



Dealing with divorce and suffering separation -

Pinkii Walaa, 16

You come home to see it spotless and beautiful. You see your mum baking your favourite type of cookie; your father coming home and bringing all the doosh, teaching you how to ride a bike, taking you to the zoo. And your siblings, who never argue, let you have the remote control right away. Life's bliss eh? Well, I'll tell you straight, a perfect family doesn't exist. Every home has its glitches, and, in my case, glitches eventually led to separation.

Separation of parents often means changing schools, losing friends, not seeing parents on a regular basis and experiencing family conflict. I'm 16

down everything we said.

I've never felt anything as horrible as the feeling of my family being torn apart.

Psychologically it has affected me. I don't see my father much now. I only have my mum's view (which is biased and full of emotion) to form an opinion of him and my brothers.

I know this may sound awful, but I often forget they even exist. Since splitting we've just never really kept in contact. It seems that on both sides we had been 'brainwashed'. I can recall how many times I've said 'dad' since the break up.

The hardest thing to face was the rejection. My mum fought for eight years to have my other two brothers back, so at least we could have a proper childhood, as a family unit minus a dad. She wanted her kids more than anything and I wanted my dad more than anything,

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now, and I have three brothers; I'm the youngest and the only girl. My mum and dad split and now I rarely see half my family. It's pretty sad.

When my parents divorced two of my brothers were taken away from me to live with my dad. I stayed with my mum and eldest brother. I felt odd and singled out in primary school: everybody used to ask me where my brothers were, and why they were suddenly gone? The teachers started acting friendlier than usual, being extra nice to me. I could sense pity.

The whole fiasco occurred when I was very young, but I have vivid memories of us all together.

Everything just seemed to fit into place like a jigsaw puzzle, but now, most of those parts have vanished.

During the custody battle I felt like my brothers and I were objects being played around by the court. Every so often social workers would interfere in our lives, just barge in whenever they felt like it, writing

but he was out of the picture, and this is where the rejection lies I suppose; he never fought for us; he never wanted us...

My life's completely normal with my mum and older brother, and everything is well and good.

Nevertheless my relationship with my other brothers isn't 'real' anymore. But the past is the past and there's nothing you can do to change it. You move on.

It's common for the child to think that divorce is somehow their fault. You have to know that it all comes down to the issues between both parents.

Divorce will often leave children with emotions that can be too much to handle. So it's a good idea to talk to a member of your family, a friend or just someone you trust. Just give it time and always look at the bright side of things.

Divorce made me a better listener, more responsible and a good problem solver.

Visit Childline on www.childline.org.uk for further advice and guidance.

Exposure spreads across north London!

By Melissa Gitari, 16

Exposure magazine is a voice for young people. For over 15 years we've been a Haringey only publication (although we've always worked with young people from all areas). Things have changed. The latest issue of Exposure was distributed across north London for the first time. Both Enfield and Barnet Youth Services jumped at the chance to make copies of our award-winning publication at their venues, while schools, colleges and youth clubs in Hackney and Islington were also eager to take the magazine.

To meet demand, with the help of the Big Lottery Fund, we're printing a thousand extra copies of Exposure; this comes just nine months after having our core-funding cut by Haringey Youth Service. The increased circulation is making the magazine even more attractive to north London companies who are keen to advertise their products to local teenagers.

Exposure is moving on to bigger and better things. North London now, the rest of the world later!



Trustworthy?

Exposure is always on the look out for dedicated trustees to oversee our charitable work. The voluntary position is open to anyone interested in the media world and in supporting young people. It's ideally suited to retired local professionals with a legal, financial, PR, media, local government or teaching background. Please call Andy on 020 8883 0260 for more details. Thank you.