

**Internship Experience at Disability Independence Group**  
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They say that sometimes the experiences you least expect are capable of making the most lasting impacts on your life. For me, completing my senior practicum with the Disability Independence Group has been one of those unexpected experiences that granted me with so much new knowledge, passion, and interest in a field that was pretty foreign to me. I have always had a desire to work in the human service industry providing help to individuals in need, but never knew exactly what I wanted to do beyond that. The opportunities I was given at DIG helped guide me towards discovering what areas of the field truly mattered most to me and where I believe I can make the biggest impact in the lives of others.

Debbie went above and beyond her required duties as a supervisor to make sure I got the most beneficial experience for not only academic purposes, but for personal growth as well. She helped guide me every step of the way while I mastered new skills, developed new projects, and completed tasks I had no previous experience with. I learned how to create an online database all on my own, reviewed and edited grant proposals, conducted my first official literature search, and worked hands on with the large ongoing projects within the organization. It has been a truly special experience being able to work under a supervisor such as Debbie that had full trust in me to work on such important tasks, even knowing that my experience levels may not be qualified to do so. Being given such responsibility helped me grow as a future employee. This has allowed me to gain confidence in myself and learn the importance of stepping out of my comfort zone with my work, while also understanding it is okay to ask for help and clarification if necessary.

As my practicum experience comes to an end, I am certain that I will take the skills and knowledge I have gained here at DIG with me as I move on to the next stage of my professional career. Seeing the enthusiasm and eagerness to advocate for individuals with disabilities among the DIG staff has inspired me to start a career that I can be as passionate about. Upon graduation, I will be joining the child and adolescent psychiatry team at Massachusetts General Hospital where I plan to provide help and support to individuals with psychological disabilities. Through DIG's mission and vision, I have realized that respect for individuals, regardless of disability, is always of utmost importance. I hope to keep this lesson with me as I begin this next chapter of my life, keeping in mind all the lives the Disability Independence Group has changed for the better, with hopes that one day I will be able to do the same.