

Jane's Story

It all started when my mum sent me to stay with my Grandparents. I was going through a lot at their house. It was whilst I was staying there that I found out that my Grandad used to touch my aunty inappropriately. I was upset and shocked. I didn't want to believe that it was true, that my mum may have known that it was true...and that she made me stay there knowing it was true. It was at this point that I found 'my perpetrator'. I met him through a friend. He was nice to me, he listened to me, and he overwhelmed me with compliments. I told him about my Grandad and he listened to me. He believed me. When I finally went back to live with my parents, my perpetrator started to plan in my mind that my mum probably knew about the issues with my Grandad. So, that's when things got bad between me and my parents.

At the time I thought he was a nice person. I thought he loved me. I thought I was going to be with him for a long time. He was my first proper boyfriend in a proper relationship; we were together for months not just a few weeks. Whilst we were together he became homeless. He used to say things to me such as, "at least you have a home to go back to" and, "at least you've got a bath to go home to". He would make me feel bad for him. I used to give him money and help him because I felt sorry for him. I paid for his addiction. He was the one that got me heavily addicted to 'spice'. When I look back at the situation now, he was good at manipulating people, at manipulating me. He was clever. He would cry in front of people. He did offer me good advice sometimes but he manipulated me to get what he wanted.

I realised that things weren't what I thought they were when I found out that he cheated on me. I was really shocked. I thought he loved me I didn't want to believe that he did this to me. He said he wouldn't do it again and I believed him. Things started to get really bad between us. He would spit in my face, throw bottles, lighters, books whatever he could get his hands on, at me. He cheated on me over and over again. I was really addicted to spice at this point. It was like one rule for him and another one for me.

After seeing my support workers who would tell me about CSE and my vulnerability I would go and meet my perpetrator and when he asked me where I had been, I would tell him the truth. I would tell him what my worker was talking to me about, what they would tell me to do, what signs to look out for etc. he then knew what he could get away with and what not to do (for example buying me random gifts). It made him a better perpetrator.

I was so upset when my parents put me into care. My parents blamed me for finding my perpetrator they blamed me for the rape. I knew that they were there for me but I don't feel like they understand me. My dad understood me the most. Even when we used to have arguments at home, he would stick up for me. My older siblings blamed me to. I find this bit the hardest to talk about, it's like the time when you need your mum but she didn't believe me.

I thought that when I went into care things would be different. I went into a foster home and I wasn't allowed out, I wasn't allowed to go to my friend's house. My foster carers told my parents everything even things that I told them in confidence. I was so upset with my parents for putting me into care. I couldn't face seeing them. I felt like

they would blame me for everything. I felt so lonely and isolated. I lost my friends and I was losing my family. I would leave the foster placement at 7am and not come back till 10pm, eat and then go to sleep. I didn't want to talk to anyone, I didn't trust anyone. For my whole time living there I only watched one film in the living room.

My future now is exciting and I feel good about my future. I am now living in supported housing which is new for me. I believe that I will meet my soul partner, I will be independent, I will get a good job where I can afford a mortgage and have children when I am ready to. I will have support, I will have better friendships. I would like to go into the army. Things between me and my parents are getting better, slowly. I really miss my little sister and she tells me that she misses me being around the house.

I think you should still work with young people even if they are talking to the perpetrator about what you are telling them. If someone gave me advice I would take it in. I would ask questions and my worker would give me advice. I was able to reflect on that advice later. You need to keep looking out for these young people. Look out for the signs and the missing information. Young people will tell you certain things but will leave out a lot of information.