

Case Study

Radius Participant Amanda

Reluctant would be an understatement.

After chronic school absences and serious behavioral problems, Amanda was court-ordered to get involved with Radius, Amicus' program working with girls in the juvenile justice system.

Here's how she described her first meeting with a Radius counselor after the court order.

"One day (the Radius counselor) showed up and she was all happy and she said, "Hi, I'm Jennifer!!" I said "Hi. I really don't care!"

What Jennifer saw was someone who was withdrawn, angry and mistrustful of most people.

"I hated it," Amanda said. "She'd just start to talk to me and I didn't know who she was. I was just not into it." When Amanda showed up to school, it was miserable for her. "I was thinking, I need to go home."

"I was thinking the opposite," Jennifer replied. "I need to stay in school."

They kept at it though. Amanda began going to group sessions and eventually a few cracks in the ice started to form.

"At first it seems horrible," Amanda said. "You've got to tell these people all your business. But once you get to know them ... it took me some time to get to know Jennifer and start telling her about my life, but once I did it really helped."

"When I first got involved, I still didn't really care. I just thought I had to do it 'cause I got into trouble. Then as time went on, I thought about life more and what I needed to do and basically trying to step up to the plate – do what I need to do instead of just throwing everything away and not doing anything with my life."

She found motivation to make a change within her own family.

"I didn't want to hurt my mom anymore and make my mom have to see me go to court all the time – almost see me go to jail. I wanted to stop hurting my whole family, basically."

She is more determined than ever to make something of her life since the birth of her son, Elijah.



"If I had gotten pregnant and I didn't go to Radius I probably wouldn't have grown up as much. I probably would have pawned (Elijah) off on my mom and tried to live my life the way I was living it before."

"They (Radius staff and participants) are always the ones that try to give me a little push that will make me strive a little bit further. Others will sit there and tell me why I shouldn't. They'll tell me why I should and what will happen – they just give me the little push I need to get where I need to go."

"I still haven't made up my mind yet, but I kind of want to be a counselor, talk to girls about my experiences and what I've been through, trying to help them along. That's all I really needed when I first started the group. I didn't know it, but all I really needed was just somebody to talk to."

"I'd like more girls to get involved," she said. "I've seen a few girls that have started in group like me – didn't like it but then grew up into it and became a completely different person than who they were before. I like that."