

Scott's Story of Resilience

•**Introduction:** My name is Scott. I am 13 years old. I'm in the eighth grade.

•**My Journey:** I have two brothers and they are 22 and 23. None of them live at home anymore. My 23-year old brother looks just like me. He is weird but fun to play with. We play football, ride 4-wheelers, and he encourages me to do many things. I miss him being at home. My mom and dad live at home. My dad has a muscle disease. The disease eats away at his muscles until they're gone. My dad has two jobs. It's always fun to fix stuff with him. I deal with his annoying behavior by using sarcastic humor. For example, when taking my evening medication, he'll tap me on the toe with his cane. I respond by saying "are you trying to be weird again?" He will normally say "yes." I laugh at him when he gives me an angry look. Although he's annoying, I'd be sad if he wasn't around. Humor helps us get through a lot and not get angry at each other. My dad also has cancer. When he was diagnosed, I was 4 years old. That is when I started acting out. I do not remember the things I did, but my mom says I was really, really bad. I believe her completely. I usually get more angry than sad.

My mom takes care of everyone in the house. She likes animals and we have a lot of them; 14 cats, 3 dogs, 1 ferret, 1 guinea pig, and 1 gold fish. Living in my house is boring 'cause I have no one to play with. Sometimes I am called "fat" and "stupid." When I was younger, I was liked for my "stuff." This really hurts my feelings. Thank God I have my animals to play with.

•**Educate:** When I was younger, I did not understand my mental illness. My family and possibly my teachers are trying to help me understand. My dad did not understand anything at all when I was younger. I did not have a lot of friends when I was younger. I think it was the way I acted. I have lots of friends now and some of them are nice to me. Some of them understand me. Most of my friends have a mental illness too. That helps us deal with each other. The way I deal with my mental illness now is different than before because I understand it better. My family is better at understanding. My dad is trying to get better with it.

•**Resilience:** My mental illness has affected my sports a lot. Sometimes it did help in football because when I got angry, I hit harder. The illness has taken away my self-confidence, but my mom found out that horses gave inner peace, especially with people with mental illnesses. I tried it and it made a really big difference. I found inner strength, confidence, and friends. I absolutely love being around the horses. I feel calm and happy. My mom, super heroes, and teachers have helped me be resilient. My time with the horses, with my mom and dad has helped me be happy.

•**Barriers to my resiliency:** I know my disorder is mood related and that makes my moods even worse. It's hard to make them stop. My disorder makes my head all disorganized but most of the time organized. I have learned to settle that problem and it does not get bad anymore. Things that make it hard to be resilient are people yelling and decisions. When I try to make a decision, my head gets all clogged and static. To make it stop, I have to have someone else help me decide.

•**My advice to others:** In the past twelve and thirteen year old years, I know more about my Bipolar Disorder. That has helped me get through hard times. My mom and our talking has helped a lot. The good thing about this disorder is I can drift off into my own world. When I am in a situation, I do not want to be in, I drift off into my own world. Sometimes it's hard to come back from that world, cause I just don't want to when others are yelling at me. Normally it's my super hero world I drift off into. They can do things I wish I could do. I study them and envy them. So, there you are. Good and bad things about my disorder. Sometimes I enjoy both sides. Overall, I am happy and angry about my disorder.