



The best part of my job as a residence worker is seeing behaviours change over time. It means sitting down one-on-one every day, discussing problems, and rewarding change.

I work at a secure residence for pedophiles and people with psychotic disorders who are placed there as part of a court order.

The residents are very intelligent – you can talk with them about issues like free trade, or first nations' rights. But they're also really troubled, are often heavily medicated, and they can be very violent. I've got the scars to prove it. Other workers at the house have been injured so badly or gotten so stressed out they can't work anymore.

It's our job as staff to change residents' negative behaviour to positive. A lot of this means getting them to complete personal care, to take care of the residence itself, and to take part in activities.

I developed a program for the residents to raise chickens. I've turned them into farmers! We started with five chickens, now we have 100. The residents feed and water the chickens, collect the eggs and sell them. We even have a waiting list because these are free range eggs. They have their own big vegetable garden too, so they're putting food on their own table.

I also got the residents involved in the "Adopt a street" program. It means they have to clean a long street four times a year. They got an award from the Mayor of Langley.

These residents want to be part of society and even if they may always need close supervision, we do help them improve. I've seen changes. One of the guys, we thought he was mute. Now after four years in residence he won't stop talking. His parents can't believe the difference.

The residents are contributing; they're not just a burden on society. I think the project makes them feel pride deep inside.

Warehousing people like this would be an easy answer, but if we were just warehousing people you wouldn't see any progress in their behaviour. My job is to bring the person from the inside "out".

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