

23-year-old Brittany had her world rocked, when her Dad was diagnosed with MND in 2017.

Brittany Hayes world was rocked, when her Dad was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in April 2017.

Her parents had been involved in a serious car accident just 12 months prior, so her life was already focused on her parents' recoveries.

There are two generations of history of MND in her Dad's family, so when he developed symptoms of weakness in his arms and legs, tiredness and tripping over, Brittany tried not to think the worst. At first, he was told that he didn't have MND, so life was quite normal. Then, a second opinion confirmed the worst fears for Brittany and her family.

Brittany, aged, 23 said, "My Mum's heart was broken when Dad was diagnosed. I was so sad my Dad had a terminal illness, but appreciative we at least had the chance to really make the most of the time he has left. It was a shock to learn that, on average, once diagnosed, patients with MND do not live longer than two years. Sadness and shock were felt throughout my whole extended family, especially for those who watched my Pop sadly suffer, well knowing the effect his MND had."

For Brittany, the journey has been difficult, watching the impact MND has had on both her Mum and Dad. She did not expect her Dad would deteriorate at the rate he has. The symptoms most affecting him are the weakness in his hands and feet, speech and being unable to walk. "Dad can still manage to eat some foods, and drinks are consumed through a straw. We are looking at getting a PEG tube in the very near future which will enable Dad to be fed through his abdominal wall."

Brittany and her family are thankful for the support received from extended family, friends and MSWA, knowing that they aren't alone. If anything, Brittany's family has been brought closer together.

"The hardest thing to accept", said Brittany, "is that my family will have to watch my Dad's condition deteriorate until he dies. My Dad is NDIS covered which enables him to access the support of MSWA to make things a little easier. We are thankful that MSWA has provided OT and physio services, speech pathology, nurses and MSWA carers for his showering and personal care needs. My parents were even able to renovate their bathroom to best suit Dad's requirements. Dad now has an electric wheelchair to use full time, which gives back him some independence."

Brittany knew of MSWA, prior to her Dad's diagnosis, and has supported the work they do by way of purchasing tickets in the various MSWA Lotteries and participating in the annual MSWA Ocean Ride. She hopes for more awareness to be raised of MND and that researchers will, one day, find a cure for this debilitating disease.