



Cruse Jubilee Conference – 17 July 2009

Providing a **WAY** forward for
those **W**idowed **A**nd **Y**oung

Welcome!

Aim – to help you understand more about WAY and what we do to support those widowed and young...

- **Caroline Doughty (Chairman of WAY)**
- **Paul Hutt (Promotions Manager, WAY Committee)**

Many of you will have heard of WAY?

You may have referred people to us....



Why does WAY exist?

- WAY is a membership organisation providing a self-help social and support network for men and women who were widowed when aged 50 or under, and their children (married or not, gay or straight)
- There are around 140,000 men and women widowed under the age of 50 in the UK
- WAY is a community of young widows and widowers across the country, united by our common situation
- WAY does not just help those widowed young, it provides support and interaction for their children too, if they have them
- We understand, because we have been there
- And we can help through our understanding and shared experience



Twelve years and counting...

- Founded in 1997 by Caroline Sarll after the death of her brother in law, when she was unable to find help or support for her sister
- Funded by bursary from YOU magazine
- Started small: 30 people attended first meeting in Cardiff.....
- Member subscription only £15 a year



Being Widowed Young is Different

- **Many have young children (previously the main carer or not...)
(quite a few pregnant when widowed)**
- **Widowed during working life
(so often financial issues and major lifestyle changes....)**
- **Contemporaries have often not experienced a bereavement
(and expect 'quick recovery' and new partners!)**
- **Some sudden deaths (road collisions/heart conditions)**
- **Some after longer term illness (typically cancer or heart related)**

WAY in 2009

- Now around 1,700 members across UK & Ireland
- National Committee and over 60 groups across the country
- National patron is Lindsay Nicholson
- New Website and Internet Forum/Messageboard
- Developing links with other bereavement support charities
- Regular media coverage



Different ways for members to interact with others...

WAY offers a national community

- Members only chat room, message board and website to communicate 24/7
- A community of mutual support and a voice for young widows
- Annual WAY holidays for members and children
- Two-day residential retreat for each year's AGM

....but with a local focus of activity

- A network of over 60 local groups across the country
- Regular activities and events for members and their children
- The beginning of some new and permanent friendships



The realisation that you are not alone is extremely powerful

- 'It was a great realisation to know I'm not alone and feel normal now'
- 'I am not mad after all'
- 'WAY has been a lifeline for me and my children'
- 'I felt so alone until I met others in WAY, they understand how hard it is'
- 'It's a relief to meet other people in the same situation'
- 'WAY gave me the confidence to move on'
- 'I can now look to the future rather than living in the past and finding my present wanting'



How You Can Help...

Please do help with increasing Way membership:

- **Leaflets in delegate packs.....more available on request**
- **Can provide speakers for local Cruse AGMs, conferences etc**

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