



Ngā Kōrerorero Stories of Odyssey





Together it's possible

We are exceptionally privileged at Odyssey to share in so many journeys each year, journeys of acceptance and growth, of aroha and connection.

For many people, connecting with Odyssey is a turning point in their lives. Accessing our services provides the space and opportunity for reflection and discovery, for learning and practicing new skills, for working towards goals that support wellbeing.

This is true for tāngata whai ora and also for kaimahi.

Together, we learn, grow and challenge ourselves to move forward - with tika | trust, pono | honesty, kaitiaki | responsibility, manaaki | concern and aroha | love.

To celebrate our 40 years, we wanted to share with you some of our stories – stories where people, whānau and communities are connected and supported to live the lives they want.

Ngā mihi maioha to Talitha for sharing her journey at Odyssey's Adult and Family Centre.




In this together: reconnecting with parenting and building strong relationships at Odyssey's Family Centre

Talitha was around three months pregnant when she joined our adult residential programme in Auckland. When she moved to our Family Centre three months later, two of her children were able to join her, before she gave birth to a daughter later in the year. She and her three children are now living in an Odyssey transition house onsite and actively looking for housing in the community. She is hoping

to regain custody of her other children when she finds accommodation in the wider community.

"I was really excited when I was told I could come here," says Talitha. "I was like, yay! I knew I needed to do this, to get my kids back."

Talitha had been using drugs since she was 15 and had tried various times to get clean unsuccessfully when, at the end of 2018, five of her children had been removed from her care by Oranga Tamariki.



"If I'm struggling or if I'm upset I can check in with staff and friends, who know how to pick you up, but without alcohol or drugs."

The agency recommended rehabilitation through Odyssey, but she had reservations – “I thought I could do this on my own” – and her then partner was resistant to the idea too. But after another relapse and faced with the possibility of not being reunited with her children, Talitha joined the adult residential programme. By July 2020, she had progressed so well that two of her younger children were able to join her to live with her at Odyssey’s Family Centre. “I was ecstatic,” she says, of having her youngest children join her. The Family Centre supported her in her pregnancy, and in the care of her new daughter and her ongoing participation at Odyssey. Her three other children, who are cared for by family members, have also been able to visit regularly.

At the time of writing, Talitha was living in a house separate to but connected to the Family Centre and is being supported to find her own house. Once she finds one, she’s optimistic that her other children will be returned to her care.

Having her children join her at the Family Centre has been crucial, she says. It has been a personal joy and has also motivated her to stick with and get the most out of the programmes and support that Odyssey offers.

It has also given her the chance to develop parenting skills alongside other parents at the Family Centre. She highlights the “Incredible Years” programme as being particularly valuable, teaching her and other parents the importance of providing ‘positive praise’ to their own and other children. She has also learned how to get her children used to a routine – including going to bed at a certain hour each day. She says she wishes she had been taught such parenting skills earlier.

Through the Family Centre she has developed mutually supportive relationships with other mums. Her children have been able to play with other kids in the Centre and have been supported to attend the local kindergarten. They have had, she says, more social

Odyssey Family Centre

In the year to 30 June 2020, Odyssey supported 28 parents and 35 children in our Family Centre, which offers a modified therapeutic community in a purpose-built residence for up to ten families at a time.

The median length of stay is 150 days. Parents living with us participate in the adult residential programme at our neighbouring residence and have similar opportunities to develop skills and strategies that will support their recovery when they leave Odyssey. In addition, parents in the Family Centre attend parenting support groups, as well as activities with their children.

activities, such as visits to the Zoo, than they have ever had in their young lives.

Odyssey has, through its Relapse Prevention Programme, also taught her to recognise the triggers for a potential relapse, how to reach out for support when she needs to.

"If I'm struggling or if I'm upset, I can check in with staff and friends, who know how to pick

you up, but without alcohol or drugs."

"It's like I've retrained my brain, knowing that the false high that you think you might get from a drug is usually followed by anxiety and depression. It doesn't compare with how you feel once you've got clean, and have so much to look forward to, and the high of having my children back with me."

Many thanks to Margo White for writing our 2020 Annual Review stories.