Julia's Story: Finding New Tools and a Path Forward

After returning to Cincinnati where she grew up, Julia had spent much of her adult life in therapy. She first began seeking support in her 20s, initially for anxiety and the pressure she felt to succeed in her career. Over time, therapy also helped her begin to talk openly about the sexual abuse she experienced as a child.

Through the 2000s, Julia continued therapy and was prescribed medications for anxiety and depression by her psychiatrist. The therapy consisted mostly of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) skills. But challenging her thoughts was difficult.

“I kept trying to incorporate the CBT skills, but I felt like they could only help so much since it was difficult for me to challenge my thoughts in “fight or flight” anxiety moments which would happen daily in my work,” Julia said.

As her career progressed and she experienced greater professional success, Julia noticed a troubling pattern. Her anxiety would become increasingly pronounced. If the anxiety continued for a long period at heightened levels, it would lead to depression. The cycle began to affect both her personal life and her work. She increased the frequency of therapy and was prescribed additional medications, but the pattern continued.

After returning to the Cincinnati area, where she grew up, Julia’s psychiatrist recognized that she seemed stuck in this cycle and recommended and referred her to the Lindner Center of Hope. Although it was scary to start a Partial Hospitalization Program, she trusted her psychiatrist’s recommendation.

“It still blows me away that we have such an amazing resource in Cincinnati. The people there really care and are rooting for you.”

Julia, Lindner Center of Hope patient



“You’re not alone… There is going to be hope. Just hold on.”

LINDNER CENTER OF HOPE

Julia's Story, continued

"It was not until Lindner Center of Hope that I was exposed to Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)," she said. "It was refreshing. It is an exciting skill set to learn—learning ways to approach difficult life moments. It was so much easier for me to apply, and it has been working for me. This was exciting and hopeful."

As Julia worked with the treatment team, she began to uncover connections between her past experiences and the challenges she was facing today.

"Brian, the nurse practitioner, helped me uncover some things, and I learned that the abuse was still impacting me. Just that awareness was huge and a lightbulb went off."

Julia also experienced the importance of compassionate support firsthand. During the PHP program, she was triggered by an experience and needed to step away to care for herself.

Staff supported her in taking that time and then Jordan, a lead DBT therapist, helped her work through what she was experiencing one-on-one, including practicing emotional regulation. She also could tell that Julia had not processed all her childhood trauma that was impacting her now. So, Jordan asked, "Have you ever had Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)? It is clear you have accepted that the childhood sexual abuse occurred, but have you processed how it maybe impacting your anxiety and depression today?" Another light bulb moment filled with hope happened. Julia said, "I will always be thankful to Jordan for how she handled that moment, and her professionalism and compassion for offering her observations and thoughts for next steps in my journey."

"For me, it was like the onion was getting peeled back," Julia said. "Working with these trained individuals can really open up your eyes. It was quite an amazing experience, and I am very thankful for it."

Today, Julia has a different set of tools to draw upon and a greater understanding of herself and the experiences that have shaped her.

She also has a message for anyone who may be struggling and feeling hopelessness.

> *You're not alone. People out there struggle. There are people who relate. Just hold on. This is a center of hope. This is something life changing. There are so many resources to meet you where you are. There is going to be hope.* ***Just hold on****."*