



## 'These days we laugh until our tummies hurt'

*Amy Tyreman, 31, a teacher, and Kerry Bamford, 27, a business support officer, are both from Rochdale. Their friendship developed after they both lost their partners*



**AMY SAYS** My boyfriend Danny and I did everything together. We loved going away on mini-breaks to Devon and Cornwall; one of my happiest memories is learning to scuba-dive with him. We'd been together for seven years and engaged for five months when he died in a tragic accident in January 2012; in the middle of the night he tripped and

fell down stairs. I went from planning our wedding to being ruined by grief.

When Kerry contacted me through mutual friends, explaining that her fiancé had also died and asking if I wanted to talk, it was such a relief. My friends and family were amazing, but Kerry knew exactly what I was going through – her partner Luke had taken his own life just two months earlier.

She didn't try to tell me that things would get better; she just listened to me talk. When I found myself running out of Asda after spotting Danny's favourite honey-roasted peanuts on the shelf, she reassured me that I wasn't losing it. Together we joined Widowed And Young (WAY), a support group for men and women under 50 who have lost their partners. It felt good to meet other people like us.

In those early days when we were just helping each other survive, we never imagined we could move on and be >

## Cosmo friendship

happy again. But with each other's support, we're doing it. Danny and Luke will always be the roots of our friendship, but now it goes way beyond the loss we share.

**KERRY SAYS** Luke was a manic depressive, and when he took his

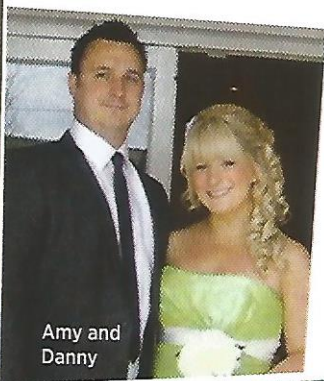
own life in November 2011 I was utterly heartbroken; nobody could do anything to make me feel better. People would say, 'He's in a better place,' and I'd get so angry. We'd been planning our wedding the following summer, and I'd even bought my dress. But even though I couldn't marry

Luke, I changed my surname to his, to show how much he meant to me.

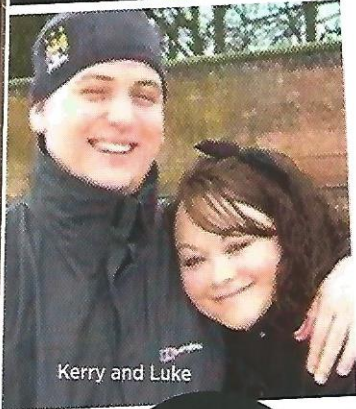
When friends suggested I contact Amy to offer her support, I felt like I had nothing left to give anyone else. But I reached out to her anyway, and our friendship quickly grew. She completely understood why I had to say, 'I love you, Luke,' out loud every night before I went to bed.

Now, we're constantly in touch, and have rebuilt our lives together. In the beginning of our friendship, we only ever talked about Danny and Luke, but these days we're able to laugh together until our stomachs hurt over *Made In Chelsea* – or my disastrous dating stories! I never imagined I'd come this far and be this happy again, and a huge part of that is having an amazing friend in Amy.

• To find out more about WAY, and to get support and advice, visit [Widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://Widowedandyoung.org.uk)



Amy and Danny



Kerry and Luke

*'We have rebuilt our lives together'*