

Haven Outreach Program: Flexible, Low Barrier Services Where Women Feel Comfortable

At 15, Gabby was couch surfing and living on the streets—it was hard not knowing what to expect every day, but it was better than staying home and not knowing what her step dad was going to do next. By the time she was 17, Gabby had been raped, was addicted to crack and crystal meth, and had given a baby daughter up for adoption. When she turned 19, the young woman realized her life had to change or she may not live to see 25.

One year later, Gabby was struggling. She couldn't keep a job and she couldn't get along with roommates. Her drug habits were harder to kick than she had thought. She had started to attend a couple of support groups, but they had made her uncomfortable and she had not returned.

Gabby was going to be homeless soon if she didn't face the voices from her past that kept creeping up and telling her that she was a loser, that she didn't deserve anything better, and that she wasn't worth it.

And Gabby really wanted it to work. She wanted Emily, her sweet baby girl, to be proud of her real mom when she grew up.

When her social worker suggested she attend a 16-Step group at Haven, Gabby was dubious. The previous addiction support groups had been dismal failures. But she agreed to try

it since it had a flexible, drop in format that would work better for her.

Before starting the group, Gabby met with one of Haven's Outreach Workers who helped her to prepare a plan to find a safe, suitable place to live. The Outreach Worker also gave her new pants, socks, personal care items, cereal, bread, and granola bars.

When she started the 16-Step group, Gabby was happy that it was at Haven and that it was only for women—she felt safe there. The facilitator was the same Outreach Worker who had first helped her, and the young woman immediately felt comfortable.

Over the course of the 16 group sessions, Gabby learned about the destructive behaviours she had been using. She explored her relationship with her mom and step dad, and learned tricks to respond to the negative voice in her head.

She found a small basement apartment in a home with a family that was supportive, and enjoyed playing with their dog in the back yard. Even though she still had a lot of personal work to do, Gabby felt more confident and positive about her next steps.

* While this story speaks to the experiences of our clients, for privacy reasons, this story and all names are fictional and the images and photos are stock.



"I realized that there are community agencies that sincerely help women in crisis. They understand what we need and how to go about offering it to us."