

Throughout her childhood and adolescence she lived with physical and verbal violence from her father who was an alcoholic. When Juanita was 8, he died and the abuse finally stopped.

Early into our meetings, Juanita expressed that she has had a bad relationship with her mother for several years and there was no good communication between them. At age 14, Juanita began to work because her mother could not afford the children's basic needs.

To make matters worse, Juanita learned the painful news that her mother was pregnant. She felt deep disappointment towards her mother, knowing the additional suffering another child would cause to her 11 brothers and sisters. Juanita was looking to escape the feeling of unbearable anguish and tension. The cutting became more frequent and deeper.

During our meetings I used several relaxation techniques, Logo-therapy, restructuring of thoughts, social skills training, coping therapy, front of the mirror techniques, and we created a life project together. After our first 4 sessions, it was evident Juanita felt less anxious. Cutting was decreasing from twice a day to once a day, then to 3 times a week, 2 times a week and finally stopped. I met with Juanita 35 times.

During our most recent session, Juanita admitted she was a new person ready to face any challenges. She feels liberated from her problems and full of security. She is confident she can leave the past in place. She managed to forgive her father for all of the damage he caused her. She can forgive her mother for all of the disappointments she has caused. She clearly understands that cutting and consuming alcohol only serve to let off steam for the moment.

With a sparkle in her eyes and filled with hope Juanita expressed, "I know who I am and freely can say what are my strengths and weaknesses. I know what I am able to do." She has the tools to strive for new goals and find solutions to problems that might come later. She has new hope for a bright future.

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