

Lisa

My name is Lisa and I am from Fayetteville, West Virginia. When I was around 16, I broke my ankle and I ended up getting hydrocodone from the doctor. That was actually what started my addiction. People want to think that you have to come from family where your mom or dad or someone in your family uses and I think that's the biggest misconception. I mean addiction can happen anytime, anywhere to anybody.

For years I would get pain pills and stuff like that and didn't realize I had a problem until I was around 28 when I started doing meth, heroine, crack, coke, Xanax — anything anybody had. I spun out of control. I ended up leaving my husband. I cut my family off and I spent every day with drug dealers or people using drugs. That was the only people I was around and it was a very dangerous situation I put myself into. You know it's a hard thing to admit to yourself that you're an addict, but it's even harder to admit to other people that you're an addict. Until you're at a place with yourself that you're totally comfortable with it, it's almost impossible to tell other people.

I came back to life the day I went back to detox. I found myself. I knew ... I worked really hard there with counselors and the group. I wasn't there to pretend I was actually there to do the work — and they saved my life. If they would not have believed in me and gave me hope, I wouldn't be here today helping everybody else.

As soon as I got clean I knew that helping others was something very important to me. That's what my job is now. I am a peer recovery support specialist and I help people like me every day. I help them whether they want to do the MAT program or if they just want to do counseling. Whatever they want, I am there to help them through it.

There is recovery. There is hope. All you have to do is reach out to someone. Recovery is possible. Recovery is real and you can do it. I got my family back — my husband, my step-son ... my mom has absolutely become my best friend. We're closer now than we ever have been. I have a wonderful life and I am very blessed where I am.

It can happen to anybody, anytime. It can be your cousin, your daughter, your sister ... it doesn't discriminate who it picks. It's a disease that no one wants to have in their family, but it happens and you have to be supportive and you have to understand what's going on — and not just shut people out.

I am going to spend the rest of my life every day saving more lives like the person I used to be. Because every day they are at the point ready for help and I want to be that person there to guide them, walk with them, hold their hand and be their shoulder — whatever they need, I want to be that in their life.