

## How BDI Has Provided Support to One Program Attendee

*With humor and compassion, Mari Porter shares how she has benefited from the BDI Program, "FEELING GOOD AGAIN: Breaking the Diabetes/Depression Connection."*

It's spring and the last double-header you went to was a visit to your endocrinologist and cardiologist. You think a lunch date is when you schedule your medical appointments around the clinic cafeteria specials. You call your pharmacist more than your friends. You might want to consider attending the upcoming workshop "Feeling Good Again: Breaking the Diabetes/Depression Connection!"

I've attended twice and will be attending again. Can it really be that helpful? In a word...YES! I've been asked to share my experience with you. Let me begin by describing some of us and perhaps you will see a glimmer of recognition.

Our beds are unmade, dirty dishes sit on the counter, piles of laundry could be mistaken for Mt. Rushmore, cars haven't been washed since the last president, and we use our unopened mail as beverage coasters. Our A1Cs are higher than we wish, we've put on some weight we can't seem to lose, and we don't exercise as much as we wish we would. We know what to do but we wonder why we aren't doing it.

Sometimes we screen our calls to avoid answering the question "So how are you and what have you been doing?" Does anyone really want to hear that you feel tired, overwhelmed, anxious, afraid and sometimes sad? We wonder if we are a burden and worry about our desirability when we can't shake our guilt, shame, anger, frustration, and inertia.

So what do we do about it? First we gather around a table and connect with kindred souls who speak our language and share our experiences. Under the compassionate guidance of Dr. Susan Guzman we take weekly self-assessments for our depression and anxiety. We are introduced to the concepts of cognitive behavior therapy to understand our negative cycle of thoughts and feelings. We learn how to identify the distortions in our own thinking patterns and we create a new, more helpful approach.

Then something amazing begins to happen as hopefulness returns to our lives. A new friend may be made among the people who understand you, maybe it gets easier to exercise a little, or perhaps an A1C score starts to improve. You don't feel quite so alone, and when you leave each session you feel uplifted by the understanding and encouragement you received. Maybe you laughed at yourself for the first time in quite awhile. You can now feel our pain, shame and guilt but still appreciate the details of someone's bakery binge for your vicarious pleasure. You're getting the hang of it!

Remember when Dorothy asked Glenda how to begin her journey to Oz? Glenda said it's always best to start at the beginning. The momentum for change in your life begins the moment you decide to register because you start to become more conscious of the things you want to improve. Sometimes success is as simple as showing up. So join us at the next "Feeling Good Again" workshop and put the first yellow brick in your own road toward a more comfortable life!