



Vanessa's Story

Vanessa was in an abusive relationship with her now ex-partner. She has four children who were removed from her care because of this violence. Vanessa went to court and won back custody of her children. Following this, she moved to Adelaide to be near her former partner's ex-wife and daughter for support. Following some misdirected allegations Vanessa's children were removed from her care again. At that time Vanessa was receiving support from a disability advocacy service and one of their workers tried to help Vanessa to sort out this issue, but Vanessa's children are still in care. Since this time Vanessa has completed numerous courses and attended counselling in an attempt to win back custody of her children. Vanessa's advocate told us that her chances of her regaining custody are not good.

Vanessa has lost the support of her family and is very isolated. Vanessa's current living arrangements are volatile. She says there are a lot of break-ins, drugs, yelling, screaming and fighting. Vanessa does not feel safe in her home. She had spoken with the police on the morning of the day we interviewed her.

About feeling safe Vanessa said:

Where do you think you could feel safe and secure?

Vanessa: Close to my kids.

About losing the support of her family Vanessa said:

...so what I should have done is went from [small town] to up here instead of going to another violent family, which I did the opposite to my family. I should have listened to my family and came this way, but I went that way.

...instead of going straight to Adelaide and got my kids taken off me and then I won the court case down there, I should have just come straight up here, went to Housing Commission and say, "Hey, I got four kids and myself. Can you find somewhere for us to stay?" But you never know. And then we went to my auntie's that lived in [small town] because she was caring for them and then she couldn't care for them anymore so she put them in foster care. Now I'm trying to fight for them back.

Well most of my family weren't much supportive, but they were happy that I left him, because they didn't like him. But then as soon as they found out the paperwork about the allegations and the DV, they just stopped supporting me.

Oh yeah, my sister. When I moved up here, my sister up from me, she is only three years older than me. She turned on me. The first thing she helped me put my forms in for Housing Commission and stuff like that and then she found the paper about the allegations and then she turned on stuff and me like that. So I told her to get fucked and then - I see her now and then with the kids, but that is about it. Now she doesn't talk to me.

About what is important Vanessa said:

Most important is just get the kids back.

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