

My name is Mikailia, I am a survivor of child sex abuse. I was abused from the age of five to age thirteen by a man who pretended to be a father figure. I kept a very large secret that ate away at me until I was eighteen. I was forced to grow up at an age where my brain was still developing. I learned to separate myself into two different bodies, one body while I was being a normal child and the other while I was being abused.

One day a chance for a fresh start was brought to me, I received a call from a detective at the Lassen County Sheriff's Department, the detective asked if I could come down to the station for some questioning, she then reassured me that I was not in trouble, however I had a gut feeling that I knew what it was about. Once I got to the department, the detective sat me down and told me how they had received a call from my ex-step fathers, sister. His sister told the detective how her brother had committed all these crimes towards me over the years. The detective then asked me if it was true. Just like always I planned to deny it with every ounce of my body, but something was different this time. Without even thinking, I yelled out "yes" and immediately began to cry. So many emotions began to rush through my body, because now my secret was out. Although I was eighteen at the time, I still had worry that the hundreds of lies he told me over the years would come true.

"Would people really look at me differently? Would the guy I was dating, not want to be with me? How will my family react? My mom's going to be so hurt. What about my safety? Because he's still out there." All of these thoughts played over and over in my head. I was scared, but speaking out was the best choice I have ever made. I realized that none of those lies were true. So I chose to fight, I wanted this man to own up to all the life altering pain he gave my family and I. For three years we fought, at times I felt

weak... but I continued to fight because I deserved a new beginning. The man who I had once longed to be a father figure was facing up to one hundred years in prison. He and his attorney decided to offer a plea, he was sentenced to sixty-one years. Now he can never hurt anyone ever, EVER again.

Throughout this journey I have learned that I did not, and will not let this define me. I loved and absolutely still love my life. Yes there were challenges, and yes I'm still overcoming some of them. But it is possible! I want my story to be heard. I want other survivors like myself to find their voice and know that if they have experienced their own trauma, please speak up and release that burden.

It is such an honor to have the Mikailia Child Advocacy Center named after myself. This center is a place for anyone who is a survivor of abuse to come and tell their story. There will be no judgment, just love and support. They can help you, like they helped me. Please, if you have suffered from any type of abuse...

... speak up.

You are already strong,
be brave

Mikailia

