

SHIRLEY J.

POPE: What kind of symptoms do you experience?

SHIRLEY: Hearing voices and suicidal, I have suicidal thoughts and depression.

POPE: If you don't mind, could you describe for me what it feels like when you are hearing voices?

SHIRLEY: It's just like wherever you at its just like you can hear it. You can hear it real clearly and then when you look to see who is there and there isn't no one there so I let it go, turn your back on it and say and try to go to sleep if you can. Sometime I just lay there and listen at them and I don't do nothing.

POPE: Are the voices scary or --

SHIRLEY: Some of them be scary and some of it don't.

POPE: Can you remember any specific things that they may have said?

SHIRLEY: Sometimes they tell me that you need to kill yourself. It ain't worth you living and stuff like that.

POPE: Have you ever been on crisis intervention?

SHIRLEY: Yes ma'am.

POPE: Can you describe that for me?

SHIRLEY: They give you a bunk bed – the bunk bed be in there but they take the mattress and give you a green like suit, it ain't no suit, but it just is where it covered you and then they give you one little blanket but they take all your clothes and shoes and stuff from you.

You just sit in your cell. You don't come out for nothing except maybe take a shower, that's up to you if you want to take a shower and if you don't, but when you're down there it's like you basically by yourself. You are by yourself anyway and they may come and check on you and they may not. They just leave you bound to do whatever you want to do.

No, I don't like being on crisis because I don't like being naked. And that's what is basically you is you naked you ain't got nothing but that little green shield, whatever they call it for clothing and to be cold. It be cold down there on crisis.

POPE: What is the worst thing about being in prison to you?

SHIRLEY: The worst thing? Some of the staff. Some of the staff make it worse for you. It depends on, like I said, some can be good to you and some will be downright nasty to you. Like I said they holler and scream at you and tell you to go sit down somewhere and nothing wrong with you and all that, but you don't know that. You got to come – you know we're crying out for help and ya'll refuse us give us help so ya'll just treat us like old shoe that throw to the side.

POPE: If there is anything you could change about the mental health system to make it better, what would you change?

SHIRLEY: I would respect them more. I respect them to the point that I would treat them the way I would want to be treated. I wouldn't scream and holler at them and stuff because like I say I don't know what that person going through. So whatever they going through maybe I could talk them down or something like that. Talk them out of it, whatever they fixing to do or something like that.