



# I am a COA & I'm Ok!

## Meet Marianne!

Marianne didn't learn about her father's alcohol and drug problems until she was an adult. Even though the problems began before she was born, it was kept a secret. Sometimes people start using substances to help forget problems and traumatic experiences. Marianne's dad was a medic in WWII and his problems started after coming home from the war.

### Some difficult experiences she can relate to.

- My dad had depression too. I remember he was often unavailable to the family and slept on the couch a lot when he was home during the day.
- My mom would put on a happy face in front of us kids and everyone else, which was confusing to me because it didn't match the feeling that I was experiencing from her, such as anger, fear, etc.

### Some of the things that were really hard as a kid growing up were...

- Having a parent with addiction issues made it really hard to trust other people, and I still struggle being able to trust myself and my feelings.
- My dad's moods were really unpredictable and sometimes scary. I always thought it was because I had done something wrong. I tried to be the perfect kid to try and keep both of my parents in a good mood.

### Did you have a specific adult that you felt you could turn to?

As a kid I didn't have an adult I felt like I could lean on. I think that would have helped me a lot. I turned inward and was really lonely sometimes. However, my four brothers have always been my protectors and solid base of support. As a kid I had good friends and enjoyed spending time with them. These days I have a lot of people I can turn to, such as immediate and extended family, friends, coworkers, and hobby groups. My support network is a lot bigger than it used to be!

### Do you have a message for young kids that are growing up in a family with addiction issues?

"It's ok to trust your feelings, and it's ok to talk about your feelings. You deserve to have someone to turn to."

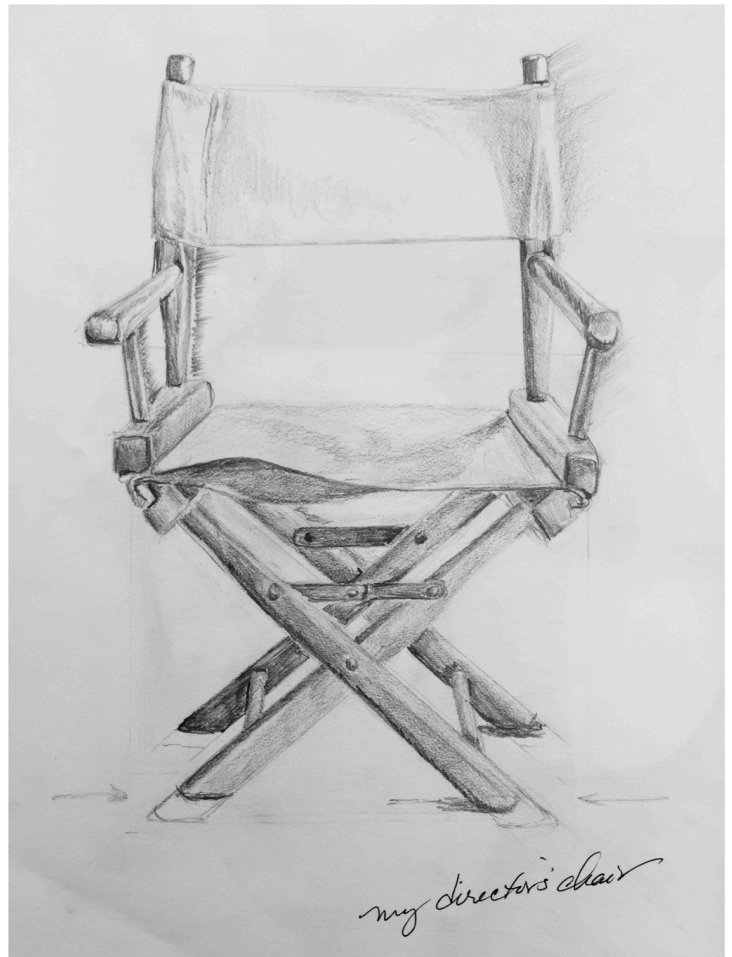
### Do you have a favorite healthy coping skill that you use in times of need?

I love to draw and paint. I love to lose myself in a good book. I love socializing with supportive people like my family and friends.



### What are you doing now that helps you be ok?

I love to learn. I'm good at studying, and I don't shy away from challenging subjects. I even went back to school in my 60's to become a medical assistant. A few of my goals are to take online art classes, travel, spend more time in nature and with family, and give to others. I also think it's important to exercise regularly, and when I feel like I need more support I go to therapy to help me feel ok.



All of the artwork used in this post was made by Marianne. She likes to draw in pencil or pen and paints in watercolors.