

# First day on the job

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When you reach an age to work, the job you want feels like a dream or set goal, no matter the place or rank in the workforce field. At nearly nineteen, I held my first working experience at RHA on second shift. RHA is a company for the mentally disabled and mentally challenged adults. They are located across North Carolina, parts of Tennessee, and Georgia. Founded in 1991, RHA started out as a small cluster group homes in North Carolina to offer support to people with disabilities. The company has since then expanded.

Some of the services provided at the RHA facilities include supported living, day programs, respite, and personal care services. I filled application out and I was hired at a group home located in Newton, NC. My memorable first day was filled with: new responsibilities, acquired new knowledge in healthcare, enjoyment, and I was more interested for future plans in healthcare. Choosing this place of business to work was not anything new to me because my step mom has worked there for many years. I was raised around some of the clients that were now in my care and responsibility.

Some of the duties on my first day were preparing the girls for the next day and helping them with ADLs. Activities of daily living are things such as: hygiene, meal prep, chores, etc. Simple daily tasks I do in my daily routine are harder for those with disabilities of any kind. Being prompted when to wash hands, take a shower, and do laundry are some of the tasks the clients performed with assistants. Working with the girls at Special Union, my path for my own independence was made. The second shift position was fulltime and my source of income.

I could now buy my own necessities, go out more, but more importantly get an apartment. Obtaining this new found independence was something to be

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proud of. My family was proud of my doings, because as the eldest of five I have siblings looking up to me. Setting an example meant a lot to my parents and me. My step mother, most proud, worked at another group home at RHA. Having a position in the same field of work as my mom was like following in her footsteps. The benefits of working fulltime other than a source of income came with insurance as well.

Co pays for employees is almost a third of what I pay out of pocket with each doctor visit. Seeing new doctors of choice is another factor of insurance. This was all new for me to take in, just as much as, the knowledge I would revive working at RHA. Each of the ladies there had their own different types of disability but was still able to function and to be treated like an adult. They may have cooking goals, laundry to do, hygiene tasks. Having a disability meant teaching the women to adapt by completing any task to the best of their knowledge.

Helping clients with everyday task seemed new to others, even though it is completed daily. Being able to perform their ADLs increased their self-esteem and accomplishments, no matter how big or small. I learned medication dosage and what needs it met for each client. Times of medication were my responsibility and signing off on the MAR sheet, proving each med was giving. These also were records for RNs, doctors, and other staff in the facility. Helping the girls understand the importance of their medication and why they require it applied for each time medication were given.

Learning of the disorders and medication broaden my experience of working but also my desire to pursue a career in the medical field. Thinking about my

future plans for a career began before I started work at RHA but became clearer of my options the first day on the job. A CNA, certificated nursing assistant, would be my first step up from the DSA, direct support assistant, I was currently that day. CNAs are certified to do more hands on work and have an increase in pay. There at the group one client was having a visit from her Case worker, more or less a social worker.

She meets with clients to make sure their needs are met as well as the others she manages in a county. I would have more the work load as a case worker but would help many other clients in need. Furthermore the larger of the career choices could be a RN as known as a register nurse. The nurse knows each client and their diagnoses with proper medication to go along with it. The nurse on shift that day also spoke of her traveling experiences and what a large demand nurses are. More in depth care for me seemed the route closet to me heart and I would enjoy it more as well.

Caring for the clients I had then was much a pleasure and being happy with the job you do is important for any job I take on. I enjoyed the job I had started at RHA. The company made a difference in the lives of clients not mentally able too. Being proud of the job and was part of the community it was located in. Newtown was a small town and safe community too. Getting to know clients they were real involved in there town and people knew them as well. I met the oncoming third shift worker and realized the job had a variety of people and ages in the company.

The home manager and other staff were always in reach with a phone call. Getting advice and help for any reason was not hard to achieve with the coordination between staff. My favorite part of the job that day was probably

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the clients. Knowing these ladies and developing a new kind of relationship was on a greater scale of achievement. Becoming their caregiver impacted their life just as much as it did mine. Seeing the challenges they faced in one day, I very much appreciated my wellbeing and life I was given.

On a grand scale of one to ten, my first day on the job was a ten to me. I gained memorable insights on life outcomes for others as well as for myself. Enjoying the company and job was blissful. I also had enjoyed the day with honor for new responsibilities gained and what an independent income could bring about for my life outside of the job. I got first hand insight on future careers to peruse if I wish and I met some pretty great new people, some of which inspired me. Never will I forget how I was brought closer to further pursue a healthcare career.