

## STORIES OF CLIENTS

Andrea (35 years old), a primary school teacher has two daughters with her husband. Soon after the birth of the first daughter her husband started physically attacking her, locking her in their home and checking up on her phone calls and messages. He was accompanying her nearly everywhere and if he was not satisfied with her behaviour in public, once at home he would beat her as a punishment. The violence continued to escalate. Finally, Andrea left and came to the ACORUS safe house, with her two small daughters. She could not leave them at home alone and unattended when she had to run away from her violent husband to escape further injuries. Gradually at the safe house, Andrea received counselling and undertook psychotherapy. After 10 months she felt strong enough and moved out while continuing to attend group psychotherapy sessions at the ACORUS counselling centre in Prague 7. These days, Andrea lives independently with her daughters and teaches at a primary school. Unfortunately, her youngest daughter has become a victim of school bullying (mirroring her mother's experience). Andrea is now using the ACORUS counselling centre again in order to help her daughter.

Jana, (26 years old), came to the ACORUS safe house together with her twin girls aged 2 years. At home, Jana was repeatedly abused and intimidated by her husband – to begin with this was done verbally. Later on she was also attacked physically, often in front of the children. „He also 'punished' me by favouring one of our daughters while completely rejecting and ignoring the other.“ The relationship between Jana and her daughters was also affected by his violent behaviour. The children became more and more aggressive towards each other, as they constantly fought for their father's attention and love.

The situation at home escalated so Jana decided to leave her husband and came to the ACORUS safe house. Jana was continuously under the pressure from her husband. He demanded frequent contact with his daughters though still never accepting one of them. Jana stayed in the ACORUS safe house for seven months while undergoing therapy to improve and harmonise her relationship with her daughters and to raise her self-esteem. After that she felt confident enough to move to independent social housing. She never went back to her husband who lost interest in her and his daughters as he found a new girlfriend.