

In Their Own Words

"I want to stress how terribly important the role was that my friends and coworkers played. True, I got support from the counselors at the abused women's shelter. But it had even more impact on me when other people in my life gave me the same messages: that there was no excuse for my ex-husband's behavior-not our financial situation, nor being unhappy at school, NOTHING gave him cause to hit me. I never thought I would enjoy life as much as I do now, unhindered by the constant threat of violence."

-Karen

"I wanted someone to ask me about the abuse. I couldn't ask for help. I was ashamed."

-Julie

"I remember the first coworker who asked me if my fat lip was caused by my ex-husband. He may have felt that it didn't do any good, or that he was wrong to ask. But by asking that question, he planted a seed in my mind that what was happening to me wasn't right."

-Karen

"After getting help from my supervisor, I worked so hard. I think I gave back as much as I could to her. The fact that they had been there for me through the rough stuff gave me a sense of commitment to the work. If you just stick it out, what a loyal employee you get in the end."

-an abuse survivor

"My coworker screened my calls when my ex-husband was harassing me. She volunteered to change her shift so that I could go to a support group, and was always there for me if I just needed to talk. The support I got at work made the whole process so much easier for me."

-Monica

"If someone had given me one of those little cards with the phone numbers on it, I don't know. Maybe I would have called. I was so isolated, any friendship would have given me a little strength."

-Karen