

So many times, professional clinicians told me, "There's nothing you can do." Tinnitus UK showed me they were all wrong – and gave me control, and hope.



I have (I think) always had tinnitus. My earliest memory is of my 4th birthday party. A balloon popped and I went to my mum and said, "Mummy, make the ringing stop." But she didn't understand.

I was 14 before I realised I might be 'different'. At a sleepover, I asked my friends, "Can't you hear that constant ringing?" – and they just looked at me with puzzled faces. I started to notice that I was having trouble hearing other people, when my friends weren't. I wondered why I was the only one this seemed to be happening to.

It was when I was at university that my tinnitus got much worse. Like most students, my life was a cycle of cheap food, late nights and nightclubbing. I would wake up the next morning not able to hear anything. After a while, it was so bad I became effectively housebound, not wanting to go anywhere or do anything in case the noise got louder again.

I went to the GP. He said, "Oh yeah, I have that. There's nothing you can do." I insisted on being referred to the ENT department – and had to pay £600 (on a student income!) for a private MRI scan to avoid a 2-year waiting list. They said, "There's nothing you can do. You'll just have to learn to live with it."

As most people do, I began Googling. It's a Wild West. There's a lot of people sharing their own experiences, things that have worked for them. But there's also so much nonsense out there – and lots of people trying to make a quick profit by selling 'cures'

The place where I finally found hope – and real solutions – was Tinnitus UK. They offered rational, logical advice and guides to living better with my tinnitus. Through them, I found ways to cope, take control of my life once more. I found I was part of a community of caring people who understood me. And I found a new mission.

I wanted to speak out – to be a part of the community supporting someone else like me. So, I started a video diary about my journey – and have found that in sharing my experience (and promoting Tinnitus UK) I have a huge new positive in my life.

I have also changed careers. I finished my degree – but then decided to re-train as a Hearing Care Assistant, which is the role I have today, working alongside a wonderful audiologist. Today, I am able to help patients with their own tinnitus – and I can say to them, “Yes, there are things you can do. And I can help you.”

Tinnitus UK, this wonderful charity, gave me the life I have today. I am supporting them (and they told me all donations to this appeal are doubled!!) – and I urge you and everyone in the tinnitus community to join me.

Tinnitus UK is our lifeline – and we are theirs.



Caris



To find Caris' video diaries, just search 'Caris Lount Youtube'



Registered charity no: 1011145