

My name is Nadia Gonzalez I am 23 years of age. A year ago today I kept a deep dark secret; I am a survivor of sexual abuse by a close family member. This family member was my uncle, everyone trusted him because he was someone that was a part of our family. I was 7-11 when these events happened to me. A lot of people haven't been through this situation are thing "Why didn't she tell her parents or an adult." It was fear, a fear of breaking up my family or a fear of my parents not believing me. This secret ate me up for years and destroyed me spiritually, emotionally and physically. I was diagnosed with depression and other mental health problems; I need to take medication to keep everything in my head balanced. Before I was diagnosed I was self -medicating so I would forget or just numb myself from everyone. I always thought the best way to solve this problem was just to end my life, which seemed like the best solution to me. A year ago today I was put in therapy after I was severally depressed. I finally found one person I can tell my secret too; a week before I told her I had to tell my family. I told my brother and then I called my sister; my sister too had a deep dark secret... It also happened to her by the man my family trust. While she was telling me this I had a flash back and the memory had always stayed with me, it was a day my uncle told me to follow him to the basement and I didn't but my sister did, some minutes later she ran upstairs crying. I feel the worst guilt just thinking about that day because I could of stopped this sooner. A lot of you maybe thinking, is she also as damaged as I am? No, she's stronger; she hid it in a box and succeeded. All of survivors cope differently, but some of us don't end up as well. Anyways, after I found out about my sister, I found the courage to finally tell my parents. It broke their hearts; they blamed themselves when they shouldn't because an adult man shouldn't be touching young girls. I still can hear the pain in their voices. We reported to the polices, I told him every horrible detail that happened to me. We also found out he had two reports on his file that had to do with bothering little girls. Two other girls also came out and said he tried to bother them too. He was also part of their family. Altogether there were 6 victims. They sent us to a detective a week later, he told him every detail again and he told us our options and he said that he would look into it but it took him weeks and weeks of him calling us back, or he wouldn't answer his phone. When he finally did he basically told my sister and I there is nothing he can do because of the statute of limitations. A week went by and I wrote my Uncle a letter and my parents faced him to give him the letter I wrote him. My parents were pretty smart because they have him confessing what he did on tape. We went to the detective a second time with the other 2 survivor and a confession tape, and still we got a no because the statute of limitations is protecting this man. Doesn't that sound wrong? Shouldn't the statute still be protecting me? This man could still be hurting other children in our community but we can't do anything because the statute is protecting him? Other young adults like me are also in my shoes, when I tell my story and more people tell me that it has happened to them, sometimes these women are 30 years old. Once I found this out my goal was to change the statute I found a great place to start Justice for survivors and we have gotten this far. I here standing in front of you today to have justice for survivors, t vote yes to this new change in the statute, so more people with a story like mine can have peace and know there children are protected in the future.

I will leave you with this.. There are many, many people that aren't talking right now that have been in the hand of a perpetrator. They are closer than you think; they can be someone we trust, a family member or our own blood. Always keep your kids safe because really everyone around you is a stranger