



BREAKING THROUGH

MOVING ON FROM CHILD
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

OUR STORIES



OUR STORIES

This booklet contains real stories of moving on from child sexual exploitation (CSE). It has been made by young people with experience of CSE and the quotes are taken from interviews with people who were involved in sexual exploitation in their youth and have since moved on.

It is part of a wider set of resources called ***Breaking Through***, made by young people with experience of CSE in partnership with the University of York and Basis Yorkshire.

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WWW.BASISYORKSHIRE.ORG.UK



Experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation

Phoenix (aged 23):

When I was seven, the man that I thought was my dad left. Then I found out that my dad wasn't my real dad. My dad committed suicide when I was 14.

Daniel (aged 18):

I had a normal up-bringing in a middle class family. Around the age of 12, I started to realise that I might be gay. There weren't many out gay people that I knew. I downloaded a couple of gay chat apps. This led to older guys messaging me. Very quickly it advanced to 'do you want to try anything?'



Sharon (aged 43):

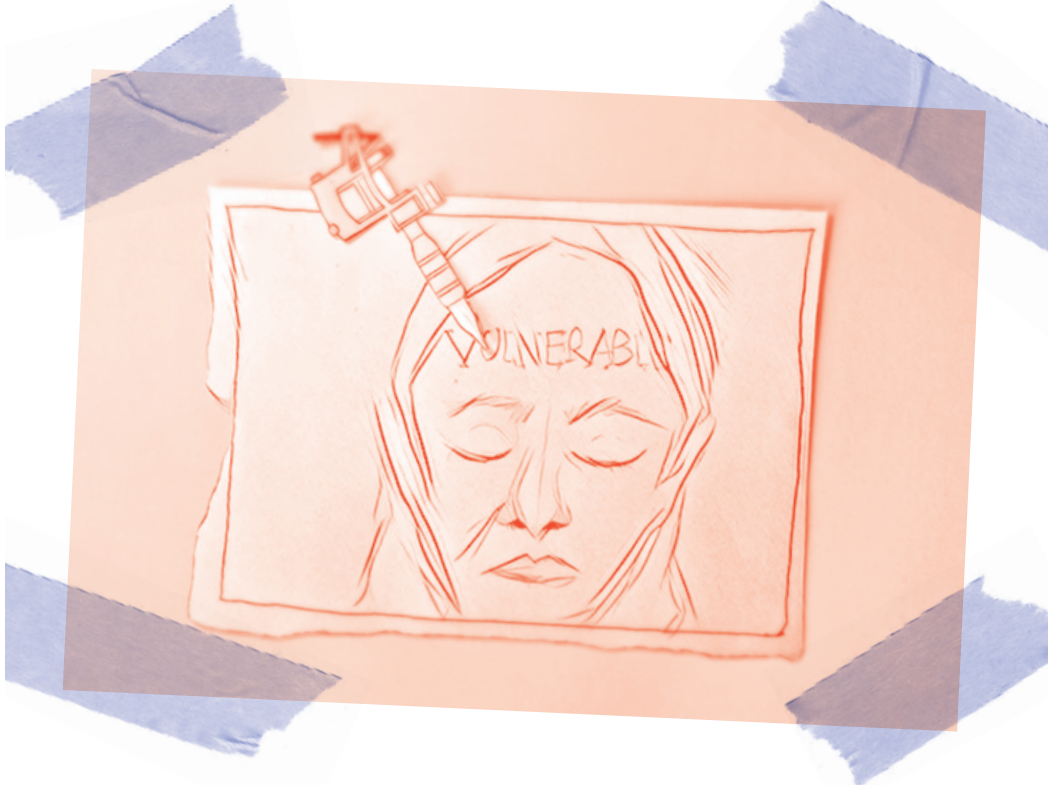
The sexual abuse first started with his dad, my step-dad's dad, so he was like my granddad. I'd never heard my mum say 'I love you', put her arms around us, tuck us in bed. I was running away, I hated it. I wanted to go in care. I wanted to know what life was. Because I didn't speak, they just thought I was a naughty child rebelling, and I wasn't.

Phoenix:

A lot of perpetrators used my dad. They can see how vulnerable you are – you don't need it tattooing on your head. I was picked up in town by two blokes, taken to Bradford and that's where I lived for the next three months. I didn't understand that it was CSE until the Police sat me down.

Jade (aged 16):

I started a relationship with Jack and things were good. He was about 19, and I was about 12.

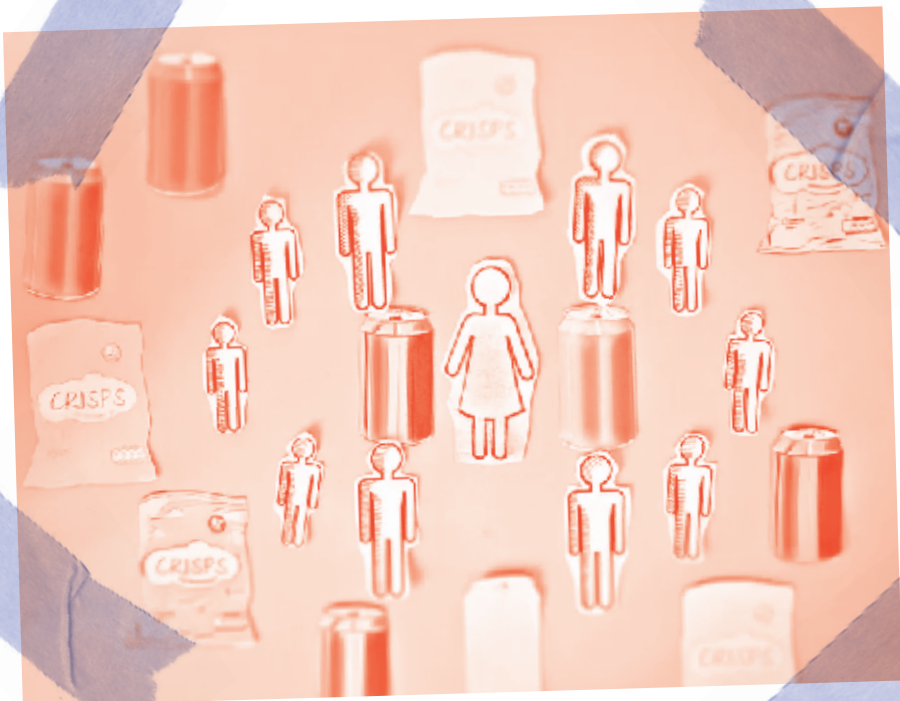


Liberty (aged 17):

Around the age of 12, I started meeting older males. Then I met other people including my daughter's dad. I thought it was ok – someone new to talk to. Before I started smoking they started buying me crisps and drinks and stuff like that, which felt nice, but obviously it's not nice because you can't trust them.

Natalie (aged 20):

Before I got involved there was this time I was with a girl from my care home and these two guys asked us to go to a hotel. I was unsure but she wanted to go. They gave us weed, drinks and put stuff in front of our noses, telling us to snort it. When the drugs started kicking in a load more guys just came into the room – I didn't know whether I was imagining it or whether it was actually happening. I freaked out.



Sharon:

On a night time, the night staff in the care home would get you out of bed. Two, three o'clock on a morning, hand over my mouth, dragged into the shower rooms, by your hair.

Daniel:

My parents wouldn't let me drink or stay out. I would easily snap and get angry with them. Smashing things. I felt everyone was saying 'stop doing this, stop doing this'. If I was a girl I would've been sympathised with more. I thought I didn't need support but I definitely did.



Moving on from Child Sexual Exploitation

Jade:

It all came out when I thought I was pregnant with Jack. I told school, school rang the police and they informed social services who got Basis involved, and my support worker came to see me. It was supportive and I could speak to them.

Liberty:

At first I didn't like the Police but I've got to know them. I talk to the local police officer that goes round the estates and stuff, even though they're really, really scary. They've given me general advice and were really supportive.



Liberty:

I've seen less of him since I got my own money. I got my bursary money in for college and ever since we've been arguing a lot. I said to him; 'You're the one that's using me, you're using me for sex. You're buying me stuff just so I won't tell the police.'

Sharon:

I have my ups and downs. My next step is going to that court a strong woman. I want to walk away from there with justice done and not to be failed for the very, very last time.

Phoenix:

If I didn't move on and do something positive with my life and gone down the path everybody assumed I'd go down, then I'd be letting them win. Good support is so big to anybody. I know I can change things. I like who I am now and I wouldn't change anything.



Daniel:

I pushed myself and got really into my studies. A good set of friends, and I've got a place at University next year. My mind was so warped by what these people were saying. Looking back it was all manipulation. I can have a healthy relationship and I want that in the future.

Liberty:

You can close your eyes and make an imaginary place, so if you've got a problem you can go into that. Mine's a palace – a big palace. It's all purple apart from the windows,

those are gold. Instead of taking it out on everyone, I have a place in my head to go and calm down.

Jade:

I really want to be a PCSO [Police Community Support Officer] and to work my way up to dealing with safeguarding. I want to work with troubled kids, like I have been in the past. Everyone's looked at me and thought 'you tearaway' and I just think you all never knew the full story. There's always reasons behind why somebody behaves like they do.



Words of Wisdom

Liberty:

If you meet someone and they're buying you stuff every day and say they love you, think about it and think to yourself, what am I doing? Am I doing the right thing?

Phoenix:

They don't love you and they won't protect you or keep you safe.

Jade:

Speak to somebody older about it. Parents, aunties, friends, a support worker, youth worker or teacher. A trusted person, and not somebody who would take advantage of the situation.

Daniel:

Police and teachers shouldn't treat boys differently to girls because they've been through the exact same thing, been told the same things, and been offered the same things. Just because a boy of 13 is being abused it doesn't mean he can stand up to it and stop it himself – he's still a 13 year old, just like a girl.

Sharon:

Look for the signs. Children that are being abused are withdrawn. They want to be alone. They're looking more tired. They're not doing their work so well.

Daniel:

Pushing someone who's already got a wall up is just going to push them further back in. If someone wanted me to do something I didn't want to do, I now have the confidence to say.

Phoenix:

When they disclose stuff, act on it. Listen to the girls and boys if they're speaking about it.

Natalie:

Workers need to be on your side, until you actually believe they're actually going to be there for you.

Sharon:

You only get one life and no matter who's hurt you, things can get better. Things will get better. You've just got to be strong and find that inner you. Just how I've done it and I'm still smiling, look.

Jade:

I'll have a good job, a nice family, a nice house. And then when they're all like, 'Oh my God how's Jade got that?' And I'll be like two fingers up to the lot of you.

Paige (aged 18):

Don't judge me. You can't handle half of what I've dealt with. You know my name and not my story.

Phoenix:

I wouldn't change any of it though, because it's made me who I am. I don't like victim and I don't like survivor. A victim says that you're still part of that process, you're damaged. Survivor means that you've got through it. The author Shy Keenan calls herself a phoenix... I like that.



If you or someone you know needs support or advice about child sexual exploitation please contact:

SAY SOMETHING

FREEPHONE 116000, OPEN 24/7

CHILDLINE

FREEPHONE 0800 1111, OPEN 24/7

BASIS YOUNG PEOPLE (For girls in Leeds)

0113 243 0036 or visit:

BASISYORKSHIRE.ORG.UK/YOUNGPEOPLE

BLAST PROJECT (For young men in Leeds)

0113 244 4209 or visit:

MESMAC.CO.UK/PROJECTS/BLAST

TIME2 PROJECT

(For young people in York and N. Yorkshire)

01904 620400

The **Breaking Through** project was co-produced by Emily, Nula and Skye working with a researcher, an artist and a CSE support worker, using real stories of moving on from CSE.

It is based on the life stories of Daniel, Jade, Liberty, Natalie, Phoenix and Sharon. Thank you to them for sharing their stories to support others.

It was facilitated by Basis Yorkshire (www.basisyorkshire.org.uk) and the University of York.

Some names have been changed and are chosen by participants in the project.

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WWW.BASISYORKSHIRE.ORG.UK

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Basis
yorkshire

