

# Broken Inside! Breaking Free of Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia

by Michelle in Delaware

I suffer from Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia. I've dealt with anxiety all my life. I am 37 years old now with two children and two years ago I was diagnosed. During the time of my disorder, I was working full-time in a school. I suffered a panic attack at work and had to be rushed to the hospital by ambulance. Not one person told me I was having a panic attack. I literally thought I was going to die.

I got through this panic attack and a few days later went back to work as if nothing was wrong. I kept having panic attacks and had to take a leave of absence from my job. I ended up being out of work for about a year because during the height of my disorder I couldn't even leave my house for fear of having a panic attack. I couldn't drive, go to the doctor's office, go to therapy, or go to the store without the fear of anxiety looming over me. I thought of it as this monster ready to attack me so I buckled down and waited for the worst. Some days I thought I should call 911 because the threat of death hung over me.

With each doctor visit and therapy appointment it got a little easier to come out of the house. Thankfully, I have a doctor and therapist who were supportive. I began taking anti-anxiety medication which for me helped to lift the fog. My therapist had me work on Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Exposure Therapy and eventually Inner Child Therapy. I learned to stop ignoring the anxiety and wishing it away and learned to find out what triggered it to begin with. I learned that worry, stress, and fear brought on the anxiety which brought on the panic attacks and eventually caused the agoraphobia.

During the time of my therapy, I journaled. This helped me to get everything out of my head that I was dealing with. I also wrote about my therapy, my doctor visits, my fears, etc. One day I decided that what I had written was turning into a story so I decided I wanted to self-publish it, which I did. Any time I researched anything about my disorder I learned there were millions of sufferers out in the world. By writing the book I could help people who also suffered. I found out about support groups in my area and wanted to let people know that they were available.

Unfortunately, I did not know about different types of therapies, medications, and support groups all these years that I suffered from anxiety. If it wasn't for my doctor and my therapist I wouldn't have gotten the correct treatment and had a chance to get my life back. After I published my book, titled Broken Inside! Breaking Free of Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia, I did some book signings at my local book stores. I did a program on WMDT TV Channel 47 called Good Things Delmarva where I hoped to bring awareness about the disorder.

In May 2008, I participated in a NAMI walk to help raise money and awareness about mental illnesses and disorders. I also spoke at my local library to help spread the word. I joined a support group and now want to become an advocate for my disorder. Today I continue to take my medication and I follow the therapies I learned. I also follow the Sedona Method and The Secret. I would love to share my story and hope it helps someone else who may be suffering.