

Recovery brings confidence, joy and peace

by Cheryl in Virginia

As a Child, I was sexually abused and had an alcoholic parent. I was an anxious child and as I grew up I had many depressed and manic episodes throughout my life.

I went through three bad marriages where I was abused. One marriage ended with my children being abused physically, mentally and sexually. During my years, I had many bad relationships. There were times when I was very promiscuous, had uncontrollable spending episodes, and had tantrums. I was violent, drove wildly, took off to unsafe places alone and caused lots of pain to those who loved me.

Finally I was diagnosed with Bipolar, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress), borderline personality disorder and co-dependency in 2006. It took many stays in the hospital to reach this diagnose.

Doing outpatient care, I finally was put on the right combination of medications that worked for the chemical imbalance of my brain.

I still had problems. I turned to God and my spiritually grew, which helped. I thought that was as good as it would get, but I was still in the dark tunnel with only a small amount of light shining in. Then I heard Bryron, a person with schizophrenia, speak at Mental Health information meeting. He spoke of recovery, and I was amazed. I had to learn more so I talked to him and grabbed all the information I could. I joined VOCAL via the internet: I chatted with online support groups and read as much as I could about recovery. I worked hard in personal therapy using EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) and talk therapy. Then I moved into my first group. We did CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Training) and I was encouraged so much by my peers. I volunteered in the community so I would take the loneliness and loss of purpose away. Everything didn't always work out and it was a fight to overcome all the anxiety.

My involvement with others grew and so did my connection with God. My passion started to grow to help others with mental illness. I began trying to find a way to stop the injustice that we faced. Today am fully in recovery. I am in the light and the world is a bright wonderful place. Am enjoying everyday, like I never have before in my life. I have faith and confidence in myself. I am able to be loved in a healthy relationship. To love others, control my moods and emotions. Now what recovery means to me is having a healthy safe loving life to share with others and to help them get there, too.