

MD (1960): A single woman who is a long-term survivor of HIV, first diagnosed at age 30.

MD describes her initial shock with the HIV diagnosis and the difficult effort of working through many progressive stages to ultimate acceptance. She reports that out of fear of transmission she intentionally chose not to be in a relationship, and instead meaningfully selected friends as her “family of choice.” MD does have siblings.

MD’s life has been full of healing and transformation. At age 40 she chose to leave her professional graphic design work to answer the call to serve others through a new career in pastoral care. She grew up Roman Catholic and is serving as a hospital chaplain working in Women Services, including pre-natal care, post-partum and with families in the NICU. She encounters patients who are newly HIV positive and others who are also long-term survivors.

She expresses her desire to help patients progress, as she has, from the shock of their diagnosis to a stage of acceptance by sharing her own experiences to achieve focus and balance and to “live well.” Her own practices for living well involve embracing a wide variety of helpful exercises including Tai Chi, Acupuncture and Mindfulness Meditation. MD reports being “off her game” if she misses these weekly practices. She gratefully lives by the river and expresses her joy of nature.

Her current goal, along with other spiritual staff colleagues, is to learn how to transfer *Dignity in Care* practices into their hospital in Florida, to better serve patients and families they care for.