



## Speaking from Experience Families & Chronic Illness

### Transcript for chapter 3 of 8: School & friends

**Jessica and Alister (age 17 and 18, respectively, both cared for grandfather):** Our education, to us, was important, because he was a very educated person, my Pop. And he had done well through school and everything so he wanted us to be good. So it just kind of pushed me to go that bit extra further to do something for myself, but him be proud of it too. And being sick, I kind of drifted, because I was at school at the time and I didn't want to go to school. But now that I'm back into studying again, doing my course, it helps me.

**Sheridan (age 16, parents with illness):** It's always affected me through school and I've always had my grades lower. It's always been an absolute struggle. I've had counselling support all of these years, especially still up until now. And I've been getting a lot of help through that as well. But it hurts a lot.

**Lisa (age 14, cared for grandmother):** My studying: I had a little bit of time for that but not very much. But I passed a bit of it, but it was really hard. And seeing my nanna at home, really sick like that, just didn't help at all.

**Shiralee (age 22, cared for father):** It did have an effect on my schooling at the time, with my dad being ill. I probably went to school one day a week, because there was so much happening with my dad being sick. I didn't go to school one time for nearly four weeks. And I went back to school and I got a phone call from the office saying that my oldest brother was coming to pick me up. And it was my dad - he was in a coma. And that hit me pretty bad after that.

**Jessica and Alister:** In classes I couldn't do anything, I just sat there thinking. I didn't know what to do.

**Jessica and Alister:** It was hard.

**Jessica and Alister:** Yeah, sometimes we had to leave school early and quickly rush over there to see him, because he was getting sick sometimes.

**Shiralee:** The school did support me during that period, but you just get some people who will say all kinds of stuff and it will get you upset. I would try to block it out, but I couldn't do it - block it out - because it just had so much impact on me.

**Simon (age 18, Shiralee's brother):** In school, a couple of kids kept teasing me, doing the wrong thing. And I was just snapping at the littlest thing and starting fights, getting suspended, not helping mum out.

**Shiralee:** A girl said to me, "Oh, I hope that your dad's alright, but I hope he dies in a way." And that just set me mental and I just went off.

**Jessica and Alister:** Some people said to me, "How's your Pop going?" They didn't know he'd passed away. Other people told them; I didn't say anything. I just didn't talk. But then other people were like, "Nah, he passed away." And they said "Oh..." they didn't know. It made me feel a bit down.

**Jessica and Alister:** For me, it was people asking was I alright, all the time. So, that was the hard part.

**Lisa:** I didn't really have time for myself. I always had to help her out and we were always going to hospital, seeing doctors about her illnesses, stuff like that, which was really hard on my mum too.



**Aaron (age 17, cared for grandparents):** No one really knows how hard it is unless they do it themselves.

**Lisa:** My friends didn't really understand, not very much. Because they haven't been in that situation before, so they didn't understand.

**Jessica and Alister:** Some people didn't understand and some people did. So you've just got to keep to yourself sometimes.

**Aaron:** We never really talked to anyone. We just kept it between each other, between us all, all our family.

**Lisa:** My friends knew about my Nan being sick and they always wanted me to come out with them to shopping and stuff. But I knew I couldn't because I had to help her. It was really sad and they always wanted me to come out with them to the movies and stuff.

**Jessica and Alister:** We hardly went out, just stayed home and took care of him.

**Jessica and Alister:** I didn't mind it though. I didn't mind staying home and my friends knew, they understood what was going on. So after everything I kind of got back to talking to everyone again.