

Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families.

Feeling Normal Again



Growing up in foster care, I didn't feel "normal" in any setting. Moving from home to home drained me mentally. Even with so many transitions that were going on in my life, I remained hopeful. Hopeful that one day, I would be happy, even if it was with a temporary family or home. On my 13th birthday, my dreams would soon come to a disturbing end. Christmas of 2013, I ran away from what I thought was my home. The one person who was supposed to protect me, my father, let me down the most. Not only was my Christmas ruined, but my faith in any aspect was also demolished. I was livid. As you can imagine, my mental health declined rapidly. I didn't see any reason to finish school, therapy, let alone life.

When I turned 18, I transitioned into the Transitional Independent Living housing program. I didn't know what to expect moving into my own apartment. I was just happy to finally have my own space. Even with my own apartment, I still felt something was missing. I was lonely. I wasn't in contact with my family, and I didn't have any friends I could call. I then realized I wasn't prepared mentally to be on my own. With the help of my child advocate and therapist, I was able to break my lease and move into an adult group home setting. Six months in, I began to feel a difference in my mood. Everyone around me noticed it as well. I started to

feel worthy, something I've struggled with since I was a child. I felt like I could do anything I put my mind to.

Fast forward 4 years. I am now 22, living in my own apartment, just bought a new car, and started a new job. Reflecting on my childhood made me realize how important mental health is. If I didn't get the help I needed at the age of 14, I probably wouldn't be here typing this now. Youth in foster care need the help I got from my child advocate and therapist to succeed. It isn't only about our physical safety. Our mental health matters, too.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

