

Luciana: Living with Menopause

Luciana: Me and my husband, we have a cleaning business.

Ignaz: I'm responsible for the employees and making sure that everything is going smoothly.

Luciana: And I'm more on the operational side. But we're kind of a team of course. We have obligations every day; and menopause comes, it makes it bigger. Your problem gets bigger, the way that you deal with stuff gets bigger. I hit menopause two years ago. My husband was telling me about that, "I'm telling you things and you forget all the time. Why are you forgetting stuff all the time?" We didn't know that that was related to the menopause. Hot flashes, everybody talks about the hot flashes, but I thought it was only that. And then after that came the mood swings growing and growing inside of you.

Ignaz: Her temperament changed, especially around periods. That's when we started noticing that something funky was going on.

Luciana: And now, it's the most challenging period of the menopause for me, because I'm on top of the symptoms. It's the eye of the hurricane. They say that 'it's a woman thing.' It treats you like, 'oh, you a woman, you should deal with that.' It's part of being a woman, but it's beyond that. It's beyond that. It's very brutal on women. It mixes with the problems that you usually have on a daily basis, like raising a kid. We have an autistic kid to raise, so that's a double concern. It's a big responsibility every day. As a couple, it's not a honeymoon all the time, of course not. And with the menopause, it becomes worse because there comes the anger, there comes the fighting stuff, and the way that we talk to each other.

Ignaz: Liam, because of his autism and everything, he pays attention to everything. So in the end, everything turns to him. Between us, we'll find a way to get things better, but we need to look forward to get him the right way and do things as a family for him.

Luciana: Every day I face new problems related to my menopause, anger, sadness, feeling depressed. You have to accept that and say, "Yes, I'm weak. I have problems and I need help." I'm seeing a psychologist and therapist of course. It's helping me a lot. I can see a light in the end of the tunnel right now, so there's someone there that is a professional that can guide me through it.

Ignaz: It takes guts to do things, to talk about yourself, and to open up to someone you don't even know. And recognizing that you actually need help is another big step too. Even she said that I need help. My help is down the garage. I like to ride. I like to go for an hour or two. I also have a motorcycle to ride with my son and with my wife.

Luciana: The first thing that I remember my therapist told me, "Do things like you feel pleasure doing. Do something for yourself. Date yourself. You're not only a mom, you're not only a wife, you're not only a worker." It's hard finding, in life, time for yourself; but I have to make an effort.

[foreign language 00:03:47]

I love singing, so I sing like let's say twice in a week, I must sing. I'm part of a community of singers, so I found and singing my space to put my voice in, and putting it out all my stress, my sadness and everything. And I communicate on my inner self that I'm in peace, I'm good. That's my place of peace.

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I think for every woman that could be having this message right now, the best way to do it is looking out for yourself and looking for help in the way that you can like therapy or doing something that makes you feel better with yourself, whatever it is. Because for yourself, it is a lonely road, let's say, but you need help. You need a hand. It's bigger than yourself.