At Indivior, we believe patient voices are vital in helping to shed light on the opioid epidemic and destigmatize the disease of addiction and other mental health disorders. They also highlight the importance of a full treatment program and provide hope to others. Every patient journey is different, and Ashlynn’s story is uniquely her own.

“\textit{I hope people will learn that we are not just a number. We can be working next to you. We can be anyone in your life.}”

\textbf{Ashlynn}  
\textbf{Patient, US}

Ashlynn began treatment for anxiety and depression at age 12, although she recalls these feelings at an even younger age without knowing what they were. Throughout middle and high school, she was treated for these mental health disorders, but nothing seemed to help. Struggling with depression as a college freshman, Ashlynn left university and was admitted into a psychiatric ward. Leaving treatment, vulnerable and still struggling, she snorted her first prescription opioid analgesic. This led to heroin and a seven-year spiral into opioid addiction, rehabilitation, outpatient and inpatient programs, and abusive relationships.

Ashlynn found herself living in an abandoned building, which she pinpoints as the worst experience of her addiction. She recalls, ‘I was so scared that I would die, and nobody would know that I did not want this life. I knew I needed to change.’

Ashlynn’s journey to recovery began with small steps through various treatment regimens. She struggled but stuck with it. Each day sober was a small victory. Working with her counselor, she learned about another buprenorphine medication option. At first, she found the treatment painful but since then she has worked with her healthcare provider to minimize the discomfort and is now in her ninth month of treatment. She also attends Narcotics Anonymous and other counseling programs to help maintain her treatment protocol and deal with her past.

Now 24, Ashlynn says she is able to focus on other aspects of her life, like her family and her full-time job. She is also currently enrolled in a community college working toward a certification in addiction counseling. Ashlynn hopes to pursue a master’s degree and become a licensed Professional Counselor so that she can help others.

In September 2018, Ashlynn celebrated being sober for one year.

\* Ashlynn received compensation from Indivior for sharing her story

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Addiction not only impacts patients’ lives, but can also devastate families and relationships, and deprive people of the everyday activities so easily taken for granted. Nathalie’s patient journey to recovery is the story of reuniting with her three children after many years apart, rebuilding her relationships with loved ones and working to create a new life that brings her meaning and joy.

“I am embracing having my children back. They are proud of me, they accept me, they trust me, and we are a family again.”

Nathalie
Patient, US

Through all of this, Nathalie’s relationship with her partner of more than eleven years was a constant in her life. He stood by her side, supporting her, forgiving her and trying to help her regain her life and overcome her addiction. She describes ‘putting him through hell’ and it was only when he ended up in hospital for health reasons, and Nathalie was facing the prospect of jail time and being away from him, that she ‘hit rock-bottom.’ Nathalie had tried various medication-assisted treatment options in the past, but she had not changed her ‘people, places and things.’ She realized that in order to truly embrace her recovery journey, she would need to make drastic changes. Already enrolled in a study for a new medication-assisted treatment option, she was able to join the Drug Court program which provided the structure and psychosocial supports she needed to be successful in the treatment program.

Now, after more than 15 years, Nathalie has all three of her children back in her life. She is in school to earn her High School diploma, has her driver’s license back and is driving for the first time since she was a teenager. She is proud of her ‘first real job’ working as a peer counselor at a local community center helping patients with Hepatitis C who are undergoing treatment. She is also looking forward to getting married to her long-time partner.

Nathalie has been sober since December 2016.

* Nathalie received compensation from Indivior for sharing her story
Schizophrenia is a chronic and complex medical condition that can affect how a person thinks, feels and behaves. Symptoms include delusions, hallucinations, confused thoughts and speech and difficulty concentrating and remembering things.

More than half of all people with schizophrenia have anosognosia or a lack of insight – this symptom makes them unaware they have the illness and complicates treatment. Schizophrenia is typically diagnosed during late adolescence or early adulthood.

Miss T was diagnosed in her late teens and we share her story to help raise awareness and understanding of the life-changing and profound personal and family impact of this disease.

By her account, Miss T had a bright childhood. Educated at good schools, she was an accomplished ballet student and a competitive diver. She graduated with high honors and was accepted to a prestigious university where she hoped to study law. “I did very, very well until I got my illness,” she says.

Just a few months into her first semester at university, she began feeling as though something was ‘wrong’ with her. She was hearing voices and seeing things that were not there. She withdrew from university, and helped by her family, pursued treatment which resulted in admission to a hospital.

“It was like the world was crashing around me all the time,” Miss T recalls. “I wasn’t really focusing. People would talk to you and it would go in one ear and out the other. I couldn’t function correctly.”

Her diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia in her late teens forever changed her life. Like many patients with schizophrenia, Miss T had difficulty accepting her illness.

She wasn’t convinced doctors had accurately identified her problems. As prescribed by her healthcare provider, she would maintain her treatment regimen. However, as soon as she started feeling better, she stopped her medication and would then find herself back in hospital.

The stigma attached to her illness made things even worse. She recalls many people looking down at her, not taking her seriously, and misjudging her. The illness and stigma took away all her confidence.

“If you’re high functioning, it’s hard to accept there’s anything wrong with you,” Miss T says. It was only after staying on treatment that she began to understand “there is really something wrong with me.”

She was last hospitalized in 2012, after the stress of losing her parents coupled with a terrible storm that shut off the heat in her apartment triggered a nervous breakdown. After leaving hospital, she moved to a state-licensed personal care home. She is described by the home administrator as “very high functioning” and a loved member of the group home family. Miss T describes the home and its staff, whose goal is to enable each resident to have the best quality of life, as “excellent.” She is grateful they are able to help her navigate life’s daily challenges including helping her remember to take her medicine.

It was through the home that Miss T met a psychiatrist and was enrolled in a study for a monthly treatment for schizophrenia. She said the monthly regimen was helpful for her as she sometimes has trouble remembering to take, or if she has taken, her daily medication.

Mostly, Miss T feels people suffering from mental illness need care and understanding from others. She said she is fortunate to have a nephew who visits her and helps her feel better about her illness. “His way of treating me is that ‘you’re special,’” she explained. “So, you’re paranoid schizophrenic. Everybody’s got something.”

* Miss T received compensation from Indivior for sharing her story.
“You should never let your illness take over what you want to do because you could be the person that makes a difference in someone’s life.”

Miss T
Patient, US