



Art and Treatment are Right Combination for Wellness



Art can be a release when you do not have words, according to Dana.

“It can help you let your feelings out. It is a way to convey anger, joy, sadness... Expression of emotion is incredibly important.”

Dana shares that at one time she abused medications and drank while she painted. She thought that was what artists did. At some point her challenges shifted from substance abuse to an eating disorder.

Fortunately, Dana found treatment at Lindner Center of HOPE that was part of helping her recognize that her art could be a tool for her recovery and health.

“When I was first diagnosed at 23 years old, I was told I was having a mixed episode. The doctor walked in with four students and told me what the rest of my life would look like. Stating I would not be able to hold down a job, I would not be able to have relationships and I would be in and out of the hospital. I was dehumanized. I was only an illness.”

After some ups and downs, Dana was able to participate in the Mindful Transitions Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) at Lindner Center of HOPE.

“I never had a better experience. Every person was so incredible. Consistently the staff were saying, ‘you can do this’ or ‘you’ve got this’. The eating disorder protocol is hard, but it made me feel like a human being at the same time. I can’t thank the staff enough. I left feeling like if I needed to, I’d come back.”

“I wish I could have gotten here sooner.”

Dana made a lot of connections between what she was doing in PHP and her artwork. In fact, she donated one of her paintings to hang in the PHP classroom.

Her painting was based off of the song, “Forever Young” by Bob Dylan. Her painting depicts a ladder into the night sky.

“When I first got sober, I had to relearn how to do everything.” The lyrics to “Forever Young” were almost like a prayer. “It was a prayer I could say to myself. An ode to this is how I’m gonna be. I’m going to struggle. It is inevitable. And the painting reminded me of the fact that I would struggle and though the stars seem far away you are surrounded by light because you are alive.”

Dana’s painting captures the little bits of expression she can’t put into words. She wanted to leave the art for PHP so others might find peace in it like she has.

“Though you come here (to PHP) to do the hard work; you come here for self-care. Lindner Center of HOPE ... I would recommend it to anyone.”