



“My daughter, Simone, has an intellectual disability, as well as some mental health and substance use problems. Not to mention the behavioural challenges which go with all that.”

Due to Simone's difficulties, the State Trustees pay me some of her Disability Support Pension, which is supposed to cover her rent, bills and food expenses. She receives the rest of her payment for her own use.

We have regular battles about money and other things. I find her impossible at times; she can harass me for hours, or even days when she gets really worked up. Our arguments have come to blows at times and I have had to involve the police on a number of occasions. In my experience they have been very good.

On one occasion, Simone had borrowed some money from me earlier in the week. She was going up to visit some relatives in the country later that week.

We'd gone over the money situation a number of times during the week, and I think she'd understood that when she was paid this week, she would need to pay me back, and use the rest of her money for her cigarettes and her bus ticket to the country.

I got a phone call from her on payday. She was loud and upset. The phone kept cutting out. She said she'd gone to the ATM and there wasn't the right money in there. I didn't believe her, so I told her we'd talk about it when she got home. She was becoming abusive, so I hung up on her.

When she got home she was very angry and agitated. She said she'd spent her money and didn't have enough to go away. She was saying in a roundabout way that she wanted more money from me. I told her if she had no money it was tough luck, she shouldn't have spent it.

She said that she'd spent the money on headphones for my walkman! I said I hadn't asked her to buy the headphones, and I hadn't even decided if she could take my walkman when she went away. I didn't really want her to take it with her, as I was tired of things lost or stolen from her.

I stuck to my guns saying she knew her budget, had made a choice and she would have to work out what she did now. I said she could always return what she had bought.

She was becoming angrier when she could see I wasn't giving in and giving her money. I was still thinking about whether I should give her money or not, as I really needed a break.

Then I realised that I would be in trouble for the week ahead if she didn't give me the money she owed me, even without me giving her any more money. I was getting angry now too, and asked her about the money she owed me.

She said she didn't have it. We were both yelling. I told her all she cared about was herself.

She gave in and gave me \$20 of what she owed me. I told her she had to give me all of it. She was 'egging' me on to hit her. I had to do everything I could not to hit her. I knew she'd like me to hit her so she could tell the police.

I didn't hit her but I ended up prying open her hand and taking her last \$10 from her. She started threatening to call the police and was ranting and raving.

I was tired of the argument by now, and walked into another room and ignored her.

After a while, we both cooled down a bit. Later, I said I'd give her the extra she needed for her bus ticket and I went to bed.

In the morning, she tried to pick up the argument again. I ignored her, except to repeat that she spent the money and anyway, I'd given her money for the fare.

I was tired all that day. But I enjoyed the peace and quiet that week.

Looking back on this situation, I think I handled things pretty well to start with but I also feel a bit disappointed with myself that I didn't stay calm, and that I ended up giving in to her and giving her some money.

I realise the way she goes on about things confuses me. At the start she talked about not getting enough money in her account when the issue was that she had spent her money. Then she got agitated and that also distracted me from what the real problem was.

When she is upset and agitated I find it stressful and confusing and I usually end up giving in to stop the argument. Or out of frustration, I get upset too and yell back.

I find it hard to stay strong. And to stay calm. I guess the more she gets used to me not giving in, the less she will carry on and the more she will accept what I say.

I guess the purpose of her behaviour was to try to avoid paying me back, or to get more money from me. I don't think she means to manipulate me, but has learned from past experience what works. I guess she's still like a child in some ways and that it's up to me to try to be the adult and set boundaries and rules.

I'm glad I stuck to my guns about not letting her take my walkman with her and about her giving me the money she owed me, as I would've been upset if my walkman was lost or if I had no money for the week.

I didn't want to give her any money towards her bus fare, but I think in the end, it was the best of two choices, as it was best for me to have a blissful week to myself!



Related Help Sheets

- Family Dynamics
- Understanding Complex Problems
- When Your Life is on Hold
- Keeping Calm
- Setting Boundaries
- Dealing with Conflict

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