

Living with Epilepsy

Karen Bryant

My name is Karen and I was diagnosed with agenesis of the corpus callosum and epilepsy before my fourth birthday. Epilepsy has affected my life in many ways, both good and bad. I grew up experiencing discrimination due to people's fear and wrong attitudes. In kindergarten, my teacher who was disabled herself, expressed fear and a lack of empathy when she stated to my parents: "Thank goodness, that kid never had a seizure in my class". I also had to stand up to the school board on more than one occasion in order to attend the high school of my choice. My parents and I were told that I would never graduate high school, much less go to college. I worked hard all through school and proved them wrong by graduating high school and then being the first one of my siblings to graduate from college. I have also experienced abuse and bullying many times and survived both. I have learned to push through and persevere through trials and traumatic events in my life. My parents were my biggest support system when I was growing up, especially my dad who was one of my biggest supporters and encouragers. He encouraged me to be the woman I am today. I care about epilepsy because I live with it. I am connected with ESWO through their group in Windsor, ON. I have also been seizure free for 20 years now and have been off all of my seizure medication for 17 years.



As an adult, I have had a difficult time in the past finding an employer who was understanding and willing to offer equal opportunities. I had to leave two positions because of discrimination in the workplace and was even refused a position at one of the jobs because I was "disabled". In 2002, I found an employer who knows about my medical conditions and still provides a safe and welcoming environment. I have been a full-time employee there for 18 years now and have been working for them for almost 19 years. I would like to let others know that there is hope out there and more awareness about epilepsy in society now, although we still "have a long way to go". I also hope that attitudes and perceptions will continue to improve and change.