

## **PE1651/GGGGG**

Anonymous submission of 24 January 2018

I write my story only in hopes that I can save people from ever getting on a antidepressant and/or benzodiazepine. I am a married 45 year old business woman with two beautiful children who are 13 and 15 years old. I have my Bachelors of Science degree in Human Services and currently work as an Account Executive.

Most recently, I was on Lexapro for 12 years. I actually think I have been on something else when I was pregnant, but I honestly can not remember due to the short term memory loss these drugs have caused. I was originally prescribed Lexapro for an eating disorder (bulimia) and well as OCD tendencies.

The lexapro gave me insomnia so the doctor also put me on a sleeping pill called Lunesta. When I switched over health insurances to Kaiser, the doctor told me they do not cover Lunesta as it is too addicting and asked that I try another "sleeping pill" called Klonopin. Little did I know, Klonopin is worse than Xanax and that it was extremely addicting. I was taking 2mg of Klonopin for over 2 years. I also started gaining weight so the doctor also put me on another pill called phentermine. I was on (2) 37.5mg of Phentermine daily for over 6 years. Meanwhile, I have never done drugs my whole life nor barely even drink alcohol.

When I found out all these drugs were addicting, I got nervous so I starting lowering my dose of all the pills over a 10 week period (which now I know was way too fast). By June 1st, 2016 I was off all the drugs. My initial withdraws were not so bad then bam come the third month...ALL hell broke lose! I literally had almost every withdrawal symptom possible and they only got worse as the days went on. I was like a complete vegetable...I couldn't see well, hear well, confused, hard time comprehending simple things, felt out of my body, racing thoughts, crying spells, mood swings, sweats, cold chills, flu like symptoms, nightmares, depersonalized, dizzy, disoriented, diarrhea everyday, no appetite, sensitive to light, losing my hair and the list goes on and on. I literally felt like I was living in hell on earth. As the days turned into weeks then months things only got worse. I ended up with so much anxiety and depression like I have never experienced before. Then the insomnia kicked in so bad I ended up not sleeping for 3 straight weeks which made me manic. I was pacing around my house like a crazy woman and I couldn't even sit still. My heart was pounding out of my chest and I literally felt like I had become completely mentally ill. By the six month, I became extremely suicidal and tried to take my life by hanging myself. I had/have no recollection of this event as I literally became that mentally ill.

I was placed on a 5150 and put in a mental ward for 10 days. It was literally the worst experience of my life. In the hospital, they tried to drug me up again. I was given Luvox, Zyprexa (which I refused to take) and Xanax 5 x per day. The doctor would not even listen to my story nor lend me 5 minutes of his time. In the hospital I

was still completely out of it and couldn't even sleep. I felt like a complete zombie. After I was released, I was forced to move in with my 75 year old mother for a month as I couldn't even care for myself nor let my children see me in the condition I was in.

I then began to have an allergic reaction to the Luvox so I slowly cross tapered over to 10mg of Prozac and got back on a low dose of Klonopin. As of today, I am only on 10mg of Prozac and thankfully off the Klonopin and Phentermine! I've been off the Lexapro and Phentermine for 19 months now and the Klonopin for 8 months but, am still feeling weird. It's been 14 months since I was hospitalized and although I am much better, I still don't feel completely like myself. I am back to work full-time but I'm not sure if I'm still going through withdrawals from all the previous meds or if it's side affects from the Prozac. As if today, I am still losing my hair and have to wear a wig full time because of all the hair loss. I was recently diagnosed with Androgenic Alopecia related to this situation. My memory and vision are still horrible, but thankfully is slowly starting to get better. I still have trouble sleeping and am dizzy at times as well. I feel flat with no happiness or joy. I never want to do things and nothing really bothers me now. I am forcing myself to get out of the house and do things with my family and friends.

Since this nightmare of an experience happened, this is all I think about. I absolutely hate that I'm still on this poison, but honestly believe the only reason I got better was because I went back on a medication. I honestly believe I would still be sick/mentally ill had I stayed off everything and that is what's so traumatizing. I am scared to death to start my taper from Prozac in fear of going through withdrawals again. My plan is to start a slow 3 year taper in another 4 months or so. If I successfully complete it, I will definitely be making my story public in hopes to educate people on these poisons!