

Meet Tiffany – a Direct Care Worker (DCW)

When interviewing with the direct care worker, Tiffany B. the first thing I noticed was her cheerfulness, happiness, and eagerness to talk to me. Tiffany was ready to tell me how her job affects her and her consumers, she explains she always had a knack for taking care of other people. And this love for care has followed her into her field of work.

There are many questions I asked Tiffany and her responses were genuine, kind, and very respectful. Tiffany tells me how she loves to go to work, because her consumers make her feel good about the work she provides.

Q: WHY DID YOU BECOME A DCW?

“I like taking care and being there for other people. Giving back to those who need it the most. It is rewarding to me to take care of others and to help them out. It makes me grateful, very grateful.”

Q: WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT GOING INTO WORK EACH DAY?

“Knowing that I’m there for the consumer that needs help the most with every day activities, taking care of themselves and their environment, and making sure their health needs are met.”

Q: CAN YOU REMEMBER A TIME OR A PERSON THAT MADE YOU WANT TO PURSUE BECOMING A DCW? DOES THE PERSON KNOW YOU CHOSE THIS CAREER BECAUSE OF THEM?

“This just made me sad a little, my grandmother on my dad’s side was the reason I wanted to pursue becoming a direct care worker. My grandmother had Alzheimer’s and I took care of her for a year, and to see how my care affected her was special. The care that I gave my grandmother brought her joy. My grandmother wouldn’t know who I was but since my face reminded her of her son, she would tell me stories about my dad, and that brought a lot of joy for both me and for her. My father passed away and so did my grandmother. My grandmother

doesn't know I went into this field, but she knew I always wanted to be a nurse and that I wanted to help people in any way possible. ”

Q: WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR YOUR CONSUMERS?

“All the consumers are very different from each other, but I hope they all can have the rest of their life to be happy and live out their lives the best way they can. I like to make them laugh, bring them joy, a little bit of happiness.”

Q: WHAT WOULD YOUR CONSUMERS SAY THEY LIKE MOST ABOUT YOU?

“They would say thank you for taking good care of me. They would thank me for being understanding, being kind, and caring for them like they were my own family. The gratitude of the consumers makes my job rewarding. The gratefulness and gratitude is what makes my job worth it.”

“The consumers are the best part of my job, knowing that they are happy to see me. They are very grateful that you showed up and care. It is a good feeling.” – Tiffany B.

Q: HOW CAN THE CITY OF ERIE HELP WITH INCLUSION OF THE ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

“It's really hard right now for the city of Erie to include the elderly and people with disabilities because of the Covid-19 Pandemic and there are not many inclusive activities for consumers. I try to take consumers out of their homes to get some fresh air, or take a walk, anything to get them outside of their houses. Because seasonal depression is a thing and it happens to everyone especially people who are stuck for days in the house. Even giving a consumer a car a ride somewhere can help, a fresh breeze can make a whole lot of difference. I believe that there should be more activities and programs for everyone and everyone means including, people with disabilities the elderly and anyone else.”

Q: HOW DOES A CONSUMER TRUST YOU?

“I never really felt like I had to prove anything, I think by just showing up, doing your job, and taking care of them, it speaks volumes. To show that you care about your job and care about the consumer should help build trust. Taking the job seriously and respect them and do your job to the best of your ability.”

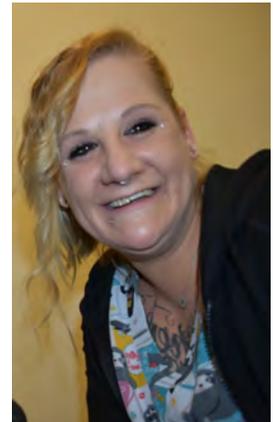


Q: IS DIRECT CARE WORK AN EASY JOB? WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS INTERESTED FOR THIS LINE OF WORK?

“Try it out for a week and then come back to me. I would tell them make sure it’s something that you really want to do because a lot of people think it’s just coming and just sitting around and not doing anything. It’s the total opposite of that. The job entails a lot, at time yes you are sitting down, but you still have to interact with the people around you including the consumers. It’s a lot and some of these consumers are looking forward to these interactions because it might be the only interaction they get for the day. They want someone who is present and the moment, not on their phones or talking on their phone, but actually paying attention to the consumer. Engagement is key, you might be there for an hour, two, or even four but engaging with them will make the job easier for yourself. Consumers need help with cleaning, bathing, dressing, and doing every day activities. This job might be a paycheck to some, but it is someone’s life and maybe their only option to receive help. You have to respect and care about people’s life to do this job. It is a hands on job which some consumers require you to be 100% committed to working.”

Q: DID CRI PROVIDE A SAFE WORKING ENVIROMENT FOR THE YOU AND YOUR CONSUMER?

“Yes! Absolutely! They provide everything we need. Everything from gloves, masks, sanitizer, anything we need to help protect our health and the health of others, CRI has equipped us promptly and with care for everyone. If we ever needed anything, we just ask and CRI is very responsive and quick to get back to us with solutions and answers.”



Q: DID YOU RECEIVE APPRECIATION FROM EITHER CRI OR YOUR CONSUMER?

“This company Community Resources for Independence does show a lot of appreciation for their workers. I get a lot of thank you notes and it feels good. This is the first company I’ve been with that actually cares, honestly. They reach out, give awards, and things like that make you feel appreciated and know that the work you are doing is good and people see that and want to celebrate that with you. I want the CRI to see that I am a good worker and that I am trying to do my best by giving the care and support to the consumer. I’ll continue to show my progress and always strive to be the best I can be at my job.

After interviewing tiffany it is clear to see that she is dedicated to her consumers and takes her job very seriously, Tiffany knows how to treat her consumers with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Interviewer: Mariya Redden

CRI Media Coordinator