

WOMEN'S JUSTICE NETWORK

**THE DAY I ASKED
FOR A MENTOR**

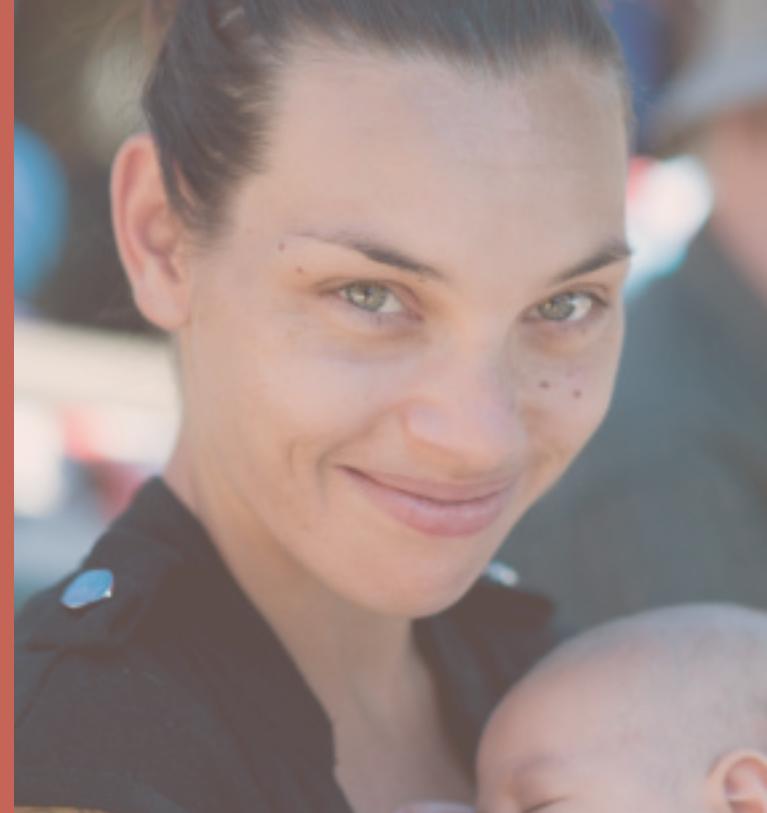
**I MADE A LIFE
CHANGING CHOICE**

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**I HAD A MENTOR
FOR 13 MONTHS. IN
THAT TIME, I HAVE
SET UP MY OWN
HOME, FINISHED
MY PAROLE PERIOD,
AND AM NOW
LEADING A POSITIVE,
INDEPENDENT LIFE.**

39 YEAR OLD MENTEE

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WJN

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Photos used are stock photos using models

MY STORY

"I have never been one to play the victim, but it's fair to say I wasn't dealt the best hand in life. My mum and dad were addicts. They tried to raise us the best they could, but life was a struggle. My dad killed himself when I was 17. My mum was in prison. I set out to find a place where I belonged. I met people who took drugs, partied and broke the law to feed their habits.

It was new and exciting, and I loved the escape and very quickly it became hell. I was addicted to ICE and getting arrested. I have been to prison five times and I have four children. I lost custody of my first three children. I beat myself up for losing them. When I met WJN, I had just given birth to my fourth child and was on the Drug Court Program. I had no faith in myself and was struggling to stay clean but I knew I couldn't bare to lose another child to the system. So I decided to give Mentoring a go. I was matched to my Mentor straight away and there was an instant click.

I had never had a normal female friend before.

My Mentor was clean and didn't break the law, but she was one of the coolest people I had ever met. She understood everything I had gone through and knew exactly what I had ahead of me. Not once did she ever pity me. I hate pity! Instead she made me see I was an adult now and I had responsibilities. The past was in the past, and we made a deal that we would only talk about the future. We would meet up, stuff our faces with food, play with my little baby and she would even come to Drug Court with me. Suddenly, my depression left me.

Now, two years on, I still have my little girl with me and I see my other children once a month. I no longer feel that I need drugs or that I that I need to put up with a man treating me like crap.

In a few years time, I will contact WJN again and this time I will be the mentor." - *Anonymous*

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is the relationship between two women. Mentors are volunteers who undertake specialised training to understand their role in mentoring. Mentee's are women who are or have been affected by the criminal justice system. Mentors are non-judgemental and can provide someone who can listen and emotionally support you. Each mentoring relationship is different and is guided by your personal goals and interests.

HOW CAN A MENTOR HELP ME?

- You will have regular contact with someone to reach out to who cares about you
- You will learn new skills that will assist you to stay out of prison
- You will have someone who you can confidentially share your needs without being judged
- You will have someone who can advocate for you and help to find local services
- You will have someone who can support you with your appointments

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A MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP IS A SAFE RELATIONSHIP, FREE FROM HARM & JUDGEMENT.

WOMENS JUSTICE NETWORK

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WHY DO I NEED A MENTOR?

- Mentoring can provide positive guidance and support during 'tough times'
- Mentoring provides an opportunity to create a deep and respectful relationship
- Mentoring can provide a new way to reconnect within the community, which can be challenging and stressful
- Mentoring can help the Mentee's personal growth and sense of achievement
- Mentoring can develop new skills that can help in living a life free of crime