



I was put into foster care at 4, and then bounced back between my parents and foster homes until I was 9 years old. Then I went to a foster home where I stayed for 7 years. When I turned 16 things started to go really bad. I became a teen that nobody wanted. I decided that if things were going to be so negative I would leave. I kind of wanted my foster parents to come after me, and want me back, but they never came for me. They packed my stuff up and sent it.

I spent the next 6 months at a guys house, who I barely knew. I had just started dating him. Next, I lived in a group home. Then I was transitioned to youth housing.

I look after myself here, and I've realized that if I'm not going to push myself to do my best, nobody else is going to.

I'm finishing my high school. I'm passionate about cooking and I'm planning of going to culinary school. I want to work on a cruise ship and see the world while doing something I love.

Don't feel like you're going to be judged when you go to the food bank or seek out mental health services. These are normal things that people need, just you can't get them in the same way as other people can. In the future you can make up for it, when you are successful and have a job, then you can donate to the food bank like other people do, and return the favour.

If you are looking for help, call 211. It's free, 24 hours a day.

e Abby, homeless at age 16