

I am a 40 year old female, with two children, both girls, now 21 and 19.

I have been at risk of suicide all my adult life. This is due to the circumstances of my childhood which involved the abuse of my mind and body, sexually, physically, emotionally, through starvation and neglect, and perpetrated by an alcoholic mother that hated me. My father knew, but did nothing, for reasons that can be understood as part of his generation, but are not understood by this adult who believes that she was sacrificed for his beliefs.

That's a quick summation paragraph, don't you think, of a life that I have had trouble maintaining this long?

What I want the Committee to be aware of is the impact on my kids. They have grown with a mother they have known may not be around when they get home from school. I was very well aware of the guilt and trauma that a child can go through when a parent suicides, and I wanted to be realistic about my own life and somehow alleviate the impact for them.

So I told my girls that I didn't feel comfortable with my life sometimes. That if there was a life event that I didn't feel equipped to deal with that often my first response was to consider taking my life – because sometimes one thing on top of another was all too much. I clearly told them over and over again – I mean maybe once per month on average – that if I did attempt and succeed at a suicide that they must understand that they weren't at fault and could have done nothing. I explained some of my life to them. I explained that this made me feel like I couldn't keep on living if things got bad, or if I had too many bad memories, if something triggered a memory that I couldn't recover from.... all sorts of things that could lead to an impulsive act of suicide.

I did this for their benefit. I wanted them to know that if I suicided it was my choice, in some strange way out of my control, and that there was nothing they could've done, said or undone or unsaid that would change that. I ensured that every time we parted we reminded each other that we loved each other, as if it was our last goodbye (although this part I didn't articulate to them).

Now they're grown. I am proud of myself that I both broke the cycle of abuse and stayed alive this long. It's possible I'll live to the end of my natural life, but that I cannot and will not guarantee. My girls, as young adults, are responsible, mature, eloquent and articulate, intelligent and proud women who understand that their mother did the best she could (which wasn't always good enough). They also understand that people have their own choices to make, and that they must then accept the responsibilities and consequences of those choices.

Including the choice to take one's own life.

Difficult for them – yes. Difficult for me – yes.

The only impediment that really stopped me from seeking appropriate help was the fact that if I advised my doctor as to the whole truth of the situation, professionals could've invoked the 72 hour 'lock her up for her own safety' rule. But when you've been what I've been through as a child... taking away my freedom, locking me up, confining me in any way was not going to help and I was worried would, in fact, tip me over the edge. So I have never sought help.

I don't think I could've written a long enough submission to tell you about the effects of my own suicidal thinking on me and my family. I hope that the very brevity of what I say speaks for itself.

When it comes to suicide – there's nothing to say.

Thank you.