

As a DSP, I have had the privilege of witnessing numerous successes in the lives of those I assist. I assist one particular individual who we will call HC. When I first met them, they were physically aggressive to the point where they had been in and out of police custody multiple times before the age of 15, had punched and kicked through every door in the house, and had to have constant supervision around others. However, with patience, understanding, and a lot of hard work, they have made incredible strides.

HC can now emotionally regulate, even in stressful situations, and is on track to becoming a successful, contributing member of society. Seeing them grow and put in the work it takes to become the person they want to be has been incredibly fulfilling and a true testament to the impact that dedicated support can have.

The phrase "filling the cup from which we pour" is a powerful metaphor for self-care, as it highlights the need to take care of ourselves so that we can continue to give to others. I am often required to be patient, compassionate, and understanding, even in the face of challenging behaviors or intense situations. It requires a lot of energy to maintain a positive and supportive demeanor when dealing with difficult interactions on a daily basis, but it is essential for the well-being of those we support. As a DSP, it's easy to become so focused on the needs of the people we assist that we neglect ourselves. This can lead to feelings of burnout and a decrease in the quality of care that we provide. It can be incredibly taxing on one's emotional well-being. This combined with unsustainable wages, leads to high turnover. 73% of adult Americans say money is the number one stressor in their lives. (CNBC) Higher wages lead to less stress, less stress in the lives of support professionals let them pour more of themselves into supporting the members of society that need it most.

The wages that come with the job have made it difficult for me to make ends meet. The long hours and physically and emotionally demanding work also take a toll on me. But even with these challenges, I continue to show up every day because I know the difference I am making in the lives of those I support. I hope that in the future, the work of DSPs will be better valued and supported so that we can continue to make a positive impact in the lives of those who need it most. By filling the cup from which we pour, we can ensure that we have the energy and resources we need to be the best DSPs we can be.