

You Are Worth It

06/03/2021

I started at PG&E in December 2001 during the energy crisis as a Customer Service Representative at the San Jose call center. On April 15, 2010, I made a decision that changed my life for the better.

It started with energy supplements to get my days started and alcohol to help “wind down” after a long day of work. Over time, I developed an addiction that progressed to a chemical dependency. I suffered in silence, believing my house was in order when in reality, my life was unmanageable. Like a bad relationship, what started as a mutual benefit became toxic and took a lot out of me. I could no longer contain the pain inflicted by addiction as it made its way into my relationships with family, friends and colleagues.

Being sick and tired of being sick and tired, I sought help. That was the most difficult step - to ask for help. But when I sought support, help was there in a generous, indescribably wonderful way.

And that's why I became a Peer Volunteer. Fear, surrounded by the stigma around addiction, not knowing much about my medical benefits or confidentiality rights - all kept me from seeking help. I finally reached out to a Peer Volunteer who listened—that's it—just listened and made some simple suggestions.

Through those suggestions, I found the information I needed to make the decision to recover. It was my decision alone to stop and, most importantly, I didn't have to do it alone. That Peer Volunteer was James Tadena who has since passed. His act of kindness and understanding helped save my life. It is my turn to pay it forward... to give back this gift that was freely given to me.

To those who may be going through what I've gone through (or know someone who is): there is a safe place to turn to. You and your loved ones deserve a life of joyous freedom. Call me if you need someone to listen, attend a recovery meeting with you, or help answer any questions you may have. I am no better than anyone and in no position to judge. I am a peer who has dealt with her own darkness and found a new way of living free from drugs and alcohol. The road to recovery is possible and you are worth it.

-Catherine