



Testimony Outline

From Addiction to Recovery

Verdia Nix

- I started using alcohol at the age of fourteen, and had no idea that my life was already on a road of wreckage. I was a good student when I did attend school between my spouts of drinking. I soon became interested in boys who drove fast cars and used hard illegal drugs, which went hand in hand. I used drugs until I reached the age of 37. I lost my self-esteem, self-respect, family members, and a few other life surviving skills.
- During my years of addiction, I experienced homelessness, county jails which led me to prison. I began the process of recovery while incarcerated. I received my G.E.D and completed a drug educational program at the jail. Because of the life I lived in the streets while using drugs, I was already dealing with other public systems, such as: Jail/prison, Probation, law enforcement, courts, health, etc.
- My first prison term was my last! At the jail I realized that I had lost a lot of years of my life running the streets and doing drugs. I decided to stop the cycle of destruction and work on myself (I began telling myself: I know I can do better, I am a very intelligent woman). I also realized that there was still time to change my life and that it was not too late. The problem was getting a bed in a treatment program. There were no beds available and the waiting list was huge! It is so unfortunate that when you have finally hit bottom and ready to make the change there was not a single bed or program that could take me. Accidentally, I happened to hear that there was a BASN bed available and that the person, whose bed had been assigned to, did not want the bed. I was quick to tell the person I wanted the bed!
- I was transferred to the Frederick Ozanam Center which is a Women Residential Facility, my next goal was to get clean and sober, pick up my life skills and clear my involvement with the other systems to become a productive member is society.

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- I completed the treatment program and received a certificate, but most importantly I have regained self-respect. I am now working in the counseling field and attending Diablo Valley College to become a certified counselor with an A/A degree in Drug and Alcohol Counseling.
- As I look in retrospective, the biggest barrier I faced was treatment availability. Sometimes we are blessed by the systems we are dealing with, and often times these could also be barriers. In my case, I was lucky I qualified for a BASN bed. The demand for treatment is definitive disproportionate to the current need. In order to provide treatment the county must reduce the length of stay in treatment must also be reduced. But sometimes we are not ready to leave treatment, much less empower to deal with the other systems that we are involved with. Very often mothers are dealing with CPS and reunifications issues, Hepatitis C, clearing up personal records, getting the drivers license back, right to vote, etc.
- The lack of job skills when individuals complete treatment could impact someone's recovery. Employment skills, should begin during treatment towards the end of the treatment plan and a transition plan should include not only ensuring housing issues to avoid homelessness, but also the ability to be employed.
- As I completed treatment, I was also very lucky to receive a bed in transitional housing, but I was just the exception to the rule. Most people in treatment do not have a place to stay after program completion, we must remember family has already closed the doors. Having clean and sober living environments is as important to recovery as treatment itself.