

A TEENAGE HORROR STORY



Can you imagine what it feels like to lose a child to drugs?

It has been three years since my precious daughter, Ashley, lost her life to drugs. She was only 20 years old at the time.

We watched Ashley grow up from an intelligent, energetic child into a university undergraduate with a promising future. She was beautiful, bright and popular. Everyone loved her natural charm and great sense of humour. She had everything to live for – or so it seemed.

At the age of 19, Ashley suddenly became a different person. Our usually sociable daughter became withdrawn and aloof. She lost weight and appetite. From time to time, she became easily paranoid, characterised by her strangely erratic behaviours. She even turned aggressive on us on a couple of occasions. Oh, we were so naive then. Instead of seeing these signs and symptoms as precursors of a deeper problem, we merely dismissed them as 'a rebellious phase' that teenagers go through.

Ashley was able to keep her drug habits a secret from everyone. We never found out when and how she started or who was supplying drugs to her. None of her friends knew what she was up to. It was too late when we found out.

She had gone to a house party with friends that fateful night. Halfway through, she left abruptly without telling anyone. It was her addiction that called - one that was bigger than friends, family, and even life itself. The following morning, we received a call from the police and were informed that Ashley was found lying unconscious on a park bench. She was rushed to the hospital immediately, but when we arrived,

the dreaded piece of news was delivered by her doctor. That, was the last time we saw Ashley. There was no chance for a proper goodbye. The post-mortem toxicology test detected high concentrations of alcohol and methamphetamine in her body. Ashley was likely to have died from acute poisoning due to the combined effects of alcohol and methamphetamine.

Looking back, we should have seen the signs and could have taken steps to save our daughter if only we had chosen to intervene early. Instead of seeking treatment for Ashley, our initial reactions were denial – 'Not our child! She has everything! Not possible!' We thought we were good parents because we had given her everything she had wanted. However, the failure to accept our child's struggles and our unwillingness to confront the hard truth had cost us our daughter's life.

This is our story but it could also happen to anyone. Drug abuse ravages lives and destroys families in ways you cannot even begin to imagine. Do not make the same mistakes we did as parents. Be involved in the life of your teenager and be aware of what is going on. Do not let this happen to your son or daughter, because with drugs, there is no turning back.

WARNING!

IN MAY 2014, 6 PEOPLE DIED FROM DRUG OVERDOSE WHILE ATTENDING THE FUTURE MUSIC FESTIVAL ASIA CONCERT IN KUALA LUMPUR.