

# SUSAN'S STORY



“ *With her newly found confidence Susan built bridges with other community service organisations...* ”



## Provider Name

Tamworth Community College

## Contact

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## Program

FSK10113 Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways

FSK10213 Certificate I in Skills for Vocational Pathways

## Target Group

People with Mental Health disabilities

## Details

One-to-one sessions (2hrs per session) for 12 months

## Key points of difference

Well trained staff, flexibility and one-on-one support

**Thirty-something Susan is a mother of three and a superstar! Susan (not her real name) grew up in a dysfunctional family; she has intellectual and learning disabilities, clinical depression and on-going medical problems.**

As a child she missed basic educational milestones and was enrolled in a special education class. On her first visit to Tamworth Community College with her support service case-worker, Susan was so nervous she experienced an anxiety attack and locked herself in the ladies toilet. The FSK trainer and the case-worker managed to convince her to come back and for the next two visits Susan was so lacking in self-esteem and confidence that she was almost non-verbal in the learning sessions.

Despite the challenging start, Susan has attended the college regularly calling it “my me time” where she gets a break from a sometimes chaotic home life parenting her children, two of whom have disabilities. Susan’s goals were simple and unselfish... she just wanted to be able to help her children with their homework and volunteer at the school.

Susan successfully achieved two full qualifications (FSK10113 & FSK10213). One of her learning strategies was to sit with her children while they were reading at home and learn to read together. She regularly informed staff at the college, *“I’m going to miss coming here. I’ve learnt I’m not silly.”*

At a small morning tea to celebrate Susan’s graduation attended by college staff and students Susan surprised everyone by making an impromptu speech of thanks. What a long way she had come from the near non-verbal person who

enrolled at the College 12 months previously!

With her newly found confidence Susan built bridges with other community service organisations allowing her to better understand her medication, improve her mental health recovery and gain access to speech therapy for her children.

The success of the program can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- Whole college approach to mental health awareness with trained staff and a comprehensive and sufficiently resourced Disability Support strategy
- An experienced and flexible trainer/assessor who was willing to take the journey with Susan
- Strong support from RTO management allowing and encouraging initiative, flexibility and creativity in delivery and assessment
- Session by session adjustments in response to Susan’s daily wellbeing and capacity
- Tracking progress each session to provide positive reinforcement and empowerment

*This training is subsidised by the NSW Government.*