

“Forgive me for not leaving your father earlier”



Susie, aged 36, was physically abused by her husband for 18 years. Her 16-year-old daughter, Lisa, had always wanted her mother to leave her father hoping to help end the inhumane abuse; unfortunately to no avail. Not being able to cope with the long-standing tension between her parents, Lisa decided to leave her home in February 2013 and stayed at a Children’s Home. Since then, Susie has lost contact with Lisa. Following continued pressure from mental and physical suffering, Susie decided to seek help from Pusat

Perkhidmatan Wanita (PPW) as she was very worried and concerned about Lisa. Susie revealed that Lisa used to love and care about her very much. She vividly remembered how Lisa had taken care of her when she had undergone an operation and needed special care two years ago. The sudden departure of Lisa without further contact was indeed greatly upsetting to her. She hoped to be able to at least hear from Lisa again. She wanted Lisa’s forgiveness for not heeding the advice to leave her husband over the long-lasting period of abuse.

PPW staff was able to locate Lisa at the Home and convinced her to talk to her mother. On the phone, Susie told her that she had left the husband and sought Lisa’s forgiveness. Lisa asked Susie not to contact her as she had to prepare for the impending PMR examinations. Lisa said that she would talk to Susie again only after the PMR examinations. Susie calmly accepted her request. She also felt that Lisa seemed to have changed considerably after staying in the Home and she was less emotional and more matured than she was in the past.

Reflection of Counselor: When staying in an environment filled with abuse and conflicts, children will be put under great pressure and their physical and mental health conditions severely affected. It is important for parents to be aware and be sensitive to the needs of their children. In fact, Lisa never told her mother about her experience of being sexually abused by her father when she was nine. As she felt Susie had no idea as to how she could be protected. Lisa eventually had no choice but to leave home to find support on her own in view of Susie’s inability to help her nor leave her husband.

Susie and Lisa are just among one of the many victims who has gone through difficult times of domestic violence. When a wife faces abuse by a violent husband, too often she would tolerate the suffering with fear of the negative impact a broken family has on the children. However, the case of Susie and Lisa has clearly shown that such tolerance and the decision to maintain a family may not necessarily be a good one. Had Susie made a quick, early decision to leave her husband and to protect Lisa from an unpleasant environment, and instead sought help, both Susie and Lisa’s life would have been different.

**Both names are fictitious for confidentiality of the clients.*