

Penny's story

AWC provides a supportive, safe and nurturing space to be heard

Separating from her husband of 15 years just six months after moving back to Auckland left *Penny feeling lost and overwhelmed with little community support.

"We had just moved back from Australia when it happened. I was completely blindsided – he just said I don't want to be married to you anymore."

*Penny, who also has a 12-year-old son, remembers it as a horrendous time where she found very little support for separated and single parents in the wider community. "I scoured the internet but other than religious places, I couldn't find anything. Eventually I stumbled upon the Auckland Women's Centre (AWC) "**Life after Separation**" course – it was the only one and I signed up straight away."

While it was just a one-day course, *Penny describes it as invaluable and very empowering – "I met some really lovely women, two of whom I'm still friends with now. We were all at different stages of our separation but I felt safe and comfortable and supported in an empowering way as in - "We're here, you can do this."

The course also provided *Penny with valuable knowledge and tools to get through her separation. "I learned a lot including about the seven stages of grief and how to stop blaming yourself."

*Penny attributes the course to helping her get back in touch with her real self – "I was just an empty vessel at that time," she says. Since then, she has started meditating and walking and has stopped drinking and made some new friends. "It really taught me I don't need a man to make me who I am."



She also attended some of AWC's Single Mum's meet-ups which take place once a month on Sundays at the Centre in Grey Lynn.

"I would absolutely recommend AWC – I found the centre itself and the women there incredibly supportive and nurturing and it provides you with a safe space to be heard," says *Penny.

To find out more about the latest courses running at Auckland Women's Centre visit: www.awc.org.nz. Counselling and other support services are also available. Please visit our website or contact the centre directly on (09) 376-3227.