

## Years of depression and struggle continue for mother

by Florence in Arizona

I was shy all through school until high school when I started drinking and partying with friends. That was the only way I would come out of my shell. I ran away from home at 16 because my dad was very strict and would not let me go anywhere, which left me home to take care of my other three siblings a lot. I ended up pregnant at 17 and all alone because the baby's father went to prison.

I raised my son any way I could, but I ended up on the streets of Houston when he was just a baby and we were going to the father's trials. Finally, after I woke up with a hermit standing over me and not knowing where my child was, I got the only job I could find, stripping. I called my mom to come back home. My dad had left and mom was a mess, so she took me to my aunt's house, which led me on welfare. I could barely make it until I met a man and things were so much easier. I fell in love with him, married and moved to North Carolina from Texas.

We divorced 10 years later when my son was going to run away from the abuse. My mother and aunt went to North Carolina to pack up my house and my beauty shop and moved me to Arizona. It was kind of scary to start all over and was excited at the same time, but a series of events and the wrong men lead me into the biggest depression that I cannot seem to get out of. I was on food-stamps until I found a good job in Casa Grande recently and she fired me because I was getting food stamps and on behavioral health meds. Then I had no car, no phone, and they cut my food stamps off for not getting my income in on time. It was two days late because my mother dropped it off and they wouldn't take it because the case-worker's name wasn't on it.

I was told by the doctor not to work. I was then evicted from my apartment and had to give up my cat and go to a women's shelter. My dog that I had for four years was run over the month prior. The shelter was too much so I moved in with my son in Avondale. He had a three-bedroom house and wanted to help me out but denies anything is wrong with me. He says it is all because of the man I dated for three years that has me this way, but I have really always been uptight and not able to keep friends. I can't keep a job after losing my beauty shop.

I have had 20 jobs in the last two years and that is the honest truth. I lost my car. The man I was seeing --The more he abused me -- the more money I spent. The clutter was unbearable to him until I went to blow up the world, and they put me into a hospital in Arizona. I threatened all of them for treating others better than me. Then they let me go without any meds. I have been getting health care through the DES, ACCHES but after moving here and they cut off everything, and I was forced to go to work against the doctors advice and after signing up for disability. My son wanted to kill my ex-boyfriend. He said "Mom, I have watched you being abused all my life, do you really want me to go to prison?"

I knew I had to leave a man that I left over 300 times, and kept going back. After I would get everything put away, I'd have to pack it all back up again. I lived like this and went to work with black eyes every week until I lost all of my clients, all of my friends and the love of my life.

I have been on several medications. I had to ween myself down on all of them because I knew I would run out, so now only take one half of the prescription each evening. I

have had four jobs since moving here in the last two months. I try so hard riding my bike out in the heat all day and I am just not getting anywhere, back un-employed now and with all my jobs, nobody wants to hire me. I am at the point where I just want to die but I love my son too much to do that. He is my life and my only child and has done so well for himself to be only 25 years old. I recorded tapes of my abuse because I wanted to catch my ex-boyfriend cheating on me and I keep them to remind me of the pain and to never settle for that again, but it is something that I do that attracts that type of person. He beat me so badly that people could not recognize me, over and over, and I still loved him and would go back. I know I need help but I have no car and no life and nobody that will help me. No one knows how, my bike now has a flat tire and my phone has no minutes and we have no food.

I am supposed to be paying my son \$350 a month, and I can't even afford to do that. Can you please tell me how I can get help? I don't know how to do all the leg work and can't be walking in the heat to get to these facilities only to be turned down. I am so depressed, I constantly cry and I need help.