

Hi!



My name is Julianna Morningstar,

I am 21, and I was in foster care in Maine too. I have experienced many of the same emotions that you might be feeling right now. When I first entered foster care, I felt lost, confused, hurt, scared, alone, and even somewhat paralyzed by all these feelings. There was so much change happening so quickly, and I was faced with so many unknowns. I had questions like, “Where am I going to live now?” and “Where will my siblings be?” I also wondered if it would ever get better or easier.

I’m reaching out to you today to let you know that it’s all going to be okay. This will be a hard season, but I believe that if you’ve just entered foster care, you are stronger than you realize. You have everything it takes to get through this. I promise that you can overcome this challenging time in your life.

Here are my words of wisdom:

- Enjoy the little things as much as you can.
- Focus your mind on the small things you can be grateful for. Maybe it’s your favorite dessert, a great song, the nature around you, an old friend, or a visit with a safe family member.
- Focus your attention on the good things. This will help you get through the hard times to come.
- Remember, you are not alone. Many people have experienced foster care, and we understand a lot of the emotions you’re going through.
- Try to connect with YLAT, a community of youth in foster care. We are always stronger together.
- Never forget that you are loved and valued. No matter what, I promise that there are people who love you, even if it doesn’t always feel that way. You are loved!

Lastly, I want to remind you that there is a beautiful life waiting for you. This storm won’t last forever, so don’t give up hope for yourself and your future. One day, you’ll find your chosen family, which could be a mix of siblings, friends, resource parents, biological family, teachers, coaches, or maybe even adoptive parents. That’s what it looks like for me!

Following this page, you’ll find the Answers Handbook, created by young people who have experienced foster care. It’s designed to answer many of the questions you may have, such as: What is foster care? How will I get the clothes I need? How do I visit my family? And what are my rights while in foster care? There’s also information on how to contact a DHHS office and tools to help you advocate for yourself at Family Team Meetings. Take advantage of it and hold on to a physical copy if you can!

With much love and support,

Julianna Morningstar

