

no more silence

George Rolph Vice Chairman of Men's Aid.

I am a 49 year old, white male, born in London.

As a child I was brought up in an abusive home. My stepmother was a gambler and when she lost money she would tell my father that myself or my sister had stolen money from her purse. Dad would beat us until we screamed and then beat us until we stopped. My step mother would join in the beatings hitting us with pokers, sticks, a belt, shoes or anything that came to hand. She would rub my face in the urine soaked sheets in the mornings and call me a dirty little b***** for wetting the bed. Punishment for being suspected of telling lies was a tablespoon full of English Mustard rammed into the mouth. We were then locked in our bedrooms so we could not drink any water and cool our burning throats. For my sister and I, this was everyday life. There was no such thing as "Child Line" in those days and child abuse was called discipline.

Out of control by the time I was 13 years old, I started a long criminal career. I was a very angry young man that hated adults. Approved schools were followed by borstals and prison. In the time when I was out of an institution I managed to get addicted to drugs and nearly died. I just wanted to block out the pain. In reality, the drugs just added another kind of pain.

During my final stay in prison I became a Christian and my life radically altered. Crime, drugs, fighting, hating, fear and the feeling that I did not belong, all slowly dissolved away.

I met my first adult female abuser after appealing for a partner on a radio dating show. She hit me with a piece of wood and split my head open, punched me between the legs while driving down the motorway at 70 miles an hour, threatened me with a knife on two occasions, destroyed my property and finally took my new born son out of the country to New Zealand without my knowledge. When I called the police the desk sergeant said, "What did you do to her to make her behave like that?" I was stunned and just put the phone down. I searched everywhere for help trying to get justice and get my son back, but I soon found that no-one cared. Had a man took a baby out of the country Interpol would have hunted him down. A female abuser, it seemed, could do whatever she wished.

By sheer chance I met my next partner one bright sunny day and was stricken almost straight away. She opened the front door to my knock and I saw what I thought was a vision of beauty. She invited me in for tea and a chat and slowly we got closer and closer. Within four months we were going steady. She was always kind, gentle, warm, and loving. Then she asked me to marry her. I was deeply in love by now and saying yes was easy.

Then the abuse began.

I remember sitting on the couch in the living room. She was leaning over me, her face inches from mine. Her spit was slamming into my face as she screamed a tirade of insults, threats, put downs and filthy language into my face. With every move of her hands I flinched, expecting a punch at any moment. My mind was reeling with confusion. This scene was repeated at least twice a week for months. By the time I had been through a