

# ACHIEVING LIFE SKILLS

**Agency:** Life-Work Planning Center

**Program:** Personal & Peer Counseling for women in transition

**Service:** With a combination of one-to-one counseling, workshop setting work, and individual testing and assessment, the program helps to empower women in transition to achieve the life skills necessary for gainful employment and/or education working towards self-sufficiency. Services are designed for women who are either moving into employment for the first time or are seeking to advance their careers through career/job changes or education

**Need:** Women in transition can include women who have been out of the paid workforce for several years, or who have never been in the paid workforce, can be single or married, whose partners may have become unemployed. As these women strive to become self-sufficient, they are often dealing with such barriers as low self-esteem, depression, divorce, low-paying jobs, lack of health insurance, and others

**Impact:** Last year nearly 600 displaced homeworkers and women in transition received personal growth and career development services. Over 98% of women in transition completed their plan for obtaining self-sufficiency within one year of enrollment

*This is one local woman's personal story of success after working with Life-Work Planning Center (LWPC).*

Having been born into an abusive, alcoholic home shattered any possibility of dreams for Nancy. She just never had any. She herself started using drugs at age 9. When Nancy was 13, her mother "threw her out of the house." Nancy was homeless and lived in a car in a garage for a few weeks.

Without any normalcy growing up, Nancy developed an emotional attachment to her partners. She was able to obtain only low paying jobs which added a financial dependency to her life. And, of course, her chemical dependency interfered with her ability to keep a job. When she was not working, she was totally dependent on her partner.

For years Nancy lived like this. At one point when she was incarcerated, Nancy attended meetings with a peer counselor from LWPC who came to the facility. She says these meetings were the highlight of her week - she so looked forward to them. She did not feel judged in these meetings and she felt that someone in the outer community cared about her. She knew when she was released that LWPC would be available for her.

Once she was released and had come to terms with her addiction, LWPC classes helped Nancy take a look at herself. She began to see who she was. She even began to think about going back to school. She now had possibilities!

Nancy attended a workshop on self esteem. She was able to find the good qualities about herself and writing them down on paper was affirming and strengthening. Career exploration workshops clarified her job and education interests. Being with other women in transition helped her see that she was not alone and the support of others provided insight she needed. Supportive staff and one-to-one counseling furthered her growth.

This is what Nancy is doing now: She is working full time, rebuilding relationships with family, rebuilding trust after a lifetime of abuse and dependency, she is gaining self confidence and she is giving back to the community in volunteer work.

Your donation to Greater Mankato Area United Way helps ensure that people like Nancy have access to the tools and resources they need to get them back on the road to self-sufficiency and independence.

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