Let Healing Begin

After Garry Jones sought treatment for depression, he decided silence was not an option.

December 10, 2010 As told to Willette Francis

As a retired lieutenant from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, I cannot find words to describe what I witnessed while working in six institutions. But my depression didn't start then. My pain started 40 years earlier, before I knew what depression was.

In college, I started drinking and smoking reefer to ease the pain. But marijuana made me paranoid, so I stopped. Then, I got married and bottled my pain.

On the job, I exposed corruption in the prison system. Retaliations followed and worsened my depression. I thought about suicide, then saw my children's faces and finally entered therapy.

One day, I saw a woman on TV talking about her son's suicide. She'd discovered he was suffering from depression only after she read his suicide note. He didn't show any signs, she said—just like me.

Although I was unable to contact this lady, a woman at the TV station I called invited me to discuss depression on her show. At first, I was reluctant. I worried that the prison staff and inmates might see me and think I was weak. But I went on the show anyway and shared my story.

Today, I'm still in pain but remain enrolled in therapy. And I take life one day at a time.

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