

A Mother's Story about her Family's Experience in CST

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About one year ago I found myself between a rock and a hard place. It seemed my only option was to give up. I was a young woman who would sit on the floor of her bedroom almost every night and cry. I would cry because my son was having such a hard time in school. I would cry because I lost another job. I would cry because my mom was diagnosed with cancer. I would cry because nothing in my life seemed good. Everywhere I looked it was bad news on top of bad news...covered with bad news.

The principal of my son's school saw that I was having problems dealing with all the bad things happening in my life and didn't want to see myself or my son sink into the unknown. I was pointed towards a county program called Wraparound. It was an orange flier that outlined its purpose. To help people succeed in the community and help get their lives together. I was very skeptical and I was never one to ask for help. I met with the project director at the Jefferson County Human Services building.

The woman and I didn't see eye to eye on things at first and I politely listened as she gave her speech about the program. To be honest, I didn't listen to half of what she said because I had already made up my mind that this was a waste of my time. I told her I would think about it and left with some extra information. I had no intention of joining this program. I mean, what could a stranger do to help my family that I wasn't already doing? Was I admitting failure if I took their advice and asked for help? My answer today is "NO".

With the help of the wraparound program I was able to focus on short and long term goals. The team was made up of teachers, principals, family members, doctors, therapists and me. We would meet and discuss what needs to happen and how it can be accomplished. I think my biggest concern at first was how I was going to keep a roof over our heads and food in our stomachs. The team was able to point me towards resources that I never knew about. I was able to work with community programs for rent and food...even school supplies!

I am happy to say that now...one year later...my son is successfully attending school full time. He is able to work outside his EBD room and can socialize with other children. He has become such a happy little guy and I can now look at him and see the goodness in him...not just the things he does that are wrong. I am also attending school. Well, college actually. I started this past fall and will be returning, full time, this coming fall. I was able to focus on a personal goal for myself. I had always wanted to go to college, but I never thought it was possible. In two years I will be transferring to UW-Whitewater to earn a teaching degree.

I have to say that with the help of the wraparound team, I was able to get the help my family needed. I can't remember the last time I cried because I felt helpless. I can't remember the last time I cried because I felt there was no good in the world. I am filled with hope. And a promise that tomorrow may not be perfect...but it's something I can work with.

The wraparound team has been a huge support and I've never felt like I was not in charge. I was given suggestions and ideas and it was up to me on how I used the resources offered to me. This is an amazing program and I look forward to continuing with the success.