

Breast Cancer and Depression Survivor manages lifelong OCD

by Annaco in Colorado

My obsessive compulsive disorder started at age 11. I became school phobic. I would come home from school and lie in bed so my mind would not keep going over and over things. Then, going to bed wouldn't take the obsessions away, and I was into obsessions and rituals. I then started experiencing depression. I never laughed. I was always scared. At 19, I couldn't drive because I would think, "What if I drove off of the highway?"

My life was a living hell. If I wasn't afraid to die, I would have committed suicide. I kept trying to let my parents know what I was going through, but denial on their part kept me in a terrible life. Finally I went to a mental health center and I was put on terrible medications. They did nothing for the OCD and little for the depression. I worked with children, and having been a victim of sexual abuse since the age of 3, I was so scared for the children that something would happen to them. I married, then divorced and then married again. I couldn't be alone. I have been in some therapies that were more damaging to me, but at the time, I didn't have good insurance. I was part of "the system." I was given pills and all I heard was to try to think positive. Then when I was 33 I went on a protocol. My OCD became more manageable, but depression and all the other symptoms were still there. My husband was very supportive at the beginning of our marriage, but now has had enough. I was always obsessed with getting breast cancer. In 2006, I did get breast cancer and survived. The problem now is I am in the doughnut hole with Medicare and had to cut down my medication because even the generic is so expensive. I have to pay full price for all of my medications until I reach around \$3,000 out of my own pocket. Of course, I can't afford all eight medications so I had to cut some down. I can feel my OCD starting to be full force again with the lack of my medication, but I cannot get help because my SSD gross is too much. I get \$665 clear a month. I have learned never to tell people I meet about my mental illness because it always gets used against me. Even when I went to the hospital a few years back because of a breast fear, I was thrown in an ambulance and put in a terrible hospital. It took 18 hours to see a doctor and then I was released. At the time, I had good insurance and the hospital was federally-funded so they would get my insurance money plus more from the government. So here I am today, cutting down my expensive medications because I cannot afford them and praying to God to help me. I would love for people who are supposedly without mental illnesses to just feel what I feel for a day or even for an hour. Then I am sure they would think twice before saying, "Get over it." I have one child who is 15 now and has OCD. He is doing well. He is a year ahead in his classes at school. He keeps me going. When I have a few months here and there of feeling okay, I work with children and let each and everyone of them know how special they are. I pray a lot and I know that God has kept me alive. I wish I could help people who suffer silently. I always have the fear that people will find out about my mental illness. Thank you for letting me share some of my life with you.