

Lue Ann: Hey, Derek, how's it going?

Derek: Going well, feeling like I'm back in the zone with work and stuff after talking to everyone and stuff.

Lue Ann: That's cool, that's cool. So, I was wondering didn't you get a call from [Michela's 00:00:15] mother like a while ago, or what's been going on with her, [Michela 00:00:21] and her mom?

Derek: Yes. So, yes, new person. I'll be meeting her, finally. So, yeah she had left me a message. I had remembered talking to you a few days ago, and I had gotten the voice mail from her mom, Maria, saying that [Michela's 00:00:38] living at her house and can't live there anymore. Apparently, [Michela 00:00:43] was hospitalized a few months ago, and when she got discharged, they referred her to us. I remember getting the referral form from the hospital and I tried reaching out to [Michela 00:00:56] a few times right after I got the referral. I left some voice mails, there were two numbers, I tried them both.

I sent quick just a note in the mail, just like, "Hey I reached out to you." I was really trying to engage her because I know she had the substance abuse history. I'm pretty sure she was actively using, so I know in the beginning, I'm sure you've worked with people with substance abuse and mental illness too, and a lot of it's just kind of in the engagement strategies to help form that therapeutic alliance. I want her to see me as an ally. I'm trying little things. You have any experience with this in the past?

Lue Ann: Well, I mean I guess I feel like it's so much about building that re pore with whomever we're working with, and it's kind of hard to, it sounds hard because it sounds like you have to connect with not only [Michela 00:01:56], but with her mom and how much does, if [Michela's 00:02:01] kind of been eh with you, I wonder how much she's even wanting to involve her mom, like by her own choice.

Derek: I'm still trying to sort that out too, but I'm glad you brought up the therapeutic thing, 'cause that's really, that's what I thought I should be doing, but it's good to hear it from a colleague as well. So I did get to talk to her for a little bit. Her mom had left me the voice mail, I made sure that we had the proper releases, I reached back out to the mom, and the mom had a terrible sob story, I know I told you a little bit about what had happened with her losing her husband and the legal settlement.

Well, apparently the money from the legal settlement is just about to run out. She's got like a couple of months left. She's sort of getting into the mindset of, "I'm going to have to get a job now." Or, "Find some other way to support myself." She's telling me, "I can't be responsible for [Michela 00:03:01] anymore." I can relate. [Michela's 00:03:03], you know, she's a grown woman now. I think that maybe it's a good time for her to be making some changes. So, [Michela 00:03:13] was at the house when I talked to the mom.

So she put her on the phone with me for a few minutes, I got to talk to her a little bit. It was not a very productive conversation, she seemed drunk and her mom said she had

been drinking earlier, so I don't even know how much of it she'll remember, but she at least agreed to meet me at Social Security on Friday. So, we're gonna meet in the morning and apply for benefits. So that was the big thing was she knows that she can't stay with her mom, like I at least got that out of her. She knows that a change needs to happen. And so she's willing to go with me to Social Security, I did tell her it might take potentially all day. So we'll see how that goes with her, first day meeting her, it's hanging out at the Social Security office.

Lue Ann: Yeah.

Derek: I did tell, I went over with her some of the documents she needs to bring. It's been so long since I've just like started from scratch with the application process, I've done this job in the past. This is the first time I'll be doing it with our agency. So I gave them the list of documents, I gave it to her mom too. So I'm hoping that she brings them, and I'm hoping that our colleagues will be able to help verify what is needed for a Social Security appointment. But I'm pretty sure I got all of them.

Lue Ann: Yeah, I know. It is such a pain in the neck, 'cause it's been a while since I've helped somebody apply brand new too, but I have, remember that time I had that other folk that other guy that I was working with and he, it's such a pain when you lose your Social Security card, and then you can't get your, you can't get the right identification from the Driver's License. And then, if you have the Social Security card, you can't get the other one. Like, it's just such a pain in the neck.

Derek: And it's amazing, as complicated as it is for us, and we're trained in the field, and we're professionals, it's got to be so much harder for people with mental illness and especially people with mental illness and some kind of co-occurring, substance abuse or developmental disability or what. It's definitely, it's good to be in this position because I know that we are getting the people the help that they need.

Lue Ann: I know. It sounds so cool that at least [Michela 00:05:44] is like on her way. Like this is like the first step, and she'll hang out with you, and she'll see the importance of the benefits and then her becoming a little bit more independent. I think it'll be cool. I think there's a lot of potential.

Derek: Yeah. And it's definitely not my favorite thing to do, sit at Social Security, but I think this will be a good person to do it with, if she'll sit with me and open up a little for me to explore her values and see what she's motivated to get done.

Lue Ann: Yeah, that's the place to talk to her and then you can use our reflective responding techniques and then she'll feel cool and important. Yeah, it'll be a good time to hang out and get to know each other, sort of relaxed environment. I know Social Security can be scary, but the waiting room is just hanging out.

Derek: Yeah, yeah. Not much else to do.

Lue Ann: Yeah, yeah.

Derek: So, what's been going on with you? How's our lovely couple?

Lue Ann: Well, actually Biana is actually still in the hospital and there's not really much change there. But, Mick called me and he said that he got a letter from Social Security. I haven't met with him in person yet, so I haven't seen the letter and the details, but he said that it's talking about him owing money. Like they paid him too much in the past, and he that he owes an amount of \$1400. So, yeah, so he's kind of panicked, of course. He's not sure, is it something to do with the current job, with the grocery store, or his most recent job when he was working at that construction company. He thought he wasn't working too many hours or making whatever he wasn't supposed to. His check is \$990 a month, that's right, I have it written here. That's what he gets a month because he does have SSD and he does have a bit of a work history.

So he's worried about that and I want to look at the letter and help him. He also told me that, you know how like when you get a speeding ticket or something, somehow people know and they send you letters? He said he happened to get a couple of letters from lawyers, private lawyers, not out of the Community Mental Health Law Project or anything like that, but lawyers who seem to be talking about, "We can represent you if you're having difficulty with a claim." I don't know if they're, if they specialize in working with people with all kinds of disabilities or what. So he's saying, "Gee, Lue Ann, do I need somebody to represent me?" He's worried if this is going to turn into a court room thing.

Derek: I totally know about those letters. I actually been getting them myself. My wife was just in a minor fender bender, and it wasn't even her fault. The guy hit her. We've been getting the last two weeks, it's been like six or seven letters from lawyers talking about defending us in our court of law. Yeah, I don't know what would be the best option for Mick in terms of representation or even if he even needs it. What are you guys planning to do next?

Lue Ann: Well, as you were talking, that reminds me that I do want to see those letters that he got from the lawyers because, remember he had been in that car accident with the van, the company supposedly didn't fill out like a accident report or anything like that. But I'm wondering if the letters might have something to do with that. I don't know. But, really, most importantly, I'm supposed to meet with him tomorrow. I want to see the letter from Social Security and I want to look at the details. I talked to him about gathering up his pay stubs and he said that he totally has those for his current job. They're handy. And he thinks he has a file of when he was getting paid for that construction job. At least we can put all that together because hopefully this letter isn't talking about a job that's even older or longer ago than these two.

Derek: Yeah, for sure. I know Social Security has some work incentive programs in place for people with Social Security Disability, SSD, and I know Mick has that, so maybe you guys will be able to take advantage of one of those. I know also maybe some of our coworkers, one in particular, has a lot of experience. You might be able to ask them for some feedback as well.

Lue Ann: Okay, cool. Yeah, yeah, 'cause I can never keep all those things straight. The acronyms, and the incentives, yeah.

Derek: It is. It's really confusing.

Lue Ann: I need a little bit of direction.

Derek: Thankfully, there's a lot of resources online through Social Security Administration as well. Good luck with him. I hope that you guys are able to resolve that and he isn't too stressed out about the payments.

Lue Ann: Yeah, yeah. And I do hope that somebody on the team could help me a little bit with some of those resources. I remember when it was the Social Security Red Book. Yeah. And it doesn't seem like it's that much easier these days, but hopefully I can figure it out with the help of those people on the team you were talking about.

Derek: Okay, cool.

Lue Ann: All right, cool. Thank you, thank you.

Derek: No problem. Let's check in in a couple of days and we'll talk and see how things go.

Lue Ann: Okay, talk to you then.

Derek: All right, see you Lue Ann.

Lue Ann: Bye.