

Elizabeth McIngvale earns PhD to treat patients with Obsessive Compulsive ...

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HOUSTON (FOX 26) –

Elizabeth McIngvale has become a household name in the Houston area. She has been brave to speak-out about her fear of germs for years, after being diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, when she was only twelve years old. Now she has a big announcement to make, and it's proof that her perseverance paid off.

You probably recognize Elizabeth McIngvale from one of her PSA's, raising awareness about mental health issues, or perhaps from a commercial with her dad, Jim, known as Mattress Mac.

Now Elizabeth has something huge to share! She will soon be able to treat patients who have her same condition, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or OCD, which prompts anxiety and uncontrollable, unwanted thoughts and repetitive behaviors. "I'm graduating from U of H with my Ph.D. in Social Work", she exclaims.

That's right, she is now Dr. McIngvale. "It makes it worth it. I wouldn't say I want OCD, and I definitely wish I didn't still have the illness, but being able to be where I am today and to be able to help people in a way that is so different, kind of makes the illness worth it to me," she explains.

She says she started studying OCD so she could better understand what was happening in her body. "It was so interesting and intriguing and the way the disease works! You actually feel relief and you feel better when you do these rituals, but they're making you more sick. It always intrigued me, but I think just through my studying and research, it continually gives me those "ah-ha moments"... oh that makes sense, that's me – or that was me," says Dr. McIngvale. She plans to start her career with a fellowship, to gain experience and also begin even more research about OCD.

Now that she understands her own condition even more, she's ready to make a difference in other's lives.

"I mean it with all of my heart, without my doctors, my social workers, my therapists, I wouldn't be where I am today. Don't know that I would even be alive. It's an honor to have the title that other people had who changed my life forever," she says.

Dr. McIngvale started a self-help web site years ago called "Peace of Mind" and ended up doing her dissertation about it and the faces of OCD. You can find out more about it at <http://www.peaceofmind.com/> (<http://www.peaceofmind.com/>).

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