



## Speaking from Experience Asthma in Childhood

### Transcript for chapter 3 of 12: Naivety, guilt and fear

**Marilyn (has three sons with asthma) & Matthew:** Because I had my nursing background, it was assumed that I understood about the condition. And yet I felt quite in the dark. I had no idea why it was affecting my child, for how long it would affect my child. It did give me the confidence though, to ask questions because of that background so I kept seeking out questions and answers until I felt comfortable with them. But still, when I was at home and I had all three children at home with me, sick with asthma, that nursing background was no comfort to me at all. I often felt quite isolated and alone.

**Lavinia and Geoff (have two daughters with asthma):** I had no knowledge at all. I had been with Geoff for a number of years and we'd gone through a few asthma attacks together. But because he was an adult I never felt responsible for his condition, so it didn't really matter. But with Gemma and April, they're your children and you feel so responsible for their lives, and I knew nothing. I hadn't taken any of the knowledge of asthma on board. I felt so useless, because there was nothing I could do and nothing that I knew. So it just made me get out there and find a bit of knowledge.

**Vladamier (has a son with asthma):** It was a matter of finding out as much as we could from the resources we had. They were limited - we didn't know where to go. We relied on our doctor mainly, and we spoke to a lot of other people with asthma.

**Marilyn and Matthew:** There wasn't a lot of written support or information that I could turn to. And there also weren't a lot of people I could turn to who had asthma.

**Paul, Vicky and daughter Michelle (who has asthma):** Well I had asthma as a child and still suffer from it infrequently. But I don't think there's much other history.

**Paul, Vicky and daughter Michelle:** No, I don't know of any asthma in my family. And our eldest child had never had any signs of it at all.

**Susan (has three children with asthma):** I was totally shocked. And what's so bizarre is that I shouldn't have been totally shocked because my family is riddled with asthma.

**Lavinia and Geoff:** I did worry too, for Geoff, because even though he coped very well, I felt that he felt a little bit guilty about it. And that might've just been my feeling, maybe he didn't really feel like that. But I could see sometimes that he felt a little bit responsible for what had happened. And yet it wasn't really anybody's fault - it was just something that happened. It wasn't something that we really thought about before we had the girls.

**Marilyn & Matthew:** Because it wasn't in our immediate family, I thought, well why me? None of my brothers or sisters, or my husband's brothers or sisters - or family - had asthma. So I thought, what have I done? And why do all of my children have asthma? It wasn't so much guilt, I felt a bit hard done by. You know, what did I do wrong?



**Paul, Vicky and daughter Michelle:** It's only recently that I've thought that this could be fatal. And it's a bit of shock. I've always... well I guess I've know that, but it's one of those things you think is never going to happen to you.

**Susan:** I understood it as a life-threatening disease because I'd often watch my sister nearly do of asthma in the bed next to me, and I'd also felt that chocking sensation myself. So I was very fearful of it.

**Paul, Vicky and daughter Michelle:** I felt worried though, because she was so unwell for some time there and you just didn't know what each day was going to bring.