

“**Anyone can change their ending.**

Volunteering helped to change mine.”

Dr. Yvonne Kallane

Founder, *Change The Ending*

Ph.D. Candidate, *University of Notre Dame Australia*

Non-executive Director, *Yourtoolkit.com*

Social Impact Fellow

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**Volunteering gave me a path back
to a life I lost to domestic violence.**

When I finally broke the FDV cycle in January 2020
after experiencing devastating abuse throughout my 26-year marriage:

- I was homeless, left with complex trauma, and a debilitating medical diagnosis
- I'm Ph.D.-qualified career woman but ongoing PTSD meant I could not work in paid employment
- I began volunteering at Yourtoolkit.com to ease my way back into work
- Using my academic credentials, I helped other women impacted by FDV

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Today I'm a Non-executive Director on their Board.

- January 2020 >> escape from Singapore and FDV
- October 2020 >> complex trauma, Guillain-Barré syndrome
- April 2021 >> Dedicated volunteer at Vinnies, ½ day/week
- November 2021 >> Ad-hoc volunteering at Yourtoolkit.com
- May 2022 >> Dedicated volunteer at Yourtoolkit.com, 1 day/ week**
- December 2022 >> Appointed to Board
- May 2023 >> Resign from dedicated volunteering

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See beyond what you think a volunteer should look like.

I'm a university professor.

I entered volunteer work while living with complex trauma.

- I needed a sense of belonging, a place where I was 'understood' >> COMMUNITY, MY TRIBE
- I needed somewhere to go at least once a week >> PURPOSE, REASON TO LEAVE HOUSE
- I needed to invest in something other than (only) FDV recovery >> OTHERNESS FOCUS

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Volunteers with mental ill-health look like this.

Normal.

Yet, they carry invisible needs:

- To nap, often several times a day >> get them a bean bag, give them permission
- Reminders, because complex trauma impacts short-term memory >> give them lists of tasks
- Dignity, to do work that aligns with who they once were >> gently, as overwhelm comes quickly
- Patience when speaking, as complex trauma impacts language centre of the brain

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Volunteers with mental ill-health also need this.

Safety.

- To express their needs about even the tiniest detail that can make a huge difference
- To cry and not be 'handled' when they do
- Calm from those around them, especially when stuff goes wrong
- A deep sense that someone has their back
- Humour, because trauma recovery is gut-wrenching

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Know your volunteers.

Stop giving them work no one else wants to do.

Dignity. Motivation. Make them want to come back.

- Play to their strengths to maximise impact >> ask what they (used to) do well
- Align their skills to projects that matter >> grow your organisation's vision
- Establish easy communication >> drop any kind of 'blame' culture, build their confidence
- Leverage lived experience >> gently, know their triggers, use it as a 'secret weapon'
- Include them just like you would paid staff >> Christmas lunch

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Projects I worked on or led.

Dignity. Motivation. I wanted to come back every week.

- Developing social impact indicators, re-designing and writing [Social Impact Report](#)
- Building a case study database of FDV victim-survivor stories
- Conducting focus groups with victim-survivors
- Co-development of online '[Coercive Control Self-assessment Tool](#)' (1-yr project, funded)

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Projects I worked on or led.

Dignity. Motivation. I wanted to come back every week.

- Submission to *Parliamentary Inquiry into Coercive Control in Western Australia* (2022)
- Co-leading the Data and Research Working Group (volunteer-based)
- Co-design of [#SaySomething](#) Violence Against Women Prevention Campaign (1-yr project, funded)
- Revising and writing [short articles](#) for online publication
- Advising on data and referencing policies, and research and publishing strategies

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The life changing power of information

Impact Report 2022

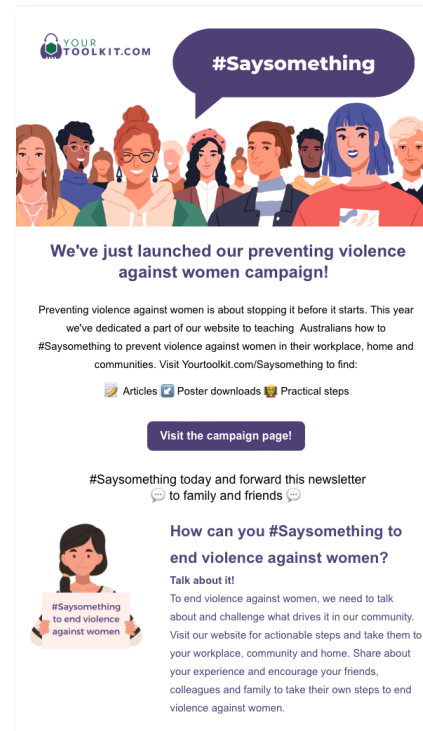
Yourtoolkit.com is a web-based resource providing free, accessible, practical information on personal safety, support services and money matters for people facing domestic violence.

Website users can easily and reliably access relevant and up-to-date information needed for all stages of their journey.




YOUR TOOLKIT.COM

prepare • act now • rebuild • thrive at Yourtoolkit.com



YOUR TOOLKIT.COM

#Saysomething




We've just launched our preventing violence against women campaign!

Preventing violence against women is about stopping it before it starts. This year we've dedicated a part of our website to teaching Australians how to #Saysomething to prevent violence against women in their workplace, home and communities. Visit Yourtoolkit.com/Saysomething to find:

- 📄 Articles
- 📄 Poster downloads
- 📄 Practical steps

[Visit the campaign page!](#)

#Saysomething today and forward this newsletter to family and friends



How can you #Saysomething to end violence against women?

Talk about it!

To end violence against women, we need to talk about and challenge what drives it in our community. Visit our website for actionable steps and take them to your workplace, community and home. Share about your experience and encourage your friends, colleagues and family to take their own steps to end violence against women.

change the ending.

Projects I worked on or led.

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The screenshot shows the 'Coercive Control Self-Assessment Tool' page on 'YOUR TOOLKIT.COM'. The page has a dark blue header with navigation links: '1. Prepare', '2. Act Now', '3. Rebuild', '4. Thrive', 'Volunteer', 'Donate', and 'Learn more'. The main heading is 'Coercive Control Self-Assessment Tool' with a sub-heading: 'Are you or someone you know experiencing domestic abuse? Take this short self-assessment to identify whether coercive control might be present in the relationship.' Below this is a green 'Start Self-Assessment' button. A message says: 'Don't have time to complete the self-assessment? Skip and learn more about coercive control behaviours.' with a link to 'Site Assessment'. There are three expandable sections: 'What is coercive control?', 'Keeping safe whilst taking this assessment', 'How to use this self-assessment tool', and 'What if my results suggest it isn't coercive control?'. The 'What is coercive control?' section contains text defining coercive control and its effects.

The screenshot shows the 'What is Emotional Abuse?' page on 'YOUR TOOLKIT.COM'. The page has a dark blue header with navigation links: '1. Prepare', '2. Act Now', '3. Rebuild', '4. Thrive', 'Volunteer', 'Donate', and 'Learn more'. The main heading is 'What is Emotional Abuse?' with a sub-heading: 'Emotional abuse is a form of coercive control and occurs when somebody destroys another person's self-worth through fear, isolation and control. It can leave you feeling emotionally and mentally confused, disempowered and drained. Emotional abuse can be hard to spot as it's very subtle and almost invisible to outsiders. Abusers are skilled manipulators who spend a lot of time covering their tracks to ensure there are no witnesses to their abuse, other than you.' Below this is a video player with a play button. A text box explains: 'In public, the abuser can be seen as a super-nice and charming person that you are lucky to have, so if you speak up about what is happening to you other people can have a hard time believing it. You may then doubt the abuse. Think there's something wrong with you, or even disbelieve it as something that happens in every relationship. Emotional abuse is a foundational behaviour in coercive control because it is concerned with obtaining and displaying power.' Another text box tells a story: 'Angela is in her late-thirties and lives with her partner Marco in a large metropolitan city. Angela is originally from South America and came here as a migrant in her late teens. Marco often condescends her when she is telling a story or explaining something, suggesting her English isn't good enough. He tells her that her feelings are wrong and that he can have her deported if she doesn't agree with what he says. Marco has started telling their families and friends that she is bipolar. He says that if anything comes up, she's probably having an episode. Angela has tried to confide in her friends with little success.' Below the video player is a section titled 'Examples of Emotional Abuse' with a list of behaviors: Humiliation, name-calling and yelling; Insults and ridicule; Punishment for not doing what the abuser wants; Invasion of privacy; Jealousy; Ridiculing religious beliefs; Disrespecting boundaries; Unsubstantiated accusations - making claims about you or your behaviour that are not true; Body-shaming, e.g. telling you repeatedly you are fat or ugly; Slut-shaming, e.g. accusing you of cheating, or being overly sexual; Taunts and racial slurs; Exploiting a behavioural or emotional weakness (fear, use, swearing, anxiety) to attack your parenting.

Know when volunteers need the next step.

Keeping good people is not an accident.

- Create new roles
- Talk about remuneration with them >> don't assume
- Engage with the Board about what could be possible >> CEO + Chair have good communication

change the ending.



Yvonne @ Yourtoolkit.com.

How they kept me.



Submission to *Parliamentary Inquiry into Coercive Control in Western Australia* (July, 2022)

>> I applied to do a (second) Ph.D. at University of Notre Dame Australia (September, 2022) -
'*Criminalising Coercive Control in Australia*'

>> Board needed (1) a Lived Experience, and (2) academic representative (October, 2022)

>> Appointed *Non-executive Director of Yourtoolkit.com* (December 2022)

>> Commenced *Ph.D.* (January 2023)

>> Founded *Change The Ending* (July 2023)

>> Completed *Social Impact Fellowship* (October 2023)

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“**It’s time to believe her.**”

See what she sees. End coercive control.”

change the ending.

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Dr Yvonne Kallane

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