

# Siblings need more support

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I am a person whose life has been impacted by road trauma. My only sibling, my younger brother, was aged 18 when he was killed in a road crash in which the driver was over the limit and speeding. The ongoing effects of this trauma and my experiences led me to want to make a difference somewhere, somehow. I came across RTSSV and asked to use my story in the work it is doing.

I first filled my role as a volunteer speaker at a Road Trauma Awareness Seminar in the Southern Metro region some eight years ago, and was immediately impressed with the standard and the obvious change the education was encouraging. I felt my very personal and emotional story, alongside the particular facilitator presentation and the emergency services talk, was a recipe for success in altering the attitudes of the people attending the session. I feel certain that each attendee takes something away from these seminars and won't forget what was shared with them.

After speaking at some seminars many years ago, I took a break to focus on my young baby and to move to a new area of Melbourne.

This year I recommenced my volunteer position with RTSSV in the Southern Metro region, speaking of my personal experiences once again. This time around I was provided with training beforehand; training that I found invaluable in not only preparing me for my speaking position but also as a time for healing.

I attend the entirety of each seminar and usually do my talk towards the end. I often help the facilitator with simple tasks like writing name cards for attendees on arrival and then sit quietly; I am often taking in the vibe in the room, listening carefully to each participant talk about what experiences have brought them to the seminar. The information I gather is often used in my speech in terms of where I focus my talk and perhaps by reflecting on something shared in the room. I also like to mention the emergency service workers, and there is usually one in attendance ready to speak after me.

Then comes the moment when I begin talking and I see faces change and emotions show – and I know attitudes are shifting. It feels great! There is no doubt these sessions make an impact on those who attend.

I would like to see Road Trauma Awareness Seminars rolled out in secondary schools. The combination of the facilitators' skills, the volunteers' lived experiences and the close involvement of schools, (particularly in offering support to students afterwards) would make a big difference.

I would also like to see a specific counselling service offered to people who lose a sibling in a road crash; sibling support is often overlooked and needs extra attention. This matter is very personal to me and I have a very deep sense of desire to help young people following the death of a sibling.