

[The video](#) showed how self-directed support has affected Pekka's life. It has been several years since the video was shot. How is Pekka doing now?

Pekka's services are still organized using self-directed support, now for two days a week. Pekka stopped working at the stables a few years ago when he was no longer interested in it. He now works at a local grocery and hardware store, organizing shelves and doing other small chores. Pekka has also been cleaning buses from time to time. Pekka works for about 1–2 hours a day, depending on how much energy he has for it.

After work, Pekka has lunch and has some time for hobbies or other meaningful activities. The aim is to allow Pekka to pursue hobbies and activities that he could not do without the help of an instructor. These activities include e.g. ice skating and swimming, which Pekka has enjoyed very much lately.

Pekka's mother, Kristiina, talks about the concrete impact self-directed support has had on Pekka's life. Previously, Pekka had a lot of problems sleeping, and he was given sleeping medicine. Thanks to self-directed support and meaningful activities, Pekka's sleep has improved significantly and he no longer needs the sleeping medicine. The impact of good sleep on Pekka's well-being has been tremendous. Previously, Pekka had periods when he was very apathetic and depressed, but he has not suffered from them at all for five years now. The housing unit's employees have also seen how self-directed support has reduced Pekka's anxiety by giving him something meaningful to do. Because of this, they were able to reduce Pekka's anti-anxiety medication.

Kristiina is happy that people now see her son as a person, not just as a bunch of diagnoses. In a sense, Pekka's disability has lessened. The people around them now treat Pekka as Pekka, not as a disabled man. Pekka has got to know the staff and the pensioners at the public swimming pool, among other people. If the other customers have not seen Pekka for a while, they come and ask him where he has been.

One of Pekka's visits to the swimming pool received a lot of attention on social media. Pekka wanted to dive from three meters for the first time. His instructor showed him how to do it and encouraged Pekka. A young woman following the situation also started to cheer for him and showed him how to dive. Finally, Pekka dived himself, and many people who had watched him smiled and were happy for him. The young woman who cheered for Pekka wrote about the incident on her blog, which is followed by tens of thousands of people.

Pekka's mother emphasizes the importance of the interaction between the instructor and Pekka in the implementation of self-directed support. Pekka does not speak, but expresses himself with gestures and expressions. This is why it is important that the instructor really knows Pekka. The current instructor has been working with Pekka for a few years now, and Kristiina is very pleased with them.

The instructor understands and respects Pekka's habits and does not try to change them. When Pekka starts spinning around with a pack of kitchen rolls, the instructor does not try to stop him. The instructor knows that after a while, Pekka will put the rolls back to where they belong. The instructor can also tell when Pekka's interest in something is starting to wane and when it is still possible to get him to concentrate on the work. The instructor also knows how to give Pekka instructions in a way that he understands them best.



Working in the same place for a long time has really brought out Pekka's development. He can concentrate for longer periods of time and gets more done. Pekka receives praise and feelings of success from his work, and he is open to trying out new things. Because of his restless nature, Pekka is often told to stop doing something or to calm down, which means that he gets a lot of negative feedback in his everyday life. That is why it is important that Pekka also receives praise and compliments.

Last spring, Pekka used a box cutter for the first time in his life. *"It was a small step for mankind, but one giant leap for Pekka towards self-reliance,"* Pekka's mother Kristiina said about the use of the box cutter. It is important that the employees see such small things through the eyes of their clients and are happy for them.

Kristiina is relieved that they were able to reduce Pekka's medication. As a mother, she is also very happy of the fact that every time she visits Pekka at the living unit, she is met by a cheerful boy surrounded by nice people. Pekka's experiences on self-directed support continue, and there is certainly more progress to be made.

