

My name is Doreen. I have a wonderful husband, and three grown children. My wish in sharing my story of HOPE is that others will know that help is out there for them too. I received treatment for my severe depression at Lindner Center of HOPE, and while under the care of Dr. Nelson Rodriguez, I also took a genetic test for depression from Assurex Health that helped identify the right medication for my illness.

This has been a long journey to feel alive and myself again.

I was born in Madras, India and have East Indian-Portuguese ancestry. I grew up with four other siblings, and my beloved father and mother. I was the naughty middle child with a passion for talking, good food, and a sweet tooth like no other. My dad passed away in 1970 at age 59 from heart disease and I miss him more and more each day. I am truly "my father's daughter" and match his zest for life and sharing. He always had the most infectious smile and was an incredible cook. After receiving my Bachelor of Arts Degree, my family and I migrated to the United States from India in 1973. I was twenty years old. I soon became a US Citizen. I had a long and exciting career in retail, then in marketing and promotions at Procter & Gamble, and at Hillshire Farms/Sara Lee. I had to retire earlier than I planned because of heart disease. I underwent triple bypass surgery in 1992, at the age of 38, just 3 months after our twins were born.

In 2007, after one of my best friends lost her leg in a car accident, I was diagnosed with depression. I was stunned, afraid and helpless, and did not understand what this was, and why this was happening to me on top of everything else. I went to see a myriad of psychologists and psychiatrists who prescribed countless antidepressants, but I seemed to be getting worse, slipping further and further away. I could not sleep, lost my appetite, and became very thin. I am known to friends, family, and co-workers, as the most social being around- I love being with people. Instead, I became a recluse. I never smiled, laughed or talked. Worst of all was the countless hours I spent crying. The antidepressants also gave me side effects which sent me to the emergency room often. The psychiatrists (many of whom were highly recommended) kept me on the medications despite my plea for help. My body, heart (most of all, my mind) felt odd and out of synch while taking these medications. I felt helpless and miserable. Nothing worked for me.

Then, in 2009 desperate for relief, I saw Dr. Nelson Rodriguez at Lindner Center of HOPE. Dr. Rodriguez suggested I take a GeneSight test that was developed by Assurex Health in Mason, OH. I was one of the first patients to be tested. The GeneSight Test is a simple cheek swab, and as Dr. Rodriguez says, "it's like a GPS

for your brain.” The test results provided Dr. Rodriguez with an understanding of the impact several medications would have on me, based on my genetic make-up.

This test may reveal to the doctor if there are potential drug-to-drug interactions, or possible drug side-effects based upon a patient’s genes.

I was blessed and lucky to have been able to take this test. With my test results, Dr. Rodriguez created a treatment plan for me. I was prescribed one medication and Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) treatments by Dr. Dallas Auvil at Good Samaritan Hospital. (A hospital was needed, due to my heart condition.) The combination of medication and ECT brought me back to life again.

My dream is to publish two books: a cookbook to share our ancestral heritage and other recipes, and a second book to share my survival story of suffering from depression, heart disease, and past abusive relationships.

I want to shout from the rooftop to tell anyone suffering from mental illnesses that miracles can happen. Faith, hope, tenacity, and a positive outlook - combined with the most amazing team of doctors, hospitals, new genetic testing, and safe treatments from the miracle of science and innovation are now available to help us conquer the stigma, helplessness and excruciating suffering from depression and other illnesses to make us whole again.

I strive to make every day count and have the biggest smile of hope – raising awareness for this needed cause. Never give up. There is hope and we will survive.

God bless you all.