

Reconnecting and Reviving Relationships to Thrive

The Johnson Family: A Case Study

“All I wanted was
to be a *family* again.”



OVERVIEW

The Johnsons are a big family. There are 10 children total, and while the majority are now adults, there are still four children in the household living with their mom, Erica Johnson.

They're all very active children who love basketball, football and making pizza for family TV night. Their story is a great example of how, no matter what comes our way, we are always better together.

THE CHALLENGE

Michael is the youngest member of the Johnson Family. Several years ago, Michael experienced abuse while in care of another adult, which led to him being removed from his home and placed in out-of-home foster care. This left them feeling incomplete.

"I was willing to do anything to get him back, but it was out of my hands," Ms. Johnson says.

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THE SOLUTION

Michael's therapy sessions through **Wellpoint Care Network** were the first step in helping him heal from his trauma. Family therapy and crisis stabilization were introduced to help the entire family manage their emotions and create a plan to prevent unsafe conditions from occurring again. Medication management was also a key component in the process.

Ultimately, what Michael needed most was being moved in with relatives to help restore vital family connections.

Kinship care is when a relative or caregiver with a pre-existing relationship to a child steps up to care for them when they are removed from the home. Michael's oldest sister had always played a critical role in her younger siblings' lives. She stepped in to care for Michael when he needed a safe place to stay.

"She's my rock," Ms. Johnson says.

THE SUPPORT

At **Wellpoint Care Network**, the majority of children in our care are placed with kinship or foster families while our case managers work with families to achieve stability. They do this by reducing and/or mitigating the safety factors that first brought the family into care.

The focus of case management in these instances is to help families achieve **safety, stability** and **reunification**.

With Michael in kinship placement, his behavior improved significantly.

His case managers and therapists coordinated with staff from **Wraparound Milwaukee**, a local program that provides care to children with serious emotional, mental and behavioral needs. All of these supports were integrated into the whole family's lives to create a safe environment for him to return home.

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is all
I need.”**



Right: Erica Johnson (bottom left) with members of the Johnson family.

THE OUTCOMES

A year after his treatment plan began, Michael was reunified with his family in his own home. “I was so grateful,” Ms. Johnson says. “All I wanted was to be a family again.”

Since then, Michael has learned to self-regulate and effectively communicate his emotions. He’s had no severe crisis behaviors, and Wraparound Milwaukee no longer considers him to be high-risk.

While still a quiet child, Michael is making great strides at sharing his thoughts with the people he knows are wanting and willing to help.

Ms. Johnson has hopes of moving Michael and his siblings to the South one day to be closer to other family members who can help support her. “Family is all I need,” she says.



Above: Michael and his siblings.



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