

LISA'S STORY

...ended at 23 years



13TH MAY 1981 - 17TH FEB 2005

LISA'S STORY



Tanya, shown here on the right, originally from Canada lives in London and works for an international Christian organisation. She tells the story of her sister Lisa.

"I was 5 years old when Lisa was born, I remember being so excited that my mother was pregnant with her, and thinking and choosing names and I remember continually asking her when she was going to be born.

As the years went on and she entered school she found it hard as there was quite a lot of pressure for her. We moved house when she was 9 years old and she had to go to a new school and she found the adjustment quite hard. She was still the same fun person but I did notice a change.

It's easy to think that eating disorders are things that happen to other people. The truth is that eating disorders can affect anyone.

I remember her in her early teens getting more conscious of what she was eating.

I did notice her self esteem just dropping and dropping and I believe that was the starting point to her developing an eating disorder.

Over 70% of eating disorder sufferers say that the first step in their disorder was dieting. Sadly Lisa was one of them.

At 17 she had a proper diagnosis. I wasn't too worried about it. I thought Lisa was just being a bit silly, a young teenage girl and I just thought, 'she'll get over it no problem at all'.

Eating disorders usually begin when someone thinks that if they were thinner it would solve other problems in their life.

She kept losing weight more and more and more. She was in her early 20s but weighed the size of an 8 or 9 year old child.

There were considerable physical effects – liver failure, kidney failure, MRSA and osteoporosis – but she couldn't think clearly anymore. She always knew who her friends and family were, but it really affected her mind.

Then one day my friend with tears in her eyes passed me the phone saying, 'it's your mother – you must be very brave'.

I didn't even have to listen – I remember just screaming, 'no not my sister, not my sister, tell me it's a lie'.

It is possible to recover fully from eating disorders but this needs the right help and support to be given without delay. Tragically every year hundreds of people lose their lives to eating disorders.

I look at that day as the day that I lost her, but actually I lost her way before the 17th February 2005. It's like the Lisa I knew who was in there couldn't get out.

She wasn't a silly girl following a silly diet but someone hurting inside who really wanted someone to listen and to help her.

I'd like people to remember her how she was, so talented, with a beautiful singing voice. She didn't have very high self-esteem which is very bizarre because to see her she was stunning, with everything going for her – very intelligent.

She was an amazing person... and in the end it completely robbed her."



In memory of

Lisa Anne Knight

Born 13th May 1981 Died 17th February 2005

Aged 23 years





Dear Friend

People can develop an eating disorder at any stage of life, but most at risk are children and teenagers. Care for the Family works with many hundreds of parents each year and through our Bereaved Parents Network works with parents who have known the heartache of losing a child. One of the saddest causes of death is because of an eating disorder.

Eating disorders are rarely about vanity; they are often about poor self-esteem and a crippling lack of confidence. They result in illness, misery and isolation for sufferers and their families. And that's why the work of ABC is vital. It is there to stand alongside families and individuals offering much needed support, advice and compassion to the person suffering with the disorder and those who are supporting them. Eating disorders cannot be 'cured' overnight, so ABC sticks with families all the way on the long journey towards recovery and the hope of a different tomorrow.

I heartily commend ABC and their work to you.

With best wishes

Rob Parsons

Executive Chairman, Care for the Family

SOME FACTS...

- EATING DISORDERS CAUSE MORE DEATHS IN UNDER 18 YEAR OLDS THAN ANY OTHER PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER.
- EATING DISORDERS ARE INCREASINGLY COMMON AND AFFECT MEN, WOMEN, GIRLS AND BOYS OF ALL AGES.
- PEOPLE CAN SUFFER AT ANY STAGE OF LIFE, BUT MOST AT RISK ARE CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS.
- SOME STUDIES SUGGEST AS MANY AS 25% OF 11-14 YEAR OLD GIRLS ARE STRUGGLING WITH AN EATING DISORDER.
- THE UK HAS THE HIGHEST RATE OF EATING DISORDERS IN EUROPE.
- EATING DISORDERS AFFECT THE WHOLE FAMILY – BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT. THE RESULTING MISERY, STRESS AND ISOLATION FOR SUFFERERS AND FAMILIES CAN BE OVERWHELMING.
- GOD CAN AND DOES HEAL AND RELEASE THOSE SUFFERING AND IT IS POSSIBLE TO RECOVER FULLY FROM AN EATING DISORDER.
- AS CHRISTIANS WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT SUFFERERS AS THEY WORK TOWARDS RECOVERY.

As many as 1 in 5 sufferers risk losing their life from the illness or from suicide as a result.

An eating disorder is not about seeking attention.
It is about coping with the pressures of life without bothering anyone.

An eating disorder is not about vanity.
It is about poor self esteem and poor confidence.

An eating disorder is not being in control.
It is being trapped and driven by false beliefs and untruths.

An eating disorder is not just about food.
It is depression, anxiety and many are victims of grief, bullying, family break up and even abuse.

An eating disorder is not a decision.
It is not something people can just snap out of.



TESTIMONIALS



“Eating Disorders are part of the great silent burden of mental health problems in our society. Many suffer in silence and shame. ABC’s campaign will help change attitudes of stigma and allow people to find the hope and healing they need and deserve.”

Dr Rob Waller, a director of Mind & Soul



“Mercy Ministries UK wholeheartedly endorses, supports and promotes ABC’s campaign in Eating Disorders Awareness week. As a Christian community, we must rally together to offer a united response to this destructive and life controlling issue.”

Arianna Walker, Executive Director, Mercy Ministries UK



“Thank God for ABC! Years ago in the middle of my battle with an eating disorder I was able to find help, support and understanding at ABC. This made a significant difference on my journey of recovery, and today I am completely free. ABC is a ‘light’ to sufferers and their families where hope is so vitally needed when dealing with such painful and difficult issues.”

Kim Hemsley, founder of New ID

Name: _____

Church: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

- I would like more information about ABC.
- I would like to pray/regularly support ABC financially and receive ___ free copies of Lifeline quarterly. Please send me further details.
- I /we enclose a donation towards the work of ABC.
- Please send me ___ copies of ABC’s training DVD for church and youth leaders at £7 each.
- Please send me ___ copies of ‘Eating Disorders – A Guide For Church Leaders’ at £4.95 each.
- Please send me ___ copies of ‘Sorted’, a manual for youth workers and students at £14.99 for the course.

ABC can also offer professional training for leaders on eating disorders and related issues such as self-harm and suicidal behaviour. If you would like more information about this, please enquire.

Please send to:

ABC, Providence House, The Borough, Wedmore, Somerset BS28 4EG

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT OVER 11 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE UK HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS CONNECTED TO FOOD.

WE RECEIVE NO GOVERNMENT FUNDING OR GRANTS AND ARE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON THE GENEROSITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE ABLE TO KEEP WORKING.

PLEASE HELP US TO STOP MORE PEOPLE LOSING THEIR LIVES TO EATING DISORDERS.

& anorexia
bulimia
care

Charity No: 1114246

Providence House, The Borough,
Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 4EG
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Parent Support Line: 01934 710645
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A Premier Lifeline Resource

