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I struggle with depression and life has been difficult. I constantly felt out of balance when I was at college. There were peaks and valleys and I wasn't motivated to do anything. I'm 25 now, and in May I got married. My wife, Saylor, and I are really happy, but I wanted more support.

Candie Holland, a Thrive Grand Champ, inspired me to start the Thrive Challenge.

We're close, and she thought that Microsteps would really help me. And when I talked about it to my therapist, she was happy. It turned out a lot of Thrive's tools are also tools that my therapist has suggested to me.

First, I established a morning routine.

I stretch for five minutes, then I walk outside to get my vitamin D. It's important to get sunlight when I wake up.

Moving throughout the day has been a game changer.

I set up reminders on my phone to take breaks at work, and I go for a 10 minute walk around the building. It's like someone has given me a shot of energy. I feel so good moving, and it just takes intention.

After work I go for walks with my dog Clover — we have a close bond.

I love to stroll around the neighborhood or walk along the beautiful trails. There's so much lush greenery with little ponds and creeks. Summer is my favorite time of year, and being in nature feels like a recharge.

I'm treating myself better and making healthy meal choices.

I tend to be a comfort eater. On a bad day I'd eat fast food like fried chicken. But I've shifted my mindset. I have more salads, avocados, and veggies, like asparagus. I've developed a love for fruit — strawberries and blackberries are my favorites. I'm eating more stuff that comes from a tree instead of snacks like chips and cookies.

Saylor and I eat together whenever we can.

She's a nurse and works 12-hour night shifts, and we're both busy, but we have breakfast with each other. It might be eggs or yogurt parfait. We like cooking dinner together. And sometimes one of us will cook and the other one will just enjoy the meal. We eat fish and turkey, and make delicious pasta with a green, blended sauce made from spinach and broccoli with basil and lemon. For a treat, we make pizza with lavash bread. I'm not going to claim that I eat perfectly, but I do my best.



I love the Thrive Microstep about making meaningful connections.

My connection with Saylor is the most important one in my life. She's so supportive and positive. We talk about any struggles we're going through at work, and what's making us happy. We're both religious so we talk about our faith.

At work, I'll schedule coffee with people I admire so I can learn from them.

Or I'll go for a walk with one of my mentors, like Karri. She's a great, positive voice for equity and diversity at Walmart. We talk about how we can both use our influence for the greater good. I'm always trying to think: how can I help others? And how can I make sure people around me are having fun?

Saylor and I make sure we spend quality time together.

Every Friday we go on a date. We'll spend a little money and go out for dinner or to see a movie. We just saw Barbie, and we loved it! We have each other's backs; that means being positive and affirming.

To lower my anxiety I do breathing exercises.

Box breathing really helps me to calm myself down and reset — just taking long inhaleds and exhaleds makes a big difference.

I enjoy everything more now, and that's a really big deal to me.

I go to church regularly, and I see my family once a week. I had a moment of reflection this week when I was praying, and it hit me that things are going well. I'm thankful for my marriage, for my career and for everyone in my life. My therapist is proud of the progress I've made. I'm feeling a lot happier.



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