

# JAMIE'S STORY



JAMIE'S HOUSE



THE GREEN



SOMETIMES  
IT HURTS





# How to use the book

**T**here are six books in the **Sometimes it Hurts** series. Each book contains one short fictional story about a child or young person who is experiencing difficult situations at home.

Each book has a summary of the story so you can choose which ones you want to read, or an adult who is supporting you might suggest which stories you might want to read. There are also short animations on the **Sometimes it Hurts** website which give an overview of each story to help you choose.

You can read just one story, a few or all of them. Each story has pictures to help you understand what is going on and is not too long. You can always read the stories with an adult too.

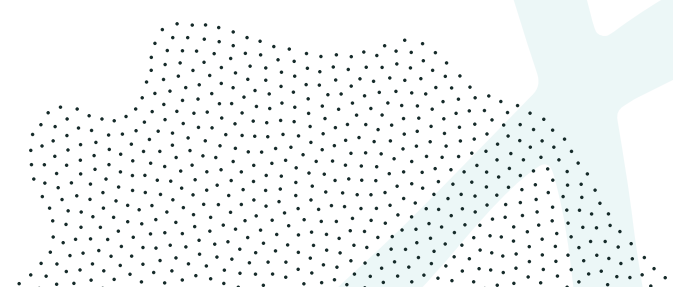
It might be that things in the stories have happened to you, or that the characters experience things that are different from the things you experience – or have experienced – but you may identify with how one or more of the characters think and feel in some way.

This series of books has a set of worksheets and creative activities to go with it, which are intended to be completed when you've read a story, to support you to explore the themes in the story and talk to adults about them.

We know the things the characters experience, think, and feel can be very complicated and hard to think and talk about.

We have learned that using creative activities can be a good way into exploring tricky issues.

To choose a worksheet on a theme that would be helpful for you, go to [sometimesithurts.org.uk](https://www.sometimesithurts.org.uk)



# Foreword

“

**G**rowing up, we had heard of what domestic abuse looked like, but we did not know what it felt like. Often, to really understand something, we need stories, not statistics.

We always thought we were experiencing something different, something more complicated – we labelled it ‘family problems’. We thought that the only pain that counted was physical pain and so we ignored the rest. We believed that our emotional pain meant that we were weak kids, rather than that something was wrong in our home. Often, we felt that we should have been able to cope with what was happening at home, and that it wasn’t dramatic enough to bother others with. We needed to hear others’ stories of domestic abuse before we could begin to make sense of our own.

We are confident that **Sometimes It Hurts** will encourage young people to recognise the many forms of hurt that domestic abuse causes. As we have learned, sometimes hearing another’s story is all the validation that’s needed to begin to acknowledge our own experiences. This awareness will certainly spark conversations that help young people connect the dots, see the patterns, and get the help they need and deserve.

## Luke and Ryan Hart

Brothers Luke and Ryan Hart are award-winning domestic abuse advocates, authors and international keynote speakers. In their book, **Remembered Forever**, and their work, they share their family’s story of coercive control and domestic homicide. So far, their work has taken them to over 13 countries and they have trained tens of thousands of professionals in identifying, understanding, and ending domestic abuse.

# About SOMETIMES IT HURTS

**S**ometimes It Hurts aims to give a voice to young people and a language to themes that are difficult and sensitive to approach, such as poverty, neglect, divorce, domestic abuse and unhealthy, controlling behaviours, both within families and within young people’s own romantic relationships. With the stories – and the resources we have developed around them – we hope to help both adults and young people to recognise what is healthy and unhealthy, develop empathy for self and others, and seek and offer better ongoing support.

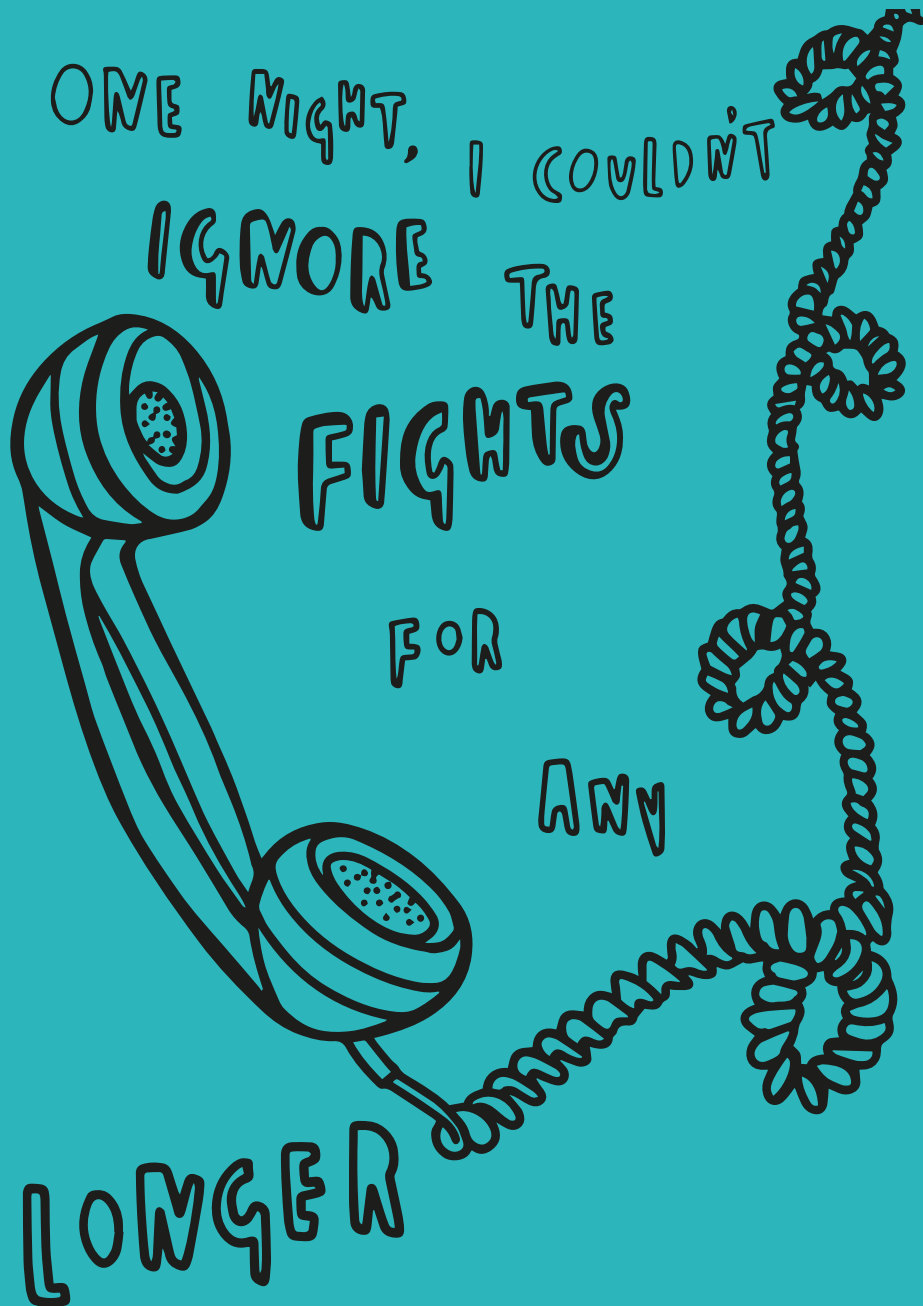
This series of books was produced by arts education company Changing Relations, who commissioned writer Bridget Hamilton to work with a group of young people and tell the stories they felt needed to be told. Here is what Bridget had to say:

“

**T**he six stories you are about to read have been written with the help of a group of young writers, some of whom have experienced domestic abuse. The young people decided on the names of the characters, the situations the characters have found themselves in, and how the stories ended. Some of the stories also contain direct quotes and experiences from the young people, which they were comfortable to share with you.

Some of the characters live with their parents and some don’t. Some have older siblings, some have younger siblings, and some don’t have any brothers and sisters at all. They are all different ages, races and sexualities. Every situation is unique, just like in real life – but they are all experiencing something at home that hurts them, and that is what the stories will explore.

**Bridget Hamilton**

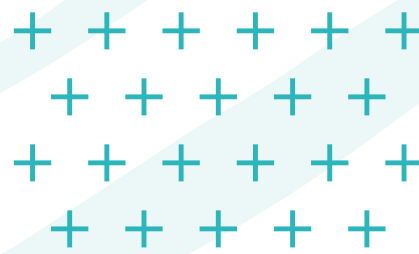


# Jamie's Story

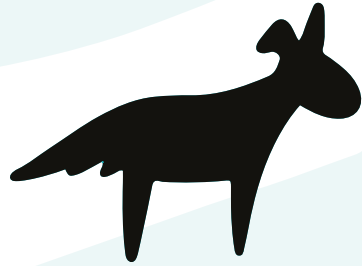
## Summary

The character of Jamie is 14 years old and has been living with his dad and his dad's boyfriend, Brandon. Recently Jamie's dad and Brandon have been having more and more arguments, and the arguments have started to lead to physical violence. Jamie has spent so much time convincing everybody that he has a 'normal' family that he doesn't know who to turn to when things at home begin to really affect him.

If this feels like a story that would be interesting or helpful for you to read, read on! If you're not sure, why not have a read of the summaries of the other stories in the **Sometimes it Hurts** series to choose one that feels more relevant for you.



“



**M**y name is Jamie, I'm 14 and until recently I lived with my dad and his boyfriend, Brandon. Most of my mates know my dad's gay, and I've learnt to ignore whatever stupid comments people make, because once you get to know him you realise he's just like any other parent. He plays rugby, he cooks boring meals for tea and he's always telling me to get off my PlayStation. He's pretty much the most normal guy you'd ever meet.

The thing is, I used to spend so much time getting people to understand how 'normal' my dad is, that when Brandon started hitting him, I didn't really know who to turn to. Our friends and family always said Brandon was such a nice guy, so how could I tell them that he wasn't?

“

Things were easy to ignore at first. When the two of them had a fight, I'd just turn the TV up really loud or take our dog Lola for a walk. That was really helpful, actually. Lola's a Border Collie, and we'd go out for walks across the huge, green fields round the back of the house. Sometimes we'd be gone for hours. I felt safer when I could get away and pretend that none of this was happening.





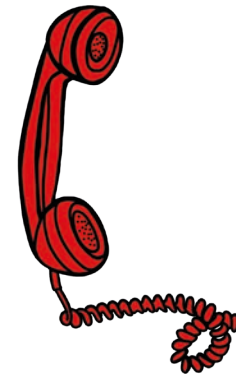
“

I told myself that kicking and punching is just the way men settle arguments - it certainly seems that way at school, there's a fight nearly every week. But then Dad started acting differently - he used to be dead positive, always asking me about my day or wanting us to spend what he called "quality time" together. Then he became really shy, barely speaking when Brandon was around and never smiling or laughing at all. It was like Brandon had this power over him, like he'd put him under some kind of spell. Even his face looked different, like his eyes had sunk further into his head and his cheeks were hollowed out a bit. He didn't really look like my dad anymore. Slowly I started to change, too. I felt more anxious whenever I got home from school because I didn't know what mood Brandon was going to be in.

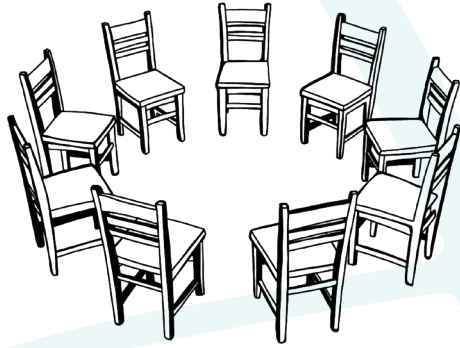


“

One night, I couldn't ignore the fights for any longer. I thought Brandon would hurt us both so badly that I called the police. When they came round, you could tell they were expecting it to be a Mam and Dad, not Dad and Brandon. I worried that I'd done the wrong thing, that I'd made my Dad seem weak and that Brandon would come back to get me. For weeks after Brandon was taken away, I sat up all night scared that he'd come back to the house, even though the police had told him he couldn't. When I finally realised that he wasn't coming back, I didn't feel happy or relieved, just completely numb, like I couldn't feel anything anymore.







“

My Dad joined a support group for men who have experienced domestic abuse. I think that took a lot of courage. In the group, there are like 15 men, and they've all been through the same thing as my Dad. There was one guy called Tariq whose wife was really violent with him, and he and my Dad got on well. I think they bonded over talking about rugby and they've been for a pint a few times now. I'm glad Dad has someone to talk to who definitely understands what happened to us. The group also gave Dad information about support for younger people, and I've been looking at their web pages whenever I start to feel a bit anxious. That's really helped me out.



“

I wouldn't wish what happened with Brandon on my worst enemy, but it's taught me that experiencing abuse doesn't make you weak or stupid or pathetic. It doesn't just happen to lasses, either – it can happen to anyone. I'm just glad that my Dad's looking a bit more like his old self now. And he's definitely strong, inside and out – he can still beat me in an arm wrestle any day.



# What Support Is Available

## Information About Domestic Abuse

If you or someone you know may be experiencing domestic abuse, both **Women's Aid** and **Refuge** have websites with comprehensive advice and can support you to hide your internet search history to cover your tracks.

Together they run the **National Domestic Abuse hotline**, a 24-hour freephone service – **0808 2000 247**.

## Emergency

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call the **police** – **999**.

## Local

Your local **Onepoint** centre offers advice and practical support across all aspects of family life, helping young people up to the age of 19 with a wide range of issues, including health, bullying and what activities are available in your local area.

## Young people

**The Mix** is the UK's leading support service for young people under 25. They are here to help you take on any challenge you're facing - from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs. Talk to them via their online community, on social, through their free, confidential helpline or counselling service **themix.org.uk** – **0808 808 4994**.

For children experiencing or affected by domestic abuse, including witnessing abuse within the home, there is information on the **Childline** and **NSPCC** websites. There is also a **Freephone Helpline** – **0800 1111**.

## Sexual Abuse

There is often an overlap between domestic abuse and sexual violence. The national **Rape Crisis** website has a lot of information, including where to find local support services. They also run a **Freephone Helpline** – **0808 802 9999**.

## At School

When you are at school, the school is responsible for keeping you safe from harm and abuse. If you are worried about life at home or have any concerns about someone else, speak to a trusted teacher, tutor or learning manager, or, if you know who they are, ask to speak to your school's **Designated Safeguarding Lead**.

If you are an adult and have a concern about a child or young person's welfare who lives in County Durham, call **First Contact** on **03000 267 979**. First Contact brings together children's services staff with partners such as Durham Constabulary and health services.

## Stalking

Stalking can be an aspect of domestic abuse and is sometimes experienced after survivors have left an abusive relationship. The **Suzy Lamplugh** website has information, advice and guidance for victims of stalking. They also run a **Freephone Stalking Helpline** – **0808 802 0300**.

## LGBTQIA

For specialist support for those who identify as LGBT+, go to the **Galop** website, or call their **National Helpline** – **0800 999 5428**.

## Men

Specific information for male victims of domestic abuse, or to seek more information about supporting men is available on the **Men's Advice Line** website. You can also call their **Freephone Helpline** – **0808 801 0327**. There is information for male victims of sexual violence on the **Safeline** website or you can call the **National Male Survivor's Helpline** – **0808 800 5005**.

## Abusers

If you are concerned about your behaviour in a relationship, or that of a friend or family member, the **Respect Phoneline** website has information and guidance. They also run a **Freephone Perpetrator Helpline** – **0808 802 4040**.

## Minority Ethnic Communities

For a comprehensive list of support services by, and for, those from black and minority ethnic communities, go the **Imkaan** website. For those affected by honour-based abuse and / or forced marriage, the **Karma Nirvana** website has information and guidance. They also run a **Freephone Honour-based Abuse Helpline** – **0800 599 9247**.



# How We Created SOMETIMES IT HURTS

The original **Sometimes It Hurts** book was created by arts education company, **Changing Relations**, in 2021 through working with our creative associate, **Michelle Harland**, CEO of **Creative Youth Opportunities**. Together with writer, **Bridget Hamilton**, Michelle led a programme of weekly creative workshops with groups of young people, inviting discussion around ideas of family, relationships, hurt, trust and getting support, through a range of participatory creative discussions and activities. These were shaped by physical and digital scrapbooking to collect and log thoughts and ideas which would help our illustrator and animator create a visual landscape for the book and subsequent animation we produced.

Our then Artistic Director, **Pollyanna Turner**, managed the creative team, which additionally included illustrator **Tamsin Rees**, animator **Sheryl Jenkins**, and sound artist **Rupert Philbrick**, fostering the environment of co-production that is a central part of our approach at **Changing Relations**. A project steering group completed the team with individuals from a range of backgrounds, including safeguarding, education, local councillors, together with professionals and individuals who publicly advocate domestic abuse awareness-raising, including **Luke and Ryan Hart** (CoCoAwareness), **Susie Hay** (Safelives), **Cllr Jeanette Stephenson** (Stanley AAP), **Rosa Walling-Weffelmeyer** & **Dr Stephen Burrell** (Durham University).

The book and stories within it were well received by children and young people as well as the adults who work with them. They felt the stories were a great way to talk about difficult issues children and young people might experience at home. Because the book was so popular, we decided to do some work to make sure more people could benefit from the stories in the original six-chapter book.

In this new phase of development, in 2023, we have created six individual books, one for each of the stories, with additional illustrations to make them more interesting and accessible for young people.

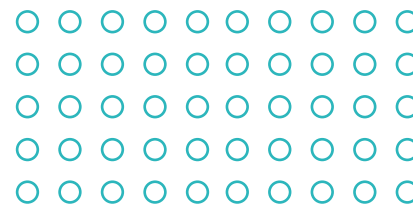
We worked with a creative action group of children and young people from primary and secondary schools in County Durham to develop a brief for our illustrator Tamsin and explore the places and spaces where the stories take place to develop ideas for a map which forms a key part of the new book series.

The creative action group tested out a set of creative activities for teachers and other supporting adults to use to help children and young people explore the themes raised in the stories and have supportive conversations about things which may be affecting them at home. Their feedback helped us understand what young people may enjoy and find useful, relevant and interesting. Young people are the ones who will be using them, so they know best!

We also worked with the creative action group to get ideas for our web developers to create a website to host the stories and resources in multimedia formats. The creative action group was made up of children and young people from **Copeland Road Primary School, Escomb Primary School, Greenfield Community College, King James I Academy** and **St John's Catholic School and Sixth Form**.

The creative action group sessions were delivered by artist and creative producer, **Sarah Stamp**, supported by youth workers from **Learning a New Way C.I.C.** and the delivery team worked closely with **Changing Relations'** Managing Director **Lisa Charlotte Davis** and academics **Dr Nikki Rutter** and **Dr Josie Phillips** at **Durham University** to develop the content for the sessions and ensure we were exploring the themes in the stories in a safe and supportive way.

This new phase of development brought back some of those involved in the initial project, such as graphic designers **Curious 12**, as well as involving new creatives professionals, **Vida Creative** who led on the associated web development.



# Acknowledgements

The biggest thank you for making **Sometimes It Hurts** possible goes to the brave, funny and kind young people who entrusted us with their stories and worked so hard with our creative team to help other young people who may find themselves in a similar situation get the recognition and support they need.

We're also hugely grateful to the new group of young people who supported us to develop and test the creative activities and website that will be used as part of that mission to help young people who are experiencing difficult situations at home.

Thanks must go to each and every one of the team behind **Sometimes it Hurts** in both 2021 and 2023.

And of course, we're grateful to the funders who made this project possible.



Thank you all!

**Lisa Charlotte Davis**

Managing Director & Company Founder

## Copyright © Changing Relations C.I.C. 2023

This publication is distributed with the intention of supporting education and training materials that may be delivered by third parties, however Changing Relations C.I.C. reserves the exclusive right to intellectual property on all creative content produced as part of **The Child's View** project, the **Rabbits in Headlights** project and in relation to **Sometimes It Hurts**.

This publication is distributed subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than in which it is published.

Content within this publication may be photocopied or brief quotations used for non-commercial use only and must reference the original source © Changing Relations C.I.C. 2023.

The Changing Relations logo must be featured wherever possible.

**Changing Relations C.I.C.**  
**Studio 18, Ushaw Historic House Chapel and Gardens**  
**Woodland Road**  
**Ushaw Moor**  
**Durham**  
**DH7 7DW**

If you would be interested to learn more about us and what we do, take a look at our website or drop us an email.

🌐 [changingrelations.co.uk](http://changingrelations.co.uk)

✉ [info@changingrelations.co.uk](mailto:info@changingrelations.co.uk)

Follow us on social media and tag your posts:

📘 @changerelations

✂ @changerelations

📷 @changingrelations

▶ @changingrelationscic

🌐 @changingrelations

We're passionate about what we do and we'd love to hear from you.



# SOMETIMES IT HURTS

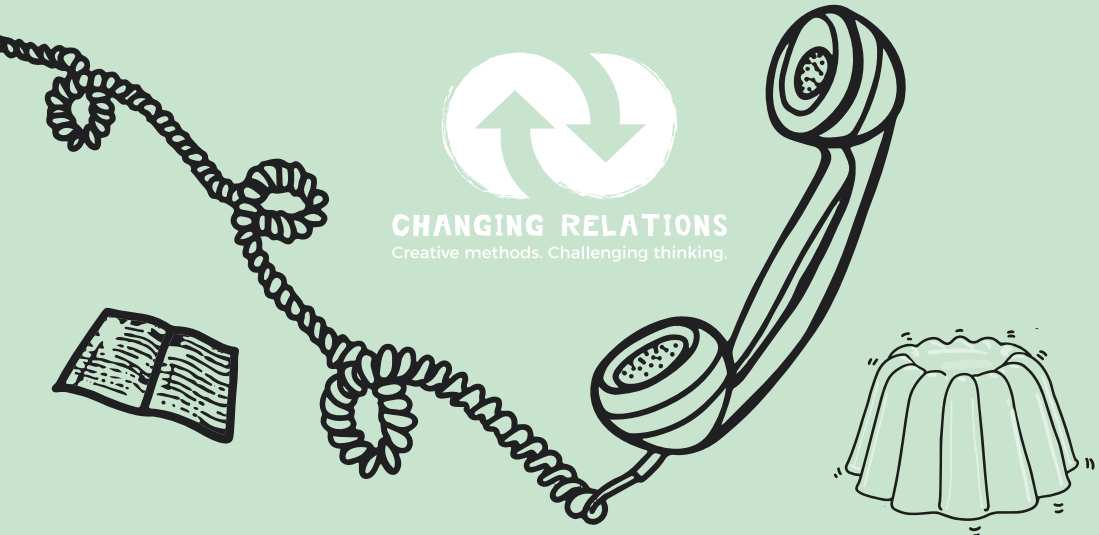


"Being someone that has been that young person, it is spot on."

"It makes you feel like you're not the only one when you go through it."

"It could make a lot of people understand more and be more kind towards friends going through this."

*Young people whose insight and experience was gathered to inform the writing of the book, responding to a reading of the first draft.*



## CHANGING RELATIONS

Creative methods. Challenging thinking.