

diHARD Series 1 Ep 5 PODCAST ABUSE

[CJ] (0:00 - 0:18)

We at diHARD acknowledge the traditional owners of the land from which we broadcast, the Yalukit-Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to elders past, present, and emerging, and Aboriginal people who are listening, as well as all Indigenous peoples who may be listening from other nations. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:24 - 0:25)

What a day.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:25 - 0:29)

You just can't ask me your questions. You wouldn't hurt a guy in a wheelchair. Not that question.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:29 - 0:42)

But I would hurt a guy with his wheelchair. But you're black-ish. Ish?

They're just people, James. They're just people exactly like us. Oh, you's a guy.

No, I just don't identify as male or female. Not a girl.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:42 - 0:52)

I'm not a girl. What about that, are you still not getting exactly? Well, obviously the core concept.

Hey, you want straight answers? Ask a straight lady. By the way, everyone here thinks I'm Taiwanese.

I'm Filipino.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:53 - 0:54)

That's actually racist, Orlaf.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:54 - 0:56)

Your dad left your mom for another dude.

[GRAB VOICE] (0:56 - 1:05)

I am not a homo, homopebic. Have you been checked for ADHD? I've had several STDs, which were probably caused by ADHD.

[GRAB VOICE] (1:05 - 1:11)

Imagine shutting up. Thoughts? Fasten your seat belts.

It's going to be a bumpy night.

[GRANT] (1:12 - 1:15)

You're listening to diHARD. Diversity.

[CJ] (1:15 - 1:17)

And inclusion. The hard topics.

[GRAB VOICE] (1:17 - 1:18)

Shut up, it's starting.

[GRANT] (1:19 - 1:28)

Good evening, everyone, and welcome back to diHARD. Diversity and inclusion. The hard topics.

I'm your host, along with CJ.

[CJ] (1:28 - 1:33)

Good evening, everyone. Today we have a particularly hard topic. We are going so hard tonight.

[GRANT] (1:34 - 1:53)

Oh, yeah. So content warning for people. We are talking about abuse this evening.

So if you're not in the place to listen to this while this is live on air, maybe take a break from this episode and catch it on our podcast when it goes up in a couple of weeks' time.

[CJ] (1:53 - 2:25)

Yeah, and the great thing about a podcast is you can run it at your own pace. You can take breaks. You can call for support.

So you can even listen to the first 10 minutes and then go back in three months and listen to more. So or not listen to it at all if it's too triggering for you. So that's all cool.

And yeah, we're just here to support everyone. And you can also jump on the JOY website if you need more support. It's joy.org.au/support. And there is a list of supports there. And we'll talk about a couple of extra ones at the end of the show, too.

[GRANT] (2:25 - 3:40)

Yes, we do have a special guest with us, Louise. We're also going to be learning a bit more about CJ's background and experiences as well. So among all the other things we already know about CJ, she is also a child abuse and domestic abuse survivor.

CJ is the founder of Ethikink, providing resources and education, both to and about the sex and kink positive communities, including kink first aid and sex worker first aid workshops and courses. CJ's courses not only cover the physical hands-on aspects of first aid in these settings, but also highlight the importance of mental health first aid for ourselves and those who work with or play with us. One of CJ's other passions was creating her business RealMAAC, which aims to provide education to emergency services and community support programs about the sex positive, kink positive, domestic violence and rainbow communities in order to provide a safe place for people to reach out for the provision of services and support and assistance with a genuine understanding.

CJ, you've done a lot in this area.

[CJ] (3:41 - 4:42)

Yeah, I have done a lot in this area. I did reach out to some of my colleagues in the kink arena, but everyone's pretty flat out this time of year and pretty worn out from the New Year period and Christmas and stuff. So I actually felt that this is something I can really speak to.

It's something I have a huge amount of experience in. So I'll be sort of focusing on perceptions amongst the kink space and perceptions that come from outside of the kink space about what abuse really is and that it can happen in that space, but it's not all abuse, which some people think that because we engage in kink, that's just abusive relationships, but it isn't. And also we have tonight, we're very fortunate to have Louise.

Pronouns are she/her and she's a domestic violence survivor, counsellor, domestic violence advocate and mindset coach. Louise currently works with Orange Door Graduates, runs an online Southeast domestic violence support group and is the founder of Louise Jane Mindset Coach, a holistic service that helps women release their past and rebuild their future with self-worth and confidence. So welcome, Louise, and thank you so much for joining us.

[LOUISE] (4:42 - 4:43)

Thank you.

[CJ] (4:43 - 5:31)

So to kick things off, we're going to talk about what abuse actually is. The Law Handbook of South Australia was the most succinct.

An act of abuse is defined as an act resulting in physical injury, emotional or psychological harm, an unreasonable and non-consensual denial of financial, social or personal autonomy, damage to property in the ownership or possession of the person or used or otherwise enjoyed by the person. And they highlight that often people who are committing abuse are taking advantage of some sort of special relationship. And highlighting this can be personal, but it can also be in the workplace.

People you think are close colleagues and that you get along really well with or people taking advantage of others in the workplace because they know they're particularly compassionate or they're a hard worker. So they will take advantage of those things to an extreme.

[GRAB VOICE] (5:31 - 5:37)

They're overloaded and it's all his fault. So what can we do about it? I'll show you what we can do about it.

[GRANT] (5:37 - 6:05)

But abuse is such a complex topic. There are so many different ways it can conform and it can build up, making it very difficult to both identify but also work through, which is why I think it's such an important topic that we dive into. And I can imagine, especially around this time of year, abuse and Christmas and being able to interact with family members in healthy ways or friends can be challenging because financial abuse is also a thing.

[CJ] (6:05 - 6:44)

Yeah, absolutely. The perceptions that we get from people outside about like, oh, you know, he just yells at you. That's not abuse.

And it's like, but the psychological damage that, that person is suffering and there's yelling and then there's yelling. There's yelling at someone once because you get frustrated and then there's literally been worn down and browbeaten by constantly being barked at, snapped at. It's not always someone raises their voice.

Sometimes it's very subtle and very manipulative and it wears you down. And it's that emotional exhaustion that people take advantage of in these relationships where you just, you end up, you know, picking your battles to a point where you can't fight any battles just about anymore because you just don't have it in you anymore.

[GRANT] (6:45 - 7:16)

And it was interesting. I did some research and particularly looking at LGBTQIA+ communities, especially around their experiences when it comes to violence around intimate partners or family relationships. And approximately 50% had experienced a form of sexual assault and 61% had experienced violence from an intimate partner.

So the rates of abuse are actually really quite high within this community.

[CJ] (7:16 - 7:39)

Huge. And there's also that perception that, for example, women don't perpetrate the violence and it's always men. But, you know, us women can be real tough nuts and real arseholes to be perfectly honest.

It's not gender specific. And it's not just butch women either. You know, you can get some very effeminate, gentle, wonderful people that you meet in the community and think, oh, isn't she lovely?

But what they do at home.

[GRANT] (7:39 - 7:56)

And it's such a difficult thing for people to talk about and share their experience because they may not feel safe about it. Louise, what does abuse mean to you? After talking about the dictionary type definition, what's your experience of abuse?

[LOUISE] (7:56 - 8:53)

Hmm. It's so broad. I think sometimes we forget all the little bits and pieces that make up domestic violence because it's not just one element.

There's so many elements that are thrown in the mix. I think the biggest thing that I've learnt over the last quite a few years when the word domestic violence is getting thrown around is that it does ultimately come down to that feeling of being scared. That fear.

So quite often people throw out domestic violence, financial violence, a whole spectrum of them. But it does come down to fear and fear of being able to leave and be okay with leaving or fear of being able to move money or whatever that looks like. For me, something

that I think people are throwing around a word a little bit too much without understanding it, I would say.

[CJ] (8:54 - 10:04)

For me, I don't use the word domestic violence because particularly in one relationship, I was in a relationship for five years and I actually couldn't leave that relationship. That person left the relationship because I couldn't get out. I wouldn't be here if I'd tried to leave.

I couldn't get away from them. It's not like you pack up your bags and you leave and you can go into witness protection. They had connections where I could be found anywhere I was and I know that for a fact.

I'd seen them do it to others. There was some physical violence and there was sexual assault but that wasn't the predominant thing. It was these subtle things that were said and done and being followed and having my bank accounts tracked and things like that.

That's not violence per se but it is abuse. Sometimes I feel stupid and I've let that go now because you don't see it coming because when they're good at what they do, you don't see it coming. They're very charming and very supportive initially and say all the right things and then you find you're stuck.

One of them I was able to leave and one of them I wasn't. I don't use the term domestic violence because the violence side doesn't ring true to me even though some of it was very violent. The predominant side was just this control and abuse and manipulation that I was enduring all the time.

[GRANT] (10:05 - 10:10)

How do you go about recognising abuse when it's happening if it's so subtle?

[CJ] (10:11 - 10:14)

Sometimes you don't. Sometimes it takes a lot of years.

[LOUISE] (10:15 - 10:48)

You're getting gaslit and manipulated. So back many years ago, you didn't have alternative places to find out what abuse was. It is around us now.

It is talked about. So if you put something on social media saying A, B and C has happened to me, what do you think? People will jump on and give you their honest opinions now whereas we never used to have that.

It wasn't on an ad or realising that it's not a punch to the face every night. It is the psychological, it's the emotional, it's the mental stuff that happens on the side that is way worse.

[GRANT] (10:49 - 10:59)

And that mental aspect and kind of the way it affects you can change your approach to health and wellbeing. It kind of eats away at you, I can imagine.

[LOUISE] (11:00 - 11:02)

A hundred percent, for many years.

[CJ] (11:03 - 11:53)

And also, for a long time after, you get out of the relationship. And particularly if it's physical, okay, they're not beating you anymore or you're not being sexually assaulted. But I remember I looked over my shoulder everywhere I went for 18 months after my relationship ended.

And then one day I sat with myself. Sounds odd. Content warning.

This is a very heavy statement to make, but it was very real. I thought if I'm going to get a bullet in the back of the head, which was a possibility, I'm not going to see it coming. I might hear it go off, but usually with the timing of it all and the speed of sound versus the speed of a bullet, you will hear it almost as it hits you.

So therefore, I thought it's actually pointless living, like this living in fear of something that I'm actually not going to know is about to happen. So I made peace with myself. And yeah, thank God I'm still going.

[SONG] (12:11 - 12:41)

Black Hole Friend by Chymes

[CJ] (13:52 - 14:15)

(14:10) This is diHARD. Diversity and inclusion, the hard topics. And you're with Grant and CJ.

[GRANT] (14:16 - 14:17)

What a day.

[GRAB VOICE] (14:17 - 14:20)

You're just going to ask me your questions. You wouldn't hurt a guy in a wheelchair. Not that question.

[GRANT] (14:21 - 14:33)

One of the things that you touched on there, and this is something that I've heard before, is that quite often, apologies will happen to entice the person to stay. Does that speak to your experience?

[LOUISE] (14:34 - 14:57)

On average, the statistics I know, just with same-sex couples, women leave around seven times before they normally leave on the eighth time. That's on average. So it takes seven big kabooms.

Not necessarily saying all the small sorries in the middle, but those big kabooms on average about seven to eight times for someone to actually leave and make that call.

[GRANT] (14:58 - 15:05)

Why do you think it takes so long for someone to step away from a relationship if that is kind of happening seven, eight times?

[LOUISE] (15:05 - 15:32)

It's the emotional abuse. It gets into your psyche. And it's the same thing after you leave.

It's still in there. It takes a long time to get to a place that you feel comfortable again. Like what CJ was saying before, I've had exact same experience where you're walking around the shopping centre and you're scared that someone, as soon as you see someone from the right or left running towards you, and they're just grabbing something quickly in the supermarket, it just alerts your body.

It starts to live in your body.

[GRANT] (15:32 - 15:35)

How would you go about sifting through that much trauma?

[LOUISE] (15:35 - 16:15)

I think it takes a long time. I mean, I would say I know it takes a long time, but also finding the right support, a new tribe that's going to be around you. Listening to the right things, stop listening to things like, you know, on the news, that's a radio or whatever it is that's negative.

You need to find something, put positive things around you, positive people around you, put affirmations up around your room and work with someone who is like a mindset coach, who can help you let go of the past, so you can start moving towards the future and let go of the anxiety. We definitely don't need to live with anxiety and depression and, you know, this very deep sadness that a lot of us live with.

[CJ] (16:16 - 16:58)

And the PTSD's can be really full on it. One of the things I found super helpful, my mum looked at me and said, for every day you live in fear of them, they still own you and they still run your life. And in my head, I went, right, that's it, I'm done.

I'm not allowing that anymore. I don't care about them anymore. They can go and get fucked, basically.

I'm thrilled that I was raised in a way that I have that sort of personality that I could do it. I know that not everyone can do that. But that thought about someone owning me like an object, that made me angry and it made me angry enough to go, yeah, that's actually true.

I'm actually living the way they want me to live. And that's not a thing. No.

[GRAB VOICE] (16:58 - 17:00)

No. No. No.

No. No.

[GRAB VOICE] (17:00 - 17:00)

No.

[GRAB VOICE] (17:01 - 17:01)

No.

[CJ] (17:01 - 20:55)

It was hard, I'm not saying it was easy because as Louise said the anxiety is definitely still there. I let them sit in my head.

I gave them a place in my head and in my soul, but it's a learned behavior. The somatic response, that body response, the physical response of feeling sick and getting the sweats and wanting to, the fight or flight. That's a sort of natural response we all have, but you can actively fight against that.

I'm not saying it's easy. There was lots of tears and vomit and all sorts of other things at my end. But you get there.

You do get there, but on the point of leaving difficult relationships or abusive relationships, the biggest thing I used to find when I was doing a lot of work in this space with a lot of particularly women in rural communities was that it's not about the leaving. It's about where you have to go and you can leave, packing your bags and going. That's one thing.

People say to me, it's the support on the other side. Everyone expects you to leave. They're like, why don't you just leave him?

But then you are so alone that it is for many people better to be in a bad relationship than to be that alone and just wandering in the great abyss. You effectively dehumanize as you turn into vapor, you become a nothing. And so understanding that we can all sit there and suggest that people should leave their abusive relationships.

Is your house going to be a house they come to? Is your house going to be somewhere where you can go, you can stay with me for at least a month and I will help you get on your feet. I can't promise you more than say a month, but expecting someone to leave and saying you can come stay at my house for a few days, I can honestly tell you that's not enough.

And I'm not saying that people should take on that responsibility if they are not in a position to, but please think about where you can help them to go. What are you actually doing to actively, I say actively support them? What are you doing as a person besides just saying "this is wrong, you should go".

They know what's wrong. That's like telling a person who's morbidly obese, oh, you're overweight. They know, you know, and either they're happy being that way or they're working towards not being that way because they have health issues.

But this is the thing, what are you actually doing to help them? Because now more and more there's not public services available. I was around when they shut the last women's shelter in Bendigo and it was a disaster.

We didn't know, we were putting people up in hotels and services were trying to raise money to put people up in hotels and motels at a great expense because there was nowhere for them to go. And this is something that doesn't get spoken about is not all abusers are actually happy with their behaviour. So yes, there are people that are just, it's their personality and this is how they behave towards others.

But there is a percentage of perpetrators that actually want help with their behavior. They know what they're doing is wrong. They have impulse control issues.

They don't use that as an excuse. They know they actually are very self-deprecating and can be suicidal and self-harming because of their treatment of people in relationships. Because perhaps, for example, this can be generational that this is how they were raised and this is the behavior that they learnt was a normal type of relationship behavior.

But there is a service definitely for perpetrators and the bulk of them are male that will seek out help and get help. And it's not about anger management classes. It's not about that.

It is about, as Louise alluded to before, the psyche of the abuser and not using things like your mental health as an excuse because it's not. Just because you have bipolar doesn't mean you can smash people's stuff and punch them in the head or yell at them. That's you needing to get help with your mental health.

But it's really challenging nowadays because public mental health services basically don't exist. You know, all these courses and things, they cost a lot of money and a lot of people don't have that. Or, you know, they're only running nine to five, so you've got to get help during the work day.

Well, how do people support themselves? Yeah, I definitely think Rainbow Door is definitely the place to start, particularly for queer people.

[LOUISE] (20:56 - 21:06)

The other place I would say is Googling Ask Izzy because that will find you locations of services close to you.

[CJ] (21:06 - 21:07)

So how do you spell Izzy?

[LOUISE] (21:07 - 21:09)

I. double Z. Y (IZZY)

[CJ] (21:10 - 21:11)

Cool. That's really helpful.

[LOUISE] (21:11 - 21:19)

That one's a really good one.

And then I would just say calling 1800RESPECT (1800737732). They're the best on the phone. If you're having a moment, go for a walk and call them.

[CJ] (21:20 - 21:52)

And the other thing is that if you go onto any of these websites, a lot of people don't access these things because they're worried their partner will find out. If someone walks in the room, there's an emergency exit, whether you hit the escape key or there's actually a

button and it's on every screen. It stays on the screen the whole time and it takes you to like random Google search.

And it doesn't save in the history, as far as I'm aware. I would definitely recommend you cross-check that on your computer, but it has an emergency exit off those websites. So they're there to protect the people using them.

[GRANT] (21:52 - 22:10)

I can imagine places like public libraries as well where there's computers available would be an untrackable version that would be harder for an abuser or partner to see what sites are being explored and things like that if monitoring is part of the abuse that's happening.

[CJ] (22:10 - 22:28)

Yeah, unfortunately though now we have, particularly iPhones, have trackers on them. So it's very difficult for some people because it's like, why were you at the library even? You know, that's an unusual place for them to go.

So yeah, I try to give people things in their own homes because, yeah, people track other people.

[LOUISE] (22:29 - 22:52)

Something I used a lot before I left, I used my friend's phone. And not just to look things up or have that broader conversation. I made a fake email address and sent all documents like my passport, photos, bits and pieces like that were sent to this email.

And when it was time for me to leave, I had everything sitting there ready to go.

[GRANT] (22:53 - 23:14)

We are, of course, talking abuse and we'll be talking more about the topic of rape after the break. So just content warning. And if you don't want to be listening to this, switch off the radio or come back to it at a podcast at a later date and join us after the break as we dive into this topic further.

[SONG] (23:39 – 27:35)

Love The Way You Lie by Eminem and Rhianna

END SONG (27:36)

GRAB VOICE

(27:37) Do do do do doo do do do do do da

There just people James, they're just people exactly like us.

[CJ] (27:43 - 28:30)

Welcome back and you are listening to diHARD, Diversity and Inclusion, The Hard Topics on JOY and today we're talking about abuse and we're just now gonna switch over a little bit to talk specifically about abuse towards men. (28:01) So not just men perpetrating abuse

towards women or men perpetrating abuse towards men but men as the victims of and survivors of domestic abuse or abuse and violence.

So Grant, I'm just wondering if you have any opinions or anything you'd like to share on the topic because I think it's really important We've had a couple of female identifying voices in the room but our community is extremely diverse So we need to be really hearing from everyone on this

[GRANT] (28:31 - 30:57)

Mmm, I think kind of it was touched on earlier about the idea about the psychological factor of abuse because when I was doing research around this I was looking up distinct forms of violence and abuse within the queer community and there were a couple of things in there that really stood out to me It talked about topics around pressuring a person to conform to gender norms or stop them from accessing gender-affirming care Exiling a person from a family due to their sexuality is also a form of abuse and one of the things that popped up there as well was forcing someone to either undergo medical treatments to fix or control either their disability or their gender and of course grouped in there is conversion therapy which kind of hit me over the head like a book because as I shared in a previous episode I'm a survivor of conversion therapy and it wasn't really until reading through some of this and exploring the topic of abuse that I realized how abusive that series of programs and correctional therapies actually were Conversion therapy, I'm so glad it's outlawed in basically across Australia now I was basically told I was worthless I was hopeless I was choosing to live the way I did It was that they actually told me that I had suppressed memories of being raped or abused by a family member and for ages I kind of didn't really consider that to be abuse because it didn't happen but over the years kind of because of the way it's presented to you I was always second-guessing it and I found that disrespectful to me and my experiences and why I kind of came out but I also found it was disrespectful for other people who actually had been perpetrated by rape Abuse can affect a wide range of people and it can happen in ways that we don't really anticipate or really acknowledge at that time and yeah, we are joined by Silent Jack who actually has some not-so-silent things around this topic as well

[CJ] (30:57 - 31:18)

And this is really important I've got a flag because Silent Jack doesn't ever speak on our show ever ever Silent Jack does all our production and editing and is quite happy in his role there so the fact that he wants to speak out he was waving us down before and sort of saying I have something to say this is huge so yeah

[SILENT JACK] (31:19 - 32:47)

So listening to Louise talk before about abuse and rape is generally perceived in society as a male issue and as in males being the perpetrators and statistically, yep, absolutely, she is correct but I am the survivor of rape and it was a female that did it to me and yeah, it's, it's difficult to talk about now because I remember talking about it before and people would look at me and go well, you're the male, you know why didn't you just do something about it like punch her it's like well, firstly violence is your first response to me being raped but also the thing for me is it looked so different to how rape is used in a storytelling form when we tell stories in the media so films and television where it's this physical violent act and the rape for me was mental I couldn't move and it was only after it happened that I realized I

didn't consent to that and I did actually say something but that was ignored and this happened many years ago but it's difficult to talk about now because of the conflicts that still go on in my mind between what a rape should look like and what it ended up looking like for me and I imagine that's something you've come across before

[LOUISE] (32:47 - 33:31)

Definitely, so many times and how many times we have had someone in our bedrooms or in our house and we do something that we are not wanting to do to just move through the next stage "alright, if we have to do it now then come on, let's get it over and done with then you can leave because I've said to you no ten times already" and because you're not getting beaten physically it's this emotional toll that kind of grips your body and it's later that you're going that was so inappropriate it was all these other things that are now in my psyche because something really big without consent just happened

[GRAB VOICE]

Ooh son of a... That's gonna leave a mark

[SILENT JACK] (33:36 - 34:00)

So how do we get through it? the thing that got me through it was time and there were people that I could talk to about it thankfully my wife is one of them because I don't know where I would be at this point in my life having so many years on if I wasn't able to unpack it. What else could I have done to get through that?

[LOUISE] (34:01 - 34:43)

I think the biggest thing is to unpack it either with yourself you can do journaling meditation you can take yourself off walking and listen to podcasts and things now that can help sort out what's going in your head but the biggest thing is to talk to someone you need to find if it's at the very start you need to find a counsellor if it's someone to help you unpack and move forward into the future that someone maybe more like a coach. You need someone to understand what you're going through. You need someone who has been there and gets it and understands how you can get to the other side of that because that's important to not live in the attack or whatever's just happened to you.

[CJ] (34:43 - 34:46)

The vulnerable state perpetuating

[LOUISE] (34:46 - 34:57)

You could still be living in it that's the most important thing to choose your future and work out the strategy or the stepping stones to make to get you into the place you want to be.

[CJ] (34:57 - 37:42)

I think also step one even before that and this is for me was definitely the hardest and to this day I still have to combat the Oh gosh how could I have been so stupid? or how did I get myself in that situation? or Why did I do that? and even more so for men because it's bad enough women trying to present to report rape but trying to report a rape to services when you're a male that's been perpetrated particularly by a female and even by another male because they're like well you're the bigger one or you know martial arts or whatever it is there's always all these reasons for men why it didn't really happen apparently. But

validating your own understanding and beliefs about what happened. If you look at it and it has all the hallmarks of sexual assault or rape or whatever kind of abuse it was, then it's real it happened. It's not like we make these things up. I don't care if anybody else thinks it's rape or not it was. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck it's a duck. If it has all the hallmarks of rape then that's what it was and a huge proportion of sexual assault and rape is not violent, a huge, huge proportion. It's not all people being dragged down in alleyways or you know pulled off trains or dragged by their hair around their house. It's not it's just not and many of us are so worn down that we're like "whatever", you know and I actually was saying before I've actually slept with someone to get them out of my house they would not leave. I was giving zero cues that I was sexually, romantically interested in them. It was literally a hangout. I wasn't a 'sleep with people on the first date' kind of girl for a lot of my life. I'll correct that, I was actually quite like that when I'd gone through a lot of abuse and I used it as a way of empowering myself that I slept with a lot of people. When I realised that that's what I was doing I was like no actually I'm not going to do that anymore. So I was very particular about not sleeping with people on the first date and there was one instance where I could not get this person to leave and I'm like I know if I sleep with them they'll go. The fact that I was even in that situation that's the abuse right there the actual sexual act wasn't the abuse it was the lead up. It was putting me in the position of feeling like that was my only option and because I didn't know them well, I didn't know if they would get aggressive or violent or start accusing me of things or bad mouth me you know in the workplace or something. They knew where I worked. They knew where I lived, we were in my home so it becomes very scary so you take the path of least resistance that you think is going to cause the least damage globally. But then we're still at the end of having been sexually assaulted you know effectively because we were forced into a situation we didn't want to be having sex in so it's not always about was the act of sex consensual or not you know.

[SILENT JACK] (37:42 - 37:49)

I remember it at the end of what happened to me the person then said to me "that wasn't so bad was it"? Ugh.

[GRANT] (37:51 - 37:52)

Yuck!

[SILENT JACK]

Right! Yeah.

[CJ] (37:52 - 39:22)

Yeah that's just vomitous. That always makes me feel sick when you tell me that. People often will directly go to, when you say domestic violence, people think of beatings and rape and it's not all that. I mean there's so many other forms of abuse and that can happen also over this family period. Financial abuse where people are shamed into spending more money on Christmas presents that they don't have, putting themselves you know great you can buy Christmas presents but then you don't eat for a week, you know you survive on coffee because you don't have money to buy food you know. They are all things... Tracking people. Gaslighting people. This stuff often happens around this sort of family time of year and it's not always intimate partner or you know abuse that we're experiencing. I just want to touch on restraining orders for a minute because there's another thing people say "why

don't you just get a restraining order?" Restraining orders can only be acted upon by Emergency Services if they have been broken. I'm not advising against restraining orders, a thousand percent I am for them. Also restraining orders extend to your anyone you're associated with so you can't get your friend to go and annoy your ex or that person; so it is helpful in that way because even if it doesn't stop the perpetrator it will often put off their associates from bugging you and doing the wrong thing. So I absolutely think they are worthwhile but remembering just to keep in mind that they are only enforceable when they've been broken.

[LOUISE] (39:22 - 39:55)

I think sometimes people have the idea that if police go in there, or if a friend goes in there and bust them and I'm going to tell you that you can't do this behaviour anymore that it's all of a sudden going to become better with an IVO whatever it is that's happening, which is most of the time not the case. It usually makes the circumstances a lot worse and the victim normally needs more time to work out what their next step up is. It's not usually go in and get them out straight away they need to work out what their next step is accommodation, money and what that looks like.

[CJ] (39:55 - 40:14)

And are they ready? Because it takes a lot to leave and also lose, there is a sense of loss. Not all relationships are bad because if it was bad when it started we wouldn't have gotten into it. It's like we can go into our dream job and then find out the people we work with are horrendous and nasty and it's your dream job. You actually like the job but you can't work with the people.

[GRANT] (40:14 - 40:48)

We touched on the concept of intention previously and it seems like this topic is really one where again, intention is what is the trigger here, is the intent to remove someone from finances, or intent to out someone. That is where the abuse can actually be starting from is that inkling or those discussions where it's someone is intending to create or make an action before the action actually happens.

[CJ] (40:48 - 40:49)

Yep

[LOUISE] (40:50 - 40:53)

Control. It comes down to control.

[GRANT] (40:53 - 40:57)

You're on diHARD. Please join us after the break.

[SONG] (41:29 - 41:29)

Die Hard by Stella Cole

END SONG (43:46)

[GRANT] (44:09 - 44:16)

Welcome back to diHARD, Diversity and Inclusion, the hard topics.

So one of the key identifiers around abuse is about control. Yet particularly within the queer community, we do have controlling relationships. such as pups, handlers, masters, subs. How can these interactions remain healthy and not abusive?

[CJ] (44:16 - 48:33)

I think when you talk about kink... It's one of those things, and people have said this to me before and I completely agree with it, is if you don't understand it, then you just don't understand it. So you're not going to get how people are going to want to engage in those activities. And it doesn't matter whether you're queer, bi, straight, whatever it is, it is a relationship built on trust and when you talk about abuse, that's not trust; That's the antithesis of trust. And in fact, I myself have been in a situation where I did engage in very hardcore edge play So edge play is your sort of impact play, consensual, non-consent Waterboarding, things like that I used to, particularly with one partner, who happened to be the abusive partner, amazingly enough, but before there was sort of that establishment of a very heavy abusive relationship I did very heavy kink play with them and it was fine And I was never abused in the course of kink at that time We're not engaging in that kind of relationship or that kind of play because we like being abused. We're engaging, for me, I'm going to talk personally now, because everyone's locus will be different of where their kink stems from, But it's not because we were abused as kids There are hardcore subs I know that love pain and love being flogged. Their parents never raised a hand to them, they weren't bullied at school, nothing. They had an amazing, beautiful, serene childhood and they say that to me. So it's actually about being able to relinquish control to someone else in a safe way There's never a time you should be going into engagement, no matter how well you know someone, without having talked about it first. Safe words are key Negotiation and discussion prior to engagement is key No, it doesn't ruin the mood No, it doesn't take the element away from it Because there is an element of I don't want to say role play because you're not acting at the time But the fact is there's an element of, it's a different element of engagement than when you're negotiating. So it doesn't matter what you talk about It's not going to ruin the surprise I promise you I've never had anyone report that it does Safe words and safe actions are critical When I say safe actions If you are bound and gagged, you cannot say your safe word There has to be another cue The other thing is if you are going to play very heavily You need one of two things You either need an established partner, play partner That knows how to read cues That knows how to read drop Like sub drop or bottom drop That can see the shift in your demeanor That knows when they actually need to stop Even if you're not stopping Purely because you may not be in a space to stop That can happen with very heavy play And you just may not recognize it yourself Because you're so into the scene You would eventually safe word out, I can assure you But it's important that anyone who's topping or domming Needs to be able to recognize that The other thing that is critical If you're doing heavy play Is have a spotter Do not have a spotter that is only aligned with one of you So I'm not going to bring my friend That my partner doesn't know So, okay What you don't want is a situation Say I'm bottoming in a scenario and the spotter has come in and they're friends with the top, but I don't really know them. And the spotter goes "I think you should stop now, Because I don't think she's going so well I think she needs a break" and the top goes "No, no, no, I know her, that's fine" You run the risk of that spotter Deferring to the opinion of the top, right?

That spotter is an independent party I know personally I can stand in a room Watch a scene Where there's two people I've never met before Never seen them Never watched them play

And I will recognize the signs of sub drop Or a top that is I wouldn't say losing control But that is very much drifting away in the scene A little bit too much And I might need to bring them back around And this is not that they're bad people It's not that they're violent people It's just they're really into it And if you talk to a lot of people who are performers and actors, there are times that they absolutely get caught up in their scene and become that person and that's a thing I mean, look at Heath Ledger as an extreme example That's a person who got so caught up in their character and elements of their character didn't leave them And that tormented him to the point where he didn't meet a very happy end.

[GRAB VOICE] (48:33 - 48:58)

Does it depress you, Commissioner? To know just how alone you really are? Does it make you feel responsible For Harvey Dent's current predicament?

Where is he? What's the time? What difference does that make?

Well, depending on the time He may be in one spot or several

[CJ] (48:58 - 52:35)

Those things can happen We can't always see them coming We're not all knowing We're not all seeing I've been doing this for over 30 years Both in my personal life In my professional life And there are times where I just don't, for example, tap out Or times where most of the time As a top, I generally I've never found that I haven't been able to recognize where I'm at. But I'm also a safety nut And I teach safety and consent and things like that. So I think my automatic responses are trained very differently to the average. But I've been in a threesome where it was someone who was quite new to domming And I had to stop them And they're like They weren't even responding to me initially I was like, no, you need to stop You need to stop right now And I actually pushed them off the person And pushed them, like Not off, they weren't on the person But I had to push them away from the engagement Because they just didn't recognize it And it's not because they're bad people So, but there's a perception by a lot of people that it's like, well, you know Especially if you go to, say, a hospital You've had a little bit of a mishap Kinksters do this This happens But you know what?

I've put my back out shagging so quite frankly and I was literally crippled from fucking, Vanilla fucking! Okay? You have to be prepared to, to go to, say, the hospital or the doctor or whatever. But we're often met with "Well, what did you expect?" And I'm like, what?

Because I engage in a risky behaviour. Have you ever gone water skiing? Have you ever ridden a motorbike? Have you ever jumped out of a plane?

Have you ever flown on a plane? That's a risk-taking behaviour you know? Have you ever driven a car between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m.? Because that's when the most accidents happen That's a risk-taking behaviour So, no, we shouldn't expect that these things will happen if we're playing. That's not a thing But I have personally experienced where someone has crossed the line using kink And threatened me using kink That is wrong. I don't care how devoted a sub you are Or devoted a bottom Or what space you're in You have the right to stand up to your Dom I don't care what you have established with them or the rules of your engagement You have the right to stand up and say No, I don't consent to this I'm not a sub by nature I bottom Occasionally there's one or two people I will sub to And

I have a cowpoke which is one of my favorite implements It's like a teeny weeny little flogger But it's made out of little thin round pieces They almost look like wires But they're leather And so it packs a bit of a punch They're quite stingy And my partner at the time was using them on me and I had dropped extremely hard, which they would have known, I can guarantee you we'd known each other for over 20 years at that stage And I was on the bed And I started to cry And then I slid off the bed onto the floor because I literally went limp And they picked me up and kept going. That is abuse I wouldn't call it violence Why not? Because we were actually consenting in heavy BDSM play that involved pain. He wasn't being violent towards me He was definitely being controlling Was definitely being abusive Was not respecting any boundaries And it's the same thing we were talking before about, you know, being drunk or being intoxicated on something is not an excuse for going "I didn't realize that person didn't want it anymore" You know, if someone's flailing about and pushing you off Or not into it Or going limp Or not conscious They're not consenting If you're unsure if someone's consenting They're not consenting

[GRANT] (52:35 - 52:37)

You can ask If you're not sure, ask

[CJ] (52:37 - 53:51)

And if they can't answer you, Not consenting. But even if you ask... Look, in the heavy BDSM realm I have had subs that will be like "No, it's okay" because that's their psyche

[GRANT]

Right

[CJ]

It's where they're at It's part of the role. So this is why I'm saying spotters are critical. And if you yourself are getting a gut feeling in there that it's wrong, it's wrong. Stop doing it! Even if your sub is begging you for that, stop, and go "No sweetheart I don't think you're in a place for this right now". But in saying that, for those people who are not into kink, it doesn't make kink wrong. It doesn't make kink unhealthy dangerous. It doesn't make wanting those things or liking those things or engaging those practices no matter how heavy they are, wrong. If someone's consented and it's clear, then it's okay. But if someone's crossed a line, they've crossed a line.

So... Definitely happy to talk more on this. We have our Instagram. Which I mentioned before @diehardonjoy, D-I-H-A-R-D-O-N-J-O-Y. Happy for people to message through on that. Or our email dihard@joy.org.au. Definitely if you've got questions, can point you in the right direction or open a conversation. This is the whole point of this show Is to open conversations

[GRAB VOICE] (53:51 - 53:53)

And now for something completely different

[GRANT] (53:53 - 54:47)

Showing my age here There was an amazing advert probably 15, 20 years ago for women's aid in the UK and it had Keira Knightley in it And it was such a groundbreaking commercial It was around the time when viral commercials were still kind of becoming a thing And this

spread worldwide with everyone sharing it This was before YouTube But it was playing out a scene Where Keira Knightley is acting And she gets hit And she turns to the camera and says, "Cut!" And then a second later She gets hit again And then she gets thrown against a mirror, I think it is And the mirror shatters And the camera just pulls out to show her being abused in this apartment And she's saying, "I didn't agree to this I didn't agree to this"

[GRAB VOICE] (54:48 - 54:52)

Oh, you're here You're hurt Here

[GRAB VOICE] (54:53 - 54:55)

How was he today? Your leading man?

[GRAB VOICE] (54:55 - 54:57)

Oh, gentle heart, please How did it feel?

[GRAB VOICE] (54:57 - 54:58)

Did it feel real?

[GRANT] (54:58 - 55:37)

GRAB VOICE

It's my job. Sorry, we didn't agree to that That wasn't in the script'.

You stupid!

*sound of breaking glass

Please I didn't agree to this, aah

*sound of breaking glass

[GRANT]

And it always just stayed in my mind, about kind of, how a situation can play out. And you're expecting to know what it is. Here is this famous actress It's playing out, you're thinking it's going to be one type of commercial and then it plays out In a very different way. So how can people draw that line when it is so difficult?

[CJ] (55:38 - 55:38)

That's such a good question

[LOUISE] (55:38 - 56:39)

It's such a big one And I also think Drawing a line for me would be very different to drawing a line for you and vice versa for each person. It took me for my kids to witness the abuse from their eyes, for that line to be drawn. But in saying that, looking back, they definitely heard the abuse in the middle of the night, but I was so oblivious to it. So that took five years for me to get to that place and even saying that, we ran for our lives and had to spend the night at our neighbour's house. But it was for... A week later when he called me and asked me to take me out for dinner, I actually went out for dinner with him. So even though I thought I'd drawn the line I talked to my old boss and she said: "I remember you telling me

you'll probably go back after all the horrific things you've just told me". So I think everyone's line is very different.

[CJ] (56:39 - 58:19)

This is where we turn, to community. And there's a really important thing that we're missing in Western society and that's the concept of a tribe. And it's important for so many things and this is where we really need to call in our tribes. That no, it doesn't have to be just me that takes my friend in for three months until they can, or a year with their kids. I might not have capacity for that. But to have, as a group of friends or as people in the workplace, get together and go "What can we do to help this person?" We need our tribe. We need this community to be a tribe. And whether it's Government changes. Whether it's our friends, our family.

I've actually had in a workplace several colleagues go to assist me in a particular situation, which I was stunned about, and it actually made me really sad because I thought, none of my friends are helping me and yet these people that barely know me are actually pulling together like a family and are there for me. But you know what? I don't care. Because guess what? They were there for me. And it's not an accusation that people aren't doing enough or you should have the capacity to help someone who is fleeing this kind of situation. But it is about pooling your resources, contacting others, getting together as a group, you know and helping each other out.

And I think that's a key step that's out of the control of the survivor. But it's certainly in the control of us as a wider community and group of people and, yeah, calling out to governments to actually talk to more people, get a broader view, have more people represented. And Grant, seriously, where's that Keira Knightley ad right now?

Why do we not have that on our screens? Because that's freaking awesome We need that.

[GRANT] (58:19 - 58:34)

Yeah. There's a study that was done around, I think it was The Vietnam War, with people coming back due to drug addiction. And there was a saying that I always loved out of that study... and it was: The opposite of addiction is connection.

[CJ] (58:35 - 58:38)

That's really beautiful I like that a lot

[GRANT] (58:39 - 58:44)

So connection it sounds like is going to be a big part of it and

[LOUISE] (58:44 - 58:45)

Absolutely

[GRANT] (58:45 - 58:51)

Unfortunately That's all we have time for. So thank you Louise. Thank you so much for coming in

[LOUISE] (58:51 - 58:52)

Thank you

[CJ] (58:52 - 58:53)

Yeah thanks. It was amazing

[GRANT] (58:53 - 58:56)

And thank you CJ For sharing your experiences as well

[CJ] (58:57 - 58:59)

You're more than welcome. That is why we're here Isn't it Grant?

[GRANT] (59:00 - 59:43)

It certainly is, diving into those hard topics. You are of course listening to diHARD, Diversity and Inclusion, The Hard Topics. Thanks so much for joining us. Have a great week.

SONG

Seretonin Killer by TIMMS