

# Healing Within Reach

Comprehensive Community  
Services: A Case Study

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## MEET ELIZABETH \*

There's no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to mental health care. If you struggle with depression, anxiety, overwhelming stress, substance abuse or addiction and are on Medicaid, you may qualify for **Comprehensive Community Services (CCS)**, a unique support program that can cater to the needs of each individual.

This case study will examine the story of Elizabeth,\* a woman in her 20s who was diagnosed with several mental health disorders. In Wisconsin, CCS services differ from county to county. Elizabeth enrolled in Milwaukee County and was assigned a care coordinator from **Wellpoint Care Network**.

She attributes some of her successes over the past few years to the variety of services she received through CCS.

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## THE CHALLENGE

Aside from the intense anxiety and depression which initially qualified her, Elizabeth was also autistic, had cerebral palsy and was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Before enrollment, Elizabeth was described as an extremely anxious person. At times, her anxiousness was so severe that it would manifest in gastrointestinal issues. She also suffered from multiple eating disorders.

Elizabeth's anxiety meant she struggled with social interactions. Her teenage years were hard, and she had few friends to turn to. Suicidal thoughts consumed her, and she had attempted to kill herself on more than one occasion.

Even as a teenager, Elizabeth knew she needed help to improve her daily life. When she heard about CCS in 2018, she decided to enroll. She was 17 years old.

*\* Name has been changed to protect anonymity.*

## THE SOLUTION

CCS programs can offer a wide variety of support services to enrollees. Traditional services might include talk therapy, psychiatry or medication management. There may also be unique services available, such as music therapy, art therapy or occupational therapy.

With assistance from her Wellpoint Care Network care coordinator, Elizabeth quickly enrolled in a number of services including equine therapy, talk therapy and yoga. Over the years, Elizabeth has also worked with several mentors.

“[Elizabeth’s] mentors have been instrumental in getting her out of the house, providing her with opportunities to socialize and giving her opportunities to be physically active,” said **Yael Greenberg**, CCS care coordinator. “This has such a good effect on her mental health.”

**“This was a *game changer* because eating better had benefits for her body and for her *mental health* as well.”**

## THE RESULTS

Today, Elizabeth plays on the Special Olympics basketball team, which has added to her independence and her ability to socialize and make connections. Equine therapy helps her work on mindfulness, staying in the moment and being present — which has played a big role in lowering her anxiety.

Through talk therapy, Elizabeth has learned how to express what she is feeling and also learned techniques like counting backwards, deep breathing and journaling. These skills help calm her mind whenever she feels overwhelmed.

Yoga and mindfulness instruction have been great for Elizabeth’s cerebral palsy, really improving her agility and overall movement. And nutrition coaching has taught her how different foods affect her body. She no longer binge eats when anxious and has embraced meal prep.

“Coaches would go on visits to the grocery store and show Elizabeth how to read a nutritional label, understand the fine print and what it means for how the food’s going to make her feel,” explains Greenberg. “This was a game changer because eating better had benefits for her body and for her mental health as well.”

## THE OUTCOME

Now 23, Elizabeth has been enrolled in Milwaukee County's CCS program for several years. Today, she is much happier, healthier and more independent than she was as a teen, and credits the positive changes in her life to her enrollment in CCS and her care coordinator from Wellpoint Care Network.

Elizabeth continues to learn about dealing with anxiety and depression in healthy and productive ways. She reports improved stability in her day-to-day mood, and no longer binge eats or self-harms.

With the skills she learned in CCS, Elizabeth graduated high school, maintains a job long-term and volunteers at a senior care facility. Her relationships with her mother and brother have grown.

Soon, Elizabeth will transition from Milwaukee County's Youth CCS services to their Adult CCS services. This program offers even more support focused on independence, from advice on schooling and career, job training and housing resources.

Because the CCS program is so customizable and offers such a wide array of services, Elizabeth has grown into a stronger, more independent woman. She looks forward to continuing her journey — and we look forward to helping along the way.



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