

“Becoming Better Helpers”

Following are two different descriptions of the same case. The first removes context, conceals victim responses and resistance, and obscures the nature of the violence. The second is more accurate and complete. The examples are taken from a New Zealand article on analysis of death review reports, which used response-based analysis: Wilson, D. Smith, R., Tolmie, J. & de Haan, I. (2015). Becoming Better Helpers: rethinking language to move beyond simplistic responses to women experiencing intimate partner violence. *Policy Quarterly, Volume 11(1)*.

Description 1

Rachel and Tim have a volatile relationship, which is characterised by lots of arguing, drinking and fighting. They both get physical. Last night there was a domestic incident and Rachel got hurt. While agencies are aware that Rachel can give as good as she can get, she is failing to protect her children from witnessing violence in their home.

Rachel needs to leave Tim and stop drinking, so her kids can have a stable home environment that is violence free. Lots of agencies have been involved but Rachel keeps choosing to stay with Tim and continue drinking, rather than make the changes needed for her kids. Rachel needs to put her children needs over hers and her partner's.

Description 2

Tim has a history known to multiple agencies of using coercive controlling behaviours towards Rachel, as well as his previous partners. Rachel and Tim have been in a relationship for ten years. Tim is 15 years older than Rachel; they met when Rachel was 16 and a young mother of her first child, Jason, who was conceived as the result of rape. Rachel has had two children, both daughters, with Tim.

Tim has strangled Rachel before to the point that she has lost consciousness, and he has threatened to kill her if she leaves him. Rachel's use of alcohol has increased over the years as a way of numbing and blocking out the abuse. Both her parents were alcohol-dependent. Rachel violently resists Tim's abuse. She has armed herself with a knife to try and stop him assaulting her.

Last night Tim was verbally abusing and threatening to beat Jason for truanting from school. Rachel grabbed a broom and stood in front of Jason; she threatened to hit Tim with the broom if he approached them. Tim grabbed a bottle of wine and smashed it onto Rachel's head, causing her to fall to the ground. Tim then kicked Rachel repeatedly in her back and head. Jason was screaming and ran to his mother's aid.

A neighbour heard Jason screaming and called the police. This is an opportunity for the police to intervene and put in place a plan to curtail Tim's ability to continue abusing his partner and three children.

Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Location/Phase: Parts 213 Winnipeg

Witness: Allan Wade

Submitted by: Jennifer Cox

Add'l info: P0203 P03 P0501

Date: OCT 05 2018

Initials

I/D

Entered

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