

Hello.

My name is Sara, and I am a mother of two young children.

Their Father and myself ended our 8 year relationship, approximately 4 years ago. Throughout the majority of our relationship I endured mental and emotional, physical, financial and sexual abuse.

For years I feared leaving due to safety and financial reasons. My ex partner changed the locks on our home, after I left with a few bags of belongings. I soon understood why my fears were indeed valid. Legally, half of everything was mine. But without money to afford a lawyer to argue within a court system, this simply couldn't happen. This is a major flaw in our justice system and protection for those who wish to leave their abuser.

I am now involved in the family court system within the Ontario Court of Justice. I hoped the horror stories I'd heard were few and far between, but my personal experiences have shown me otherwise.

I have now met two Judges who stated that my ex partners 13 pending criminal charges (sexual assault, assault, breaches of protection orders and obstruction of justice), and violence toward myself in the presence of our children, "do not indicate what kind of parent he is". Despite proof that his girlfriend accused him of also physically assaulting her within the last year and his own admission to having been a drug addict, he was allowed unsupervised visits with our children. Despite not receiving child support, having a medically fragile child who has additional expenses for which I receive no help from their Dad for, I have been ordered to drive my children for their now three times a week visits with their father (a 35 minute drive each way). I've asked for safeguards for myself and presented the issue that their father has been breaching his no contact order yet again, by getting increasingly closer and closer during exchanges, despite there being a 3rd party there to exchange the children.

Clearly our Family Court Judges require immediate education on matters concerning abusive and violent relationships. My experience has been shocking and sickening.

Thank you for your time.

Sara