

# NEW YORK FOUNDLING FAMILIES RISING

An Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) program funded by the NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice that provides evidence-based Functional Family Therapy (FFT) to young people with open cases in Criminal and Supreme Courts throughout New York City.



**Tiffany\*** was mandated to The New York Foundling's Families Rising program in December 2019 and began therapeutic services at the start of 2020. Tiffany was referred to Families Rising for an Attempted Murder in the second-degree charge. When she started treatment, Tiffany, a young mother of a 5-month-old, had just moved to a new foster home. She was navigating a new family system while also figuring out how to be a mother.

In Functional Family Therapy, Tiffany was able to share with her foster mom some emotional 'triggers' based upon on her experiences growing up, which helped Tiffany and her foster mother share and express their feelings freely to each other. As the family progressed through therapy, they learned new communication skills

to negotiate expectations, prevent and resolve conflict, and learn to come back together and make a plan for moving forward together. Working with her Foundling therapist, Tiffany was able to build a strong, trusting relationship with her foster mother.

As Tiffany explained: "Just staying in therapy has helped me tremendously. It taught me to let go of certain things. Or I should say it taught me to be the bigger person in many situations. I think something my family learned is we're sometimes just gonna have to agree to disagree. Because to this day, we still don't always see eye to eye, [...] but we must always respect each other as a family and as human beings."

Tiffany and her foster family made great progress in therapy, learning to navigate new, exciting, and challenging family dynamics, while also addressing risk factors in the community. Tiffany received her High School Equivalency Diploma in March 2020. Since then, she has worked part-time. After finding childcare for her daughter, she is ready to explore future career and educational opportunities.

At the start of December 2020, Tiffany was sentenced and received "Youthful Offender" status and a conditional discharge so that she has no criminal record for the case. A week later, Families Rising successfully completed services with Tiffany and her family. When asked about her life after therapy, Tiffany shared:

"Something positive in life right now, after therapy, is really having the ability to walk away from certain situations. Even when I know I'm right, I learned to walk away. Before, growing up, I didn't have the strength to do that. I thought being strong was facing every situation head on and I felt I was about being aggressive all the time and I had reasons for that. I was angry within myself. So now I see the person who is always aggressive or the person who tries to take me out of my character and I see them as people who are angry within, so I walk away."

*\*Name changed to protect identity of young woman who completed The Foundling's program*

[For more information about MOCJ-funded ATI programs, click here.](#)

Image by [The New York Foundling](#).