



Education Module #1

Service Providers In The Home Of People With Medical Illness And Disabilities

Service providers are important for people who live with medical illness and disabilities. People can lead full and interesting lives, yet be at risk for serious injury or other problems because of disabilities. A few drops of water on a floor, for example, can readily result in a fall for people with visual and physical disabilities. An individual who relies upon equipment for basic movement may be unable to buy and install battery or charger replacements for mobility scooters, power chairs, wheelchairs, lift chairs, and vehicle lifts.

Service providers are as different in their function as the owners of the homes they enter. Personalities can also be very different and, as in all employment, a service provider should attempt to develop a positive professional relationship with an employer with disability. A positive, mutually respectful relationship between a service provider and an employer can last for decades to the benefit of all.

A service provider can help with almost every task. Some service providers, such as handymen, are generalists who have developed their skills on-the-job. Architects, electricians, and plumbers are examples of service providers who have highly specialized skills. They complete demanding legal requirements for education and training. Many service providers are self-employed, while small businesses employ others. Service providers can work independently or as a part of a team.

In addition to maintaining a clean and organized home, service providers can anticipate household needs and do shopping. Service providers can cook daily meals for people with special diets and cater holiday parties. They can assist in basic hygiene and transform appearance for a special occasion with professional makeup and hair styling. A service provider can offer companionship and help with communication. They can schedule and keep track

of appointments, safely driving to these appointments. Lawyers and accountants are some of the professional service providers who maintain financial "health" while medical therapists maintain physical health.

Many service providers participate in the construction and remodeling of buildings. They can work on the exterior and interior of your home. Service providers design, construct, install, clean, repair, paint and refinish surfaces. Service providers work on cabinets, porches, decks, doors, counters, walls, furniture, floors, gutters, fences, awnings, and windows. They often remodel kitchen and bathrooms, making it possible for people with disabilities to remain at home.

A service provider can organize your attic and garage, packing boxes for removal to donation centers or the dump. When the weather service issues a storm alert, service providers can check sump pumps and board windows. They can make a quick trip to the store for batteries, water, and other essentials. After the storm, a service provider can clean up debris. If your sump pumps fail, a service provider will know what local company can protect your home from progressive water damage. When you're away from home, a service provider can check on the home and notify the owner about problems. A competent and ethical service provider knows when and where to refer a homeowner.

There is great variation in the roles of service providers, but skill, reliability and a positive attitude are the foundation for all functions.

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