

Val's Story: 32 years old, has 5 children, is presently living on her own.

I had a difficult life during my younger days, living with my parents when they were alive. They weren't very good memories because they drank lots. I didn't like any of that happening in our home. It was very frightening at times. My sister and I went through lots by ourselves. She took good care of me when I was a little girl.

When we were with my parents they did their best to take care of us. They had there bad days, they drank and took care of us at the same time, but that's probably how they grew up. That cycle has to break and that's what I'm working on. Drinking isn't the answer when you have a problem, it just gets worse.

During my school days, when I was in grade 1-3 and before moving here, I had a hard time. I was put back in grade one, I think, but I always wanted to be with my original class. I was so mad when I was put back. I started crying because I wasn't smart enough to be with them. During math, which I didn't like very much at all, I couldn't do the work well and I wasn't patient at all. I would get frustrated and start to cry. I couldn't concentrate. I just hated math. I still do today but I have to learn to like it to get through in life.

As I got older things seemed to get harder. For instance, things like budgeting and things to do with numbers. Not memorizing numbers, that wasn't really one of my weaknesses. I'm good at memorizing, at least 10-12 numbers and phone numbers.

I volunteer at the daycare for a couple days a week. I've done this for a few months now. During my job there I have a list of things to do so I don't get lost or wonder what else to do. I had a hard time dealing with kids who don't know me so I just tell them that's ok I don 't feel offended. I really enjoy working with kids at the daycare. Some days I can't make it because of my children being sick. I have to be with them as I am a single mother of five. Sometimes I'm sick as well as my kids so I have to take care of them as well as myself. I seem to manage. I do have support from Healthier Babies. They are people who help mothers who are expecting babies. They help them through their pregnancies and as their babies get older.

It would be hard for me to have a full time job because of not being organized. That is one of my weaknesses. So I also have problems when my kids have homework; both when the work is hard to understand and when they don't want to do their homework

Being a good role model was hard to do because you can 't drink or do drugs. It took me about two years to get back on track when my kids moved back in with me after they were in foster care. My goal was to break the cycle of being a person who drinks every day. I'd rather be a sober person. My kids are happier and I'd rather be happier. I drank because of anger, peer pressure and because I saw my parents doing it when I was young. So I thought it was ok. Now I know that drinking is not the answer. It just makes things worse.

I'm happier the way I am, my kids are happier too and that is my goal.