

Submission 145

I worked in many different work places everyone impacted me socially, mentally and physically with abuse and sexual harassment. I grew up believing this was the "Norm" and due to this have had an abusive life. My mother told me when I was young when I came to her for help at the age of 9 being sexually abused by a boy down the road it was my fault or its just playing doctors or nurses it means nothing.

My first job was great I was 13 years old and worked [REDACTED] with a wonderful female boss and all female staff so had little problem except the normal work politics.

When I was 18 I tried to get an apprenticeship with the [REDACTED] as a Sparky and was treated from the beginning as an outsider and my testing was twice as hard as the boys! I knew all the [REDACTED] names, [REDACTED] dialogue etc but was not clear on the name of all the tools but did know what they were for, I failed to get entry [REDACTED] even though I passed all the tests and this was never explained to me, my friends got in (male) and they knew so much less than I did no one could understand I believe it was because I was a female as it was clear from the beginning they didn't want me in their.

I then tried to get apprenticeships in panel beating shops and mechanics but no one would take me on. I worked many times as a TA but was always isolated from the other workmates with lude jokes and the crib rooms filled with pictures of naked women and including pictures from XXX rated and degrading pictures with animals. After a few years I gave up and was given the opportunity from [REDACTED] to work as a TA on a mine site in [REDACTED] 1990. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I worked with the Boiler Maker, Plumber, Carpenters and Mechanical Engineers. I was given no training and sent to do the most demeaning jobs that were high risk. I was lowered by abseiling down silos to weld patches on the walls, checked pumps and motors, installed air conditioners, made aluminium conduit, replace ovens and did electrical work the plumber and boiler maker were fantastic and I learnt a lot and they were respectful. The Mechanical Engineers were PIGS. I suffered physical sexual attacks in the sheds, physical abuse at the Single Mans Quarters, I was put in dangerous situations at work, being dropped by a Height as a joke on the abseil while welding, asked to clean a lime mill for over 8 hours with a nail gun, sent to clean Hydrochloric acid screens with not protection and work in rooves with asbestos I was also lowered into the crusher without protection and asked to crawl into small spaces under the crusher when suspended on portable Power Packs which was extremely unsafe which i didnt know at the time until an engineer came up from [REDACTED] and saw what i was doing and told management they shouldnt make me do that but they continued.

I finally went to management to complain about my treatment. I was hard working an no one could dispute I wasn't a good worker. When I approached management and

the union they told me I was the only girl on the site and they didn't care and I could do nothing about it. I stated to the management the simple task of going to the toilet was impossible because you made me go 3 km down the road to a station house and wouldn't let me use the toilets on site. I told him how I had been raped on one of the 24 hour shifts and they stated prove it. No one cared I was young and made to blame myself for all that went on after 8 months I quit as I could not survive under this abuse.

After a few other failed attempts to work in a male dominant trades I retrained myself in office work and got contracts in the Government [REDACTED]. This was no better than working on the mines. Men who were usually my managers made me feel uncomfortable with comments and physical touching. When i started work in [REDACTED] there was one man [REDACTED] who would touch my breasts as a "Joke" had pictures of "De Fleur" which he informed me represent womens vaginas. I remember him pressing up against me in the hallway in front of two police officers [REDACTED] and the shocked look on their faces but they said and did nothing. I have self esteem issues i never saw myself as pretty and always fat however reality is i probably was not ugly nor that over weight at the time. I moved on from this job after 4 years to work for [REDACTED]. Again i was faced with a man that didnt like me but hated me, the rest of the staff were fine except for [REDACTED] who would make sure he had lude photos of women on his computer when i had to drop off paperwork and would make suggestions all the time, like i said i was not the prettiest girl i couldnt understand why men would speak to me like this, they even seemed to think i should appreciate this kind of attention.

I became pregnant while working in [REDACTED] and my contract was ended because of this in 1999. I was unaware they should have put me on maternity leave not end my contract and as i had almost worked there for a year i was also up for a permanent position which i didnt know. With the ending of my contract and being so sick with the pregnancy i had to get another contract (part time quick) so not to lose my super, long service leave etc. I worked a number of contract jobs and faced the same chauvinistic men in all my roles. I was working for the police in 2001 after the birth of my child and they told me i should be home in the kitchen bare foot and pregnant not going to work. The then [REDACTED] and a couple of other higher ranking officers sent me emails of people having sex one had a baby watching his parents performing oral sex. I reported this to the [REDACTED] Equal opportunity and immediately became isolated by management. Nothing was done but a year later someone elses complaint had been made public regarding the lude emails.

I had also reported [REDACTED] and although nothing had happen at the time 3 years after i had left i saw he had been charged with unbecoming acts at work and fraud (which is what he wanted me to do pay for things out of petty cash and i refused). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I seemed to find myself constantly caught up in the middle of bigger issues however nothing i reported or did seemed to assist me in anyway. I lost the opportunity to rise in the ranks due to my resistance to follow instructions blindly if they were illegal or meant overlooking female victimisation. [REDACTED]

At this point in my life [REDACTED] i felt like i had to fight every day to just be able to work as a female.

I then won a contract with the [REDACTED] Department [REDACTED]. I had worked under a few managers but the Worst was [REDACTED]. By this time i had a child (single mother) and overweight and [REDACTED] saw this as worthless. If you were not attractive or showed him favours and accepted his vial leers and suggestive comments you were nothing to him. As i was honest and would follow protocol he saw me as a liability and every minute of the day he tormented me. One day be pulled me aside and told me "I was ugly fat and would go nowhere in this department and the best thing i could do was to leave" . He did so many nasty things to me in the office, he tried to break my moral instinct by offering me a position (someone else he didnt like) so he could push them out, he told me it was the only way i would be able to move up. I went to the other staff member [REDACTED] and told him what he had offered me and said i would not be accepting it, he put in a complaint but nothing was done. After a number of years of him tormenting me i tried to put a complaint in to his management which at the time i was not aware they were in a relationship. He pulled me aside and told me did i really think i would get a complaint through. I applied for other contracts however my substantive position was in his office and i was left knowing i would end up back under his management. When i left my role was made into a [REDACTED] with 3 other people helping. When i returned after a few years he stated that they had changed my job ID and i was not going to go back into that positon and was given another [REDACTED] position it was devastating and [REDACTED] just laughed at me and said what did i think would happen i told you to stay away. He actually had the nerve to say he had advertised my position and due to my morals he didnt feel it was right for him to tell me that as it would give me an unfair advantage and you wouldnt want that. my job had been advertised for one week I had no way of knowing he had done this because he had raised it to a [REDACTED] and that is why i could go back to it as he had given it to one of the young trainees i had taught (male) who had no clue how to meet the jobs requirements due to lack of experience so most of the work was given to another lady [REDACTED] hated. One of my roles out of this office was working in [REDACTED] which dealt with insurance cases and complaints i was the PA [REDACTED]. I was shocked when i looked at my file

as all complaints regarding [REDACTED] were not on the file I then looked at other files i knew had put complaints in and they too had no records. [REDACTED]

I did a number of contracts and ended back years later in my role in the Department [REDACTED] where [REDACTED] had been manager, there was a scandal and i think he knew he couldnt get out of this one so took a management role at [REDACTED] (god help anyone working there). I then confronted the new management and said why hadnt they helped me with [REDACTED] and they said they knew they would lose their way of moving up if they had tried to support me.

I fell pregnant again and took leave when i came back to work it was [REDACTED] years later due to being sick, my house being destroyed in a storm, my mother getting cancer and dying and my son having a disability not diagnosed at that time. I was still single with two children both had disabilities and i went back to work part time. It was difficult my work place had shifted and i now had to travel by car as there was no trains or buses over 130km a day and pay for parking. I had no support and my youngest was at daycare and kindy and my daughter would catch a bus home or stay with my friend at work after school. My workplace refused to assist or meet any requests i made to make my workplace more family friendly they even isolated me when i asked not to be put on early and late phone rosters due to not being about to get back to my children in time at daycare or drop off for school. I worked 6 days a fortnight and nothing was done to make my role as a mother easy in anyway. I was a [REDACTED] and trained all the staff and did all the projects due to my extensive knowledge in the Department i was working at a level much higher than a [REDACTED] i asked for this to be reviewed but they wouldnt do i told them i would limit my work load to [REDACTED] only until this was resolved which included no more training staff. Management was very unhappy with me however I felt i was being looked over for younger staff i was training there was a real biases to single mothers. I took my resolve with a number of other older staff being treated like myself over looked for promotion as we didnt socialise due to our children i could not go out on a friday and get drunk with them. I remember years ago the Social Club in the Government was about families, picnics and Father Christmas party for our kids, but from 2000 onwards it seemed to change to be booze ups for the younger generation and brown nosing.

My son [REDACTED] in Kindy had a break down [REDACTED] [REDACTED] i was called away from work on many occasions for [REDACTED] months due to the Schools inability to care for my son. It was distressing to my son and myself and i asked for support from the [REDACTED] Dept [REDACTED] however i was told it would be best to leave if i was going to be called away from work. I have been discriminated by men and women over the years due to my gender, looks, age, weight and my inability to

go to outside Social Functions due to my family commitments i am now a fulltime carer to my son however would love to work again but have so many emotional shackles because of my experiences.

I wish in the future there is ultimately a better culture in the work place and that legitimate family commitments, gender bias and female characteristics/traits are looked upon sympathetically not as a negative or making them a target to Managers and work colleagues but as a necessity for all parents and women to function and be positive role models to their children.