**M5 – Gay Son**

Interviewer: How old was Ruan when he came out?

M5: He was 17 and in matric. We had problems with him, wrong medication and ended up in Weskoppies and he OD. He was diagnosed with Depression. They diagnosed him with major depression. They gave him Zoloft and you only give Zoloft for people above the age of 17

Interviewer: With which medicine did he OD?

M5: Lithium

Interviewer: When was this?

M5: It was in his matric year and when he was in standard 9 and he was admitted to DENMAR

Interviewer: At that stage, why did you think he was admitted to DENMAR?

M5: We (M1 and her husband) just thought it was a mental disorder of some kind. The start of this whole thing came from his biological mother… he experienced a lot of trauma there. I raised him even though I am not his biological mother. .

Interviewer: Did you ever suspect that he might be gay?

Interviewer: Yes I did

M5: We ( M5 and her husband) were three months married when I told him that your son is gay. He was 10 at that stage. There were times when I thought ok it might be that he is gay but then again I also thought that it might be only a stage. Due to all the trauma, medication and all. I’m a guy that goes by facts and proof. I’m not going on some sort of suspicion. There was once an incident at school where he sent another boy a sexual message on his phone. Then the boy’s father saw it and there as big trouble at school and we had to go to the school office. The boy’s father was a captain in the police service. The words that he used was a shock and abnormal to us. Like where did he get those words. Adults talk about such things. He was 11 or 12 at that stage.

M5: Can I say what he said in the message?

Interviewer: Yes

M5: Like one thing I would never forget is that he said that he wanted to suck his dick and lick his balls. For us this was a bit early.

M5: But he is flamboyant about these things. Yes, now he has a personality like none other. Now that he knows that we know he is gay, he shines

M5: For example, sometimes he would take my tissue oil from my salon because he has a boyfriend that sleeps over here on weekends. Very nice boy. He is an architect. He takes my tissue oil. Then I asked him what he wants it for… He would also say any guy that likes to HOLJOL (assplay) is a moffie

M5: For so many years I suspected him to be gay and so many times I pushed him just to talk to me about these things, because I saw that he struggled but he always denied it.

Interviewer: Do you think he was bullied based on his sexuality?

Willie: Yes, for sure.

M5: Look, he is a ginger so they often gay him a ginger punch. Ruan taped pins and needles under his clothes for his own protection … It started in primary school already. But in standard 5 he received the trophy of Mr. Personality. That gave him a boost. That was his best year ever. But then he went to high school… He then went to John Voster High School because it was a technical high school. He was there for two years and then we moved him to Oos Moot Hoerskool. But when the kids found out that he was in DENMAR, they started teasing him. There is the stigma that you are then crazy and dangerous. It was tough on him. He then ended up in stabilus for the abuse of drugs. It is there where I told him ok, Ruan, I know you are gay and I accept you for it. I just wanted you to live a damn normal life. M5 commented that she just wanted a darn normal life, and I told that to the principal. He (the principal) said he would look into the matter. Until now, we have heard nothing. That is why I took my son to another school with the hope that it will get better". I asked him a few times before then whether he is gay and he always told me that he is not. When he was in Stabilum the psychologist contacted me the one night and said ok, Ruan wants to talk to you about something and that he feels like he is a disgrace to you. He then told me that he is gay. I then told him that I still loves him and nothing is going to change. I just want you to have a normal life. You are now done with drugs and self-medication. Because he told me he had two lives that he has to live. He has to be Ruan at home and then Ruan outside who he wants to be. That is why I took my son to another school with the hope that it will get better.

Interviewer: When he was bullied in school, did he tell you about it?

Willie: He just said that the kids weren’t nice to him but never went into detail.

M5: He did however mention that when he was in standard 6, 4 matric boys ginger punched him. I totally lost it. I went to school and started screaming and the 4 boys got hit in the principal’s office (laughing)

M5: He just didn’t fit in anywhere.

Willie: He didn’t play rugby and neither did he do athletics

Interviewer: Now that you knew he was bullied, what did you do about it?

Willie: It only came out now. Slowly but surely he started talking about it… like some learners pushed his head under the water …

Interviewer: Let’s say you knew at that stage, what would you have done?

Willie: I would have gone to school, because he knows his father. He wouldn’t have told me because he knew that I would have made big trouble at school. I am a different kind of (bliksem)

Interviewer: What would you have liked the school to have done?

Bullying at schools are tough now because there is no discipline at homes anymore. And it will continue at schools. I would have gone to the principal and … I think that is already where Ruan ( gay son) would have been scared because I have a temperament on me… if something is wrong, it must be corrected. I often went to the school. I went to each and every teacher and asked how he was at school because at home he drove us crazy. Like he would never want me and his dad to go somewhere alone. I think there was this once and that’s when we went for wedding. He went all ballistic and shouted at the gate when we left. Tomorrow we are going away for the week and it is the first time in 9 years that Willie and I are going away alone. We never went on holiday because there were always too many problems here at home. It was Ruan this and Ruan that. We moved him to other schools often to try to help out son. Our son never finished school. This makes me very sad but I can understand.

Interviewer: The questions now is, what could you as parents and the school have done to help Ruan?

M5: I just would have liked that if the school suspected something, which they should have, to come talk to us and ask whether we are aware of it. Because so many times I asked Ruan whether he was teased and bullied and he said no but he tells me now that it would have made his life so much easier if he told me this a long time ago.

Interviewer: Why do you think he didn’t tell you earlier?

M5: I don’t know. He is very scared. Maybe he was scared I’m going to tell his father. I don’t know.

M5: But people must also not do it too early because gay boys tend to run away.

Interviewer: When you finally realized that your son is gay, what went on in your head?

M5: I always told him that if he wants to have sex he needs to tell me so that I can go and buy him a packet of condoms and in matric… because I don’t want the child to get an illness or something.

Interviewer: When you suspected that your son may be gay, what went on in your head?

M5: But Willie ( Father) didn’t want to believe it because from a young age I told him that your child is gay, accept it now. Then we would fight about it and he would get angry with me. At another stage he would get angry at me again because then I would tell him again, just accept it.

Interviewer: Do you think things would have been different if he came out to you at an earlier age?

Willie: Yes, definitely. He would have finished school at least

Interviewer: What grade does he have?

M5: Grade 10

Willie: In his grade 11 year there was drama once again and he ended up in Stabilus and the school knew about it and he just refused to go back to school.

M5: One evening he just told me that he is not going back to school. I’m sure that something bad happened at school. That following morning I had to beg him to get into the car, he cried and I had to sign him out. I stood there humiliated and watched how the teachers tried to persuade him to finish school, that it is only three more months then it is record exam and … he bluntly refuse

Interviewer: Do you think he was taking drugs in Oos Moot already?

M5: Yes, he was already on drugs and with the homeschooling I gave him enough rope so that I can catch him out. I told Ruan that I knew that he was on drugs. And he had an eating disorder, for sure. He was anorexic. He just refused to eat. I think it was coke, and I think many of those kids have problems with drugs and …