

## Kayleigh's story

### **Kayleigh's Mum died of cancer when she was 14. She talks about her experience and what has helped her.**

I remember the day that she told us that her cancer wasn't going to go away. My brother and I just sat there not knowing what to say it came as a shock; we thought she was getting better. My brother was asking all sorts of questions about other treatments which could cure her, while I started crying not knowing what to say. We tried to focus on building more memories with her as we did not know how long she had left.

My parents divorced when I was 4, after that I spent half the week with my Mum and half the week with my Dad. This was great as I spent a lot of time with both my parents. But when I was 10, the decision was made that I would live with my Dad permanently and could only see my Mum for a few hours a week. I found this quite upsetting at first, but I know that it was for the best and to keep me safe.

I was 14 when my Mum died. Even though it was expected and she was in hospital, it still came as a shock on how quickly it happened. As she died in July, I wasn't able to go back to school until September. This made it harder because many people didn't know. And one incident proved this when one of my teachers asked how my Mum was doing and I had to tell them that she had died. I had a counsellors come into school once a week. But this made my grades suffer and she was making me talk about stuff that I wasn't ready to talk about. This didn't last very long and my grades picked back up. For 2 years afterwards, I didn't think about how I was feeling much and just focused on getting my education and making my Mum proud of what I have achieved. This meant, however, having emotions overcome me at the most annoying times making me not being able to cope and causing more anxiety.

After finding Child Bereavement UK, they have helped me deal with how I feel in a way I feel comfortable with. It has helped me to deal with letting people know when I feel sad, which means I am not hiding my emotions anymore. They allow you to talk in your own time and only with what you are happy saying. The use of the Young Peoples Advisory Group (YPAG) shows you that you are not on your own and helps you connect with other young people who are in a similar situation.

Kayleigh, 17