

**Submission after Questionnaire from Working Party.
Prior to this I did send an earlier file.**

What is 'coercive control'?

Q.1

What other types of coercive controlling behaviours or risk factors used by perpetrators in domestic relationships might help identify coercive control?

Answer:

All these acts specified on Internet and available for perpetrators to add to their existing acts

- a. Theft of relatively unimportant household items to foster debilitating mental health issues
- b. Phone calls late evening and early morning
- c. No yard maintenance
- d. Accusations by perpetrator of attempts to interfere with vehicle safety - false invoices from mechanics
- e. Victim unable to obtain evidence – all security compromised - at times required repairs
- f. With ongoing abuse after final Family Court appearance – alienation of children – children used as tools of abuse against the victim and also abusing grandparents (by grandchildren – verbal and physical)
- g. Damage to fly screens to enable recordings to be passed through to other party
- h. Attempts to open safe
- i. Mobile phones of victim stolen
- k. All personal papers stolen – from victim's house and grandparent's house
- l. Absolute disrespect for parent and grandparents
- m. Nuisance phone calls to grandparent's landline – eight in one day – unlikely to have been any other person involved
- n. Perpetrator accessed landline - later cancelled by victim
- o. Perpetrator interfered with mobile phones – (hacked)

Q.2

What aspects of women's attempts to survive and resist abuse should be taken into account when examining coercive control .

Psychological Abuse:

After final Family Court decision – Urgent need required also for advice – one major issue is the inability to access information regarding security methods.

Answer

Victim attended to following-

- a. External cameras installed
- b. Internal sensor security
- c. Changed locks on external doors
- d. Repaired holes in Flyscreens to allow recordings to be passed outside
- e. Safe installed
- f. After car key stolen new key setting done by dealer of vehicle
- g. Continually replacing mobile phones – after theft and also illegal access
- h. Internal man-hole covers secured

Note: All means to compromise overcoming security set-up by perpetrators is available on Internet.

Part 1 – How is coercive control currently dealt with in Queensland

Community attitudes

Q.3. What should be done to improve understanding in the community about what 'coercive control is and the acute danger it presents to women and to improve how people seek help or intervene?

Answer

Currently a very limited number of people in the community know about or understand about coercive control. A person only does understand when one is the victim or one is involved with assisting a victim. The whole idea of this form of abuse and the acts of the perpetrator are quite unbelievable. Therefore “not believed”. The victim is not aware for quite a period of time that the abuse is happening. It is subtle, invasive and insidious. This abuse is also used on the parents of the victim by both the perpetrator and the alienated children.

Q. 4. Are there opportunities for the media to continue to improve its reporting of domestic and family violence and for popular entertainment to tell more topical stories to increase understanding of coercive control?

Answer

Yes. The media could do a lot more. However, please do not encourage the use of high profile sports people, actors or breakfast show hosts (unless they are the perpetrators). The current add ‘the children kicking a football’ is a start but very few in the community grasp the intended message nor acknowledge these words are demoralizing to females.

Q.5. Would a change in terminology support an increase in community awareness of coercive control?

Answer

I believe it would. Many in the community do not know the meaning of Coercive control or psychological and emotional abuse. There is little need to know until you or a family member or friend, becomes a victim. It is difficult to know exactly what deeds come under the umbrella of those words. ‘Gaslighting? Narcissism?’

Q. 7. If you are a victim of coercive control (or have supported a victim) and you received assistance from a mainstream service

Answer

Q7. 1. What worked well?

No help available as on the first visit to the Court House my daughter was told to 'go to that room down the end'. All that was in that small room were a few brochures. On the second visit after the final Family Court appearance and the abuse continued, she was told to come the next day 'after 12:00'. After attending at that time and waiting for three hours we had to leave to pick up the children from school because no one was available to talk. The only service she received was a visit to the Community Legal Centre who advised her to get a solicitor.

Q7. 2. What could have been done better?

Answer

Central agency for early support and advice.

All agencies said that they could not talk with me, the mother and grandmother, and the victim should phone them. I understand the reason but the knowledge of the situation according to the assisting person is very relevant. It is from another perspective.

Many victims have such low self-esteem they are unable to speak on their own behalf.

Support staffing in an agency will require specific training in all the general required needs of a victim. They would listen to, and accept, that the victim is being truthful. Trained staff would better understand the level of help and advice required by each individual.

The victim is already suffering mentally and emotionally and it is so important to be able to access sound advice and guidance before huge sums of money are handed to a Solicitor for work which could have been done for a fraction of the cost.

This cost of Legal Advice adds additional fear and anxiety to the existing heartbreak and trauma of victims who have been suffering, in many cases, for several years and the abuse is never ending.

The Medical Profession

The victim : Fear, Anxiety, Rejection, Depression, Despair.

If no one believes then no one can help.

I do not believe that General Practitioners understand this form of abuse. However, the only advice they are in a position to give is to suggest counselling. Counselling is costly. But it does not solve the ongoing mental stalking and abuse where there is no evidence available.

Police

The police can do nothing if there is no evidence. They record the thefts.