

Samaritans counsellor commits suicide at the spot where her son killed himself two months earlier

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Last updated at 3:58 AM on 21st October 2010

A Samaritans counsellor whose son killed himself by jumping off a bridge on his 24th birthday leaped to her death from the same spot just weeks later.

Yvonne Brown, 59, had been devastated when Ben took his life after becoming depressed over health and job problems.

Grief-stricken, she told her husband Michael, 'If people knew what this does to the people left behind, they wouldn't do it.'





Devastated: Michael Brown, left, arriving for the inquest of his wife Yvonne and son Ben, right, both of whom committed suicide off the Humber Bridge

Two months after Ben's death, she too jumped from the Humber Bridge.

Ben had suffered from acute arthritis since he was 17 and required regular hospital treatment, an inquest in Hull heard.

After his A-levels he worked for the police force in human resources and shortly before his death he took an administrative job at a local college.

But he 'hated it' and tried without success to get his old job back. He lost two stone and had problems sleeping.

A week before he died, he went to the Humber Bridge, he told his girlfriend Laura Richardson. She said: 'In hindsight that was his cry for help to me.

'I was constantly sending him positive text messages.'

Ben was spotted standing beyond the bridge's safety barrier by an off-duty police sergeant who tried to talk him around.

John Excell said: 'He told me he had been up to the bridge before and didn't want this going on his record.

'He told me he'd been suffering with depression and his family would be unhappy he was there again. I assured him the most important thing was his safety. There was no change in his expression, until, without warning, he stepped backwards off the bridge,' he said.



Tragic: Yvonne Brown leapt to her death off the Humber Bridge in August two months after her son Ben also took his own life there

Mrs Brown's husband Michael, 59, told how Ben's death in June changed his parents' lives totally.

'From Yvonne being the strong one and I the weak one, our roles altered. I had to be as strong as I could for her.

'Yvonne was grieving for our son as I was. She was very, very upset.'

He asked her to give up her Samaritans work following Ben's suicide but she refused, telling him: 'There might be somebody out there who hasn't got a family who needs help.'

Then, days before she died, Mrs Brown told her husband about her suicidal thoughts.

He replied: 'If you want to do that, we should do it together.'

On August 31, Mr Brown woke up early at their home in Hull to go to work at BP. He asked his wife of 36 years, who worked as a clerk, how she was feeling.

'She said the same as Ben used to say, "I'm just chilling out",' he said.

'I asked her if she was sure she was OK, and she said, "Yes, I'm OK. Go to work". I gave her a kiss and that was the last time I saw her.'

Later, Mr Brown found her farewell note in the kitchen. His son had left a similar note making his intentions 'clear cut', the inquest was told.

Both Mrs Brown and her son had been put on anti-depressants by their GP before they died, the inquest heard.

Coroner Geoffrey Saul recorded verdicts of suicide after hearing both died from multiple injuries.