

CONTROL: 'We tried to keep her away from him, but it was hard to do'

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Chaney explained.

In addition to physical abuse, it can be manifested by name-calling, possessiveness, social isolation, monitoring a person's whereabouts, withholding affection and threats of harm. Chaney's agency has programs tailored specifically for youths to help them understand what constitutes an abusive relationship.

"Sometimes they get into very dangerous situations before they realize it," Chaney said.

In hindsight, Cassie is now aware of things that were "off with the relationship." CL wanted to know where Cassie was, who she was with and demanded that she constantly checked in with him — in person, via email, texting or phone calls.

During the summer months, Cassie rarely spent time with her friends and family. His friends became her friends. Her time, Cassie said, was consumed by CL.

"I didn't look at it being strange or not normal, I enjoyed spending time with him. I thought he wanted me to do it because he enjoyed me and wanted to spend more time with me," she said. "Looking back, it didn't take long to see that no one else was in my life."

The physical abuse started in an insidious way — CL would often pinch Cassie's legs or the back of her arms. Leaving bruises, she carefully chose clothing to cover the marks. To prevent her from leaving or calling for help, CL often took Cassie's car keys and cellphone — even breaking several of them.

And, when school resumed in the fall of 2008, Cassie quit sports and other extracurricular activities. CL expected her to go to his house before she went to school and return as soon as classes were over. If she didn't, he went looking for her.

The first escalation of physical contact occurred after Cassie turned down a sandwich he made her. CL shoved her backward over the couch. Shocked, Cassie didn't know how to respond.

"He left for a little bit, and then came back and was super apologetic and said he wouldn't do it again," she said. "I believed him."

Keeping the abuse a

secret, Cassie didn't tell her parents. She grew up hearing messages about how to be strong and to have respect for herself. Cassie thought that somehow she had allowed it to happen. Embarrassment, she said, initially prevented her from asking for help — hoping, instead, to handle it herself.

Jeff and Carol Greene learned of the abuse after police responded to reports of aggressive behavior between Cassie and CL. The police, Carol said, told her Cassie was fine but they decided to call since it was the second time officers had responded to a neighbor's concerns. Carol was flabbergasted they weren't notified previously.

Police were called on another occasion by Cassie's boss when CL showed up screaming and swearing at her.

"They just talked to him and they let him go," Carol said. "They always just let him go home — that still frustrates me."

Recognizing the situation was becoming dangerous, the Greens told Cassie they would immediately call 911 if she didn't answer her cellphone.

"We basically tried to forbid her from seeing him," Carol said. "We tried to keep her away from him, but it was hard to do until she was ready — until she realized it's not going to get better."

A picture's worth a thousand words

Cassie's normally bright and expressive eyes are dull, red and swollen in photographs documenting injuries after CL attacked her May 30, 2009. Fear initially prevented Cassie from fully disclosing details to police. CL was charged with assault and violation of a restraining order.

However, the incident in her car was far more serious than she first revealed. In addition to squeezing her throat with his hand and pressing brass knuckles against her windpipe, CL attempted to wrap the seat belt around her neck.

Cassie was nearly a foot shorter than CL and weighed less than 100 pounds. Barely able to breathe, she began honking her car horn. Attracting attention, a man came out of his house to intervene and CL finally got out of the car



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Domestic violence survivor Cassie Greene has taken to illustrating her survival story using her skin as a canvas.

Soup Bowl Supper & Silent Auction

Host: Domestic Violence Services
When: Tuesday, Oct. 23, 5:30-8 p.m.
Where: Sister's Cafe, 308 S. Main St., Pendleton
Cost: \$25
Info: 541-276-3322, www.dvs-or.org
As part of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the fundraiser supports the

nonprofit organization in Umatilla and Morrow counties. Serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, DVS has shelters in Pendleton and Hermiston, offers safety planning, provides information and referrals, offers classes and peer support, and maintains a 24-hour crisis line (800-833-1161).

and left. Cassie is convinced that stranger saved her life.

"I thought I was going to die that day," Cassie said.

With her cellphone damaged during the fracas, Cassie drove to a friend's house, who in turn called the police and her parents. That evening and the next day, Cassie shared more about what happened with her parents — they both urged her to follow up with police.

Two days after the initial report was filed, Cassie met with police again. Additional charges of strangulation and menacing were tacked onto the case.

CL continued to reach out to Cassie. And she still saw him a few times after that incident.

"I had a really hard time breaking away. He was

really persistent," Cassie said. "I really did care about him and I did believe that he loved me."

Sensing he was losing his grasp, CL began stalking Cassie — leaving notes on her car, hanging around the school and donning dark clothing and standing outside her bedroom window.

One night, CL demanded she get her suitcase and go with him. Frightened, she went into her parent's bedroom and told them she was having nightmares.

"We laid on the couch," Carol said. "She was cold and shaking."

Not long afterward, their landline started ringing. The number was blocked and no one spoke when Carol answered. That happened several times.

"I looked at Cassie and she looked petrified," Carol said.

The next morning Cassie realized her cellphone was gone. CL had either climbed in or reached through Cassie's bedroom window and taken it. He was subsequently charged with burglary and ultimately put on felony probation. Shortly thereafter, the Greens had an alarm system installed in their house.

"We realized he was actually going to hurt her or us," Carol said. "We were afraid he was going to take her from the house."

Cassie finally got some breathing room when CL was incarcerated and in a rehabilitation facility.

"I was able to break away from him and realize this had to stop," she said.

Increased consequences for a serious crime

Senate Bill 1562, passed unanimously in the House and Senate earlier this year, upgrades strangulation from a misdemeanor to a felony. Domestic violence victim advocates applauded the change — as did Cassie.

"It's about damn time," she said. "Someone strangling you is one of the most personal and terrifying things."

Equally enthusiastic, Chaney said it didn't make sense that something as life-threatening as strangulation was previously a misdemeanor. Increasing the legal classification, she said, helps in relating the seriousness of the offense.

Also, Chaney doesn't mince words regarding strangulation — calling it choking, she said, is a misnomer.

"It's a very serious thing. Someone is trying to prevent you from breathing," Chaney said.

"It's all about power and all about control. It's really about them saying to you they could take your life at any time," Cassie explained.

While CL did eventually go to prison, it wasn't until after he was charged with strangling another victim. Cassie wonders if the threat of a felony would have saved his next victim.

From victim to survivor

On her 18th birthday, Cassie had the words "Live

Strong" tattooed on her right forearm. It's a permanent reminder to be strong for herself.

A work in progress, she now has a sleeve with multiple tattoos that depict being a survivor of domestic violence — including words to Eminem's "Beautiful Pain," the infinity symbol with "bts" for "Break the Silence" and a butterfly, which represents her metamorphosis as a survivor.

With a desire to leave her past behind and knowing she eventually wanted to go to college, Cassie moved to Corvallis after graduating from high school. Initially, she met a guy and merely existed.

"I went down a dark path for a long time," she said. "And then I knew I didn't want to be another statistic of domestic violence. I wanted to be a survivor. I wanted to overcome what happened to me."

Working for Jackson Street Youth Services, a shelter for teens, and later in the detention center at Linn-Benton Juvenile Corrections, Cassie assisted youths who were struggling.

"A lot of my healing has come through helping people. I was able to work with kids that had been trudging their whole lives," she said. "That's all I wanted to do with CL, too, because he was so messed up in so many ways."

Enrolling at Linn-Benton Community College, Cassie graduated with a degree in criminal justice in 2016. Breaking off a six-year relationship, Cassie missed her family and decided to apply for jobs in Umatilla County.

"I just felt it was time to come home," she said.

As a probation services specialist with Umatilla County Community Corrections, Cassie works with the offender population. A number of the clients have a history of domestic violence — both as perpetrators and victims.

Without judgment, she provides services to help people change — if they want to. As for victims, Cassie wants them to understand that once the abuse starts, it usually gets worse.

"They need to know they aren't alone. They can and will get through it by asking for help," she said.

"Looking back, I know there were people there for me."

ECONOMY: Enough reserve to cover first biennium

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scenario.

Oregon's economy is more volatile than many states, rising faster during good times and falling faster during a downturn. Its economy is more diversified, with a variety of manufacturing and natural resources, and on top of that, its heavy reliance on income taxes over sales tax gives the state a more volatile revenue stream.

Lehner said that's not necessarily a bad thing, as seen now when Oregon's growth continues to outpace other states.

"Oregon comes out ahead," he said.

Looking for solutions

Softening the blow of the country's next economic downturn is something that some Oregonians are already thinking about. At a Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce event Tuesday, titled "Facing Oregon's next economic crisis," Jeremy Rogers, vice president of the Oregon Business Council, discussed possible solutions to Oregon's economic challenges.

Rogers is part of the Oregon Business Plan, a collaboration of public and private entities that researches and lobbies for solutions to make Oregon's economy stronger. He said the upcoming 2019 legislative session will be a crucial time to address those challenges, because after that the state could be back in a recession.

The problem, Rogers said,

is that despite Oregon's strong revenue growth, its expenditures are also growing. He said the state projects an \$800 million shortfall next biennium, and more than a billion in the two after that.

Part of that shortfall will be driven by an expected 150 percent growth in expenses for the Public Employee Retirement System between 2019 and 2027, he said, along with a 90 percent growth in Medicaid expenses expected during that same time. The Oregon Business Plan believes the state must look at ways to cut expenses, such as PERS reform, in addition to increasing revenue through methods, such as a restructure of the tax code.

The state currently has enough in reserve to cover the first biennium of a recession, Rogers said, but not the "hangover" after that. One possible solution discussed is reform of Oregon's unique kicker law, which states that if Oregon's revenue exceeds state economists' revenue projections by more than 2 percent for any biennium, taxpayers get that money back in the form of a rebate.

Rogers said if the previous two kickers plus the one currently expected were put into a reserve fund, that should be enough to cover state budget shortfalls during the next downturn.

"We would have enough to cover the full impacts of a recession," he said.



Lehner

However, the fight for a ballot measure to redirect the kicker money into a rainy day fund would be expensive and difficult, he said, which was why the Oregon Business Plan was talking to groups around the state asking for their feedback about whether the effort would be worth pursuing.

Weston mayor Jennifer Spurgeon said part of the problem with asking voters to give up their rebate is that there was a low level of trust that the legislature would truly save it for a rainy day.

"It would be very important to lock some of that up so you don't end up in a bigger problem," she said.

Diversifying Oregon's revenues by implementing a sales tax and lowering income taxes would be one strategy that could soften the effects of a recession on state services, but John Audley of the Oregon Business Plan said that's not a fight worth starting in 2019, given Oregon voters' resistance in the past.

"We're barely pumping our own gas; sales tax is just a stretch too far still, even though many experts argue it is the most logical thing to do," he said.

However, Rogers and Audley said there were other tax reforms that might have a better chance of passing, such as a business activity tax that would tax gross receipts minus purchases from other businesses.

Eastern Oregon Telecom CEO Joe Frannell said such a tax would be devastating, if not fatal, to a capital-intensive businesses like his, to which Audley responded that's the type of feedback the Oregon Business Plan needs as it searches for a way forward.

Tax effects

While legislators or voters may decide on changes in Oregon's tax structure at some point, Lehner told the *East Oregonian* that there are benefits to Oregon's tax structure.

"In a typical year, income tax brings in more revenue than a sales tax," he said.

Income tax is more equitable, he said, because higher-income households tend to save a significant chunk of their income instead of spending it, while low-income households might spend every penny. Money sitting in a bank account isn't subject to a sales tax.

The economy is also becoming more service-based, and items like televisions and couches aren't bringing in as much as they used to.

"These big-ticket items that sales tax relies on are actually getting cheaper," he said.

Any type of tax will be affected by the quality of the state and national economy. And economists aren't sure exactly what the economy will do in the long term as market forces such as tariffs and tax cuts come into play.

For now, however, state economists say Oregon continues to "hit the sweet spot."

OPIOIDS: Include illegal drugs like heroin

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Energy and Commerce considered regulating pill presses but the idea died because the supplement industry uses the mechanisms in abundance

munities Act, passed out of the House in late September 393-8 and days later sailed through the Senate 98-1. Walden, chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said the bill now awaits the president's signature. He turned over most of the hour-and-15-minute session to hear from doctors, addiction specialists and county officials.

Opioids include illegal drugs like heroin and fentanyl and prescription drugs like oxycodone and hydrocodone.

Harry Geller, president of St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, touted the success of identifying local "frequent flyers" who sought opioids. He said the hospital managed to reduce its prescription for the drug 60 percent and save \$250,000.

Dr. Joel Rice, who operates addiction treatment centers in Pendleton and La Grande, told the congressman that fentanyl is the most commonly used opioid in Umatilla County, costs about \$25 a pill on the street, and an addict needs four or five pills a day. The drug is coming out of Yakima, is in Union County, and making its way into Baker County.

Walden said the product is coming from China and into the U.S. through the

postal system.

"What costs \$3,000-\$5,000 in China will sell for a million here," he said.

The substance does not require a key ingredient like pseudoephedrine the way methamphetamine does, Joel said, and for the price of a \$350 pill press online anyone can be on the way to making fentanyl.

Walden made a note of that.

"That's another thing for the oversight committee to address," he said, adding the Energy and Commerce considered regulating pill presses but the idea died because the supplement industry uses the mechanisms in abundance.

Walden also received plenty of thanks from the dozen or so officials in the room before he left for the clinic in Boardman for another session.

His appearance at the courthouse also attracted four protesters.