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[https://www.losaltosonline.com/community/abuse-victim-builds-a-support-network-confronting-domestic-violence/article\\_4209e4f0-cfde-57b5-b348-89b7c2d231ab.html](https://www.losaltosonline.com/community/abuse-victim-builds-a-support-network-confronting-domestic-violence/article_4209e4f0-cfde-57b5-b348-89b7c2d231ab.html)

## Abuse victim builds a support network: Confronting Domestic Violence

Ruth Patrick  
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This is the final installment in a six-part series on domestic violence and technological abuse. Names and other personal identifying features have been changed to create a composite character to protect confidentiality.

After leaving her abusive husband, Beth discovers that he has been using technology to stalk, frighten, control and discredit her and then learns what to do about it. To read parts 1-5, visit [losaltosonline.com](http://losaltosonline.com).

Realizing that her abusive ex-husband's modus operandi had been to isolate her, Beth was determined to overcome that isolation and build a strong network of support. Working with WomenSV led Beth to the following resources.

- Support groups at Women- SV/Positive Solutions, Next Door and the YWCA.
- A trauma-informed job coach for the support she needed to re-enter the workforce.
- An attorney familiar with the tactics affluent abusers use.
- A therapist to help her heal from the trauma and begin to reclaim her power, voice and sense of self.
- A parenting coach to help her set clearer boundaries with one of her children, who had begun to imitate her ex's abusive behavior.

After years of keeping everything inside and living like a prisoner in her own home, Beth is at last beginning to open up to friends and family, reconnect with the world and recover from years of living in an abusive relationship.

Abuse thrives in secrecy, silence and isolation. Abusers count on their victims to unwittingly collude with them out of shame and fear. Beth is countering all of her abuser's tactics by getting educated about abuse, taking steps to protect herself, telling safe people about the abuse and asking them for help, and building her own strong network of support.

Judith Herman, M.D., author of "Trauma and Recovery," notes that two of the most effective ways to deal with the anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and sense of helplessness that accompany abuse are by joining an informal support group and taking positive action. Beth has done both. At last, her experiences are being validated, and she is getting the education, support and resources she needs to reclaim her sanity, her voice and her power.

A balanced, thoughtful approach is most effective when there is suspicion of technological abuse. It is equally important to avoid becoming hypervigilant and believing without proof that every move is being monitored.

Ruth Patrick, M.A., is a local resident and domestic violence outreach specialist. She was recently named director of the WomenSV program under the nonprofit Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative. WomenSV is a Town Crier Holiday Fund recipient. For more information, call 996-2200.