

Having fun and learning helps with coping

by Jeffrey in North Carolina

I'm diagnosed with schizophrenia. I've been diagnosed with mental illness since I was 24 years old when I was in a psychiatric hospital. I have Medicaid. I've had no problems getting care as far as I can remember. I've been hospitalized four times for my mental illness.

Since I moved into a group home, I see a doctor at a mental health center. I also have a community support person and attend a local clubhouse where I learn coping skills and work skills. I've had some setbacks since I started going to the clubhouse, like my symptoms got worse and I've been in the hospital once, but I feel like I'm getting better everyday with my illness.

I have never been married and I don't have any children. I graduated from high school and I worked sawmilling prior to being diagnosed. I like to walk and listen to the radio. I feel like I need to get some more hobbies.

With my schizophrenia, I experience hearing voices and seeing things others don't see. I've also experienced paranoia. I can't live by myself anymore because I had trouble with making decisions and my judgment has been bad at times. I had a tendency to spend too much money and my family and I decided that it would be best for me to live in a group home. I felt, at one time, that my family discriminated against me by not giving me money, but I think that was just my illness. The worst part about my illness is that sometimes I feel like I'm always having to struggle. I feel I have to work hard.

One thing I would change about people's views about mental illness would be not to let people push others down because they have a mental illness. The things that have helped me cope the most have been having fun and learning new things. I hope this helps someone else learn more about mental illness.