



### **I Have Depression**

*By Sue Spooner*

My name is Susan, Susie or Sue Spooner. No matter what name I go by, I am a little nervous and a bit embarrassed to say I live with depression. It took years to admit this to myself, let alone other people, especially colleagues. I thought it was a sign of weakness, and it took me a long time to realize I needed help.

I remember trying to explain what I was feeling when I was younger, but people just dismissed it as being a teenage girl, a phase. Deep down I knew it was more, but I couldn't explain it and certainly didn't want anyone to know I had "depression". From the outside I seemed like a very happy, normal girl. But on the inside I was not that person at all. Why couldn't anyone see this? Why could no one see the tears behind my eyes, the pain I was feeling inside? It was because I didn't talk about it.

I carried this into adulthood, and over the years I also developed low self-esteem and anxiety. When I would try to explain how I felt to family or close friends, I would get the typical response of: "What do you have to be depressed about? You have a great husband, great kids, a nice house, a good-paying job, a car to drive, food to eat..." The list would go on and on. Then I would just feel even worse, because they were right. What was I depressed about?

My depression didn't start with something situational; it was a chemical imbalance. However, I didn't know this at the time. Of course, this had an impact on my professional life. Now, I am in a place in my life where I can and will be helping my mental mind by recognizing I need help and opening up to others. I have colleagues who are supportive, the same way they would be with someone who lives with an illness such as diabetes or high blood pressure. I don't discuss it at length in the workplace—I concentrate on my work. But I don't hide anymore either. I have discovered that this works for me.

My name is Susan, Susie or Sue Spooner. No matter what name I go by, I am no longer nervous or embarrassed to admit that I live with depression. It is never too late to talk about it and take action.

Share your thoughts and be part of the initiative.  
Visit the iService Mental Health site: <http://iservice.prv/mentalhealth>

