

## **Rina van der Voorde (Holland)**

### **My Story**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. .  
Thank you very much for having me here.  
My name is Rina van der Voorde, I'm 28 and I come from Holland.

When I was a little one I thought I had a normal life.  
I went to school and played a lot outside.  
I had a real brother-sister relationship.  
And we had horses where i loved to be.  
Nothing special, I'd like to say.  
Then there was my mother.  
I found that my mother was strange.  
Fysically she was present, but emotionally she couldn't offer me anything as a child.  
Talking about emotions or talking about feelings was not happening at home.  
So I learned as a child that it was safer not to show or talk about my emotions.  
I didn't knew how to spell the word alcoholic, I only knew the smell of stinky liquid and that it turned my mother into a scary monster for me.  
She could be very nice and smiling at me and 4 seconds later she could be very angry and scream to me or smack me in my face.  
At a certain point, when I got tired of her unpredictability, I tried to avoid her as much as possible.  
Especially when she was drunk when she tried forcing me to love her.

One day my mother was gone.  
My father, brother and I knew nothing about it.  
In a moment of panic I went looking for her.  
I put the cloths, she had forgotten, neatly in bags and brought them to her work.  
I felt sorry for her, I was afraid she had to walk around naked.  
I asked her: 'Mom, what's going on, why don't you want to live with us anymore?'  
She cried and said: 'Your father, I can't live with that man.'  
For me it felt like is was my fault because I was born and causing all these troubles  
After several months of separation, we came together again in the house where my mother now had come to live.  
She always said: I am the boss in this house so do as I say!  
My time that followed was dominated by a growing fear of my mother.  
Several times I found her to be having a conversation with the gods.  
I didn't understand any of it.  
Before I went to sleep she often whispered to me that they would burn the house down during my sleep.  
At another point she screamed wildly, "You've fucked your father, I'll beat your brains in!"  
She almost did killed me, but that's an other story.

The many questions about my mothers behaviour got eplained by information from herself, my father and some other people.  
Her past involved all kinds of abuse, incest, neglecting, and she had seen her own mother committing suicide.  
During my puberty there came a turning point for me cause I began hearing voices

myself.

They spoke full of hatred about the way how i could release my mother from her suffering.

I figured that this was really crazy, because who wants to murder their own mother?

I needed something to be less bothered by these voices and so i began smoking cannabis.

I reported myself to the social services and explained my home situation.

They agreed my home wasn't very healthy for me and they would help me find a solution.

In the meantime I tried to avoid my mom and my home as much as possible.

At school I couldn't fit in, so I often skipped to go horse riding.

Several times I slept in the stables near the horses

When I was 15 I got placed in a house for troubled youth.

Here I tried to learn to get more independent.

The more I tried to help myself, the more troubles I got, so it seemed.

At the new school I got stuck over and over again.

I had a big mouth and took on the fight with teachers.

In the family things were getting out of control.

My brother was admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

And for me it wasn't getting better.

My dignity got stolen from me.

I was 17 and got raped by an older man.

When I turned 18 child support couldn't offer me anything as an adult.

After 2,5 years living in this shelter I had to move.

I thought I was very lucky because I could live with the mother of an old friend and her boyfriend.

I accepted the shelter and she got me a job by her side.

If we weren't working we hung in the pub getting drunk and high.

Sex drugs and rock 'n roll was the motto, and I didn't like living this way.

The life I had run from I walked back into, only in another family.

Because I had no other place to go, and nothing more to lose, I went back home.

The confrontation was terrible.

I didn't recognize my brother after his admission to the mental hospital.

It seemed as if his joy of life was gone.

The psychiatrist said he suffered from schizophrenia.

More and more I began to wonder who I was in this picture.

My crazy mother, my aged father, my schizo brother.... where was I in that list?

I started an internal education in a nursing home for the elderly and stopped smoking cannabis.

In the meantime I was dating my first boyfriend.

After several months I was told that I didn't have the right attitude to work in health care.

I took too much time for the people and that did not fit in their way of working.

I experienced it as a total rejection.

Not wanted as a child, not as a sister, not wanted as a woman and not wanted as an employee.

I was getting lost again and my voices came back.

I heard a thousand times repetition of: "Your mother is going to die, your mother is going to die, your mother is going to die ....".

It made me crazy, crazy of that mother and crazy about the voices.

Soon after that, my first admission to a psychiatric hospital followed. According to the psychiatrist I was psychotic and I was suffering from schizophrenia. Besides talking to the people around me, I had many conversations with myself and my own voices.

After several months my boyfriend told me goodbye because he had a new girlfriend. There I was in the mental hospital I just had lost everything and I could not think independently anymore.

I felt like I was possessed.

Flames came out of my body, literally.

It was the most frightening experience.

The only thing my psychiatrist had to offer was taking medication my whole life long.

That way I would have the best chance to stay alive, so he said.

After 1.5 years in the hospital I had had it.

Nothing happened at this place.

Talking seemed a big taboo.

Exercise or sport did not exist and cheerfulness had died out.

I had also had it with the pills

I refused to take the chemical junk anymore.

Of course I had to do that secretly, otherwise I would be punished by the nurses.

I let myself be seduced by boyfriend number 2 to come and live with him.

There I went again getting myself in trouble.

I had come to live with an addict in a house full of abuse in all kinds of ways.

A subsequent period of flight and wandering began.

Eventually, after almost 2 years I became psychotic and my second admission was a fact.

This time I got placed on the department double diagnosis.

I asked myself Double diagnoses..? I quit smoking weed 2 years ago.

Some employees from the double department treated me like I was some kind of a criminal.

I was in a mental hospital and I fell prey to the sexual needs of others.

I was angry about my situation and about all those men, angry about the employees who knew they abused me and did nothing.

I began to lose my self control.

Even my voices told me it had to end, I had to choose, live or let die.

That was an easy choice for all of us...

The next man who would touch me was gonna die...

At a moment a really big guy tried to touch me on my private parts and I flipped.

I hit him on top of his nose and was waiting for his reaction.

He was asking and I was yelling to him, you coward come on, fight me, do you want the next upon your eye?

He said: You are so lucky that you are a female otherwise I would strike back.

I saw blood coming out of his nose and it scared me.

It shocked me.

It was the first time I had ever hit someone.

And it shocked me even more because for that moment I felt like a predator a beast.

I tended to kill somebody who wanted something from me.

Everything I had always detested became more and more part of me.

I asked my psychiatrist why I was on the double d.  
He told me i did not have to come here with my life story.  
Again I asked my psychiatrist who is responsible to put me on double diagnosis cause I dont use drugs or alcohol.  
He looked at me for a moment but said nothing.  
He was looking at pictures and drawings of his children which hang in his office and I asked him, Sir,do you want me to become an criminal a murderer?  
He araised from his chair en told me he would transfer me to an other department, if I liked.  
I transfered to a different department,and later I applied to a protected place to live.  
After eighteen months in the psychiatric hospital I got into the protected house.  
Here I met boyfriend number 3 who was just like me a so called schizo but we had a lot of .  
I started to be active in the clientboard of the hospital where I once was admitted.  
2.5 years later me and my boyfriend tried to live together.  
Before we moved we made appointments with the working team of the hospital and the protected house just in case of emergency and to proctect ourselves for not getting homeless.  
It didn't work in the relationship and it didn't work with the appointments so we both lost everything.  
My believe in the social services and other people was gone and I was homeless again.  
The help from a fellow council member saved me from falling apart and she gave me hope again.  
She sheltered me and put me in contact with some people who themselves are actively engaged with recovery.  
The first step of my recovery was to realize a place to live for myself.  
Then followed a general health check which was so incredible scary for me because the dokter had to touch me.  
Together with my savior and a group of people we took on a running challenge.  
Several moths we were running, talking ,meditating and working hard together.  
When I crossed the finish I had no chance to be sad because I was immediatly intercepted by people who were proud of me.  
This experience for me was the ultimate turningpoint just because i never made somebody proud before.  
Still now I have to get used to positive attention.  
Togheter with 2 wonderfull human coaches I now take the challenge to further ballance my physical and mental health.  
I am lucky because I am still willing and try to give form to my life and to my future.  
I hope people will open their minds to each otherbecause we all have life...together. and really learn to help each other, especially in the mental health services.

Thank you again ladies and gentlemen for you having me here and your attention.