

feeling the way I am

the first question is, when was the first time you ever needed to use services in the city for housing and homelessness related stuff?

just a little after my 18th birthday

I grew up, like, in care

a bunch of foster [REDACTED] homes, group homes

met my biological mom when I was 16

I moved in with her

I was seven and a half months when we found out

I was pregnant

then I got diagnosed with C-PTSD

it's so complex that you don't know why you're feeling the way you are

my son was three months old

I ended up running away from home

from your bio mom?

yeah, I ended up [REDACTED] feeling, like, really shitty about it

so, I went back

ended up getting into a fight

she kicked me out

I ended up at the [REDACTED] shelter for... I think it was like three or four months?

with the baby, or did you-

no, I voluntarily put him into my mom's custody

I was at least mature enough to know that at the age of 17, I knew I wouldn't be able to care for him the way he should have been cared for

that's hard

though wise of you, [REDACTED] when you're 17 to make that decision

you know, growing up and having to become so mature so young... it was easier to make the choice

it still hurt, like, even now

how's he doing?

he's good, six and a half now

you were in foster care and then a group home by the time you were seven. and then group homes until...?

from the age of 7 till I was 14

I was in [REDACTED] House, which is their, like, I guess you could call it like their transition house?

and then, I got moved to [REDACTED] House, which was their all-girls group home

I was 14 when I got moved into another foster home

Did they give you a reason for the moves when this was happening?

it was because of my anger

I was apparently like, [REDACTED] too much to handle

I was like, under a year and a half old

me and my sister were both taken from my mom

a lot of built-up anger

kept together in the foster home

until I was moved into my group home

but her and I stayed in contact, [REDACTED] and even to this day, [REDACTED] she's like my go to for everything

“oh no”

when my mom still had custody of us when we were babies, she was working one day

her boyfriend [REDACTED] burned me with a cigarette lighter

I don't know how to pronounce the word, but it's a fear of humans, because of how bad like my social anxiety can get

it's not like, “Oh no, like, what does this person think?” it's like, “Oh no, this person's gonna hurt me”

two and a half years... figure [it] out

I was a crown ward, you're crown ward until you're 25

I was on the... I got put on the VYSA program when I was 19

that ends when you're 21

they give you like two and a half years to like, you know, figure out

if you can't get a job within two and a half years

they expect you to go on social assistance

Okay, so you're on the VYSA, you got, it ended.

yeah

that whole time, you were staying with your mom, and sometimes at the YES shelter, or-

my mom's kind of on and off

our relationship works better if we don't live together

we weren't around each other when I grew up

because of that, we don't know each other

you can't just move in with someone you don't know

jail

so, I just got out of jail

I was in for 27 days

in order for my release, the court said I had to have like an approved address

I said I was staying at my mom's

but me and my mom both knew I wasn't

Why'd you need an approved person?

originally, the crown was saying that I could only be released with a surety

but I can't get a surety, then the address has to be approved by courts

I used my mom's address, and then they found out that it wasn't there

I can't use her address anymore

was that a breach of probation?

yeah, I had like 14 outstanding charges

and then I had two fail to appears

I was like, "Oh, I gotta go to court today. gotta go." didn't go to court

banned

how long are you banned?

I don't know. [REDACTED] I have a staff that's looking into it. so, I've only ever gotten a level one, which is just getting kicked out for like three days. and then I've gotten level five

what happens when you get a level five?

you're kicked out for three months from all shelters

but where do you go?

wherever you can really

I don't want him to die.

so, like if the shelter government whoever runs it thinks that you're like, you're well off enough like you can take care of yourself, then you'll get put into transitional [housing]

there's also the transitional housing that's in the shelter [REDACTED] upstairs. that way, you're taking care of yourself but you still have the staff there to support if you need it kind of thing.

apparently I'm on the list

apparently, I'm really like right there

the only reason I hadn't taken it before was because like

I have major separation issues and like abandonment issues

I knew that my boyfriend wouldn't be able to be there

we've been together for almost four years and, like, my daughter, she's two

he's the daddy?

Yeah, so, like, I just couldn't

yeah, that's hard. there's not a space for couples

I wanted to give him a chance you know benefit of the doubt, because when he's not high, he's a great guy, like he's amazing with my kids

I've been clean for a month and three days

I know that if I touch it, I'm just gonna die, you know, I have my kids to worry about

how hard is that, though, when you're staying in the park and stuff?

I was at the shelter

last night, I stayed at one of my sister's friend's houses

she actually just told me this this morning, that next month

cause she's moving

she's gonna let me take over

it's definitely helpful

then I can have my kids over, it's a stable place

how about your boy when he comes out of jail?

he's been clean too

so, you guys have a plan. are you feeling hopeful?

I am. I just, my main thing is like, I want to try and get housing before he gets out

if he's on the street when he comes out, he's gonna use again

I don't want him to die.