

Just imagine

. . . you're 12, you have zero self-esteem because you're bullied mercilessly at school, and then you fall for a 20-year-old man who convinces you that a sexual relationship is "okay." Remember, you're only 12.

Just imagine . . . he betrays you. He calls you bad, horrible names. Robs you of yourself. His text messages to you are downright cruel, but then he leaves you. Now, you're alone. Heartbroken. And feeling worthless.

Just imagine . . . you soothe yourself by jabbing your arm with a pencil. And you haven't even started high school.

Sadly, you don't have to imagine any of this. This story is very real, and it belongs to "Tracey."

We first met Tracey when the CT Dep't of Children and Families (DCF) referred her to us to treat her severe depression. So dire was her condition that she wouldn't shower or talk. Tracey hid behind ridiculously oversized clothing; she looked odd and smelled badly, and this all isolated her even more.

At CBC, we showed Tracey that goodness and kindness exist in the world – that there is help. And help she needed. She needed more than just once-a-week therapy, and her family needed hours of support and coordination. So many situations like Tracey's require professional assistance to synchronize the family's care – assistance that will knit together a team to support a path to recovery. The team will incorporate anyone: doctors, schoolteachers, administrators, therapists, and, of course, the family!


We call this care coordination. For so many children and families it is integral to their success.

For Tracey, this team consisted of Tracey's mother, sister, uncle, aunt, and key school personnel – all of whom committed significant time and energy to help Tracey overcome substantial trauma.

And, oh, how Tracey responded! In June, Tracey stepped out of those loose, baggy clothes and into a beautiful, flowered sundress to attend her brother's 6th grade graduation! In post-ceremony pictures, Tracey's attire is complemented perfectly by the confident smile she wears as she stands with her proud, happy family preserving a special moment. At about that same time Tracey had found the courage to join a peer support group, and when her sessions ended this October she decided to rejoin group! A wonderful outcome: today, Tracey is serving as a first lieutenant of sorts to the group leader and spends time encouraging her group peers to engage, listen and learn!!

Indeed, Tracey is paying it forward. She knows better than most that, with help, it is possible to heal from trauma.

Maybe you can ask her one day when you see her standing proudly and smiling broadly in her beautiful, flowered dress.



“Clifford Beers has been a Godsend to my daughter and me,” says Laurie, Tracey’s mom. “With you, we accomplished more in six months than we had in two years!”