SAINT SOPHIE'S

PSYCHIATRIC CENTER

Patient and provider: Two experts on the road to wellness

Connie Soper, PA-C

Emma

- Emma has struggled with her mental health for over 20 years. After finally being diagnosed with bipolar disorder Emma was able to receive the correct services to help her gain control of her mental illness and life. She vowed to herself that she could still live an extraordinary life despite living with a serious mental illness. She has been able to have a successful career, raise two children, and be in a successful marriage. Emma now shares her story in hopes to destigmatize mental health and bring hope to others that are struggling. Emma currently sits on North Dakota's Behavioral Health Planning Committee and North Dakota's Medicaid Medical Advisory Council, using her lived experience to help create changes for behavioral health at the state level. Emma also trains peer support specialists across North Dakota to use their lived experience with addiction and mental health to help others.

Bipolar Disorder

- At least one episode of Mania(I) or hypomania(II)
  - Three of the following Type I more severe, lasting a week – interfere with functioning Type II – less severe without disruption in function, lasting at least 4 days
  - Inflated self-esteem or grandiosity
  - Decreased need for sleep
  - Increased talkativeness
  - Racing thoughts
  - Easily distracted
  - Increased goal directed activities
  - Engaging in high risk behaviors such as illegal acts, excessive gambling, shopping sprees.

Bipolar Disorder continued

- Depressive Episode (5 or more symptoms for 2 weeks)
  - Loss of interest or pleasure in life
  - Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day
  - Significant weight or appetite change.
  - Pacing or other purposeless movements
  - Fatigue or low energy
  - Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness or guilt
  - Diminished ability to think or concentrate
  - Recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal ideation with or without a plan or attempt

Thank you, Emma for sharing your journey!