

# \* Under-Utilizer/Inappropriate Utilizer=Future Super-Utilizer

\* A Heterogeneous population requires individualized interventions.

\* ONE CASE STUDY

Susan Lax, NP—Brookline Community Mental Health  
Center, Brookline, MA



24 years old. Diagnosed with Schizophrenia.

Separated from her drug abusing parents as a toddler.

Placed in several different foster homes.

“She told me I was retarded. She kicked me out of the house all day in bad weather. When I did homework, she made fun of me. She told me I was ugly and fat. Her husband got me pregnant at age 16. I never told her. They took my son away. I went on the streets after that.

“I don’t need any help.  
Other people need it  
More than I do.  
You should be helping  
them. You can leave  
now.”



Ginger’s state of  
neglect was  
alarming.



## Engagement Succeeds!

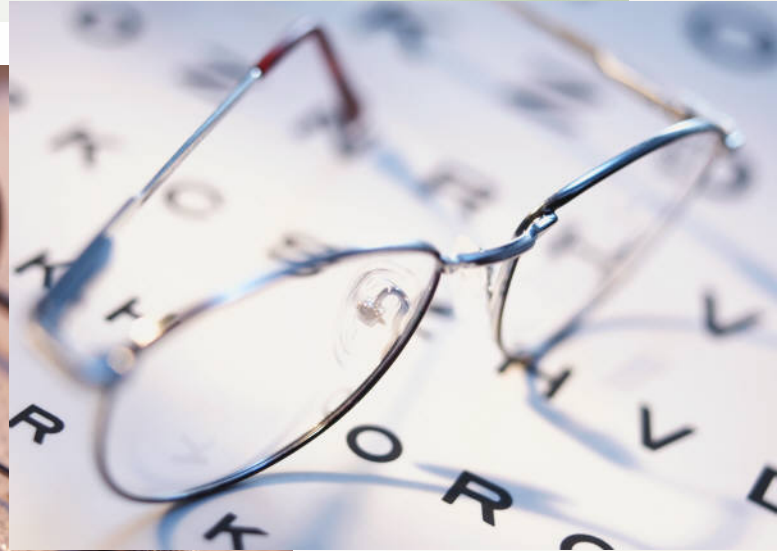
Ginger called. "I'm in pain."

Argued about going to the ER.  
"No, I'm alright." "I'm just  
Constipated." "I can't get in your  
Car."

Treated for a **Bowel Obstruction**.  
Discharged without evaluation or  
treatment for her severe mobility  
problems, her severe lower extremity  
pain, and her inability to care for  
herself. No attention given to washing  
her glasses, attending to her hygiene,  
matted hair, or podiatry needs. My  
reports of her at risk status were mostly  
ignored, though staff did obtain a  
walker for her.

**Discharge plan:** Prescribed VNA and PT.  
VNA withdrew after 2 days. Ginger  
could not tolerate PT exercises. Her  
devoted therapist could not  
demonstrate improvement and had to  
discharge her.





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“Susan, I don’t think  
people  
Understand.  
No one listens.  
It’s like I’m giving birth in  
my legs.”





Refused to see a PCP.

“They don’t understand.

“I can’t climb on the  
Table.”

“I don’t like to be seen  
undressed.”

“I don’t like to be touched.  
It makes me anxious.”

## Addressing Ginger living in filth and squalor



“Please don’t do anything.  
Housing will kick me out.”

### Home improvements:

Feces cleaned from floor.

Toilet repaired.

A supportive chair.

New shower curtain and linens.





“What are you doing now.” “You don’t have to do that.” “I feel bad.”

Cabinets cleaned.  
Things put in reach.

“I don’t need help.” “If housing Knew, they’d kick me out.”

Finally accepts help  
with cleaning via  
Guardian Health  
Care.











Let me ask you this.... I think you're living a pipedream.

I'm so tired

How many  
Doctors do  
we have  
to go to?

Susan,  
am I ever  
Going to be able  
to walk again?



Routine now:  
Permitting a home  
health aide to clean  
Permitting others to  
shop for her  
Permitting writer to  
cut and wash her  
hair, soak her feet,  
give her a sponge  
bath---all touch!

“I like it now.”

“Is it FB day?”

It used to be I had  
no one. Now I  
have  
you, you, you,  
and you.







Happy Birthday 3-20-13



“I love you. If I had a brick of gold I’d give it to you.”

#### Interventions:

- Build trust
- Maintain consistency
- Use trauma-sensitive communication
- Use trauma-sensitive pacing
- Respect fears and limits
- Advocate for her---with her, and with others
- Be “real” and honest
- Equalize power and support personal control
- Maintain intelligent, flexible, individualized boundaries
- Use techniques to address emotional, cognitive, and physiological dysregulation
- Teach and model mindfulness