

Case Study – Jessica

Becoming a mother for the first time is often a rewarding experience, but adjusting to life with a new person in the house can be quite a daunting task. And this was the situation that Jessica, a young first time mother, found herself in after the birth of her daughter. With a partner working nights and unaware of her anxiety, Jessica found herself struggling to cope with the pressures of raising a new baby.

'It's a really big thing adjusting to having a new baby in the house but I got through that with the support of my family and my Connections worker.'



Jessica's introduction into motherhood was not as smooth as it is for some mothers. After enduring a traumatic delivery, moving into a new home the day after leaving hospital caused Jessica to experience an enormous amount of pressure. Stressed and without knowing who she could turn to, Jessica was referred to Connections UnitingCare by her maternal and child health nurse.

'It was good to know that there was a place like Connections there offering support.'

Jessica was placed in contact with her caseworker Jennifer, who after a number of visits, observed the need for Jessica to become more comfortable in her new role. Jessica, with Jennifer's assistance, developed strategies and worked on a number of routines that could be introduced into her life, assisting both her and her daughter. These subtle changes in their routine became the turning point in their mother-daughter relationship.

'Jennifer encouraged me. She told me that I was doing a good job; she made me feel that I wasn't alone.'

Since her initial interaction with Connections, Jessica is not only seeing the benefits of a healthier relationship with her daughter, but also with her partner. They are communicating much more openly, and are sharing the responsibility of raising their daughter together.

'Connections helped us improve how we approached and interacted with each other. My partner is now helping more with Charlette and around the house.'

This year, Jessica was presented with the City of Whitehorse 2009 Young Citizens Award at an Australia Day celebration for her work mentoring other mothers in her community.

'I just encourage young mums to know that they're not alone, there's support out there, there's Connections out there.'

On discussing the developments in Jessica, her caseworker Jennifer said...

'Jessica responded to the support and encouragement and began to be more positive, assertive and confident in her parenting role. Her positive outlook was reflected in her daughter and their warm interactions and the changes between Jessica and the babe were a delight to observe – Jessica's young baby presented as happy, playful and relaxed as a result of the changes made.'

Connections offers a free community based family support service that includes in-home support assisting families to develop their parenting, household management skills and links people with specialised support from other professionals and organisations.

Connections UnitingCare is a community organisation with a long and proud history of supporting marginalised and disadvantaged people.

We offer a range of services across a continuum of care from preschool and childcare through to counselling and in-home support. We provide innovative and early intervention programs that support children, young people and their families giving them a better chance in life now and in the future.

For more information visit www.connections.org.au