

## Archiving Resiliency Through Youth Testimony

### Lucas's Story of Resilience

- **Introduction:** My name is Lucas and I'm 10 years old. I'm going into the 4th grade this fall. I live with my mom and my older brother. My favorite thing about my brother is that he lets me play with his play station on his days off from work. I have an office at home and I like to draw and write poems in it. I am an expert animal tracker when I go on hikes with my friends.
- **My Journey:** It all started when they took me away from my mom when I was 8 years old. I got abused in foster care and had a huge bump on my head. When I returned home with my mom, I really struggled with the bad things that had happened to me. I think about it all of the time and can't concentrate in school or at home, and it makes it hard for me to trust other people so I can make friends.
- **Educate:** I have Autism/Asperger's Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and ADHD. I have so much depression and so much medication to take, but the medication doesn't always help. It's really hard to live with this and sometimes I feel like I can't handle it! Sometimes I just need to be left alone and to have my space.
- **Resilience:** My brother helps me - I play a lot of his video games when I'm really stressed out. My mom is really helpful, too. If I'm having a bad day, she gives me a hug and tells me everything will be ok. At school, I ask the principal to talk with me about how I feel, and this helps. When I returned home from foster care, I really struggled, but I told myself I just had to do what I had to do! My family has been the most helpful to me in my most difficult times of my life.
- **Barriers to resilience:** I have a lot of nightmares that make it hard for me to concentrate. Some people are mean to me, like people who take my stuff (like my iPod) or do stuff to me and I don't feel I can trust them. When I get anxious, I start to feel really small, and I bite myself or clench my teeth, and it's hard for me to actually speak. In order for things to get better for me, I need for children's services to change me back the way I was before I got taken away.
- **My advice to others:** Do what you have to do to get through it. I would tell them to talk to others about how they feel. I would let them know that I'm sorry they have to deal with their illness.
- **What others can do help:** Some organizations and people help by supporting me and my family because they try to understand what it's like to live with a mental illness, and they help us. Reassuring me that everything will be ok is very helpful.

My family has been the most helpful to me in my most difficult times of my life. (One caring person).