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REDUCING POVERTY.

## Peer Support Specialist

Northwest Family Services (NWFS) provides the ONLY Oregon Health Authority Peer Support Specialist approved certification available in English and Spanish. NWFS certified Peer Support Specialist staff provide adult & youth mental health first aid trainings.



I have always wanted the best for my family and provided the best I could, but I was overwhelmed by hopelessness. The day to day routine, the children fighting, the bills, the calls from their school, and life just became too much. I never saw myself in this situation. This was not the life I thought I would be living. My husband was now out of the picture, and all the children had was me.

I had tried to seek help, but I always left feeling worse. I did not understand the language and felt that I was at fault for my situation. I was ashamed. I began to scold and grow even more desperate and frustrated with the children. I felt alone, and regularly cried myself to sleep.

I was referred to Northwest Family Services, and really did not know much about the program. What I did know is that the lady that called me spoke Spanish like me, and it was her native language. I did a lot of the talking and she listened. I did not realize how much I needed that!

She asked me when I had last had a physical, and I told her I could not remember, but that I needed to schedule one. She asked me if she could help me schedule it, and in less than ten minutes I had an appointment where she agreed to accompany me. I cannot express in words the support that I felt from a complete stranger. I have had more than ten "appointments" with her! I have shared with her my greatest fears, the anger I have been harboring, and this feeling of impotence.

Although I thought I was protecting my children from my inner turmoil, I did not realize the impact it had on them. I am currently continuing to see a mental health therapist who speaks Spanish, and my children are all receiving support from an amazing therapist that I can communicate with.

"I am thankful for the light that Northwest Family Services has provided for me. I notice changes in myself, but more importantly in my children. I can now hug my oldest child. I thank you, and ask that you don't forget about me, because I won't forget about you."

- Northwest Family Services Client