

Newsletter

Edition Oct 2021

free for SURVIVORS
who are Members
of CIS'ters

£12 p.a. subscription for non-members
or organisations

Charity registration:
1184857
(previously 1123125)



www.cisters.org.uk

CIS'ters IS NOT a therapy group: it is a small registered charity, run by survivors
“we might be victim/survivors, but this is not all that we are, or can be”

2021 = Are YOU ok ?

Email: helpme@cisters.org.uk

Phone: 023 80 338080 (answer phone)



So..... are you ok ?

We think we ought to be ok and yet, some of us still have ongoing feelings of fragility, vulnerability, and these can sometimes be linked to the ongoing covid-19 situation – or completely unrelated.

Resilience is something increasingly talked about, but it can be something that is hard to define. Does it mean that we are ‘better’ and have no other issues linked to the past; or does it mean that ‘today’ we feel more resilient than we did yesterday, and that is ok. It might mean we have to work on this every day, and accept that some days we are more or less resilient than the day before.

We might have to accept that, in common with the general public, we will always face unexpected traumas and dramas – and being resilient is how we survive some of these, or all of them, or none of them.

So..... are we ok ?

Well, we continue to rebuild our small team. The office team is still depleted with: Cathie recently returned following an impactful covid infection, Gillian recovering from an operation to fit a pacemaker (which we have started to call GBot (Gillian’s robot)) and Kate doing all she can to juggle the 101 tasks/priorities that seem to zoom her way. Thank goodness for Avril who comes in once a week to help keep the place looking tidy (amongst all the other drama).

Finally, apologies for the delay of this newsletter which we have finally managed to complete despite the ups and downs of the last few months.



Emotional v Physical

Gosh the last four months have been somewhat of a roller coaster for me, more so than usual. Feeling progressively unwell and struggling to get GP appointments.

Wondering if the increasing internal feeling of heart fluttering due to anxiety or something else such as burn-out (which would be a real possibility given the last 2 years).

Finally, an answer which presented me with unexpected dilemmas. I needed a pacemaker !

Submitting myself to an operation to have a pacemaker fitted meant being vulnerable at a time when emotionally that had become an issue. That's the bit I find the most puzzling. Why was it an issue? Decades ago I had a large number of gynae ops without being overly impacted (trauma wise) and yet, in the last 3 years each time I have needed a procedure which involved 'touch' it was an issue for me. The difference in the before and after has been something which has puzzled me. I believe it is that, although still resilient, I have lost some of the ability to dissociate that I had harnessed in those early years, the ability to maintain the mask of 'I am ok' when I was not. **Now**, when I am not ok, I can choose to let others know – but in doing so, it means that when I face procedures like colonoscopies, mammograms, and the pacemaker, I am feeling (very much so) 'vulnerable'. I am no longer able to pull the mask on so quickly or tightly. This is the unexpected downside to being 'more open'. So..... pondering on this prior to the pacemaker date I decided to go with the flow....to let others know how fragile I was feeling rather than present as 'strong Gillian'.... I would let others see 'the frightened Gillian'.

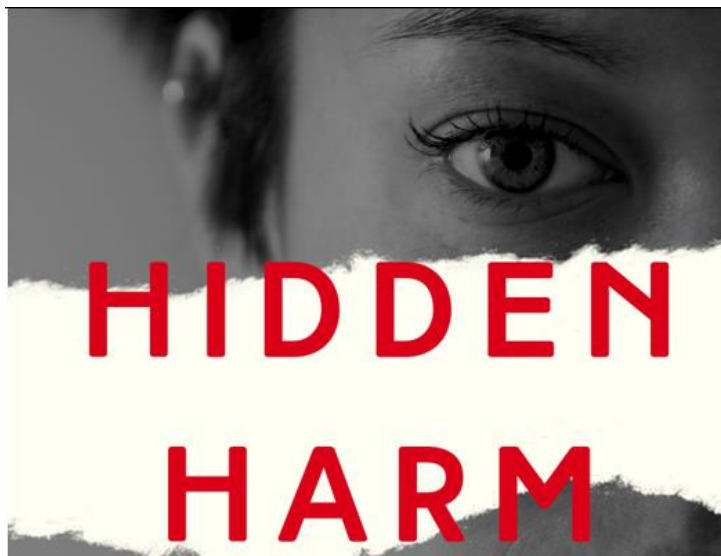
In the weeks running up to the operation (to be done with a local anaesthetic) I had an appointment with the consultant and let him know that I had experienced *a sexual trauma* and that the planned operation was triggering for me (being awake, lying still, no control). The consultant listened and with my permission, put in place a level of 'trauma awareness' within the team I would be meeting on the day of the operation (theatre and ward). I can honestly say that the sensitivity I received did help on the day. They were professional (which would be as expected) but also gave me the much-needed cushion of care that ensured that the trauma triggers I was being exposed to were kept to a minimum. Each time I was at risk of bouncing out of my 'window of tolerance' I was eased back into the optimum frame.

In those early operations decades ago I definitely experienced less of an emotional roller-coaster (before/after) so my reaction this time was unexpected - forgetting that I was in my 20s/30s all those years ago – and am now 70.

Others persist in telling me that having a pacemaker is a small op. But my reaction has been so much more. It has taken me far longer and I am still in recovery. No infections, just the emotions of getting used to my pacemaker (I have nicknamed the "GBot") and the tiredness (linked to my fibromyalgia, or not ?). But, the op has also given me the opportunity to reflect on how lucky I am to have the support of equitable friendships and relationships and realisation that this was something I did NOT have all those years ago. Plus, being able to show I needed help now (emotionally) was NOT something I could do decades ago. That saying "I am not ok" is something that I can and do say now. That – amazingly, it is ok not to be ok. That it is ok to ask for help, and appreciate the help that is given.

A special shout out to a dear friend called Lesley who answered my unexpected plea for help the day after my operation, as I needed a bra adjustment (something I had failed to consider in all of my preparations). She came over the same day and sorted out a suitable contraption for me to wear whilst my body is getting used to the weight of the pacemaker; and not chafe against the pacemaker incision whilst it heals. Thank you Lesley – my tears turned from pain to laughter and appreciation.

Thank you to everyone for the love and care you have given to me. It has meant, and means, a lot to me, Gillian x x x x



Hidden Harm is our podcast channel project (funded by NHSI) and to date we have created 28 editions.

Many of the titles/subjects have been suggested by our members/others – and if you would like an issue considered for inclusion please do contact us either by email or leaving a message (and your name/contact details) on our answer phone.

<https://cisters.org.uk/pocastsnewslettersurvivors-voices/podcasts/>

or

<https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/18173600> and then click 'more episodes' to see the complete directory of podcasts

| Episode | Title | Length |
|---------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Introducing CIS'ters – How It All Began | 7 mins 6 secs |
| 2 | What Do Survivors Talk About ? | 7 mins 28 secs |
| 3 | Hurdles To Telling As A Child | 14 mins 8 secs |
| 4 | Disclosing As An Adult | 14 mins 24 secs |
| 5 | Telling Partners, Family and Friends | 15 mins 21 secs |
| 6 | Disclosing To Your Family Of Origin | 8 mins 36 secs |
| 7 | Coping Strategies | 10 mins 51 secs |
| 8 | The Pressure To Forgive | 10 mins 17 secs |
| 9 | Loss | 8 mins 59 secs |
| 10 | Collaborative Working | 8 mins 27 secs |
| 11 | The Power of Music (sometimes called 'warrior' music) | 15 mins 23 secs |
| 12 | Isolation Through The Eyes of Survivors | 11 mins 44 secs |
| 13 | Learning Something New | 9 mins 59 secs |
| 14 | <i>Obs and Gynae</i> | <i>Being redone</i> |
| 15 | Self-Neglect and Self-Harm | 12 mins 24 secs |
| 16 | Everyone's Invited (<i>our response to this initiative</i>) | 14 mins 8 secs |
| 17 | Domestic Abuse | 9 mins 16 secs |
| 18 | When An Abuser Dies | 9 mins 41 secs |
| 19 | Interview with Fay Maxted OBE, the CEO of The Survivors Trust | 14 mins 34 secs |
| 20 | Reflections On the Past Few Months | 5 mins 8 secs |
| 21 | Counselling and Therapy | 13 mins 11 secs |

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|----|--|-----------------|
| 22 | Mind Your Language | 9 mins 52 secs |
| 23 | Trauma and Physical Health | 8 mins 40 secs |
| 24 | Abusers Can Be Female | 7 mins 14 secs |
| 25 | Institutional CSA Cover-Ups | 8 mins 6 secs |
| 26 | ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors/Advocates) | 13 mins 30 secs |
| 27 | You Think I'm Alright. You are Wrong | 7 mins 34 secs |
| 28 | Adverse Childhood Experience | 17 mins 2 secs |
| 29 | Window of Tolerance | Upload soon |

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE ? (source: www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychopedia/window-of-tolerance)

Window of tolerance is a term used to describe the zone of arousal in which a person is able to function most effectively. When people are within this zone, they are typically able to readily receive, process, and integrate information and otherwise respond to the demands of everyday life without much difficulty. This optimal window was first named as such by [Dan Siegel](#).

WHAT IS THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE?

When a person is within their window of tolerance, it is generally the case that the [brain](#) is functioning well and can effectively process stimuli. That person is likely to be able to reflect, think rationally, and make decisions calmly without feeling either overwhelmed or withdrawn.

During times of extreme [stress](#), people often experience periods of either hyper- or hypo-arousal.

- Hyper-arousal, otherwise known as the [fight/flight response](#), is often characterized by hypervigilance, feelings of [anxiety](#) and/or [panic](#), and racing thoughts.
- Hypo-arousal, or a freeze response, may cause feelings of emotional numbness, [emptiness](#), or paralysis.

In either of these states, an individual may become unable to process stimuli effectively. The prefrontal cortex region of the brain shuts down, in a manner of speaking, affecting the ability to think rationally and often leading to the development of feelings of dysregulation, which may take the form of chaotic responses or overly rigid ones. In these periods, a person can be said to be outside the window of tolerance.

Each individual's window of tolerance is different. Those who have a narrow window of tolerance may often feel as if their [emotions](#) are intense and difficult to manage. Others with a wider window of tolerance may be able to handle intense emotions or situations without feeling like their ability to function has been significantly impacted.

The window of tolerance can also be affected by environment: people are generally more able to remain within the window when they feel safe and supported.

Most people move between these varying states of arousal from time to time. [Trauma](#) and/or extreme stress often make it more likely a person will become either hyper- or hypo-aroused.

THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE IN RELATION TO MENTAL HEALTH

The stress of a traumatic or otherwise negative event may have the effect of "pushing" a person out of their window of tolerance. People who have experienced a traumatic event may respond to stressors, even minor ones, with extreme hyper- or hypo-arousal. As a result of their experiences, they may come to believe the world is unsafe and may operate with a window of tolerance that has become more narrow or inflexible as a result. A narrowed window of tolerance may cause people

to perceive danger more readily and react to real and imagined threats with either a fight/flight response or a freeze response.

People who frequently operate outside of their window of tolerance may experience mental health issues, such as [depression](#) and anxiety.

A person who is often in a state of hyper-arousal may develop symptoms of posttraumatic stress, such as [flashbacks](#), nightmares, and [derealization](#). A person who is often in a state of hypo-arousal may dissociate, have [memory](#) issues, and experience feelings of depersonalization.

MANAGING THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

It is possible for individuals who have become dysregulated to use techniques to return to their window of tolerance. Grounding and [mindfulness skills](#), techniques considered beneficial by many mental health experts, can often help people remain in the present moment. By focusing on the physical sensations currently being experienced, for example, people are often able to remain in the present, calming and soothing themselves enough to effectively manage extreme arousal. These techniques, and others, can be learned in [therapy](#).

Many individuals are able to widen their window of tolerance and, by doing so, increase their sense of calm and become able to deal with stress in more adaptive ways. Therapy, which provides a safe space for people to process painful memories and emotions, can be a helpful step for many. With the help of a mental health professional, individuals are often able to make contact with their emotions without becoming so dysregulated that they cannot integrate them. Increasing emotional regulation capabilities in this way can lead to a wider window of tolerance and prevent dysregulation.

References:

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4. Trauma, power-based violence, and sexual health. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://sapac.umich.edu/article/trauma-power-based-violence-sexual-health>
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Message from Gillian:

There is a really good online animation which explains the window of tolerance produced by The Beacon House > <https://youtu.be/Wcm-1FBrDvU>. Based in Sussex they are a specialist centre for children who have experienced trauma. The videos and other resources they have available on their website are useful for both children and adults, and **CIS'ters** have highlighted their website as 'informative'. www.beaconhouse.org.uk

In addition, CIS'ters is in the process of uploading other information on The Window of Tolerance onto our website > it will be possible to find it on the following web-page:

<https://cisters.org.uk/the-impact/> - and will be under a sub-heading of 'Window'

Window of Tolerance

Hyperaroused State

- Fight/flight response
- Emotional reactivity
- Sweaty palms, increased heart rate
- Difficulty concentrating
- Panic, rage
- Hyper-vigilance

Optimal Level of Functioning

- Present, Calm and Safe
- Can think and respond clearly
- Engaged and alert

Hypoaroused State

- Freeze response
- Lethargic, low energy
- Numb, Lack of emotions
- Little to no physical movement
- Zoning out, dissociation
- Shut down

An account of PTSD by a CSA survivor - Thank you to Elizabeth Shane who contacted us to ask us to include this item within a newsletter.

Life Beyond Words

Words once spoken cannot be returned. Whether asked for or not, a diagnosis is given. Truth heard in hushed sounds within my head. Dare I say it out loud or has shame clouded the reflection misted over? Wipe away the residue or maybe not? Perhaps I can pretend time has frozen. Underneath, everything can remain the same. Who do I trust? Perhaps I will board the runaway train. No return ticket required for an unknown destination.

Yet somehow, I know. Deep within the core of my soul, no lines need be told, the story is permanently etched, unwanted carvings, pieces taken, one day, one month, one year, claiming hostage of mind. Scrambled thoughts running out of space to hide until now. With clarity comes fear. A flickering moment when sense prevails. Is this what it means to lose control, lapse of time, recurring flashbacks, dreams of the day become reality of night? On guard young soldier, be ready for battle.

Is this what it feels like when words dance across crisp white lines of a blacked-out landscape? Resignation or acceptance? Defeat or acknowledgement? Men in white coats tiptoeing around, like dots of clouds passing by. Hush and be calm. The first moment, each occasion and every reoccurrence. It's not a flurry of madness or a clock whizzing rapid hands around a pounding heart. Stand down young soldier and fight no more.

Say the words again but louder. At first it will crush the breath from your chest as your mouth gasps a ghostly whisper. Imagination has not fled in shock. This is PTSD. I will repeat slowly. This is PTSD. Complex. Misunderstood by those in unworn shoes. A body wants to flee but my eyes hold a steadfast gaze. No more stigma, no more hiding, no more shame. My mental illness has been given a name. Strength comes with knowledge, knowledge comes with power, power comes with freedom, freedom comes with a voice. My voice, your voice, our voice, one voice.

© Elizabeth Shane 27.06.21 (CSA Survivor)

Masks – What one shall I wear today!

Check the weather, nice and sunny! Oh Good! I'll wear a smiley mask today!

Raining! Still a smiley mask! Rain gives life to the beauty of our gardens, to our plants, our herbs, our healers! Being a Survivor, I've had to wear many masks! As a teenager, a rebellious, stropky one!

As a young woman, wife and mother, many masks were worn. I didn't want my husband or children to see the hurt/shame in me! But I didn't know why I was hurt or felt ashamed !

In my late '30's, a chance conversation with a cousin triggered flashbacks on several incidents of childhood sexual abuse that happened when I was a child !

Anger, hurt, shame, devastation! Who could I turn to! Who could/would help ? Images forcing their way into my consciousness! More importantly ! Who would believe a child ! A child that was usually creating problems, being cheeky!

Then, in the late 1990s, I found **CIS'ters** by chance and realised that what happened to me was not my fault ! It wasn't me who caused all the hurt and anger !

I was in my '60's (some years later) when I decided to go to the Police and found the courage to do so. They were extremely helpful, I felt believed. My inner child, sighed with relief! No more masks ? ! !

But even so, wearing masks still goes on, depending on the situation, the event or even just what happens on a daily occurrence. Now everyone wears masks ! Not just for the trauma they experienced as a child, but the worldwide circumstances we find ourselves in with the COVID 19 Pandemic !

But today, I'm wearing a smiley mask, not just because we need to because of the Pandemic, but my inner child is growing stronger and is confident enough not just to put a brave face on, but that's the way my inner child feels! Brave ! Sending everyone love and best wishes, Cathie (143)

Thankfully a calm sea-day on 21st July 2021

CIS'ters, like many other charities, is very lucky to benefit from the kindness of others.



In early 2020 we were chosen by BIZPEDIA (a business networking organisation) as their designated charity after being nominated by Wayne (from Abbey Office Solutions).

Then along came Covid-19 and everything was put on hold as individual business necessarily focused on their own financial survival rather than ours. We were really appreciative in the Spring of 2021 that Josh from BIZPEDIA reaffirmed their decision to raise funds for us (to take place in Spring of 2022). In addition, Gillian and Kate were invited to take part in a BIZPEDIA networking event being held on 21st July 2021.

When we heard they would be on a yacht (one of seven) sailing across from Lymington to Yarmouth to attend a BBQ and then back, we knew Gillian and Kate would experience a much needed adventure.

Feedback from Gillian and Kate was heart-warming in that the BIZPEDIA attendees they each spoke to were enthusiastic about raising funds for our small charity.

Technology > Gosh it has been a busy time !



During recent months we have replaced our office IT equipment (thanks to Lloyds Bank Foundation) and also thanks to Adam (IP Technologies Hampshire) who set it all up for us (plus his ongoing help and support). In addition the invaluable help from Steve at Net Primates and Rob at VOIP-Unlimited who have recently upgraded our out-dated phone system

The support and help provided by donors (individual and organisations) plus assistance from local companies is critical to our survival and the work we do to reach out to members/others. It is important that we acknowledge the help and support we receive. Without this level of support we would not be here. **THANK YOU EVERYONE!**



Member Weekend Workshop is in May 2022

This is a one-night residential event for our members.

It provides an opportunity for members, from far and wide, to meet within a safe and confidential space.

21 – 22 May 2022 is an event for members

We wanted to let give you an update on the important work of this Inquiry, and of the Inquiry's Truth Project which is one of the strands of work within the Government funded initiative.

IICSA - Truth Project:

Over 6,000 victim and survivors of sexual abuse during childhood have now shared their experience with the Truth project which was launched in 2015, describing feelings of empowerment and catharsis and many stating that they finally felt listened to. This portion of the Inquiry's work closes on 31st October 2021.

"It was a huge weight off my shoulders to finally be able to share my story. I can't thank the Truth Project enough for their support and kindness throughout the whole process. Even if my story helps just one child in the future it's absolutely worth it."

<https://www.truthproject.org.uk/i-will-be-heard>

IICSA – Multiple Failings in responses to csa claims against Lord Janner QC

For the 'Institutional responses to allegations of child sexual abuse involving the late Lord Janner of Braunstone QC' investigation, the Inquiry received information relating to 33 alleged victims, including details of their allegations against Lord Janner, which spanned three decades, alongside the outcome of the police investigation into those complaints. A copy of the IICSA report can be downloaded from: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/investigation/lord-janner>

Professor Alexis Jay, the Chair of the Inquiry, stated that:

"This investigation has brought up themes we are now extremely familiar with, such as deference to powerful individuals, the barriers to reporting faced by children and the need for institutions to have clear policies and procedures setting out how to respond to allegations of child sexual abuse, regardless of the prominence of the alleged abuser."

IICSA – Disempowering experiences of criminal justice system

"The fear of not being believed is monumental," Forum Members emphasised that summoning up the courage to report, only to be told that they cannot find the records which once existed is again disempowering. This report produced in 2019 emphasises the kind of difficulties victim/survivors experienced within the criminal justice system after reporting.

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/11693/view/criminal-justice-system-forum-report-may-19.pdf>

Southampton City now has a local lottery – which gives charities like ours the opportunity to raise funds whilst letting people win for themselves.

This is a new endeavour for us and not yet sure whether this is a route we should be taking.

Give us some feedback ! <https://www.solotto.org.uk/support/cisters>

Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP) for police/CPS no further action decisions prior to 5/6/2013

If you are a victim or survivor of alleged child sexual offences and this has been previously reported to the police, and:

- **the police or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) made a decision PRIOR TO 5th June 2013** not to proceed, you can ask for a Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP)

What the CSARP will do

The panel will decide if the approach taken by the police or the CPS at the time was wrong.

If the CSARP thinks the approach was wrong then they'll advise the police that they should reinvestigate the allegations, or advise the CPS that they should review the decision not to prosecute. What the police or CPS decide to do will be up to them.

If the CSARP agrees with the original decision to take no further action, the victim/survivor will be told by letter and given advice and information.

Cases that can be reviewed by the CSARP

The panel can review cases where:

- the allegations were previously reported to the police
- the alleged offences were committed when the victim or survivor was under 18 years of age
- the police or the CPS decided not to take any further action
- the decision was taken before 5 June 2013
- the alleged offender may still pose a risk
- the alleged offence was committed in England and Wales

It doesn't matter if a victim/survivor have already asked the police or CPS to review their decision. CSARP can still consider your case.

Cases that the CSARP are unable to review

The panel won't review cases if:

- the victim has not previously reported the allegations to the police, as this will be a new that we will need to investigate
- there is new evidence which means the case will be re-investigated
- the case was investigated and the police or CPS decided not to take further action on or after 5 June 2013 – in which case > *If the decision was taken on or after 5 June 2013 then you can challenge under the Victims Right to Review scheme* > <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/victims-right-review-scheme>

How to apply for a CSARP review

If you want the CSARP to look at your case you can:

- Email the CSARP directly > nationalpanel@npcc.pnn.police.uk
- ask the police or Crown Prosecution Service to take your case to the panel

ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP A RESEARCH PROJECT ?

We are often approached by university students and others who are undertaken research on topics related to sexual abuse during childhood and enduring impact into adulthood. In the majority of cases the theme being researched is not new and so our approach is to only engage directly where the related approach is new or innovative. We have become aware of some research being undertaken which

focuses on the experiences of mindfulness (courses) among adult survivors of child sexual abuse. The researcher is, herself, an adult survivor undertaking Postgraduate Research through Coventry University.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of how adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse experience mindfulness and how this experience has impacted you as a survivor.

Criteria to be considered as a participant ?

Have to be:

- 18 years or over *and*
- a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, *who must have previously*
- undertaken a mindfulness **course** (e.g. 8 sessions) in person, online, or via a self-learning resource.

Important to note that 'introduction to mindfulness courses, which are much shorter in length, would not be considered at this time.

What are the benefits of taking part – if you are accepted ?

By sharing your experiences with the researchers they, and other survivors, will better understand the experience of engaging with mindfulness as an adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse. The study has the potential to increase understanding around an area of which there is currently little research, and therefore expand the pool of knowledge to other researchers, survivors, and mindfulness providers. It is hoped this new knowledge will support survivors to make more informed choices around mindfulness engagement, and influence mindfulness providers to better support the wellbeing of survivors.

How to contact the researcher ?

If you are a member, and fit the criteria above, we can provide you with contact details for the researcher.

- ring our helpline 023 80 338080 and leave a message explaining you want to be considered as a research participant and leave your name and phone number; or
- email us: admin@cisters.org.uk explaining what kind of course/duration you have previously undertaken and that you wish to be considered by the researcher as a participant.

A message from Jen (700)

I wrote this poem (*on next page*) as a form of therapy which I sought after my sister had formally and suddenly estranged/ cut me off in 2018 and has had no contact with me or my mother since. Although, as a child and teenager I had suffered sexually abuse by my father, my sister (eleven years younger than me) had sadly suffered some emotional neglect and physical abuse from him. In adulthood she treated me emotionally the same way my father had treated her and it wasn't until the past 10 years that I learnt to be more assertive with her and tentatively challenge her retorts and rather toxic behaviour towards me.

She was, and always will be my sister, whom I love, but I needed and wanted to stand up for myself and stop the bullying and undermining behaviour she afforded me. Sadly she did not like this 'new' version of me and, instead of respecting me, decided to distance herself, in one final verbal enraged rant, leaving me fairly traumatised and upset for me and for her.

Some readers will be thinking, as I do, that my sister is a very troubled soul and so she probably is, but in my opinion, she does need to take responsibility for her life now and seek professional support, as I did, and I did advise her of this in my last words to her.

Poem by Jen (700)

I will give my sister's behaviour "the benefit of the doubt".
I will try and understand why she had to rant and shout.
Maybe she has a ball of pain, so large as to consume her brain ?
Or is it that she is insane ? Will she maintain her disdain
Of me and retain, again, being inhumane ?
I will attempt to think 'empathic' and show compassion, if erratic.
Although I do not patronise, and find it hard to sympathise
With her behaviour so extreme, geared to lower my self-esteem.
She threw her pain into my face, her spears of anger thrown full pace.
What hidden thoughts fuelled such a base ?
What darkness grows in her mind's bad place ?
Projecting outward her disgrace which etches lines across my face.
Once upon a while or so, more than fifty years ago,
A sweet and funny little girl, without the slightest hint of churl,
With reddest hair and brightest smile, would tease and trick us all the while.
Can it be, this is the same person who has come to blame
Me for her accumulated stuff ? The same as she in constant huff ?
She so rough with cruel rebuff ? Enough !

She needs to deal with it, it's tough.
She set her life on such a path to become a classic sociopath.
Why would this happen ? Why ? I ask, "is my lil sis underneath that mask ?"
It feels like loss and grief unfold, my tears no more can I withhold.
Our life choices poles apart. And so, where on earth do I start
To regain that bond, once fond, of each other ? I was almost like a second mother,
My being older by eleven years.
Questions flow like scraping tears
Scratching doubts and stirring fears. Which are mine and which are hers ?
Safe sounds becalm my noisy mind, knowing need to now unwind
What becomes of us, I am yet to find.

Editorial Statement: We welcome letters from Survivors and from those who support them such as friends/allies/counsellors/social workers etc. While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments when necessary, and will note it as 'edited'. Decisions about the inclusion & amendment of contributions are the responsibility of the Editorial Team, and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views & opinions of **CIS'ters**, members of the Trust Board, or the Editorial Team. Inclusion of any reference to an individual, book list, or organisation resource is not a recommendation.

The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only.

This newsletter is not a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision.

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