



### Rising UP, Singing OUT – Through the Eyes of Mary Jo Mc Veigh

Her view of the world was of the ground and people's feet. That was because she hung her head down, daring not to lift her eyes up from behind the safety of her fallen hair. This was how I met her for the first singing group.

She was quiet in the initial group sessions, lacking in confidence, not believing that she had anything of value to add. At the session in the recording studio she could not let the others hear her voice for fear of ridicule. Under the compassionate and talented encouragement of Damien, the total acceptance of the other young people and gentle coaching from myself, she joined with the others writing and recording their song.

Her view of the world on the last session was of the faces of the people (adults and children) that she made her speech to, proudly holding her head up. She spoke about enjoying hanging out with the other young people, but moreover she said, "I learnt lots of things. It got me inspired not to doubt myself."

This young woman along with two other young people found their voice, a voice often silenced by abuse. As the lyrics that they wrote said, "*What do I got to do for you to know I have a voice, someone you know I've got a voice, someone you can listen to.*"

They also found the company of others to help shatter the isolation that they can sometimes feel as a result of the abusive experience. In the words of one participant's advice to other young people who may think about doing the group was, "*It's an amazing experience. Don't be embarrassed, everyone feels the same.*"

In the lyrics of the song the young people asked,  
*What if we were free to be what we want to be*  
*Strong enough to break from our misery*  
*Why can't we break away from being scared*  
*Why can't we believe we are already there*  
*It's not far out of our reach*

Through the power of song and belonging to a group, these young people got the opportunity to feel that breaking through the effects of the abuse is within their reach and there is someone who will listen to them.

Through the power of CaraCare, all young people get the opportunity to feel that breaking through the effects of the abuse is within their reach and there is someone who will listen to them.

