

Edna

My name is Edna. I was raised in a very abusive home. My addiction started at the age of 9 years old. I just thought it was a way of living life then because my parents were using. They were okay with it. It went from marijuana to I started using cocaine. I started using and then selling it. I almost overdosed twice. Prior to that, I almost had a heart attack once. I ended up in the hospital several times and I had become so depressed I could not function. I just felt like I didn't care and I felt like I would probably die anyway.

I got busted in 2002 and they locked me up on my birthday. They sentenced me on my birthday. In 2002, February 11, that was my birthday gift. I ended up spending 10 years in prison.

All during my time it was so very ... I was ready ... I didn't think I would be here for real. I didn't think I would make that time. Plus my age. When I got out of prison, I was 48 years old. And I just made up my mind that I did not want to come out going back into drugs. I didn't want that life anymore. I changed my friends. I didn't go around people I knew still used and so when I ended up in Union Mission — that was my turning point — learning about stability and learn to be stable.

It was in 2018, I began to work in recovery. I just wanted to go out and share the story and help other people then and go out and encourage other people. And I loved it. I realized that while all these people that are broken and are struggling with addiction and they have given up hope. Somewhere along the line they have lost hope in life and their worth and they don't feel worthy so we as Peer Support Specialists and Recovery Coaches — our responsibility is to encourage those. And some people get so brushed off.

You can't lift anybody up by putting them down because they already feel that way. They need to know they are worth it. They are worthy. I don't want to see them in their graves early. They are young because I am older. I am 60 years old. I have 18 years of sobriety under my belt so that is a blessing too, to be able to let other people know you can do this. I feel good because I can give back to all I went through in life. Like now, I never like to say never. I drop the "n" off and say I don't ever want to use again. I hate drugs. That's how a person has to get to that point. You have to say I hate drugs. I love life. You know I want to live. I want to see people get better. And I truly mean that.