

"I fear that I will be scorned, laughed at or not taken seriously"

by Amy in Kentucky

I was diagnosed with severe depression at the age of 17. I can remember the day I was admitted into the hospital as if it were yesterday. It was 1992 and in hindsight it had been a downward spiral for me for a very long time! My mother at the time was married to my stepfather who had emotionally, and at times, physically abused me. My mother was mostly absent at home as she was pursuing her master's degree at night and worked full time during the day.

I had years of pent up anger and emotions and one day I checked myself out of school and decided I would end my life. When I arrived home I was distraught and scared and instead of committing suicide I called my mother at work and told her everything. She rushed home to me and called her therapist and made an emergency appointment for me. After a long session the therapist made a few phone calls and admitted me to a local psychiatric hospital. I was prescribed anti-depressants and received intensive therapy for two weeks and was discharged on an outpatient basis. I continued the medication and therapy for awhile. My mother divorced my then-stepfather and I decided that I no longer needed the therapy and medication, thinking my condition was related to the situation, which it was, but in hindsight I was a tearful and fearful child and suspect (as does my therapist) that I have long battled depression prior to my hospitalization. Since my hospitalization, I can recall many mood swings, depths of despair, thoughts of ending my life, sadness, fear and loneliness and it has progressed.

Nine years ago I began having panic attacks, mostly when I am driving, but there have been episodes which I am sure have been related to stress at home or work. My doctor put me on anti-anxiety medication. I took the medication for a few years and stopped because my physician kept increasing it whenever I would have another panic attack, I decided I did not like the feeling I had while taking it and felt that I was too sedated. This roller coaster has affected my home and work life, but my husband has been more than patient with me as have my many co-workers and supervisors.

I have bottled up so many emotions for the past 16 years that in March of 2008 I reached my breaking point. I began becoming increasingly angry and spouting off at my family and co-workers. I would come into my office every morning and shut the door and sob for no reason. I began to isolate myself and withdraw from society and began sleeping all the time which has resulted in a large weight gain (which adds to the depression).

I am not a very open person, sharing sensitive information and feelings makes me very uncomfortable and vulnerable. I fear that I will be scorned, laughed at or not taken seriously; typing this makes me anxious. I have been seeing a therapist for the past 4 months for psychotherapy sessions for depression and anxiety.

I recently started an anti-depressant 3 weeks ago and I have noticed some positive effects with my mood swings but I do feel tearful at times. I have a follow-up appointment soon for a medication review; perhaps the doctor will increase my dosage. I so look forward and yearn for a time in my life when I can find peace of mind. My battle seems to have progressed over the years and I cannot stand what I have become. I worry for my daughter who has watched me spiral downward and withdraw from her and for my husband who thinks I do not love him anymore because I

do not open up and have lost my sex drive and developed a fear of intimacy. I feel lost and lonely, but I know I will find my way and I accept that I cannot do it alone and that asking for help does not make me weak.

I hope anyone who reads this will find the strength to reach out and seek help. Yes, it can be scary but it also feels good to know that someone is truly listening to you and can help you.