

Transition to independence

Transcript of Jason, 19, trainee in construction

What does independence mean to you?

I didn't need no one else. I could do everything. Support. I was healthy, I was ready to go, ready to get out and do what I needed to do, find my way back to finding family. Obviously, sorting out my education.

Who supported you?

I had a lot of support from a lot of family. Mainly when I was out of foster care I was really angry so I needed to get out a lot of my aggression. I signed up with PCYC. I had social workers – a lot of them for years, on and off. Some of them would give me good advice about dealing with my anger. Just getting out, speaking to people. Mainly the support was on and off but as I changed, so did other people. My main support was family, that's really all I needed.

What could have worked better for you?

Things could have been better for me in a sense that I could have had more opportunities. But then, that was back then, now is different. Now we get some more support. Obviously things are getting more open and that's good. I guess, the more people are aware, it's going to benefit you. I just wish for me, I had of had more counselling sessions, more anger management. Just for someone to sit down with me and discuss how my day was and how I'm going.

Who inspired you?

That's a hard one. A lot of different people come in to my life. I guess, people that had a hard life. Some people (like old mates) would come to me when they got out of the place they did and when someone close didn't do what they did before. I admire that. I admire the strength to know what you've always known, to not go with the pack - go by yourself, lead by yourself, just don't do what other people did. I admire that. The strength it took to do something different. Do something different with your life other than what people already do.

What are your hopes for the future?

I've got a lot of hopes. I'd like to move to an island, I want to go overseas (I've been wanting to go overseas for a while). I've got a lot of hope, for my five brothers and three sisters in foster care (long term). I'm hoping that we all come back together, I'm hoping that they turn out alright. There's not much more I can do in my life, other than pray that it all works out.

What advice would you give to young people transitioning?

That's a difficult one. Obviously I, as an Aboriginal person, would want others to have the same opportunities as everybody else. The key to transitioning is to be focussed on culture. Culture is a big thing. Always surround yourself by that. My family has been lost, I am a second stolen generation, my father is a first. My family has gone so far back that we can't even find my family. My father is Yarrabah but times are lost and he doesn't want to find his family. Times have changed, people change. But the main thing is having people with that around you all the time whether you go in the community, learn those ways - don't lose it. Focus what's on what's good in your life, focus on independence. Focus on goals, you'll be alright.

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