

Megan's story

I lost my best friend 2 years ago, when I was at the age of 20, from a fatal heart attack, which I witnessed along with my best friend's Mum, near her home in her Mums car on the way to the cinema to see 'Sex and the City 2'. We had known each other for years and were more like twins than just best friends. We would do everything together. The day that I lost my friend, my life changed forever. The experience of witnessing someone dying at such a young age traumatised me in the weeks and months to come. It was hard to come to terms with what had happened. One minute sitting chatting talking in the back of the car next to my friend the next she was gone. The events that occurred that day after it happened I went through in the weeks and months that went by.

The one thing that I remember was being shocked about was how little help there was out there for young adults of my age who have suffered trauma and bereavement. I thought I would be able to go to my local Doctor's and be able to find out where I could go to get support and help. I was shocked to find that there was no support in place that could be given by my doctors, nor was there any information or knowledge of organisations that I would be able to be referred to for help with bereavement or trauma. Instead I was just left to try and find help by conducting my own research on the internet and through private counselling. This was extremely stressful and didn't help how I was feeling or coping. This also affected my immediate family as they had to deal with my frustration.

The other issue I would have to come up against whilst trying to get the support I needed, was my age and being classed as an adult. Due to this doctors would refuse to deal with my Mum, who at the time was looking after me. I was trying to hold down a job working in the day to keep my mind preoccupied. As I was working I was unable to handle calls or book appointments. Instead my Mum would do it on my behalf to help. I found it frustrating and this added to the post traumatic stress and grieving that I was going through. I felt lonely and frustrated. All I wanted was to get the right support and help and to be able to talk to someone about how I felt.

Eventually, I happened to come across Child Bereavement UK while searching on the internet for help and support for bereavement in my local area. I contacted them directly and they referred me on to see a lady who came into the charity that helped with Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and grief. The CBT involved doing practical activities that helped me express my grief, through using various colours that represented my feelings. This helped me come to terms with some of the events that I went through. And made me realise that I wasn't alone and there were people out there that I could relate to. From the experience I have gone through I feel it is essential that young adults of my age do not get forgotten and that there is the appropriate help and support readily available. I would not want another young

person a similar age to come across the same problems when trying to get help. Two years has now passed since my best friend died.

I still have a part of me that feels empty but with the support of my family and friends, as time has gone on it is got easier to accept and my friend will always have a place in my heart. I am now living my life as well as my best friends. I know that this is what she wanted.