



Noemi Canales

Chile

Noemi Canales is the Founder and President of Epilepsia y Juventud Chile. The mission of the organization is to accompany people with epilepsy and their families by providing education and guidance.



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When I was 15 years old, I received the diagnosis of epilepsy and it became a family secret.

I recovered from cardiac arrest at 16 and continued to pursue my dream of attending university.

Although my teachers knew I had epilepsy, they didn't agree to make adjustments. They doubted my intelligence, and they failed me.

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When teachers doubted my ability at university, I felt discriminated against.

I got fired from different jobs because my bosses were scared.

Churches don't accept people with "bad spirits or possessed", so I lost friends.

Since my family was ashamed of my condition, I lived a life of overprotection and restrictions.

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I developed aphasia, hemiparesis, and mild cognitive impairment at 25 from a second epileptic status. My physical and mental health issues first became obvious to me.

Still, I showed my skills and worked hard because I accepted my condition.

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After I learned to listen to my body and emotions, I focused on art therapy to support people with epilepsy and show them that there are new paths, just as our brain creates new neural connections.

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

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Education, awareness, and campaigns are the keys to creating awareness of epilepsy among people with and without the condition. In addition, create a psychosocial support network for people with this condition.

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I want to motivate others
with epilepsy to have a
voice and end
discrimination.

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International
Epilepsy Day



Discover more stories like Noemi's and
learn about epilepsy stigma at
internationalepilepsyday.org

