



Though I didn't know the name of my diagnosis for a long, long time, I have been living with Borderline Personality Disorder since my teens. For most of my life, my symptomology included various self-injurious behaviors because I was hurting so deeply inside that I wanted to be numb and go away. Looking back now, I know that my suffering was the result of a severe abuse and trauma history, and I was terrified of everything. I started receiving various treatment services as a teenager. I struggled to get better for many years. Things changed when I met an inspiring nun who really took time to listen to me, and her way of interacting with me gave me hope for the future.

I was mistreated for most of my life, and it was really hard to deal with until I found positive coping strategies to combat the feelings those interactions caused. I did things like read scripture and visit the ocean, and I learned to believe in myself and not care about what others thought as much. Nowadays, in my sixties, I still struggle from the things caused by my "illness", but I find hope through many things. Anything nature oriented reminds me of how beautiful life is and being outdoors and working with the earth stimulates my sense of hope.

- Colleen, Redwood City



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