

30-year journey with depression leads to happiness and wisdom

by Paula in Pennsylvania

My diagnosis is major recurrent depression with a personality disorder. I should have been in therapy as a child, but only started in my late 20s. I am in my late 50s now.

When I first started having a mental health problem I was really out of control. They could not find the right medication combination. I was in and out of the hospital every month. My personality disorder was in full bloom, I sought attention in the typical ways, and was also cutting, scratching and burning myself. When I was angry, I took it out on myself. I had to be restrained while in the hospital so I couldn't hurt myself. I have also tried to commit suicide many times. All this went on for many years.

I had so many operations that I got addicted to pain killers and started drinking so much that I did not remember doing certain things. I told my psychiatrist I had a problem and wanted to go to rehab.

After getting out of rehab, I went to counseling and also went to a partial hospitalization program. I now have an intensive case manager and a recovery worker. My episodes of depression and other symptoms are much less.

I have been out of the hospital for five years. Here are things I do now to remain stable:

- Attend a drop-in center many times a week.
- Meet with my intensive care manager every 14 days or more.
- Meet with my recovery worker five hours a week. She gets me out with other clients. We may go to the grocery store, go to the drop-in center or just go socialize with others.

It has taken 30 years to get this far in my life. I am glad I have grown to what and where I am now. I am happy with who I am.