

Testimony before the Mental Health Subcommittee
January 29, 2013
Mary Stone

Hello my name is Mary Stone.

I am in recovery for mental illness which are anxiety, depression and bipolar and bereavements issues. I am here today to tell you what I know and try to get you to understand why mental illness is not a joke and how awful it is to suffer from it. I have been in recovery now since 2003 and the person you see standing here now was not the person then. I have been depressed to the point where could not sleep, do any kind of daily hygiene care, crying all the time, wishing it would stay night forever because just knowing the sun is coming up makes you anxious that yet another day is coming. I used to feel like I was here on this earth just to take up space.

My mind was constantly on overload and sometimes I had wished that I was never born. I used to try to accomplish something but my mind would not let me. Suffering from manic depression even if the phone rings I would not answer it or take it off the hook because I could not deal with anything, not one more thing on my plate. So I figured if I just stay in that comatose state that I was in that somehow my problems would go away.

I used to curl up in a fetal position whether on the bed or couch. Those were my safe places while the t v was watching me. My anxiety used to get so bad that it would cause me to have panic attacks. I could not find any air, my heart felt like it was going to burst through my chest and I would start throwing up profusely. I thought very little of myself; I thought I was weak and unimportant. I would get very angry at the slightest thing or sometimes just hibernate from people for periods of time. These instances would reoccur at different times, on and off. My mental illness did not let me enjoy life, pursue my dream and have a happy life.

It took a person from a DCF to recognize and recommend that I go a mental clinic. That was the beginning of my recovery. First I did an intake then was evaluated, was given assigned a Psychiatrist, clinician, case manager and participated in different programs that showed me certain tools to use and how to notice the trigger symptoms before they become too severe. Community support was also helpful in my recovery because although there were people who did not take mentally illness serious or stigmatize against it, there were events given to support for people with mental illness.

From groups, meetings, Psychiatrists, clinician, case managers, churches, working, my community and my faith, I started to think different. I started to think that I was here for a purpose and my purpose is to bring attention to society that people that suffer from mental illness needs more support and awareness. The reason I can stand here now and bring you this information is a combination of previous things I described. I am not here to tell say I'm cured, but to say I am here and still standing and my recovery still goes on. There is no cure for mental illness, but there is recovery.

I now work through the help of Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and Marrakech for Yale Program and Community Health through Yale Psychiatry where Dr. Larry Davidson developed this program and saw there was a need to research the different paths in mental illness recovery.

I am so glad to work for this organization. It has been a great source in my recovery along with my faith just because of how it helps give me a purpose and at the same time help others. Dr. Larry Davidson designed a place to work in which it gives me empowerment to try to exceed, to get to a point in life where I can contribute to society and at the same time myself.

It is through my job as a case manager for Project (P E P) "People Engaging People" which is one of the recovery programs and my own personal experience I see obstacles, like lack of funding for the health care system and the community programs that's better in educating, providing more health care for the people who suffer from mentally illness, engage in more awareness towards mental illness, have more adaptable programs in places for schools, specialized training for police officers, teachers, parents and basic needs such as housing for people with mental illness is essential in recovery which there is so much lack of.

I thank you for listening and I hope that you take something away from my story to help you know how serious the help and need for mental illness and its recovery.