

Good Morning ladies and Gentlemen. My name is John Allen; I am an IFS Family Support Worker in the north region. Please consider the following concerns when crafting your five year plan.

I along with my fellow DDS family Support Workers am in several homes where the caregivers are elderly, often in their seventies or eighties. They have difficulty caring for their adult children with a developmental disability. We may assist them with direct care, such as bathing or grooming, taking the individual to medical appointments or into the community for recreation. We have also done this for parents who have had to go into the hospital for surgery and need help with their child while they are recuperating.

Sometimes the parents have their own issues which compromise their ability to provide care. We have worked with parents that have had mental health issues, physical and medical issues, as well as financial limitations. We have worked in many nice homes. We have also worked in homes with hoarding and in homes with infestations.

In my job I have brought people from alleged abusive situations to safe houses. I have worked and am working with DDS clients whose parent has gone into a long term care facility leaving them home alone. I along with my coworkers provide support until a long term solution can be found.

The IFS Respite Centers provide much needed relief to families who need a break. It is my feeling that without the Respite Centers and Family Support Workers the demand for placement could be much higher.

My coworkers and I have been asked to assist in homes where the home health aide has quit. Some families have complained that they cannot find aides to work the hours needed, or that they cannot get an aide to stay. Although we are not Home Health Aides, Family support workers along with many other DDS staff have specialized training and many years of experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities that some home health aides may not have. We may be asked to assist until more help is secured.

What I have described is just some of what we do as the family support workers as we have to adapt to the needs of each situation presented to us. There has been an emphasis on helping the elderly caregivers in recent years. Currently there are ten family support workers supporting the North region which extends North and East to the Massachusetts and Rhode Island borders. Going into the families homes I see the overwhelming need for support first hand. Many families are looking for help, not for help to be taken away from them. I look forward to continue helping them as a trained, experienced DDS IFS Worker.

Thank You, John Allen