

Last fall, I relapsed.

I was tired of wearing masks and social distancing. I missed going to church. I didn't feel good, was in so much pain, but the doctor didn't find anything wrong. I visited my mom, and when I left her apartment, I saw someone selling drugs. I talked myself into believing that a bag of dope would make me feel better, and I got high that night.

Right away, I knew it didn't help the way I wanted to be helped. Instead, it just took me out. I knew that I made a mistake... but in the past my mistakes usually meant that I would keep getting high for weeks or months.

I remembered one of the first things that I learned at Chance for Change: consequential thinking. I thought about what was at risk if I didn't stop using drugs. About losing contact with my son and daughter. I don't want that to happen, but if I kept getting high that would happen.

I thought about my mother, who has tried so many times to help and isn't convinced that it's possible. My brother, who goes to church with me. And my sister—my biggest supporter, who will do anything for me if I stay drug-free.

The next day, I talked to my case manager at the Residence. She gave me hope, told me that I could start again. I talked to my Chance for Change counselor. She reminded me that I have tools that can help.

And I talked to my family. I was afraid to let them know and thought that they would probably jump all on me for failing. But they had sympathy and want to support me.

It means a lot to have my family's support, and I can't risk losing them. NCS helped me understand this risk. They also helped me recognize the triggers that usually come before a relapse, like loneliness or pain. Now I know what to look for, and when to ask for help...before I get high, instead of after.

—Patricia