

OCTOBER

OUTSIDE THE

2024

BOTTLE

Bipolar and Dehydrated- Krystal's Story
There will be Progress- Ben C.'s Story

District 16 Newsletter



KRYSTAL DEHYDRATED AND BIPOLAR

My name is Krystal and I'm an alcoholic. My sobriety date is March 19, 2018. This is not a story of my first time sitting at a table. It's not even a story about me recognizing that I needed help—and still do. This is about realization and understanding.

When I was in active addiction I couldn't drink plain tap water or bottled water, especially in the morning. Every time I did I would vomit it up. I remember waking up daily with raging hangovers which naturally included a grand headache and the shakes. It was horrible! As a kindergarten teacher I had to get myself together, so I would be able to meet my students with high energy and love. This was a daily challenge.

I would drink or take a few sips of coffee, look around at the empty bottles of wine that I eviscerated the night before. I needed pain meds to start my day--every day--I just couldn't take them with plain water. During the day regular water nauseated me, too. More on this a little later.

This past February I was diagnosed with Bipolar II Disorder. It was a diagnosis that didn't scare me. It brought a boatload of clarity to my past behaviors. I read in the Big Book, "There is a manic-depressive type, who is perhaps the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written." (p. xxx). This struck me. I don't think I paid attention to that sentence before

Here I am 52, Black, and bipolar. This isn't a late onset diagnosis; this is a diagnosis that wasn't caught previously. After a suicide attempt at 26, I was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and given a prescription for Prozac that I had an allergic reaction which presented as mania. Apparently, that is a tale-tell sign of bipolar disorder. This gave me a solid understanding of my hypomanic and depressive cycles and how I used alcohol during each cycle and in between. I would drink during my hypomanic cycles to be the life of the party and I would drink during my depressive cycles to numb the pain that was ever present, between the cycles is when I would decide to take a break from drinking and/or bargain with how little I should drink to gain control—a very fleeting idea.

I've had amazing sessions with my therapist and psychiatrist where I was able to trace my cycles all the way back to nine years-old. I realized that my mom also had manic-depressive cycles. Her manic cycles would include a rum and coke within arm's reach; her depressive cycles, which lasted months, would include a gin gimlet at arm's reach. She also didn't drink water very often, but she was fond of chewing ice. Women of color are regularly misdiagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder or Schizophrenia depending on when they reach out for help. Unfortunately, my mom never received help.

Back to the water...

I have been on mood stabilizers for about six months now and I take them with water. I no longer vomit water. The plain water was refreshing, enjoyable even. I know that my inability to keep water down had a lot to do with being dehydrated from the amount of alcohol I was consuming daily. Today, I can drink water. Today I enjoy drinking water. Being hydrated is awesome!

It is truly amazing how realizations happen when you work the program, get a sponsor, be open to delve deep into yourself, be willing to ask for and receive help to change behaviors both physically and psychologically. Had I not sought help for alcoholism, I wouldn't know that I am bipolar, and I would still be dehydrated. I am eternally grateful for AA and my Higher Power.



BEN C. THERE WILL BE PROGRESS



I have experienced the progressiveness of this disease and by God's grace, have not gone back out "for more research" since starting in AA. While I have remained sober for over three years, I had to find my true bottom while dry, and my path to true recovery started more recently.

In early 2020, before going into recovery, the church I attended had 28 days of prayer and fasting (sort of like lent) and I decided to fast from alcohol for 28 days. I was praising God for how good I felt at the halfway point but by the 26th day, I had developed an undeniable desire to drink. I decided to bump up the calendar a couple of days, justifying to myself that it was close enough and I deserve a drink. After all, who was I to tell myself I couldn't drink? I'd once again convinced myself I could feel that good, even when drinking. Then I was off to the races.

I didn't take a single day off drinking during the last year that I was in the bottle, and I would consume up to a case of beer between the time I left work at 7 AM and returned at 11 PM. I'd report for duty five nights a week, neither drunk nor sober, just moving around in that fog we're all too familiar with. Things escalated Thanksgiving night of 2020, as I was awoken by a welfare check from the police after I did not show up for my duty as a 911 dispatcher, nor did I answer numerous phone calls. You'd think this would have been a one-time occurrence, but no, I woke up to another call for the same reason only two weeks later. While sitting in my boss's office and signing my second reprimand in two weeks, he asked with genuine concern if there's anything going on that he should know about and questioned if I was self-medicating. I suspected he already knew the answer and I probably should have just admitted it, but at the time I could only say no. For the next several months I went to work wondering if that would be the night they gave me a breath test and fired me.

One morning in March 2021 while I sat wallowing in self-pity and feeling sick and tired of being sick and tired, I knew something had to give so I reached out to a close friend with experience in recovery who helped connect me to Brighton for inpatient treatment. I walked in on March 18, 2021, and was discharged twelve days later, excited to be clean. I attended my first AA meeting the night I got out and another the next morning, at what would become my home group. I attended regularly for a while, though my participation was minimal at best. By the time I received my one-year coin in 2022, my attendance had tapered down to about once a month. I knew I was powerless over alcohol and had no trouble admitting it. I was staying sober, but everything else in my life was hanging by a frayed thread. Life was unmanageable, but I didn't see it, and I couldn't figure out what was wrong. Wasn't sobriety supposed to be better?

In early 2023 I knew that God was leading me to return to AA, but this time it was with the knowledge that "Meeting Makers Make It." For me that would not be the case if I was not giving myself completely to the program. I attended regularly but still carried a feeling of hopelessness. I returned one morning to my home group and sat at the meeting wondering how I was supposed to do it all. But had I ever even asked anyone? No. After sharing my feelings at that meeting, a man sitting close by gave me his number and said to give him a call sometime. Soon after, he became my sponsor. It was in this first meeting with him that the second part of Step one was truly revealed to me, and I realized that unmanageability didn't stop when alcohol did. No one was hiding it from me. I just refused to see it. I had been sitting with fire all around me and choosing not to see it. Today I am grateful that God has given me the ability to see how blind I was choosing to be and for allowing me to learn from my past.

I'm incredibly thankful for God, the AA program, its members, its values, and our many sayings including (but not limited to) Play The Tape Forward. With knowledge of my past, I know I could rival my old ways. If I went back out, my self-confidence, the total liability that it is, would say to me something like... "You think it was bad before? Hold my beer and watch this." Then, I will Play The Tape Forward.

Save The Date
 We would like to invite you to the
AREA 33 INVENTORY
Sunday, October 6th
12pm - 4pm
 915 E Eleven Mile Rd, Madison Heights, MI 48071

Join us for an important session where we will conduct a comprehensive Area Inventory. This is a crucial opportunity for members of Area 33 to assess how well we adhere to the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. Together, we'll evaluate our practices and identify areas for improvement to better serve our community.

Your participation is vital in helping us ensure that our Area is functioning effectively and in line with AA principles. Let's work together to strengthen our fellowship and support each other in our common purpose!

This is an in person event, but there will be a survey for members to fill out in the preceding months. This will allow for individuals who can't attend to participate and let their voice be heard.

Stay tuned for more information at our Area 33 Assemblies and website.

For questions, please email:
area33chairperson@aa-semi.org
www.aa-semi.org

**Service keeps us sober.
 Share your experience,
 strength and hope in
 future editions of "Outside
 the Bottle." Email
district16news@gmail.com
 for more information!**

**Women's AA
 12 Step
 Retreat**

**November 22-24,
 2024**

**St. Paul of the Cross Passionist
 Retreat Center
 23333 Schoolcraft
 Detroit, MI 48233
 For more information:
 Faith R. 248-854-1669 or
 Debby M. 248-840-0693**

**DISTRICT 16 MEETS AT 7:00 P.M. ON
 THE 4TH THURSDAY OF EVERY
 MONTH AT:**

**1st United Methodist Church of Madison Heights
 - 246 E. 11 Mile Road,
 Madison Heights, MI 48071**

**If groups would like to contribute to District 16,
 please mail a check or money order:
 Payable to: District 16 of Area 33 A.A.,
 PO Box: 725362, Berkley, MI 48072**

AREA 33 ASSEMBLY

**Madison High School, 915 E. Eleven Mile Rd.,
 Madison Heights
 October 19**

**New GSR Orientation @ 11:00 &
 Assembly @ 12:00**

**Come join us for a Area Commtee Chair
 Elections**

Editor: Anita B.

AA of Greater Detroit:
 248-541-6565

AA of Oakland County:
 248-332-3521

AA of Detroit Wayne County:
 313-831-5550

Outside the Bottle is the newsletter of
 District 16. The newsletter contains
 announcements, meeting changes,
 events, news & information around the
 district, and stories about sobriety and
 recovery.

Any A.A. member is invited to submit
 material to the newsletter.

Please send
 questions/comments/contributions to:
district16news@gmail.com

**Michigan Statewide
 Corrections Committee**

AA Workshop

**Re/Max Building
 6870 Grand River Ave Ste 200
 Brighton MI, 48114**

October 12th, 2024

**9:30am - 3:00pm
 Lunch served at 12pm**



Panelists include:

- ⊗ How the Corrections Committee carries the AA message
- ⊗ AA members share how they carry the AA message inside Prison/Jail
- ⊗ Court and Corrections Professionals share how they cooperate with AA
- ⊗ AA members who found AA and sobriety through the help of the committee

For more information contact
Jacob.F.@Corrections@CMA32.ORG

**AREA 33
 2025
 MARCH
 ROUNDUP**

**WORKING
 TOGETHER,
 INCREASING
 TRUST**

**MOTOR CITY HOTEL CASINO
 MARCH 7-9**

**MHGAA
 Fellowship
 Riverwalk Event**

**Sunday
 OCTOBER 20, 2024**

**Meeting
 at Carousal
 1340 Atwater
 (Limited Free
 parking on Atwater)
 @2pm**

**DINNER
 Los Galanes
 3362 Bagley
 Detroit, 48216
 @5pm**

**Scooters and
 Bikes Available**
Suggested to download apps prior to event
 You can also bring your own bike or scooter.

**Family and Friends
 Welcome**

Questions or concerns feel free to text or call
 Ronnie B. @248-376-4162