

MIA'S STORY

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. and is often linked to underlying mental health conditions. In 2018-2019, 4.7% of adults in Louisiana reported having serious thoughts of suicide in the past year.*

"Mental health should be taken so much more seriously," said Louisiana resident, Mia. "You just don't know what other people may be going through." Mia's former partner and the father of her child died by suicide in 2017 when their son was two years old. "I don't wish that on my worst enemy," Mia said.

While the couple were no longer together at that time, the loss of her child's father affected Mia deeply. She remembered the strength she had recently gained through Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP). "I was in shock and disbelief. NFP helped me have that motivation to be the best mom I could



NFP graduate, Mia, with her 8-year-old son, Colton.

“““

NFP HELPED ME HAVE THAT
MOTIVATION TO BE THE BEST
MOM I COULD BE - EVEN IN HARD
SITUATIONS.

-NFP MOM MIA

be – even in hard situations,” remembered Mia. “My NFP nurse always made me look forward to tomorrow even when I didn’t.”

Mia was 21 years old and had just graduated college when she became unexpectedly pregnant in 2014. She remembered, “I felt like I wasn’t ready and I didn’t know what to expect.” Mia was told about Nurse-Family Partnership when she visited her local health department’s WIC program in south central Louisiana. “I had not heard about NFP before then and was skeptical. Then I was paired with my own personal nurse and always looked forward to her visits,” she said.

Mia shared, “Not enough first-time moms know about the benefits of NFP. The program is so much more than education. My nurse and I had a lot of one-on-one talks about my life and my mental health. What I like most about NFP is that it was so personal.”

Toward the end of her pregnancy, Mia was placed on bed rest at home by her doctor. “I was working 10-hour days as a pharmacy technician and was severely dehydrated,” she remembered. “My NFP nurse reminded me to drink lots of water and eat fruit to help with my dehydration.” Mia delivered a baby boy, Colton, over a week early in November 2014. While he was a small baby, Colton was born healthy with his mom, dad and their family to welcome him.



WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
NEXT, MY NFP NURSE ALWAYS HAD
AN ANSWER.

-NFP MOM MIA

Two months later, Mia remembers noticing a change in her partner's mental health, "He loved Colton, I could tell by the way he looked at him. But after having a child, he was stressed and tied up in his personal life and depression."

When Colton was four months old, he suffered an injury at home while under the care of his dad that resulted in transport to the emergency department in Lafayette. Mia said, "He wasn't waking up and I thought, 'if I lose my baby, I will lose my mind.'" Colton received MRIs, testing from neurosurgeons and exams by pediatric optometrists. He was hospitalized in the PICU for four days before being released home. "Mentally, my NFP nurse was my number one savior at that time," Mia said. "She collected the discharge reports and talked all of them over with me. I didn't understand all the medical terms on the reports, so she explained what they meant."

Mia continued the relationship with her NFP nurse during the next two years of Colton's life when he transformed from a baby to a flourishing toddler. "He had come such a long way since his injury. He had to wear an eye patch before he began wearing glasses, but he had no learning delays and met his childhood milestones," Mia proudly remembered.

Then Mia received a call that changed her life. "It took time for me to process that Colton's dad died by suicide," she said. "When I didn't know what to do next, my NFP nurse always had an answer." Mia went to counseling and took some time to focus on Colton and her mental wellbeing.



Mia's son Colton enjoys science, Legos and fossils.

Mia graduated from NFP in 2017. She said, "Honestly, I was sad to graduate from NFP! I felt like I gained a friend in my NFP nurse." Today, Colton is in second grade and enjoys science, Legos and fossils. Mia said proudly, "He has straight A's and is reading at the top of his grade."

Mia has since left the pharmaceutical field and now is an administrative professional. She even finds time to be an entrepreneur as a small business vendor specializing in fashion retail.

Mia recollects on her time in the NFP program, "Colton was the blessing I didn't know I needed. He shaped me into who I am today." She continued, "I wish more first-time moms knew about NFP, it changed my life. By sharing my NFP story and advocating for the program, I hope to change someone else's life, too."

**Data provided by Kaiser Family Foundation*