

Understanding Trauma

Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc.

This is one of several recovery stories that trauma survivors and providers shared with us as we developed the Understanding Trauma Report.

“I am more than a survivor – I am at peace”

July 30th, 2004 at 11:30 a.m., the FBI (approximately 10-12 people) raided my home looking for evidence that my husband had child pornography on the computer. I learned that he was ‘chatting’ on the internet with another man about offering our 2-year old daughter for sex.

I could feel my entire being literally going into shock for the only thing I knew was that my husband was on the computer late at night. I believed him to be a good person (as you do when you marry someone), but I had absolutely no idea what he was doing.

It has been almost 5 years for me now and it is still so difficult to write these words. I later found out that he had been molesting my youngest sister, during our marriage, at about the age of 16. Absolute and utter devastation and very, very deep trauma do not even begin to describe my feelings and how horrible I felt.

He was arrested that day and went to our local prison.

About a week later, he was put on house arrest at his parents’ home. He was sentenced about 9 months later to 6 years in a federal prison for sexual offenders. I began treatment and therapy about a week or two after this horrid incident and remained in therapy for approximately three years.

For me, therapy was a lifeline of support along with my strong faith in God. It was one thing I could hold on to that there might even be a glimmer of hope for my children as well as myself. The invaluable support I received from my therapist was absolutely crucial to my survival and then on to the start of my healing.

I clearly remember when she gave me the information that I was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. I desperately needed to know that I was suffering so harshly and deeply because of a real, tangible disorder. I remember it so vividly because it made sense to me – that this trauma disorder was so real to me and I finally had a

name for it.

I truly believe this was the start of a turning point for me and my healing. I can tell you that just a few months ago, I finally received my divorce papers. I am so grateful to all those who helped me during this extremely traumatic time. As of today, I feel so whole again and healed beyond my wildest imagination. Life is good, because my children are doing absolutely wonderfully and I have finally joined them.

He will one day be released from prison and I may still have much fighting to do to protect my children. However, I never thought so much healing, calmness, quiet, and peace would ever be achievable in my lifetime. I am here and I am more than a survivor – I am at peace.

By Anonymous