

## Overcoming Adversity

### Profile

**Name:** Jessica

**Date of Birth:** February 2nd 1983

**Current Age:** 29

**Gender:** Female

**Residence:** xxx Arizona, USA

**Education:** Graduated from high school and then attended the University of xxxx and earned a bachelors degree in psychology



A picture of Jessica at Taekwondo

**Description:** Jessica was born without arms due to a very rare birth defect which was not shown in any of her mother's prenatal tests. Jessica uses her feet instead of her hands to do everything. She can write, type 25 words per minute, brush her hair, use her phone, change her contact lenses, surf and drive with an unrestricted license in a car that has not been modified. All of this is done with her feet. She has not used her prosthetic arms since she turned 14. She is also a certified Scuba Diver, the first armless black-belt in the International Taekwondo Federation as well as the American Taekwondo Association and she studied dance, performing for 14 years. Although none of this matches up to her most famous accomplishment, learning how to fly. After three years of training (opposed to the usual six months) through an Able Flight Scholarship in three states with three flight instructors and four planes, she received her pilot's license on October 10th 2008. Jessica is now qualified to fly a light-sport aircraft to altitudes of 10,000 feet. It took her a year to find the right but she flies a 1946 415C Ercoupe Airplane which is made without pedals. This means that Jessica is free to use her feet as hands. She now works as a motivational speaker.

A detailed and extensive profile describing Jessica's background and adversity.



A picture of Jessica driving

### Analysis

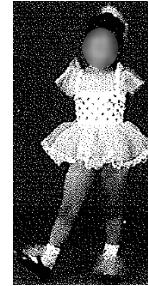
#### Role and impact of adversity on health;

Challenge and adversity was a common thing in Jessica's life but this never seemed to be a problem for her. She faced everything with a positive attitude. Having a positive attitude helped her overcome any obstacles life had in store for her. Jessica believes that having creativity, persistence and fearlessness means that nothing is impossible. Jessica had a fear of heights and decided to face her fear by going out and getting her pilot's licence. She has not had arms her entire life so she has naturally grown doing



A picture of Jessica

everything with her feet. There were questions asked when Jessica was born as to if she was able to live a 'normal' life. Her father was never upset but was supportive and very confident that Jessica had potential. Her mother was also very inspiring and having two supportive parents really motivated Jessica to become confident in herself as she continued to live life in her own special way



A picture of Jessica

Jessica's adversity has now led her to travelling the world to deliver motivational speeches. She encourages people to be innovative and creative with her saying, 'think outside the shoe'. Her speeches are warm, humorous, interactive and uplifting. She inspires people to take steps forward to improve themselves. Jessica has her unique thoughts on confidence and opens people's eyes to differences in others and how to solve life's problems.



A picture of Jessica driving

Her adversity has not negatively impacted on her mental health. In fact it has made her stronger. Not having arms has given her more life challenges that she enjoys attacking, rather than doubting herself. She says that with a willing heart, everything is possible. She became the first pilot with no arms, proving that you don't need 'wings' to fly, simply because she wanted to overcome her old fear of heights.



A picture of Jessica

Jessica studied psychology in university and says that knowing the way you think has a greater impact on your life than being physically limited. Jessica has a great way of tackling life's hardships and it is to persevere and creatively think to solve life's problems. This is one of her important messages.

### **Access to and use of support people, services and strategies to manage health:**

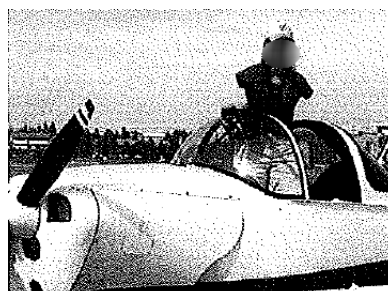
Jessica never had a very poor mental health state but a very positive attitude. This came from her extremely supportive and caring family and doctors. These people were an inspiration and a motivation to push through life no matter how hard it was. Jessica always had easy access to support if she needed it. Her taekwondo teachers, dance teachers and pilot instructors did not doubt her once but were kind and supportive towards Jessica.



A picture of Jessica writing

Say she did have a very poor mental health state she could visit websites such as [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au), [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au), [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com), or [www.blackdoginstitute.com.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.com.au).

These websites are good if one does not feel comfortable speaking to someone in person, all they need is the internet. She could have talked to a family member. Talking to someone this close to you would help as you can place your trust in



A picture of Jessica in a plane

Comprehensive description of Jessica's hardship and adversity

Harpers response would benefit from some American websites to ensure Jessica can access local and relevant support

them and they would already know and understand you and your background. Although if she wanted more professional help she could have spoken to a psychologist, counselor, social worker or other health professionals. These people have been studying this kind of thing and are definitely able to help you. There are also numbers that can be called in need of help such as the kids help line or the lifeline. These numbers are good if you still want to physically speak to someone but you do not want to go and see them or you have no way of transporting yourself to someone. Calling someone can be done in the comfort of your own home



A picture of Jessica

Clear discussion of support Jessica has accessed and the influencing factors

Jessica started up her own service called the Jessica xxxx Motivational Service which is a small business that backs up her speaking career. She speaks for schools, churches, businesses, children and adults.

### **Social and cultural influences on the way the person approaches life challenges:**

Jessica's culture did not influence the way she approached life's challenges to much. She would participate in all of her normal cultural activities just as anyone else would. This helped her show that she was just as capable of achieving things as anyone else would be. Her social influences did affect the way she approached life. Her loving and supportive friends and family are what motivated her to live life the way she does. It helped her to be confident and to face her fears. Her inspirational parents helped her persevere. She never gave up on anything.

Influencing factors can shape a person's life and their attitudes. Jessica could have had very negative parents who decided to give up on her because she had no arms and therefore could not do anything. This would have made Jessica a very different and much more negative person. She would not have had as much confidence or any of her other amazing qualities.

## **Reflection**

Before writing this case study I had never even heard of Jessica xxxx. I found her on a website that was listing inspirational people. Researching her has been really interesting and has showed me how fortunate and lucky I am to have all my limbs. I have never thought about that before and have definitely taken it for granted that I was born without any defects. When I think about what I take for granted I will often think food, water, friends, family a house to live in and a safe school offering me a good education. It has just never come across my mind to think how lucky I am for being physically and mentally healthy and in a good state.

Includes a range of examples indicating ways this may affect their own life

Jessica's life story has also impacted on the way I go at life's challenges. She has shown me how having a positive attitude towards every little thing can bring out the best qualities and make life's hardships much easier. She has inspired me to set myself a new goal; to be positive about everything. I want to try my best to have all the qualities she has and talks about in her speeches. Mostly I want to be more perseverant and not give up on things so easily.

I have also learnt more about management strategies for overcoming adversity and poor mental health. If I ever needed help I know now about all of the websites out there, numbers to call and people to speak to if I ever had any issues

## **Bibliography** (Please note these links have not been verified and may not work)

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## **Grade Commentary**

Harper's response has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of Jessica's adversities and the challenges she has faced. It provides a detailed profile with a comprehensive description of supports, services, coping mechanisms and strategies. Harper provides an informative discussion about the effects and how Jessica approaches obstacles faced. This work sample demonstrates characteristics of work typically produced by a student performing at a grade B standard.