



### **Romy - aged 35 POCAR**

Romy had been referred to the POCAR program previously around concerns about her alcohol use and the effect this had on her parenting. At this time she had a young baby called India and 3 older children.

Romy was vulnerable and easily led by acquaintance's calling themselves "friends" and using her place to drink and use drugs. Romy had a history of unhealthy relationships with men who were violent. She was in denial around her problems with alcohol and went through the motions of the POCAR program without really engaging, presenting as quiet and withdrawn and on several occasions smelt of alcohol. It was becoming clearer that Romy wasn't managing as we had hoped and as a result and through months of heartache her daughter was placed for adoption and her elder children removed to the care of their grandmother, Romy's mother.

Fast forward a few years and Romy was re-referred to POCAR by her social worker, Romy was pregnant and looked well. Romy presented differently, she was open, engaging and honest and was reporting complete abstinence from both alcohol and drugs. Romy had a supportive social worker and we worked together in monitoring and supporting Romy through her pregnancy and recovery. Romy gave birth to a healthy little boy and although Romy was evidently in a positive place her past still raised obvious concerns and anxieties, a Child Protection Plan was put in place and it was decided that Romy and baby would spend some time in a mother and baby placement. Romy embraced this opportunity and was motivated to do anything to parent Stanley in a healthy way and prove her abilities to do so. The placement went extremely well and Romy worked really hard to meet her personal goals and the expectations of professionals. Eventually mum and baby went home together. Stanley accessed the crèche while Mum attended POCAR and they attended BOPPERS together.

What was different? We explored this during key work and Romy was able to articulate how she felt. It was refreshing to hear that Romy had made the decision to change for herself but also for the sake of her baby and older children, explaining that losing India was something that she could never go through again, this she

reports was the hardest lesson to learn. Romy understood her risk situations and why she had made previously bad decisions around relationships. Romy wanted a future, a family and to be happy, she understood the practice of taking each day as it comes and talking through feelings and issues. Romy was able to reflect on her previous experiences and reports not being ready for change when she was last on the POCAR program.

Romy is still engaged with Oasis taking her recovery seriously and thinking about her and her family's future for the first time, Romy has hopes and aspirations. Romy is currently facilitating the peer led SMART support group at Oasis and wants to eventually become a volunteer, in her words using her experiences positively to help others and giving something back. She is experiencing some problems with her older children but is taking this in her stride using the techniques she learnt from Triple P and asking for support for her daughter from Young Oasis.

Romy now has had some contact with India, which is something she had only dreamed about; this has enabled her to process some of her guilt and has given her more motivation for her recovery. She will always be India's mum and hopes one day they can have a relationship. Romy sees her elder children daily and they stay over, she is managing Stanley's needs and re starting her life.

### **Points Illustrated**

- **Timing of Interventions and value of offering same support again**
- **Use of POCAR alongside foster placements**
- **Partnership working with social services**
- **Recovery pathway including taking on Peer roles**
- **Value of gender specific interventions for women who have experienced DV.**

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