



Jessica  
USA

Jessica was born in Bogota, Colombia but was adopted as a baby and has lived in the U.S. her whole life. She had her first seizure at age 10 but was diagnosed with epilepsy at 12. She is married and has two bonus kids who are both teenagers.



Jessica experienced stigma at work while she was employed as an assistant manager at a retail location.

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At the time I was under restrictions due to my epilepsy and ongoing medication adjustments. I could not climb ladders and could not do overnights. My supervisor asked me to do an overnight shift, and I reminded him of the letter from my doctor that stated I was unable to do so because of my epilepsy. He became very annoyed and told me I would never be a store manager if I couldn't do overnights. It made me feel horrible and somewhat deflated.

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Words like this can end a career, but I decided to use this as fuel to my fire and set out to prove him wrong. Since then, not only did I become a store manager for a couple of years, but I am now employed at the corporate office.

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**What can we do to  
reduce stigma?**

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The most powerful tool we have is storytelling. Putting a face along with the disease makes it more human and more real. We need to continue to share our experiences as members of the epilepsy community, and also continue to educate and break down the misconceptions that surround epilepsy.

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**International  
Epilepsy Day**



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