

More education and less shame

by Amy in Illinois

Hello. I have dealt with mental illness all my life. I always felt "different" even when I was in grade school. I didn't want to always participate in recess. It wasn't until 11 months after my father passed away that my depression and anxiety started ruling my life. That was January of 1992 and I finally saw a therapist in April of that year, followed by an appointment with a psychiatrist the following month.

Having to talk about yourself to two strangers at the age of 14 is just about pointless. I am now 29 and I have tried all the medications possible. I have tried herbal remedies to help, but it seems that I am overly sensitive to everything. For kicks I tried acupuncture once. It started lifting my spirits almost immediately but within 24 hours of treatment I was on a high. I have never gone manic but I have hypomania and to this day it is a struggle to take care of my 6 and 4 year old daughters.

Recently, I have not been able to sleep and that has a great impact on my parenting. Life is not easy for those of us with mental disorders. My knack in dealing with my problem is through humor, or rather, making fun of myself and calling myself a psycho chic, etc. Somehow it seems to work when I tell people about my disorder. This makes it easier on me because I don't like the idea of having to continually suffer in silence the rest of my life. I have put in 15 years and what good has it done me?

The FDA needs to pass regulations on new meds a lot sooner and alternative ways of treating mental illness needs to be covered by insurance companies. When you have mental illness it is a disease just like cancer. This disease eats away at your daily life, relationships, working capabilities and overall daily functioning. Something in the USA needs to change and mental illness needs to be as recognized the same as autism or cancers. I wish people would become more educated and not ashamed if they do have mental illness because together we all can stand together as one. I hope someone gets something from my story; that while I am not happy with the results I am still here and fighting for MY LIFE.