



## Making leaps and bounds down the pathway to independence

Since she began receiving support from SSI's Local Area Coordination (LAC) services 18 months ago, Jessy, a young woman with Autism Spectrum Disorder, has taken great strides towards living an independent life.



Jessy began receiving support from the NDIS in 2016 and first contacted her Local Area Coordinator (LAC) in late 2019 seeking guidance around employment, and assistance with day-to-day tasks and management of NDIS funds.

At the time, Jessy was experiencing workplace bullying. To assist her in overcoming this situation, Jessy's SSI [Information, Linkage and Capacity Building \(ILC\) Consultant](#) put her in touch with a legal representative who talked her through her rights and what she could do to seek help in the future.

"I liked my work, but felt I got in trouble for things that I didn't do. It made me angry," said Jessy.

Soon after, with the support of a Disability Employment Services provider and ILC Consultant, Jessy found a new job with a smaller property realtor, where she now feels more supported and included.

Jessy's employer has been making ongoing efforts to support her in the role and has rostered Jessy to allow her to pursue studying computer skills at TAFE while working part time.

"I like my new workplace better because when I ask someone a question or for help, they don't walk away from me. There is more teamwork at a small office, and I think teamwork is very important for everyone," she said.

With the support from her LAC in managing funds in her NDIS plan, Jessy started receiving support from a speech pathologist to assist her communication skills and has also started seeing a counsellor for psychological support.

Her LAC, Esther Chan said Jessy has now moved out of her family home to live independently and enjoys playing an active role in reviewing and accessing the services she receives.

"Jessy had been living with her parents for more than 20 years. Now, she has become more independent and confident by living in her own home," she said.

"Jessy made her own choice to choose a provider that suits her, and she negotiated and discussed with providers by herself. We try to empower and encourage her independence as she is a high functioning young lady."

Jessy plans to continue her computer literacy studies and hopes to one day apply them to a full-time job.

"I am a hard worker. I really am normal, just like everyone else", she said.