

“I’m in better health mentally and physically than I’ve been in over two decades.”

Robert Loiseau, an attorney and business executive, now leads a Houston nonprofit organization, is remarried, interacts with old and new friends and enjoys a deeply satisfying life following a treatment journey that included The Menninger Clinic’s Professionals Program.

Not that long ago, before Robert received a major health scare from a cancer diagnosis, only a prior severe panic attack nearly a decade earlier had shattered his sense of well-being. After learning he had cancer, the then-divorced father took a leave of absence from leading a law firm. During the year that followed, Robert became increasingly more isolated from family and friends, retreating from life and ambition.

The mental pain of depression and anxious misery mounted. Suicide seemed to be the solution. Fortunately, Robert had continued to see his doctor who recommended psychiatric hospitalization. “That advice,” Robert said, “along with my desire to avoid leaving my daughter a legacy of suicide, saved my life and allowed me, over time, to recover.”

Robert came to The Menninger Clinic’s Professionals Program for intensive treatment by team of psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists and nurses. After two months in the hospital, he continued his recovery with outpatient therapy, visits to his physicians and help from support groups. Looking back, Robert cites six elements of the Professionals Program for saving his life and launching a late career change successfully:

1. Treatment among peer professionals as well as friendships forged that continued after they left the hospital
2. Quality medical care
3. Time in treatment to learn about himself and allow treatment to take effect
4. Learning about depression and related conditions, including how to recognize and manage the disease during everyday life and while under stress
5. Direct contact with the clinical experts on his treatment team
6. Therapies and tactics that reconnected him socially and improved his thought processes

Gradually, Robert resumed working and reemerging socially. Like most people with mental health issues, he was concerned about telling others about his treatment and his absence. “I was met with nothing but support and compassion from family, friends and colleagues. What I had concealed so meticulously became a non-event once on the table. Even more surprising was the number of people who told me about their own experiences with depression, or those of their friends and family members.”

Having beaten cancer and the darkness of mental illness, Robert lives an enriching and full life that includes volunteering to assist other professionals who are suffering from the effects of mental illness.

