lejacie

A TEAM ACTIVITY · PRACTICE LAB

“I can’t keep going.”

Before you treat exhaustion as a change of instructions. A research-to-practice learning session for family-law teams. Twenty minutes, facilitated, in five parts.

INDEPENDENT DEMONSTRATION BY LEJACIE · PRACTICE LAB · DRAFT 2 · NOVEMBER 2026

THIS PRACTICE LAB IS FOR YOU IF

- You are a family lawyer or supervised legal staff member
- You are another professional taking part within your own role
- You facilitate team learning and have twenty minutes
- A client has ever told you “I just need this finished”

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Part of the post-separation coercive control collection: a plain-language summary, a practice brief, a team activity and a policy brief, all developed from one published study.

Draft 2, 4 November 2026. Drawn from a 2026 study of post-separation coercive control in Australian family-law matters. An independent demonstration by Lejacie, not commissioned or endorsed by the researchers. The scenarios are fictional, developed for this resource; they are not participant accounts from the research. This is a research-informed demonstration, not a validated assessment tool, procedural guide or accredited CPD programme. Not legal advice.

LEJACIE · PRACTICE LAB · RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE DEMONSTRATION

Before you treat exhaustion as a change of instructions. A research-to-practice learning session for family-law teams. Twenty minutes, facilitated, in five parts. Drawn from a 2026 study of post-separation coercive control in Australian family-law matters. An independent demonstration by Lejacie, not commissioned or endorsed by the researchers. Numbers in brackets point to the sources on the last page.

20 minutes
A facilitated team discussion, a paired conversation exercise and a short practice task

5 parts
Notice, connect, practise, check the opposite risk, make it visible in the work

14 accounts
Women who described adverse financial impacts of coercive control, separation and family-law involvement in the underlying study [1]

A client calls.

"Tell them I'll agree. I can't pay for another report. I just need this finished."

There may be a clear instruction in that sentence. There may also be important context you have not understood. Has the client changed their mind about the outcome they want? Have they made a considered trade-off? Or have the costs, pressure and circumstances narrowed what they feel able to pursue?

The task is **clarification**: not persuading the client to continue, and not assuming that stopping is their only option.

About this Practice Lab

For
Family lawyers and supervised legal staff. Other professionals may participate within their own roles.

Time
20 minutes.

Format
A facilitated team discussion, paired conversation exercise and short practice task.

You will practise
Recognising missing context, responding without assumptions, preserving client choice and agreeing a workable next step.

You will need
This resource and your organisation's supervision, safety and referral procedures.

Status
This is a research-informed demonstration, not a validated assessment tool, procedural guide or accredited CPD programme.

Before you begin

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Confirm who participants should consult if an exercise raises questions about urgent safety, professional obligations or matters outside their role. The session does not teach capacity assessment, specialist family-violence assessment or the selection of legal remedies.

Read aloud:

> "We will discuss fictional situations involving post-separation abuse and financial pressure. Please do not identify clients or share personal experiences. You can participate by observing, and you can step out."

The scenarios and practice prompts below were developed for this resource. They are not participant accounts from the research.

1 Notice what you might be assuming

THREE MINUTES

THE CALL AT 4:47PM

Nadia has been involved in parenting and property proceedings for two years. Earlier in the matter, she reported that her former partner had threatened to "keep this going until you have nothing". That account is on the file. You have not yet discussed it with her. She works part-time, has borrowed money from her sister and has missed shifts for appointments.

She calls shortly before the end of the day:

> **"Tell them I'll agree. I can't pay for another report. I just need this finished."**

The proposal differs from the outcome she previously wanted. You do not yet know what she understands about its consequences.

DISCUSS

1. What has Nadia actually told you?
2. What are you tempted to infer?
3. What would you need to clarify before acting?

Compare these two responses:

"Of course. I'll tell them you accept."	"You shouldn't agree just because you're exhausted."

The first may act without enough clarification. The second may substitute the practitioner's judgement for Nadia's.

THE QUESTION TO CARRY FORWARD

What do I need to understand, not what outcome do I want her to choose?

2 Connect the situation with the evidence

THREE MINUTES

WHAT THE RESEARCH FOUND

Meyer and colleagues examined accounts from 14 women who described adverse financial impacts associated with coercive control, separation and Australian family-law involvement. Their analysis identified [1]:

- The financial burden of pursuing safety.
- Depletion of financial and emotional resources.
- Intentional litigation abuse as a strategy of coercive control.

Women described proceedings affecting savings, debt, employment, housing and their ability to continue pursuing preferred outcomes. Some reported former partners deliberately using legal processes to prolong control or increase financial pressure [1].

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR THIS EXERCISE

A person's wish to stop may need to be understood alongside what continuing is costing them. That does not establish that:

- A particular proceeding or communication is abusive.
- A tired client cannot make a considered decision.
- Continuing is better than settling.
- The practitioner knows what the client should choose.

The study offers insight into experiences and mechanisms. It does not determine Nadia's situation or evaluate the conversation approach proposed here [1].

3 Practise the conversation

FIVE MINUTES

Work in pairs. One person practises the professional's response; the other reads Nadia's opening statement. Do not invent further facts. If the scenario does not provide an answer, say:

"We would need to ask Nadia."

BEGIN WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, NOT A CONCLUSION

> "I hear that you need this finished and that another expense feels impossible. Before I communicate agreement, I need to check what you want and what you understand the proposal would mean. Is it safe and practical to talk about that now?"

Then choose a few relevant questions. This is not a script to complete in full.

Understand what has changed

- "What has changed since we last discussed the outcome you wanted?"
- "What matters most to you about the decision now?"

Understand the constraints

- "What would continuing mean for your money, work, housing or ability to manage day to day?"
- "Has anything happened, or has anyone said anything, that is affecting this decision?"

Check understanding

- "What do you understand would happen if you agreed?"
- "What do you still need explained?"

Identify the next manageable step

- "What is the most important question we need to resolve first?"
- "Let's agree what happens next and who will do it."

PART 3 · IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME

Do not let the closing time silently determine the response. Identify any known deadline, establish what needs urgent clarification, and follow the organisation's supervision or escalation process. Agree when and how the conversation can continue. Do not promise that a decision can safely wait without checking.

PART 3 · PAIR FEEDBACK

- Did the response leave room for Nadia's own explanation?
- Did it explore pressure without assuming abuse?
- Did it preserve her right to make a decision the practitioner might not prefer?
- Did it avoid promises about cost, support or outcomes?
- Was responsibility for the next step clear?

4 Check the opposite risk

FOUR MINUTES

"I UNDERSTAND. THIS IS MY DECISION."

Amelia has received advice about a proposed property settlement. She can explain the main consequences and the alternatives discussed. She says:

> **"I understand I might receive more if I continue. But I want certainty. I don't want to spend another year on this. This is what I want to do."**

She appears tired. Nothing in this scenario establishes threats or deliberate misuse of proceedings.

DISCUSS

- What does her tiredness tell you?
- What does it not establish?
- What further clarification is genuinely needed?
- At what point could repeated questioning become pressure to choose differently?

FACILITATOR'S LEARNING POINT

Recognising pressure does not mean denying agency. Money, time, uncertainty and emotional cost can matter to a person's decision. The purpose of clarification is to understand the decision and address relevant unanswered questions, not require the client to choose continued proceedings.

A possible response:

> "Thank you for explaining. Let's check any remaining questions and confirm the steps needed to act on your decision."

5 Make the learning visible in the work

THREE MINUTES

REWRITE THIS NOTE

"Client exhausted and wants to settle. Send paperwork."

What is missing? Use this structure without filling gaps through assumption:

RECORD	PROMPT
Client's words	What did the client say?
Reported circumstances	What pressures or changes did they describe?
Discussion	What advice or explanation was actually provided?
Instructions	What did the client instruct following the discussion?
Unresolved matters	What still needs clarification, advice or review?
Action	Who will do what, and by when?
Contact	What communication arrangements were agreed?

Do not record abuse as established, understanding as checked or advice as provided unless that accurately reflects what occurred.

FINISH WITH ONE COMMITMENT

Each participant completes:

"When a client says they cannot keep going, I will clarify _____ before assuming _____."

The team selects one change to consider, names an owner and sets a review date.

KEEP BESIDE YOU

A pause before you act

What does "stop" mean?
Stopping one task, accepting a proposal, changing lawyers, withdrawing from proceedings, or something else?

What has changed?
The preferred outcome, the circumstances, the available resources or the person's understanding?

What remains unanswered?
Consequences, alternatives, costs, safety concerns, deadlines or professional questions?

What can I do within my role?
What can I explain, and what needs advice, specialist input or supervision?

Who owns the next step?
What will the client do? What will the professional do? What happens if the proposed step is not possible?

This is a conversation aid, not a screening instrument or legal decision rule.

EVIDENCE, LIMITS AND SOURCES

What this Practice Lab rests on, and what it is not

EVIDENCE AND LIMITS

The underlying article was published in 2026 using survey and interview data collected in 2021. This analysis drew on six survey accounts and eight interviews from a selected sample of 14 women. The sample was predominantly white and highly educated. The study does not estimate prevalence across family-law matters, and the authors identify limits to transferring the findings to other populations and contexts [1].

ABOUT THIS LEJACIE RESOURCE

An independent demonstration translating research into professional learning. Not commissioned or endorsed by the researchers. Developed using Safe to Say, Safe to Reach, Safe to Use: preserving evidence and professional boundaries, creating recognisable situations without overstating what they mean, and connecting learning with realistic action. The framework is a developing proposal, not a certification of safety or effectiveness [2].

BEFORE DELIVERY

This draft requires family-law and specialist family-violence review, facilitator preparation and testing with intended participants. The delivering organisation must confirm local escalation pathways, resource ownership and review arrangements. Pilot evaluation should examine whether participants distinguish facts from inference, preserve client choice and identify workable next steps, not merely whether they enjoyed the session. Attendance alone is not evidence of improved client outcomes [2].

SOURCES

	DOCUMENT
[1]	Silke Meyer, Ellen Reeves, Sandra Walklate, Kate Fitz-Gibbon and Jaclyn Chalmers, Experiences of Post-Separation Coercive Control: Family Law-Involved Victim-Survivors' Perspectives on Coercion, Litigation Abuse and Financial Impacts, Violence Against Women (2026).
[2]	Safe to Say, Safe to Reach, Safe to Use: A proposed practice standard, Version 1.0 consultation draft, Lejacie Pty Ltd, October 2026, published on chamirupasinghe.com.au. Practice Lab by Chami Rupasinghe · Admitted Australian lawyer (non-practising) · Founder, Lejacie.

VERSION

Draft 2, 4 November 2026: the Draft 1 content of 22 October 2026, set in Lejacie's current design. Research-to-practice demonstration by Lejacie. Not commissioned or endorsed by the researchers. Fictional scenarios. Not a validated assessment tool, procedural guide or accredited CPD programme. Not legal advice.

Feedback. If something is wrong, out of date or hard to understand, email **info@lejacie.com** with the page number.

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