

My name is Gabriella and I have had epilepsy for about twelve years. In the beginning, epilepsy was a struggle because it was a new condition that interferes with your life greatly and there are changes made. In the beginning when I was diagnosed I was okay with it because to me, it was just a title of the symptoms I was having.

I have always been the type of person to look at things in a positive way but after a while, dealing with epilepsy did get hard. There are many things that go along with being a person with epilepsy. There is increased tiredness, confusion, memory loss, doctors' visits, different treatment methods and after a while of trying different medicines and other treatments that are supposed to work, it can be difficult to always be positive and be confident with the fact that you have epilepsy.

When I discovered the Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware, it really changed me for the better and allowed me to look at the fact that I have epilepsy differently and showed me that I am capable of doing amazing things. Also, you can help people that are going through the same things as you and you realize that there are ways to cope with this condition and there will always be people there to support you. When I first started coming to the support groups and different events run by the Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware, I was a little shy and I did not feel like participating and talking about something that already was a struggle to me. After a while of getting to know the leader of the group who always helped me with things and talked to me and I got to know the different people in the support group, I truly started being open minded and accepting that I have epilepsy and all I can do is be positive and start being patient with my condition and be okay with it. Also, I started to realize that being in this support group and helping others and connecting with others is an amazing thing. To impact somebody just by telling them that you understand what they're going through and helping each other is so wonderful and it actually helped me want to help more people and strive to want to be more involved in projects and events for the Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware has helped me grow and realize that epilepsy doesn't define who a person is and that by learning more about it and helping others you can feel amazing about yourself, but you can also help people that are going through the same thing that you are. As an adult it is hard as well because you have to do things differently than other adults. It took me a long time to feel like an actual "adult" because, for a while, I wasn't able to do what adults do. I learned about different resources that could help me with this. There are still challenges and obstacles with epilepsy that I face and I'm sure other people with epilepsy face, but this support group has helped me get through those challenges and find a way to cope with them. I am proud to be a part of the

Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware, because it has helped me grow and accept that it is okay to have this condition and it can only get better if you learn more about it and talk to others and have the support from a wonderful foundation. I am also happy to have recently joined the Board of Directors for the Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware.

I strive to help others with epilepsy and people with other illnesses every day because I know what it's like to be diagnosed with a new condition and have trouble dealing with it. I want to be there for them just like the people and leaders in the support group of the Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware have been there for me. Because of this, I earned my Master's Degree in May and am now a Clinical Mental Health Counselor, working with many different people, but I eventually would like to specialize in people with chronic illnesses. With the support from God and especially family and friends from the support group, it has helped me a lot with my epilepsy!