

Ryan has been employed for over 3 years. But he nearly left his job when his employment supports weren't working.

Rather than provide employment support, Ryan's supervisor constantly harassed him about his disability. He would yell, mock, and intimidate him, often sending Ryan home belittled and deflated. In addition to the treatment, Ryan wished to increase his hours from part-time to full-time but his supervisor would ridicule his request. After months of horrendous treatment at work, Ryan went to his mother, Sue, for support. He was on the verge of quitting.

Sue, experienced at advocating, contacted the supervisor and met with them together. This provided short-term resolution but eventually the malicious treatment resumed. She then tried contacting the corporate office of Ryan's employer but did not receive a return call. It was after several attempts that Sue and Ryan contacted Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) for help. DRT contacted the employer's corporate office and explained the treatment Ryan was experiencing. After hearing about the situation, the employer investigated.

Realizing the degree of derogatory treatment and mismanagement that was occurring, the employer terminated the manager and hired a manager skilled and experienced with managing diverse groups of people. The company also increased Ryan's employment to full-time. Now, Ryan no longer dreads going to work and the employer has retained a dedicated employee.

Resiliency is often discussed as something innate to each of us. Either you have it or you don't. But resilience is a scale with positive and negative factors stacked on each end. When Ryan's supports disappeared due to his supervisor's treatment, so did his chance for a positive employment outcome. He nearly left the workforce. Ryan's story shows the value of workplace supports and how they can tip the resiliency scale toward a successful outcome.