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On Behalf Of:  
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For the past 12 years, I've worked as a Direct Support Professional for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). The length of my employment makes me a statistical outlier. My profession has a turnover rate comparable to that of fast food workers, and the quality of care our clients receive suffers as a result. It takes time for new DSPs to learn about their clients and build a working rapport with them. Every time one of us leaves, the client has to start over with somebody new.

Caring for I/DD clients can be tougher than it sounds. Many have behavioral issues that require a great deal of patience on the part of their support staff. Some behavioral crises even require physical interventions that can be dangerous for everybody involved -- and those crises happen more frequently when a client and DSP haven't had enough time to grow comfortable working with each other. Given the difficulty of the work, it's no wonder that DSPs often leave the profession within one or two years -- and leaving grows more tempting when the pay doesn't keep up with rising costs of living.