



AUSTIN — As Kimberly Allen stood on the south steps of the Capitol on Wednesday afternoon, preparing to share her story about battling alcoholism and bipolar disorder, she was cracking jokes.

A television reporter approached the podium to collect his microphone and Allen cried out: "He's taking my microphone. Who is this man? Are you someone I used to be married to, sir?" Her comments elicited laughter from the nearly 100 people who gathered in Austin for Mental Illness Awareness Day.

"You've got to have a sense of humor," she said. "If you have mental illness, you have to have a sense of humor."

Allen told the crowd about her father, an alcoholic who served in the Army during the Vietnam War and who had bipolar disorder. She shared how she suffered from alcoholism like her dad and how she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder after she got sober. But unlike her father, she got treatment.

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