



FINDING MY VOICE

The first time I came to Family & Children's Services of Mid-Michigan, I was 17-years-old and pregnant. I was also at a standstill with my parents. They weren't taking the baby news well. My parents struggled with how accept the idea that their straight-A student with a college scholarship was pregnant and told me that I needed to put the baby up for adoption.

I didn't know what to do. I struggled with how to tell them that I didn't want to give up my baby and also that I had been sexually abused by a neighbor as a child.

My parents got good advice and contacted Family & Children's Services. We needed family counseling to get on the same page. At first, my parents went separate from me. Then we went together.

I finally felt like someone was on my side. There were a lot of decisions to be made and they helped counsel us through. I gained self-confidence and the ability to make my voice heard. I was able to tell my parents what happened to me when I was younger. When my parents found out I was pregnant, I was basically the worst person on the planet. But Family & Children's Services gave me the confidence to tell them what had happened when I was younger. My parents gained knowledge that they didn't have about their child. It gave them tools to make decisions and to see me as a human being instead of an awful person.

With counseling, I realized I wasn't a bad person. I could make better decisions for my child and myself and also have a good relationship with my parents. People who are facing a difficult time in their lives need to know that there is help available no matter what their situation. The counselors at FCS are kind and caring and an amazing resource for the whole family.

Today, my son is nearly 30 years old and I volunteer at Family & Children's Services because I want to be a part of making sure that everyone has access to the same high-quality counseling services that helped me, as well as my parents, when I was seventeen.

Mental health is as important as physical health. Needing help is not something anyone should be ashamed of. Family & Children's Services is so needed in our community, they are saving the future.