

My question is actually to you, Brianna, it was just in Section 5 of your submission you talk about ADVOs and that potentially there is an opportunity for training on coercive control could assist in terms of how we address issues with ADVOs and you have experienced some issues with ADVOs as it is. So just hoping you might expand on that a little bit please? That was breaking up, was it?

If police and other first responders received adequate training on coercive control, it is more likely that the correct offender would be identified, and the correct victim would be protected. Training on coercive control would help first responders understand the patterns, dynamics and complexities of domestic violence, the fact that domestic violence is not just physical abuse, and that most domestic violence is committed by men against women.¹

At Lou's, we have noticed an increase in police granting ADVOs for the protection of perpetrators and against primary victims. Sometimes, this is in response to chargeable offences committed by the victim. More often, it is due to perpetrators manipulating situations and police officers to make the victim appear 'crazy' or 'criminal'. As stated elsewhere in my submission, people who have experienced abuse for long periods often do not appear believable or credible to authorities. Further, perpetrators are master manipulators, often able to convince everyone around them of their version of events.

The increase in ADVOs protecting perpetrators may also be due to police policy. We have received anecdotal evidence from police officers that their policy is to charge the person who commenced the chain of events for that particular incident, without regard to the history and circumstances leading up to the offence. For example, a perpetrator may have been verbally and emotionally aggressive for an extensive period, the victim then breaks down due to the ongoing verbal abuse and throws the perpetrators phone. The perpetrator retaliates by hitting victim on the torso. In this chain of events, according to this purported police policy, the primary victim would be charged for property damage – the first chargeable offence for this series of incidents. This is because verbal and emotional abuse is not currently a chargeable offence under the law.

As a result, training on coercive control as well as a review of the way police charge and view offences in light of coercive control, would assist in addressing some of the shortcomings of ADVOs. Other shortcomings, such as the fact that ADVOs are a civil document until breached, would not be remedied by such training.

¹ Michael Flood, *Where Men Stand: Men's roles in ending violence against women*, 2010 9.