

My Respite Provider Was My Family's Hero

Emotionally and physically exhausted! Can't think clearly? About to lose control, or maybe you have lost control, with your child and don't like the person you've become.

I've been in your shoes. There was a time not long ago that I found myself at my wits end.

My youngest son is on the autistic spectrum and was physically and verbally abusive towards me and tantrumed on a frequent basis. I left the work force to home-school him since he was spending over 90% of the day in the recovery room. He was out of control at school and at home. I mean, we're talking throwing desks, chairs, or anything within reach. I was an emotional basket case. The older and stronger he became, the harder the blow.

Our family didn't receive respite until he was 11 years old when we moved to Texas. At first, I was skeptical and afraid he wouldn't succeed in this environment. I kept waiting for our respite provider to call me requesting I pick him up early . . . but that didn't happen. Instead, I started meeting my husband for lunch, going to the gym, or biking. Sometimes, my husband used vacation days so we could have fun and reunite our relationship. We explored caverns, took hikes, and just spent quality down time rejuvenating our heart, soul, and mind. Not only did we benefit from respite, but my son enjoyed and loved his provider so much he never wanted us to return. My respite provider was my family's hero.



My autistic son with my family's hero

There are many situations in which a family can benefit from respite. *Often times, when we think of respite, we think it's only for families that have a child with a disability like autism or Down syndrome. But that's not the case.* Parents whose child has a diagnosis from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders like depression, ADHD, or just ODD may qualify for respite. Many states receive Federal dollars that fund respite like the 1115 Waiver or the YES Waiver program.

Every parent or caregiver deserves a break. So don't delay, pick up your phone and call your local behavior health community services for an intake assessment to get this service started. Then, and only then, you'll be able to get your rest, think clearly, and rejuvenate your heart, soul, and mind to be that loving, supportive, and caring parent.