. It was bringing back a lot of things that I knew and I learnt a lot of new things as well. It really made me stop and think about the damage I was doing.

We are starting a family and things have been better than ever. It has been quite amazing. I got counselling at church. It really, really helped as well. It was going back to one point I remember as a kid. My mum would go to the pub and I used to sit on the kitchen bench looking down the street just crying my eyes out. I would be sort of looking at cars coming up the road just hoping it was Mum. That was something that came out in some Christian counselling. It was deep. In the last five years I have been going back to church a lot more regularly.

One thing I did notice was my wife mentioned that she saw that I made an effort and the thing I noticed was she kind of softened as well. I think that all just helped the whole mix. I like to think of other people and so when I am walking in the door at home it is always on my mind, 'what I can do to help around the house?' So it has never been that far away from me to want to be a good husband and partner and so that comes reasonably easily.

My wife and I, we have not had one argument since. We've had disagreements and I've learnt not to take things personally. One of the big things was realising that we are all different. My dream for the future is being the best dad I can and being violence free.



Fear doesn't live here no more

– Woman's narrative

From the age of six I experienced abuse. By the time I was ten I was looking after my sister. Then around twelve I went on the streets in Wellington. I met my partner at thirteen and became involved in the gang scene.

Once when I tried to tell my Mum about the people doing stuff to me, the Police got involved. The family got involved and the first thing they said to me was that I was looking for attention. After that I just shut up and didn't say anything about anybody. If someone was going to touch me then they were just going to touch me.

When I was in the gang scene I just became their mattress. It was either have four or five fellas or get a hiding. It was better than being at home.

Anyway, that's how I met my husband. He watched me get 'blocked' and then he was the one who took me away from that. I looked at him as my protector. Remembering I was thirteen. He took me away and kept me safe. None of those fellas could touch me again.

I didn't know that he was exactly like them. But I wouldn't give him up because I knew, even though all this stuff was happening in our relationship, it was still better than what it had been.

So when my husband went to jail, I went to DOVE. By this time I was thirty-four. This was one of the first times I had spoken about my abuse, you know, just being someone's sex-toy.

I spoke with Whaea and that was the first time I had broken down. She helped me go back to the child, that little girl, and some words that she said to me have stayed with me, 'You know, they have taken your mana away and your wairua away. ... You get it back!'

Those words were the beginning of my healing journey. I had to find myself, find the courage to face my hurts and where it came from, then give it back, let it go, it's not mine.

I never used to be able to do that, but God has given me that, allowed me to talk about it and to know that it is safe. God does that for me. I owe my life to him. When you know the enemy has a hold on you, it's not until we release it that we are set free.

I had to look at the abuse, the abusers, and make that decision to not hold it anymore, to let it all go – give all the hate back to them.

Where I hated my mum for not protecting me – give it back. I didn't need to carry the burden of abuse and hate anymore – their hate, their

burdens, their abuse. When the hate went, I allowed love to come into my life. I found the beauty within me, I was worthy.

Now I pass that taonga on to other women who are suffering abuse. You can see – I just know what they are going through, I just know. I say to them, 'You're worthy, you're beautiful.' I thank them for letting me be part of their healing journey.

I know where I am today and I say to myself, the more we speak about it the more freedom we get. The more we hold onto things the more it has a hold on us.

Questions and Suggestions for use of the Stories

Initial Reactions

1. What do the titles of the stories mean to you?
2. What is your guess as to what they mean for the narrators of the stories?
3. What is your first response to each story?
4. What do you find shocking or disturbing in the stories?
5. What do you find hopeful in the stories?

Feelings and Their Meaning

1. Select a story – what are all the feelings/emotions expressed in the story?
2. If the narrator was sitting in front of you what words, phrases or sentences might you use to reflect their feelings?

Beliefs and Values

1. Find examples in the narrators' words and stories of how they changed or are changing beliefs and values about violence and abuse.
2. Do you think being brought up with violence, abuse and punishment leads to suffering or perpetrating abuse in adulthood? Justify your answer referring to wider reading and research.
3. Sometimes we may be invited to think about individuals involved in family violence in terms of perpetrator and victim. Discuss how these stories might support or challenge that way of thinking.

“Breaking the Cycle of Violence”

1. What does “breaking the cycle” mean?
2. How would you know when the cycle is broken?
3. Whose responsibility is it to break the cycle?
4. What does it take to break the cycle of violence? What steps are needed? How long might it take?
5. Choose a story: In a couple of sentences describe the role violence has played in the narrator's life.

6. Choose a story: How far have the tentacles of violence spread in the story you have chosen?
7. What role(s) might counsellors, social workers or other professionals play?
8. What kind of practice could support breaking the cycle?
9. What does self-determination look like in the context of violence?
10. What choices do the tellers of these stories have?

Power and Control Wheel

<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/training/wheels.html>

1. Identify elements of the power and control wheel in the stories.
2. If you were the counsellor/social worker what aspect of the wheels would you want to explore?
3. How could you support the narrator to examine their beliefs about violence and abuse?
4. How would you support the narrator and their family to step away from violence and abuse?
5. What supports do these stories show are helpful in stepping away from violence and abuse?

Holding Hope in Practice

1. How do these words/stories carry expressions of hope?
2. Find examples of the importance of hope in bringing about change.
3. How could you assist in building hope of a different life if you were a counsellor, social worker or other professional?

Qualities, skills, personal attributes

1. What do these stories suggest to you about the qualities, skills and personal attributes individuals and families need to bring about change and to break the cycle of violence?
2. What do these stories suggest to you about the qualities, skills and personal attributes needed to work with people to bring about change and assist them to break the cycle of violence?

Other suggested ways to use these stories

1. If you were to write a programme for a group of perpetrators or for a group of victims what would you need to consider?
2. As a case study for family or individual work.
3. There are some great websites, eg http://www.areyouok.org.nz/family_violence.php that can be used to grow our knowledge and inform our thinking. Find at least two websites that you consider will be useful to you as a practitioner. Note the new learning you have gleaned from them. Consider how you might use what you have learnt as a practitioner working with the narrators and their families.
4. Find local resources for adults, children and families struggling with domestic violence.



References

- Chase, S. (2002). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 57-94). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ehrhardt, P., Little, G., Marsters, M., Nauer, G., Pentecost, M., Stockdale-Frost, A., & Wivell, J. (2013). *Report on effectiveness of services delivered by DOVE Hawke's Bay Inc.* Napier, New Zealand: Eastern Institute of Technology.
- Silverman, D. (2007). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Speedy, J. (2008). *Narrative inquiry and psychotherapy*. Houndmills, England: Palgrave MacMillan.







DOVE HAWKES BAY



EASTERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
TE AHO A MĀUI