



My name is Shelia. I have been diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, and I'm an alcoholic. I have been dealing with my illness and alcoholism for over 15 years. I first started my treatment over 12 years ago. I was introduced to the mental health system by being mandated, and went into a treatment for alcoholism. My mental health and recovery was a challenge for me. My cycle was I would get better, then I would stop treatment and get worse.

Today I have 25 months clean and sober and have been stable. I have more awareness of my cycle of mental illness and alcoholism. I'm working on myself everyday before anything else. I take my medication and I participate in recovery meetings. I show up for my appointments with my therapist and my psychiatrist even if I feel I'm doing well.

What gives me hope is the progress that I have made. I know if you address the issues and make them a priority in your life, you begin to live. Before, I just existed. There are resources that can help you. You have to make the decision to get that help. I still have my struggles, but I know I will get through them with all of the support around me. I'm very careful with the choices I make today, and I'm very proud of myself for all the rewards, accomplishments, and respect that I have received by taking care of myself. I finally look forward to my future.

-Sheila, San Carlos

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