

MARAC SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS

April 2007

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MARAC

SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

Interviews were undertaken with a random dip sample of survivors who have been through the Exeter, North, East and Mid Devon MARAC process, in order to assess the success of its interventions. The interviews were carried out by the IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisers) working in the Exeter, North, East and Mid Devon areas, and consisted solely of open ended questions, to ensure that in-dept and comprehensive qualitative information could be obtained. It was decided that closed-ended questions (which would yield quantitative data) would not be appropriate in this instance as the likely sample size was expected to be relatively small, and as such, the results obtained would not be representative or generalisable.

The interview template was originally developed by Dr Amanda L Robinson, of Cardiff University for CAADA, but has been slightly modified to meet the needs of the current project.

The data from the interviews was analysed using a procedure known as Grounded Theory, which involves an assessment of each comment from each completed questionnaire, looking at re-occurring themes etc.

Sample

In total there were 6 completed interviews returned. All responses have been anonymous, and each have been arranged a case number (e.g. 'Case 1')

SECTION 1

General Perceptions of ‘holistic’ approach in Devon

Are you aware of the multi-agency approach that happens in Devon?

e.g. Advocacy / IDVA / Safety Unit work with health, probation with the police etc.

A half of the respondents failed to answer this question, and of these who did, the majority were not aware of the multi-agency approach.

2/6 (33%) stated that they were not aware of the multi-agency approach that happens in Devon:

“No” Case 4

“I am not aware of the multi agency approach in Devon. I don’t remember being risk assessed and having a letter explaining the MARAC process. It may have been that my injuries were so severe (broken back) that they didn’t need to risk assess me to recognise that I was ‘very high risk’. I don’t remember receiving MARAC update’s either. (MARAC updates where not happening as a matter of course at this time. Records show that she was risk assessed at least twice).” Case 6

1/6 (17%) stated that they were aware of the multi agency approach but did not comment:

“Yes” Case 5

3/6 (50%) did not respond to this question.

Do you know what they do?

A half of respondents stated that they knew what the MARAC did.

3/6 (50%) stated that they were aware of what the multi-agencies do, due to support/information that they had received:

“Yes – the MARAC report went to my daughter’s School.” Case 2

“Yes the agencies get together to see if we need support and are safe.” Case 3

“Oh yes that was really good – it made me feel stronger and able to take action to stop the abuse. No I don’t remember what MARAC is I was so stressed at the time a lot was happening that I can not remember. It seems like a long time ago.” Case 1

1/6 (17%) Respondent stated that they did not know what the agencies did.

“No” Case 2

3/6 (50%) Stated that they were unsure as to what the agencies did:

“Not sure – do you mean ‘W’ and ‘A’? I do not know what the safety unit is. Case 1

“Not sure” Case 5

1/6 (17%) respondent did not answer this question.

What do you think of this approach?

Encouragingly, the majority of respondents agreed that the approach was positive.

1/6 (17%) stated that the approach to multi-agency working was good due to a raised awareness of risk to survivors:

"I think that the multi agency approach is a good one. It's really comforting to know that people have understood the level of risk that you are facing and that different parties are aware of this. I have been really comforted to know that there is a police warning on my address and that if I dial 999 a car will come around straight away."

Case 6

1/6 (17%) stated that the approach to multi-agency is good in principal but not necessary straight forward:

"It is a good idea but not everything is straight forward, it's a bit black and white, not everybody is the same."

Case 2

2/6 (33%) stated that the approach to multi-agency is positive:

"Really good"

Case 1
"Good."

Case 5

2/6 (33%) respondents did not answer this question.

Do you think it could be helpful?

The majority of respondents did not answer this question. Of those who did, the responses are listed below.

1/6 (17%) cited that the multi agency approach could be helpful:

"Yes, it could be helpful."

Case 2

1/6 (17%) stated that the approach to multi agency could be more helpful if the agencies carried out what Was asked of them:

"It would have been more helpful if all the agencies had done what they said they would do."

Case 3

4/6 (67%) respondents did not answer this question.

Has it been helpful to you?

There was a very mixed response with equal number agreeing that it either had been helpful, or had not been helpful and 2 did not answer.

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that the multi agency approach had been helpful to them as they would not have known how to get support otherwise:

"I would not have known what to do. Without the help I would have stayed in the relationship and been hurt even more." Case 1

"It was good that they offered to contact Women's Aid. I wouldn't have approached Women's Aid otherwise" Case 5

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that the approach to multi-agency was unhelpful to them as it had a negative affect on themselves and their families:

No, it has not been helpful to me – purely because of my circumstances. In the way I live, it made things worse for me and backfired involving my children – generally the whole thing about involving the police has made things worse" Case 2

"I wanted more help to manage my daughter's difficult behaviour – she has been damaged by the DV she has seen. I do not think I got this help." Case 3

2/6 (33%) respondents did not answer this question.

Have you had any experience of agencies working together?

e.g. joint visits, increased contact from any specific agency?

Only 1 case said that they had not had experience of agencies working together and answered no. This being case 2.

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that they had experienced agencies working together:

"Without agencies working together I may not have reported incidents to police – (DVO) and (IDVA) believed me and understood what my ex-partner was like." Case 1

"The IDVA went to the housing with me in another area, if she had not done this I don't think I would have been able to move. She was able to help me put my case to be re-housed to the woman at the housing department. I could not have done this on my own and I was too all over the place to have made the practical arrangements on my own. The Police had said I was at high risk in Exeter their view helped my case with housing." Case 3

3/6 (50%) respondents stated that they had not had experience of agencies working together:

"No" Case 2

"No I was just aware of WA" Case 4

"I am not aware of agencies working together, but that is not to say that they did not. When you are in crisis you do not take a lot in. Things were being done, but I'm not sure who was doing them. I know I have had contact with Outreach, the Police and Women's Aid. I am confused about the distinction between Outreach, Women's Aid and Social Services. I have had a lot of contact with Women's Aid." Case 6

1/6 (17%) Miscellaneous:

"MARAC" Case 5

If yes, in what ways have they impacted on your life?

Interestingly the vast majority of respondents stated that multi agencies working together had a positive impact on their life, despite the fact that a number of respondents stated that they were unaware of this is in the previous question. These are broken down into 2 different themes

3/6 (50%) respondents cited that the experiences they had with multi agencies had impacted on their life as they were able to move away and feel safer:

*“Every one knew I was in danger and had to move” Case 1
“I feel much safer now that I have left Exeter – he (my ex-husband) does not know where I am.” Case 3*

“Good, all positive” Case 5

1/6 (17%) respondents stated that the experience of multi agencies working together had impacted on their life due to their receiving continued support from various agencies:

“Working with Women’s Aid and Outreach has had a tremendous positive impact on my life. My husband is currently on the REPAIR course and I have been support by Women’s Aid at the same time. I am doing the Women’s Aid Pattern Changing course. I am really grateful for this support. I don’t really understand the relationship between Repair and Women’s Aid. I was under the impression that Repair was part of Women’s Aid. This is because the link between repair and women’s aid has been seamless. It feels as though my husband and me are in a double confessional box. I know that what I disclose to my support worker will be used to challenge my husband by the repair facilitator and the same is true for him. The relationship between my husband and me is greatly improved. I feel as though I have a new lease of life.” Case 6

2/6 (33%) respondents did not answer this question.

What do you think of the ways in which different agencies work together?

The vast majority of respondents responded in different ways with regards to how agencies work together. Below is a sample of comments:

*“IDVA and DVO are the same they both help to keep women and children safe” Case 1
“It really depends; I have had more experience dealing with agencies involved with my kids” Case 2*

“It felt like the Women’s Aid IDVA was left to pull it all together for me. I was often left waiting to hear from other agencies and she chased things up for me. Women’s Aid in the other areas I have moved to work differently to Women’s Aid In Exeter and they do not offer the same level of practical support as Exeter, the DVO in Exeter was helpful and so was one of the housing officers in the area I have moved to. Housing officers in the same department have been far less helpful. Some Police Officers have been lacking in understanding and have made me feel like the guilty one. It seems like the way agencies work is down to individual workers as much as the agency.” Case 3

“Don’t know, but very friendly, supportive” Case 5

Are you aware of any action that has been taken by an agency on your behalf?

Case 5 simply answered no to this question. The remaining respondents stated that they had had action taken on behalf of themselves. This has been broken down into positive and negative comments.

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that actions taken by an agency on their behalf resulted in changes being made to their accommodation:

“DVO got housing and police to fit me a panic alarm - IDVA – supported me in moving when he continued to stalk me after we had separated and I had a Restraining Order” Case 1

“Helped to move.” Case 3

1/6 (17%) stated that the actions taken by an agency on their behalf was not what was required:

“I have had loads of letters and loads of phone calls. Only to do with the kids, which is not what I needed.” Case 2

3/6 (50%) Respondents did not answer this question.

SECTION 2

Relationships

Are you still in a relationship with (name)? If so, how is the relationship?

A vast majority of respondents stated that they were no longer in a relationship with the named person. Case 1, 3, 4 and 5 answered no to this question.

1/6 (17%) stated that they were not continuing the relationship with the named person but would support them from a distance:

“No I will support him from a distance for the help he is getting, which is Respect & Repair.” Case 2

1/6 (17%) stated that they were continuing with the relationship but that changes had been made:

“I am still married. The relationship is a lot more bearable, and is improving all the time. The relationship always had really good parts in it and I feel as though they have been brought out. The incidents of violence and aggression, (smashing things up have stopped.) The rages have become less and less. We talk now and he is redirecting his anger. I can’t recall any other types of abuse happening. I am not entirely confident that it won’t start up again. We’ll just have to wait and see.” Case 6

If you are no longer experiencing DV, are you experiencing any emotional, sexual, financial abuse?

Only a half of respondents answered this question, all of whom responded in the negative.

3/6 (50%) respondents cited that they were not experiencing any abuse:

“No” Case 1

“No” Case 2

“He’s in prison – harassment order” Case 5

3/6 (50%) Respondents did not answer this question.

If you are still experiencing DV, is the violence towards you different in any way (better / worse?) Is it escalating?

1/6 (17%) stated that there had been no change in the way the violence was directed towards them. All other respondents did not answer this question.

If not, are you in a new relationship? How is that going?

The vast majority of respondents stated that they have started new relationships, and encouragingly they are all positive about them and that they were going well:

“Yes – I am really happy” Case 1

“I am ‘going out’ with a man but am taking things very slowly, I am afraid of things turning bad.” Case 3

“Yes and it is going well” Case 4

“Yes - very well” Case 5

Are you with the same type of man? How so? How different?

Again, encouragingly, the vast majority of respondents stated that their new partner was not violent towards them, and that they were positive about the new relationship. See comments below:

“No – my new partner is kind helps around the home, contributes financially – we argue but he never hits me – we sort things out – total opposite” Case 1

“No he ‘SEEMS’ gentle, quiet, hard working and accepts the type of relationship I want right now.” Case 3

“No he is not controlling at all. I’m not frightened of him.” Case 4

“No – perfect completely different” Case 5

Are you happy being single?

2 /6 (33%) of the respondents stated that they are single and happy with being single. See their comments below:

“Yes, very happy being single.” Case 2

“Yes – don’t have time for a partner, I have my computer, new friends, my children.”
Case 3

SECTION 3

Issues Around Additional Violence

Have you experienced any additional violence or threats since July 2006?

Encouragingly, the majority of respondents stated that they had not experienced any additional violence or threats.

4/6 (67%) Half of the respondents stated that they had not experienced any additional threats since July 2006. Below are their responses:

“No – my new partner is kind helps around the home, contributes financially – we argue but he never hits me – we sort things out – total opposite” Case 1

“No – although he did climb into my garden in October” Case 5

“No.” Case 3

“There have been no threats of violence since the incident in July and that was a common feature of our relationship in the past. The historical threats and violence did have a dramatic impact on my life. The only way I can describe it is to say I was suppressed. I didn’t recognise it at the time. It was a gradual thing. Pattern Changing has enabled me to recognise this. I lost all my confidence and my emotions were suppressed.” Case 6

2/6 (33%) stated that they had experienced additional violence or threats since July 2006 but did not provide any additional information:

“Yes and reported it.” Case 2

“Yes” Case 4

If so, was it reported?

Interestingly, 3/6 (50%) respondents stated that they had reported additional violence or threats. Despite the fact that only 2 respondents stated that they had experienced violence in the previous question.

3/6 (50%) Respondents did not answer this question.

What happened?

3/6 (50%) respondents stated that the once they had reported the additional violence and threats, these were then dealt with by the Police and Courts. Below are some comments on what happened.

“He is out on bail for the one assault and waiting to be charged. The other assault has gone to court.” Case 2

“Went to court, he got 16 wks in prison and 2 year restraining order.” Case 4

“Police dealt with it.” Case 5

Have the violence / threats had an impact upon your relationship (positive / negative)?

3/6 (50%) respondents stated that violence and threats had an impact on their relationship. Please see below for comments.

“Yes, it has ended it (negative).” Case 2
“Past violence with ex-husband has made me very cautious of new relationships.”
Case 3
“Not sure really” Case 4

The remaining respondents did not answer the question.

What has been the impact upon your children?

1 respondent stated that they had no children.

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that there had been no impact on their children please see below for comments:

“It has not really, they have never lived with him – he was not the Step-Father. They would see him occasionally, and he would give them some pocket money or drop my Mom and them off at places. He has always had his own home and his own children and I have mine. That way I feel that I have protected my children. One of my children was there, when he damaged my car and pinched my arm.” Case 2

“No, he’s safe now.” Case 4

1/6 (17%) stated that there had been an impact on their Children due to the effects of violence and threats, and that this has caused problems with them forming relationships with other people:

“Huge – they have been very damaged by their Father’s violence and have difficulty forming relationships in their own lives.” Case 3

Miscellaneous:

“CJS” Case 5

2/6 (33%) Respondents did not answer this question.

What do you think about the levels of support you received after you reported the incident?

All respondents stated that they had received different levels of support after they had reported the incident. See below for list of comments which have been broken down into various themes.

3/6 (50%) respondents stated that they had received a positive level of support which had had a positive impact on their lives:

“Excellent – really mean it – everything was explained the first time I went to court ‘W’ took me – she is a strong person – this made me feel strong. The second time I had to go to court the new Court person ‘C’ (court IDVA) kept me really calm – she told me I just had to just tell what happened – the truth – and then I could go home and have a cup of tea – she is lovely – I had screens and did not have to see my ex-partner” Case 1

“I felt that the hospital staff were very supportive also and were sensitive enough to screen me off and ask me if I wanted to see my husband when he came to visit. I was surprised that they knew what had happened. I have received good support from Women’s Aid also. ‘A’ (IDVA) contacted me when I was discharged from hospital. She was really nice and I know that we spoke on the phone, but I can’t remember the content of the conversations. I was very confused and numb at this time and was not taking a lot in. ‘V’; my outreach support worker has been fantastic.” Case 6

“DVO was good” Case 3

1/6 (17%) stated that the level of support was quite good but would have liked to have had more information:

“Quite good. I would have liked more information about what was happening to him being arrested and updates after that. In court I was supposed to have screens and didn’t have” Case 4

3/6 (50%) Respondents stated that they were not happy with the levels of support that they had received mainly by the police after an incident had been reported. The reasons stated included lack of communication and understanding, and incidents taking a considerable length of time to deal with. See below, for examples of what happened when the survivors reported the incident:

“The police; on the whole have been diabolical, It has had a horrible impact on my business. The police turning up on Saturday afternoon for a courtesy visit. When they were looking for ‘M’, three police officers came through my private door and searched my house to find ‘M’ that I had reported the assault and they were looking to arrest him for it, I felt that they did not believe me when I told them ‘M’ was not here but they carried on searching the whole place, even under my bed. There was one officer – ‘D’ who was very supportive and didn’t judge me but the other looked at you like, I let it happen, just no support. Lack of communication between somebody somewhere. ‘M’ had to answer his bail but the other assault had happened after the first, and when the second happened they took him in, and he was remanded in custody. ‘D’ called me up to say that ‘M’ had not answered his bail, and I had to tell him that he was remanded, see just lack of communication. I have lodgers, that were here before me but when I took over the pub I agreed to keep them on as they are no problem. The police when they searched my house, they were threatening about illegal immigrants. I think that they should be helping me not threatening my lodgers. The length of time from the arrest and then bailed. How can you get on with your life when it is going on and on? If it is done quick, I think ‘M’ would be quicker to plead Guilty. The longer it goes on, everybody has time. I have moved on with my life and calmed down and then that thing is in the past and that’s why I think women drop charges. It ruins everything; I could loose my kids over this from having got the police involved.” Case 2

“Some of the Police who were called to incidents were very understanding and helpful others were terrible – the police were called to my address regularly and I could tell some Officers thought it was my fault, often by the time they arrived my

husband was calm but I was in a terrible state and very loud. I could tell what they were thinking – on other occasions when my Husband was arrested it seemed that he was best friends with the Police by the time they reached the Police Station – my husband always seemed to be released and back home in no time. My daughter has been very damaged by all the emotional abuse and violence she has witnessed and acts in a very violent way herself, the Police have been called to the house because of her behaviour – one Police Officer said to me ‘you don’t know how to bring your children up that is why she behaves like this.’ In the court facts presented for the defence do not seem to be checked – on one occasion my ex-husband told the court he was living with me and that we had a joint bank account – this was not true but was accepted as such.” Case 3

“My first contact with the police was very bad. I was thrown off a sea wall by my husband and broke my back. The police happened to be driving past the area at the time of this incident and stopped to see what was happening. I had managed to crawl up the embankment and managed to stand. I could see the police car and was making my way towards it. I felt as though my life depended on getting to that car, so I found the strength to walk at this point. I was a bit drunk and understandable upset. I remember asking the police officer if I could sit in the car as I was in so much pain. The officer responded by saying ‘you have walked this far, you can stay there’. He continued to say ‘There is nothing wrong with you’. My husband was then arrested and I went home. The following day the police called around to tell me what was happening with my husband. By this time I was in agony and could not move. I asked the officer if they could get me a glass of water and switch on my electric fire, but they said they couldn’t for health and safety reasons. When they left I managed to call my friend who took me to the hospital where I was told that I had broken my back. I was admitted to hospital. The police support since then, has been really good.” Case 6

1/6 (17%) Respondent did not answer this question.

SECTION 4

Emotional Abuse

Are you experiencing any emotional abuse from him? If so, please describe.

All respondents stated that they no longer experience any emotional abuse as they are no longer in contact with their partners.

“No I no longer see him – he is currently in prison for breach of the restraining order”
Case 1

“No, I had had one phone call from him when he was crying but nothing else. I sent him a text message, to see how he was and he replied saying that he was very low which is not like him – so I thought that I would just leave him alone. We talk but only about the business.” Case 2

“No I have moved and changed my name. He does not know where I am and I have changed my mobile number.” Case 3

“No” Case 4

“No contact at all” Case 5

“I am not experiencing any emotional abuse from him.” Case 6

Has the level of emotional abuse lessened or increased over the last year?

3/6 (50%) Half of the cases stated the levels of emotional abuse had both increased and decreased over the last year. See below for comments:

“Before the last court case the abuse was getting really bad – he was stalking me and waited for me to return home and grabbed me and held a knife to my throat and threatened to hurt me – I was terrified” Case 1

“The level of abuse was Increasing rapidly before I moved – I had no choice but to move.” Case 3

“Increased after the separation then dropped to nothing” Case 4

3/6 (50%) Respondents did not answer this question.

SECTION 5

Victim Quality of Life / Victim Intuition

How is your quality-of-life / emotional well-being generally? Has your health been affected?

All respondents stated that there had been a great improvement in their quality of life, although a number stated that despite this, they had suffered either emotionally or had experienced health problems.

“I had no life when I was him – I now look forward to getting up in the morning – I did not realise when I was with him how bad it was affecting me emotionally – I had no energy – no life.” Case 1

“Up and down but OK. There are times, I miss him and other times I don’t. I have been through a lot. My health was not affected by the violence, I was poorly anyway.” Case 2

“I get down because I haven’t really dealt with the emotional side and I have his son.” Case 4

“Very good, financially better – children happier.” Case 5

“My quality of life and emotional well being is pretty good now. My back has healed and I feel a lot healthier than I did before the injury as I am doing more exercise and looking after myself.” Case 6

“I have had very poor health in the past few years; I think this must be in part due to the stress I have lived with. I had gall stones that were undetected for so long that I have suffered damage to my pancreas. When you feel like crap a drink makes you feel better this does not help. I have also become an insulin dependent diabetic. When you are really scared your body shuts, I am really screwed up I went to the Doctor and he said I needed more than counselling. He thinks I need Psychotherapy.” Case 3

Do you feel safe / secure?

1 respondent simply answered ‘yes’ to this question. The remaining responses have been broken down into different themes.

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that they feel safe and secure due to having support from their families:

“Yes - I know there is help if I need it – not just family – they are good but it is not always easy to talk to family – my family like to sort things out with violence – that is not right” Case 1

“Yes, totally. I have my mom with me now. I have moved her in with me, which is a big statement to M. My mom would not let anything happen to me.” Case 2

3/6 (50%) The vast majority of respondents stated that they did felt more safe and secure, however they still had a number of concerns regarding their safety:

"I still worry that he may find us one day – but I am better than I was in Exeter. I can go to the shops; I don't drink to forget as often." Case 3

"Not completely – yes whilst he's in prison but I am never sure what he'll do." Case 5
"I feel 80% safe and secure". Case 6

Are you frightened?

1 respondent answered 'no' to this question. All remaining answers are listed below:

1/6 (17%) stated that they no longer felt frightened, although they still felt somewhat unsure and anxious:

"No – but I am still anxious at times – I look behind and worry I am being followed if out in the dark – I do not like the dark – it hard to lose the fear – it not really as strong as fear– more like anxiety" Case 1

3/6 (50%) respondents stated that they still feel frightened. See below for a list of reasons given:

"I am still frightened I think about the things he did to me. It's hard to get it out of my head. I think bang and I could be dead, I worry if he could be that violent so could other people." Case 3

"Sometimes, I am never sure he won't come round" Case 4

"There is still a bit of me that is worried and frightened that these changes may not be permanent." Case 6

1/6 (17%) Respondent did not answer this question.

Do you feel you are being well supported? Who are you in contact with?

4/6 (67%) The vast majority of respondents stated that they are being well supported and that they are in contact with various agencies see below for a list of comments.

"Yes, 'L' has been fantastic; I have been able to be very open with her. She does not judge me. I have had contact with 'L'. Outreach have written to me about putting me on the course, pattern changing. I have had previous partners that have been really violent towards me." Case 2

"I have a good GP. I still phone my IDVA in Exeter, she knows so much about my situation I find it easy to talk to her. I was not comfortable talking to the Outreach Volunteer I was referred to in the area I have moved to and have not stayed in contact." Case 3

"Women's Aid – yes well supported I can call if necessary" Case 4

"I feel that I am very supported, through Women's Aid and Pattern Changing. I am in contact with 'V' and 'A' who are facilitating on the course, and who are supporting me whilst my husband is doing the REPAIR course." Case 6

1/6 (17%) stated that they were no longer receiving support but that they were able to contact agencies if needed:

“I am no longer supported by anyone but know I can phone W and A at any time- they are easy to talk to – my family support me and so does my new partner” Case 1

1/6 (17%) stated that they no longer received any support:

“None now” Case 5

1/6 (17%) Respondent did not answer this question.

Do you feel that you may be at risk of further violence? If yes, how so?

A half of respondents stated that they no longer feel that they are at risk of violence, as they would now know how to act. See below for a list of comments.

“No – and if I was I know what to do” Case 1

“No, I will not put myself in that position again. I have removed myself from the situation in time, walked away. I think men have to learn to leave. M gets bad when he is drunk, there have been times when he has started so I thought if I am not here then nothing can happen to me so I have gone home and then in the morning he is OK because he has sobered up. I think that other women should walk away, I am not saying that they should because it should be the man but walk away if you can so that you do not get hurt.” Case 2

“No I will be careful about future relationships, but I still worry that my ex-husband will find me. I have escaped before!” Case 3

“No” Case 4

2/6 (33%) respondents stated that they felt that they were still at risk of further violence.

“Maybe, I will never fully trust him.” Case 5
“I feel that there is a 20% risk of further violence, because I’m waiting to see how permanent the changes in my husband’s behaviour are.” Case 6

SECTION 6

Children

How are your children?

1 respondent stated that they did not have any children. The vast majority of respondents have children, and stated that they are now fine, although at times they are still affected:

“My son is fine now – he still finds it difficult when he hears people argue – he disappears to his room – it makes him feel very uncomfortable” Case 1

“Fine, they ask where M is but I say that Mommy does not see M now but we are still friends.” Case 2

“Fine” Case 4

“Happier, fine. Doing well at School” Case 5

1/6 (17%) stated that their child had been severely affected by the domestic violence and this has caused a number of changes in their behaviour:

“Damaged mentally. My daughter is violent.” Case 3

Would you say that the welfare of your children has improved? Can you think of any specific ways (yes, no)?

A half of the respondents stated that their children’s welfare had been improved with regards to changes in their circumstances as well as not being in a violent atmosphere any longer.

“Yes – my son used to always be in trouble at school – he is now an A star pupil – his attendance is good and he has friends – before I worried about him he was bullied at school and hated leaving me. his school attendance was really bad” Case 1

“Yes, he is safer. He is not hearing arguments” Case 4

“Yes, not hearing/seeing things they shouldn’t. Financially better off” Case 5

1/6 (17%) of the respondents stated that although their children’s welfare had been improved, the affects of violence had changed their behaviour as well as their relationships with other people:

“On the surface they are better – calmer. My son had responsibility taken from him, now we have escaped he does not feel responsible for my safety or his sister’s behaviour. My children are very needy; they can not make friends easily and do not like being apart from me. My son is 21 and my daughter is 17 they are not like other kids of their age.” Case 3

1/6 (17%) stated that they had not observed any changes in their children’s behaviour with regards to the affects of domestic violence:

“No different. My children are together again (for other reasons they were separated not DV)” Case 2

1/6 (17%) respondent did not answer the question.

Relationship separation – has it been difficult on the children? If yes, how so?

2/6 (33%) of the respondents stated that relationship separation had not had a differential effect on their children:

“He is now a normal teenager – with friends and happy to leave me” Case 1

“No – he was very young and quite unaware” Case 4

2/6 (33%) of the respondents stated that relationship separation had been initially very difficult, but that their children had in time, managed to cope effectively:

“It took my daughter a long time to deal with separation from her father, we have escaped before. This time I initially left without her as she has disclosed my whereabouts to her father. When her father took no interest in her when I was not around she was able to see that he had used her as a way to get to me this was a difficult thing to understand and acknowledge, but it has made her hate what he has done and has made separation possible. My son is relieved – he stabbed and almost killed his father protecting me. My son has nightmares about spending years in Prison for murdering his father. He is relieved that his Dad has no contact with us. It has taken a huge weight off him.” Case 3

*“Initially but as time goes on it is easier until he sends a Birthday card or something”
Case 5*

2/6 (33%) of respondents did not answer this question.

How is child contact arranged? Is it a point of conflict between you and your ex-partner?

1/6 (17%) respondent stated that there were no conflicts between survivor and ex-partner with regards to arranging child contact:

“None – but it was at a contact centre” Case 4

1/6 (17%) respondent stated that there were issues of conflict between survivor and ex-partner:

*“Negative – When it started he threatened to commit suicide and I called the Police”
Case 4*

Miscellaneous:

“Abuser was not his father – he does not see his father” Case 1

3/6 (50%) respondents did not answer this question.

SECTION 7

Significant Events

Any especially significant events over the past 12 months, either positive or negative?

1 Respondent simply answered 'no' to this question. All other responses have been broken down into 2 different themes consisting of positive and negative comments.

Positive significant events 4/6 (67%):

"Positive – I have my life back – I can walk out side without being in fear – and I am no longer worried he will kidnap or harm my son" Case 1

"Positive, he has admitted that he has a problem and needs help. I have made serious decisions on my own that I would of consulted him about." Case 2

"Positive – My daughter is now with me, I moved made new friends. I have realised that I have a brain I left school when 11 years old but in the last 12 months I have passed GCSE Maths & English, CLAIT computer course and Driving School of Computer courses. I did these classes to get me out of the house and away from the abuse, but the result has made me feel wonderful, I still find it hard to believe that I have passed an exam ME yes ME" Case 3

"Loads – attending court when he changed his plea to guilty was positive." Case 4

"I don't know about any significant events. I know that there have been positive changes in my life. I have regained my confidence. I feel as though I am my own person and I feel as though I can confront my husband now." Case 6

Negative significant events 3/6 (50%):

"Negative – I was stalked had a knife held to my throat." Case 1

"Negative – The way it has been handled by the police, about the length of time it has taken." Case 2

"Negative – Abuse was worse before I left. My head has been 'messed up', I left without my daughter my health has been poor." Case 3

SECTION 8

Victim View of Circumstances

Why do you feel you are in this (positive / negative) situation?

Encouragingly all responses appear to be in a positive situation as a result of many different reasons. See below for a list of comments.

“I have a new partner and am happy” Case 1

“I know where I am going, quite positive about it. I know what I want to do about the kids and everything.” Case 2

“I feel neutral, I have made positive changes escaped my husband and no longer have any feelings towards my ex-husband. But I am in temporary housing I need a secure home. Although I am safer now my children and I are carrying the scars of emotional damage. He was found guilty – but released.” Case 3

“Me taking action and calling the Police and now he is not allowed to contact me.” Case 4

“Realising how much better I am without him” Case 5

“I feel as though I am in this positive situation because of the support that both myself and my husband have received. I feel that the dual approach that has been applied is essential” Case 6

Issues around: multi-agency support, getting rid of perp, divorce, counselling etc.

3/6 (50%) respondents stated that they were able to obtain multi-agency support in order to alleviate problems associated with the perpetrator:

“I have a 5 year restraining order against my abusive ex-partner – and he is currently in prison for breaching the order – I will continue to use the law to keep safe” Case 1

“Outreach, Police, Social Services.” Case 2

“Getting rid of perpetrator” Case 5

1/6 (17%) stated that they were able to obtain multi-agency support, but that they could learn more about dealing with domestic violence by talking to other survivors:

“All agencies need to learn from women who have experienced DV as we are the only ones who really know what it is like. Need more help for young people who behave badly because of what they have experienced.” Case 3

2/6 (33%) Respondents did not answer this question.

LEVELS OF SUPPORT

Which agencies have you had contact with?

All respondents have had contact with various agencies. See below for a list:

“Women’s Aid, (IDVA), DVO, Police, Housing Benefits, GP / Hospital, Solicitor, Victim Support & Court Person (SDVC IDVA)” Case 1

“L.” (Name of agency representative) Case 2

“Women’s Aid IDVA, Court IDVA, Housing, GP, CYPS, Police, Solicitor, DVO & Housing Officer from Housing Association I moved from.” Case 3

“Women’s Aid” Case 4

“Women’s Aid, Police, Victim Support.” Case 5

“I have had contact with the Police, Health Service and Women’s Aid. Women’s Aid has offered my most support. The nurses and physiotherapist and RD&E have also been very good.” Case 6

Which agency do you feel has offered you the most support?

4/6 (67%) The vast majority of respondents stated that agencies who have a direct impact upon domestic violence issues had provided them with the most support:

“IDVA and DVO” Case 1

“Women’s Aid – without a doubt.” Case 3

“Women’s Aid” Case 4

“Women’s Aid” Case 5

2/6 (33%) respondents did not answer this question.

Can you think of any support / information that you needed but did not receive?

e.g. welfare / benefit / housing advice

1 respondent simply answered ‘no’ to this question. The remaining answers have been broken down into different themes.

2/6 (33%) Respondents stated that they needed more information regarding CJS and courses:

“Updates re CJS and what was happening” Case 4

“I feel as though the information about REPAIR was not easily sourced. Our GP came back after 6 weeks of asking with the leaflet and the Nurse at RD&E struggled to get it. (IDVA records show that conversations regarding Pattern Changing and Repair had taken place between them)” Case 6

1/6 (17%) would have liked more support with their family:

“Help with my daughter.” Case 3

1/6 (17%) stated that they did not need any support or information, but would have liked more contact with their agency:

“No – it would have been good if Women’s Aid could have called me more.” Case 5

1/6 (17%) respondent did not answer this question.

Do you feel adequately supported / protected?

Half of the cases stated that they felt adequately supported and protected and simply answered ‘yes’ to this question. The remaining responses are listed below

“I do feel adequately supported and protected.” Case 6

2/6 (33%) stated that still worry about feeling supported and protected:

“Not sure still worry about the future.” Case 3

“Yes, sometimes the Police don’t keep me informed. I didn’t hear when he was released.” Case 5

What do you think about the levels of support you received after your case was heard at court?

2/6 (33%) Only 2 respondents were happy with the level of support that they received after their case was heard at court:

“Happy with my support” Case 1

“Enough – I had the injunction from court” Case 4

2/6 (33%) respondents were unhappy with the levels of support received after they had their case heard at court, due to the outcome and also with not being kept fully informed:

“I was forced to move after the court case because although my ex-husband was found guilty he was only charged with a fraction of what he had done. I had been too afraid to report most incidents. He was immediately released after sentencing because of the length of time he had spent on remand. This was all explained to me, and I was helped to move but it still feels wrong he is free.” Case 3

“As above. Not brilliantly informed of results.” Case 5

2/6 (33%) were unable to comment on this due to their cases either having not yet gone through the court process, or that their case had not been heard:

“Still going through the court process, the only person I have spoken to is ‘L’. You phoned me and told me about court.” Case 2

“Case was not heard. NFA” Case 6

Can you think of any support / information that you needed but did not receive?

e.g. welfare / benefit / housing advice

2/6 (33%) Respondents stated that they could not think of any support / information that they had needed.

1/6 (17%) stated that they would have liked to have received more support / information for their family, but that they did not receive this:

“Help for my daughter.” Case 3

3/6 (50%) did not respond to this question.

Do you feel adequately supported / protected?

1 respondent, answered ‘yes’ to this question.

2/6 (33%) stated that they did not feel adequately supported/protected due to the Police taking a long time to arrest the perpetrator:

“It took quite a long time for the police to find and arrest my ex- when he breached the injunction – not so long when he breached the restraining order – these orders are good but only if the man can be found and arrested” Case 1

“When he breached bail cons, Police took ages arresting him they said that they had difficulty finding him. He was eventually arrested at work I felt very vulnerable while the Police were looking for him. When he was on remand I felt very safe given the history of violence I was surprised that he was not remanded in the first place.”
Case 3

3/6 (50%) respondents did not answer this question.

SECTION 9

Open Feedback

Can you think of any changes you would like to see to improve the experience of women who have suffered domestic violence?

All respondents suggested that there are a number of improvements that could be made. See below for a list of comments and recommendations:

“No changes – it is good that women get contacted when they are at very high risk – if it had been left to me to ask for help I would not have been able to – I was unable to do anything for my self back then I was too scared and confused” Case 1

“Time is so important, it has to be fresh. If you look at the bruise then you want to go to court. When the police came round and took photo’s, I wanted a copy because I could look at it and know what ‘M’ has done because a month down the line, the bruise has healed and its not so frightening.” Case 2

“I would have liked a voice at court to tell everyone, including him how awful the abuse had been – how it has been for me and the children. I want to be heard the court process does not tell it like it is. Listen to women who have experienced domestic abuse – and use their experiences in training people at the courts.” Case 3

“Not really. I have had enough support.” Case 4

“Better communication – more contact with Women’s Aid worker” Case 5

“Yes, I can think of changes. I am really worried about ongoing support when me and my husband have finished the programmes that we are on. I am worried that my husband won’t receive more support and what could happen then. I think that all professionals should be given more training on domestic violence. If my husband’s GP had, then he may have been able to help us sooner. Also the first police officer that I came into contact with may not have treated me in that manner if he had understood the dynamics of domestic violence. Even the health care professionals, although they were great, did not have knowledge of the services that were available to us. I also think that Women’s Aid may have to think about when and how they get into contact with victims. I have only just remembered that A got in contact with me and that is because of what I was going through at that time. I defiantly was not reading letters I was receiving. Maybe phone calls would be better. I know that the critical period for me in seeking and accepting support was about 2 months after the incident, although I realise that this may be different for everyone. I also would have liked more information and updates about MARAC as I would have felt better at the time knowing that I was being monitored.” Case 6