

Coping with abuse by seeking support through therapist, family and friends

by Kerri in Wisconsin

I was emotionally, physically and sexually abused by my ex-husband, who I had two children by. The abuse dragged on for seven years, ending in 1995 when he was finally charged with sexual assault, false imprisonment, domestic violence, and battery. I've been struggling with PTSD. I have a low self-esteem, bipolar and depression.

I don't keep jobs for more than two years. I have one class to finish in college for one degree and two classes to finish for another, but I know I won't finish any. I think I'm too dumb even though I'm not. I'm afraid I won't be accepted and, most of all, I feel my past history with abuse will make me too emotional and everyone will think I'm crazy. I work a fulltime job that's stressful and just get sick of all it. I want it all, now or never.

I also raise two teenagers and my husband is gone a lot for work so, really, I don't struggle financially; just emotionally. My relationship with my husband is good but I have a low self-esteem, which he doesn't understand. He hates my ex who abused me because he sees what I struggle over. He's a family man; big and strong and I'm proud to be with him. He doesn't put up with any bull. He runs his semi company and makes me feel special all the time. He's my lover and best friend. I'm surprised he's still with me but he also says I'm his best friend and the most beautiful thing ever. I'm lucky. We have insurance that doesn't cover much at all, so I have to stop counseling often. I only received out patient-counseling and quit for financial reasons and because I feel I'm their friend by what they tell me about their families and illnesses. I want people to understand mental illness more and I want my counselors to not answer the phone or keep looking at their watch when I'm talking. TIME is what helps.

I write a lot when I'm feeling sad, mad or glad. Don't be ashamed; accept that mental illness wasn't your fault. It happened but it's up to you to help your self and you must accept it, deal with it and move on. Do things that make you feel good and treat people how you would want to be treated.