

With recent events of a heinous act of revenge pornography by someone I trusted and loved, I have had a severe recurrent episode of depression, anxiety and PTSD with ongoing (but without current intent) suicidal tendencies. This battle is not meant to be fought alone! With hopes to save lives and educate people the most important thing you can do is tell someone how you are feeling! This persons betrayal of loyalty sent me into a horrifying downward spiral into a mental health relapse hell. I knew I had to reach out but I didn't want to bother or worry my loved ones. I am thankful family and friends for their unbiased support in this particular situation. But after months passed I was still in a very dark place.

PTSD can occur at the time of trauma or months or even years after the trauma occurs. Trauma is very different to every individual, don't judge. PTSD is not "what's wrong with me" it's "what happened to me".

I knew I had to get help when the thought of death was a peaceful thought, a release, a "sigh" of letting go. Being with Jesus sounded immensely more comforting than staying here with worldly people. I can remember being on a flight, looking out the window & seeing the most angelic pathway of clouds that would lead me to a lovely eternity to heaven. I closed my eyes, leaned my seat back, and was at total peace with pleading God to please take this jet down. And when we landed being so very disappointed because I had to "go on" and put on my fake smile. Let's get back to this, I want to take a moment to explain what "fight or flight" means to me.

Over the last year I've been to Florida twice, Atlanta, Ft. Wayne, Kentucky, Las Vegas and Seattle. Sounds like a wonderful year of vacationing doesn't it? What it really meant was escaping my demons, chaos, confusion and pain. Spending money I shouldn't have

with no worries. Don't get me wrong, there were some great times and I'm very blessed to have friends and family help to get me away, distract me from my turmoil. But I also had unrealistic thoughts and plans as to where else I could escape to and not tell anyone. Maybe check in with loved ones occasionally. I would joke about loading up my two beloved German Shepherds and just drive until I ran out of funds and couldn't drive anymore. I was certain we could live under a pier by the ocean (my only concern was how much I do not like fish, lol), or in the wilderness, or for some reason San Antonio stuck in my mind. I would tell people this and laugh but on the inside it was very real to me. The urge to "Flight" outweighed my "Fighting" capabilities. I'm too exhausted to continue to fight.

Ok back to the suicidal planning. The more places I went, the stronger my urges became. I'm not sure why. I guess because all these beautiful places that God created seemed so tranquil. While my friends and family were admiring wonderful clay colored canyons, and majestic waterfalls, and the thickest green forests and breathtaking mountains, I was soaking in the serene Peace of knowing where I could drive back to and miss a winding curve into a sunlit canyon or freely fall into a fierce current of a violent waterfall. I didn't want my loved ones to know my death was intentional. I hid my tears. Do you know how hard it is to choke back a melt down? I'm mastering that emotion too. My last "vacation" I returned home and checked myself into Marion General Hospital Partial Hospitalization Program where I spent 5 months trying to make sense of it all.

During my 4 month stint at Marion General Hospital Partial Hospitalization Program I endured what I describe as a “out of body” relapse. I had made it through the program and was now in relapse prevention. I was dealing with months of ongoing court issues that pertained to pressing criminal charges on the offender. I was triggered every time I had a court appearance, whether the perpetrator was present or not, or meeting with any agency that was helping me pursue justice. I walked in to relapse prevention somber, empty handed and feeling depleted. With tears running down my face I told the counselors someone was going to die. Either me, the coward of a man who did this to me or both. My body was sitting in the chair but the words coming out of my mouth were that of a stranger and inaudible. I had so much confusion and noise in my head. I can see the counselors looking at each other with great concern but I didn't understand why. What was I saying that was so fearful? I vaguely remember them whispering to me if I was willing to surrender my weapon to someone trustworthy that would safely lock it away from me. You see, for months I slept with a 9mm under my pillow, pepper spray under the other pillow and a steel bar at arm's length placed under my bed. It became surprisingly comfortable sleeping with a gun under my head. But somewhere between protecting myself and my household, became a very scary idealization of permanently ending the nightmare I was living. I am thankful God was with me that afternoon, as He is everyday, and placed me in a safe place with trained professionals to defuse a potentially horrific situation and immediately took appropriate action which placed me back into PHP for another month.

I'm not where I want to be but thank God I'm not where I was! I thank God for giving me grace and mercy and saving me from myself. For carrying me when I couldn't stand, for the discernment to get to the hospital. I'm learning to set boundaries, recognizing my

triggers and avoid them if possible, to run like hell when I see or feel a "red flag", and give myself permission to slow down and say no and take "me" time. This is not an easy task for me. I'm educating myself and loved ones on my diagnosis. I'm trying to eat healthier, yea right lol. exercise and use coping skills. I've become very active in NAMI. They have helped me be accountable in maintaining my mental health in which I am passionate about advocating and educating.

I have a safety plan in place. I promise not to mask and tell the truth when I'm struggling. Most importantly I promise to never break the hearts of my sons, my mother, my sisters, my brother, my grandmother, and the rest of my family and friends and my God <3 For I am the daughter of the most high King