Making her own future
Case study: FFT-CW®

The Family Profile

Marisa*, 25, a single Aboriginal mother from Mt Druitt, joined the Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT-CW®) program, in anticipation of the return of her four children, whom she was separated from for four months.

Meeting Marisa’s FFT-CW® therapist, Sue, was a life-transforming experience. Marisa has now completed positive parenting courses, engaged in drug and alcohol counselling and created a home environment where her children are able to safely stay together. Intensive therapy gave Marisa insight into her negative relationship patterns, enabled her to develop a better understanding of how children perceive their mum and the importance of her kids being back with her. “This was a turning point in Marisa’s behaviour and enhanced her confidence in her parenting skills”, explained Sue. Marisa has also established a stable routine for her kids, which includes going to school and childcare.

The Result

As a result the family unit has been strengthened and Marisa’s newly-found confidence has also become evident in other aspects of her life; Marisa will soon be commencing a Community Pathways course at TAFE to prepare her for a Certificate IV in Community Services. The course will bring her one step closer to achieving her dream of becoming a domestic violence support worker assisting other Aboriginal women in her community.

Given the high proportion of vulnerable Aboriginal children and families in Western Sydney, the FFT-CW® program is delivered in a culturally inclusive framework. All therapists attend cultural awareness training; an Aboriginal case worker is on-hand to guide therapists on culturally appropriate behaviour; and the team is constantly focused on building positive relationships with the local Aboriginal community, agencies and services.

In recognition of her determination, Marisa was nominated for the Mary MacKillop Award for ‘Courage in Life’ at the end of 2017. These important awards acknowledge program participants who demonstrate inspirational perseverance towards their goals in the face of challenging circumstances.

Sue commented on Marisa’s progress: “As a young single mother of four, Marisa’s challenges will be ongoing. However, her family unit has now been strengthened, she is a determined and confident mum who engages and encourages others in her community to seek the support that they may need.”

*Names changed to protect the privacy of individuals