



Survivors' Decision Process: Advocacy Beyond Leaving

Nellie's Story

My name is Nellie. I've got to talk to you about me and Junior. Junior was there for me when I left my son Devon's father. He spent time with Devon. He moved in with us, he paid his share and helped out. For a few years everything was good. We were a happy family.

Then Junior lost his job. We're living on my paycheck and we're behind on our bills. Junior is trying to find work but there's nothing out there. I think he's given up. All he does is sit around the apartment. He finds something wrong with everything me or Devon do. On weekends, his friends come over and they all drink too much.

I know Junior's got a mean streak – but last Friday things got real bad. He was drunk – as usual. He came into our bedroom telling me we were going to have sex. I didn't want to, so he slapped me and threw me down on the bed. I screamed at him to get off and leave. He started yelling and he spit on me. I just kept screaming and it must have scared him. He slammed the door on his way out. Thank God Devon was over a friend's house.

When Junior didn't come home I got worried and went to his Mom's house to look for him. She was there. I had a good talk with his Mom, Ms. Rudy. I know her pretty well because we go to the same church. She said she's going to talk to Junior but I'm not sure it will do any good.

I've been up all night thinking. Listen, I'm no fool. I left Devon's Dad when he hit me, even though I still want him to have a relationship with Devon. But Junior isn't anything like him. He's a good man and he cares about me and Devon. He's like a father to him. I know he was just acting stupid. He needs help to find a job and someone to get him to stop drinking so much. I want things to be good again with us, like they were.

I don't know where to get help. I know some people might say I should leave Junior but I'm just not going to do that. Can you help me?