

## **Nia – child abuse**

It happened when I was between . . . I can't remember the exact age, but it was between 5 and 7, but I never told anyone until I was a senior in high school—17. The one that I was abused by was my—at the time—my best friend's older brother. He was about . . . we were the same age; he was about 7 years older than us. And it all started off with a hugging game. He would take us into his room—her and I individually—and just . . . we would sit on his lap and he would hug us, and to any child, that feels really good. It was a fun game, you know, but he was very weird about it. He said we couldn't even talk to each other about it. Her and I couldn't talk to each other about it. Every time she would leave the room, he would jump on me. He never—I was never penetrated vaginally. It was always oral. Um . . . mostly he would lay on top of me. I couldn't even breathe. He would say stupid things like, well, “why didn't you say something?” How could I?

When I told my mom, I remember we were in my room, and I just kind of broke down. I started crying and I ran out of my room and ran downstairs, and it was like “I didn't want to tell you this.” I didn't—she's going, “what don't you want to tell me?” And finally I just laid it all out there for her, and she was very—I mean, she was upset, she was hurt.

And I didn't tell her who it was. I didn't tell her for about a year or so who it was. It took a while for me to tell her.

She got me into therapy right away. It was never a question of, are you sure this happened? You know? Are you sure you're not making this up? Or you're just remembering things wrong? She never doubted me. And to this day, I wish I had said something to her years before, but . . . I couldn't.

I was depressed for a long time. I didn't even realize I was so depressed for a long time. All I ever did was sit in my room and watch television and eat. I have a hard time trusting people. Or I just jump in, like, feet first without them giving me any reason to really trust them. Usually I find—I've gotten burned like that a lot of times, but it's like because I feel as though when I was that young, I wanted to be able to do that with someone and I couldn't, so now I'm still kind of looking for that.

When I walk into a room, within 10 minutes of being in that room I know every way out of that room, including if I had to jump out of a window. And it's just—it's like instinct to me now. I don't even realize that I do it anymore, but I'm always looking for an out. I'm never trying to be trapped in a corner. Never again.

I recognize now that it's not about sex at all; it's all about power. And I really do feel that a lot of them get off on that. Um . . . the whole idea of you hurt me, you know, you're hurting people. I think that's what they're looking for. It's weird for me to talk about this because it's so third person, 'cause I do feel as though she's still with me, she's still in there. That little girl is still . . . you know, she cries sometimes still, and it's like, it's okay. It's okay to cry.

I mean, I'm still angry. I think I have every right to be angry. But it doesn't rule my life anymore.