

BLUE KNOT DAY

By Mark Sawa
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There is an estimated 5million victims of child abuse in Australia. One of those victims is Hannah Stewart*. She was sexually abused between the ages of six and 11 by her uncle. It happened on my grandparents' farm," she said. It didn't click that what actually happened was abuse. When I told my parents they were very supportive. "They confronted my uncle and my uncle actually admitted it, which was incredibly helpful."

But the psychological torment would continue for more than 30years. Despite strong support from her parents she would experience severe episodes of depression and even attempt suicide. A nurse in her 40s now, who has lived in Canberra for almost two decades, she said it had only been the past two or three years that she had managed to move on from her abuse. "It is like a scar," she said. "I can see that it is still there but it doesn't have that power to hurt me anymore."

On October 27 - Blue Knot Day, Adults Surviving Child Abuse will ask the community to unite in support of those victims of childhood trauma. ASCA president Cathy Kezelman said the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse had made the significance of this year's Blue Knot Day more prominent.

"This year Blue Knot Day will focus its attention on the education and training urgently needed for health professionals and organisations working with survivors," Dr Kezelman said.

The organisation is urging people to host activities at home, at church gatherings or a company event that will raise awareness of the problem and support the victims. This year's Blue Knot Day official event will take place at Canberra's Parliament House on October 27.

For more information about Blue Knot Day and support services for child abuse victims visit www.asca.org.au/blueknotday

*Hannah Stewart is a pseudonym.