

Family and Care Coordinator Story

This piece reflects the experiences of a family who was supported by Care Coordination during the time of COVID-19. It addresses the hurdles they faced and the positive outcomes Care Coordination can deliver, even during very challenging times. The family has given permission to share this story. Names and some identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

When sixteen-year-old Lizzy came into care coordination, she was in a “dark place”. She was referred from Mobile Crisis Intervention Services. Lizzy was refusing to go to school and spending all day in bed crying. Lizzy’s parents were overwhelmed and did not know where to turn. She went from singing in choir, playing guitar and piano, to having no interest in anything. Their bright vibrant honor student had completely shut down and they were worried about her. They agreed to a referral for Care Coordination with the hope to get their vibrant daughter back.

Over the beginning months of Care Coordination and getting to know Lizzy, the family, and their needs, and strengths Lizzy continued to struggle and not attend school. Care coordination looked at the needs of the family, helping to build a team of supports to implement strategies using the wraparound plan of care. Lizzy began working on herself, with her own resilience and the help and motivation of her team. Lizzy started with small steps that were supported by her team. She invited school staff, her tutor, and her family to discussions about what she was feeling and how she needed support. Lizzy began going to bed early and getting up on time, and working with a tutor through homebound schooling. The team met often with the school staff to support Lizzy and advocate for changes as needed. Eventually, she began to reach out to friends again and build her support network. She participated in outside of school activities and attempted to go to the school building for team meetings. Lizzy’s parents started to report, feeling that they were seeing their daughter come back after months of sleepless nights, stress and worry about her future.

Lizzy used her strengths and the strengths of the family and team members. Her mom and dad were great supports, who would do anything to get her to a better place. Dad, who reported that he did not understand anxiety worked hard to learn about it so he could understand his daughter. He would join team meetings from his office virtually as needed. The family began to learn how to advocate for Lizzy and her education during the pandemic and during their daughter’s struggles. With the support of the team, which was made up her care coordinator, family, educational advocates, teachers, her therapist, and Lizzy herself, Lizzy is now graduating a semester early. Lizzy even spoke up for herself during her own Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings to express her concerns and advocate for her educational needs. She used time in Child and Family Team meetings to prepare for PPT meetings. She is getting her license soon and is thriving with her friend group, and even attended prom.

Her family reports having their daughter back again with all of her strengths. She is growing into a strong individual and is even looking into colleges. The family, along with care coordination worked as a team through one of the most stressful situations, they faced as a family. Parents report that they are proud of her and finally feel that Lizzy is not only going to be ok, but is going to thrive in this world. They also reported being better prepared to work through future challenges with Lizzy and their younger daughter due to what they have learned.