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NEWS



Lawyers Set Out to Prove 'Egregious Emotional Distress'—a High Hurdle



Andrew Lieb, the complainant's attorney, said the police report is particularly damning. "I would be mortified if I was associated with a place like this," he said.



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News

**Emily Cousins**

Litigation Reporter

Plaintiffs counsel is setting out to achieve a rare goal: proving egregious emotional distress.

The case is on behalf of a Connecticut mother who alleged her disabled daughter was discriminated against and "tortured" by employees of Adelbrook Behavioral Services Inc., a residential facility for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Nancy Camp, the complainant, claimed in an affidavit filed with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities that her 14-year-old daughter, a resident and student at Adelbrook, was pinned to the ground and a lock of her hair was cut as a form of punishment.

Camp's legal counsel, discrimination attorney Andrew Lieb of Lieb at Law, said it is rare to claim egregious emotional distress, but the facts in this case fully fit the standard.

"We pride ourselves on articulating emotional distress," Lieb said. "We're working on how this really impacts my client and her mom, and how we can mitigate it."

Alyssa Goduti, president and CEO of Adelbrook, said her team had not received the complaint from the CHRO, but noted "Adelbrook's core values require all staff to provide compassionate care in a safe environment."

‘Pinned’

Camp’s daughter suffers from autism spectrum disorder and disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, which limits the child’s motor coordination, verbal communication, reading, writing, learning, emotional regulation, and caring for herself, the complaint affidavit said.

“For that reason, [she] was accepted and placed in Adelbrook’s facility, where she resides full-time,” the complaint affidavit said. “It was understood that competent professionals would provide her with the specialized care and education she requires based on her disabilities ... and it was certainly understood that she would not be tortured, as has occurred.”

Lieb said this incident particularly shocked him because this residential facility is for children such as Camp’s daughter, and the staff has no excuse for responding to a behavioral issue in this manner.

Adelbrook’s website [states](#) that it is committed to meeting the needs of the children.

“Through collaboration, both internally and externally, we will utilize our expertise to provide high quality, comprehensive, data-driven, person-centered services with compassion,” the website says. “By building trust in a safe and nurturing environment, we will help those we serve find a future filled with achievement, dignity, happiness, and hope.”

Camp alleged that her daughter was subjected to discrimination through “threats, intimidation, and ultimately physical and psychological abuse due to her disabilities.”

The incident occurred when Camp’s daughter was dealing with issues associated with her disabilities, when Adelbrook supervisor Michelle Taylor allegedly threatened to cut the minor’s hair if she did not stop acting out, the complaint affidavit said.

Two other employees, Dakesha Nicole Scrivens and Olivia Rentas, also allegedly threatened the same punishment, the document said.

When the threats did not work, Taylor and Rentas allegedly pinned the girl to the ground and Scrivens cut her hair, the complaint affidavit said.

Another employee, Julian Murta, allegedly witnessed the incident, and immediately reported it to Adelbrook behavior manager Monica Carras, the complaint affidavit said.

“Needless to say, threatening and physically violating [the minor] in this way is beyond the pale for discipline of people with disabilities in 2023,” the document claimed.

A police report was written, as well as an investigation by the Department of Children and Families, which concluded that Scrivens committed physical neglect, and Taylor and Rentas committed emotional neglect.

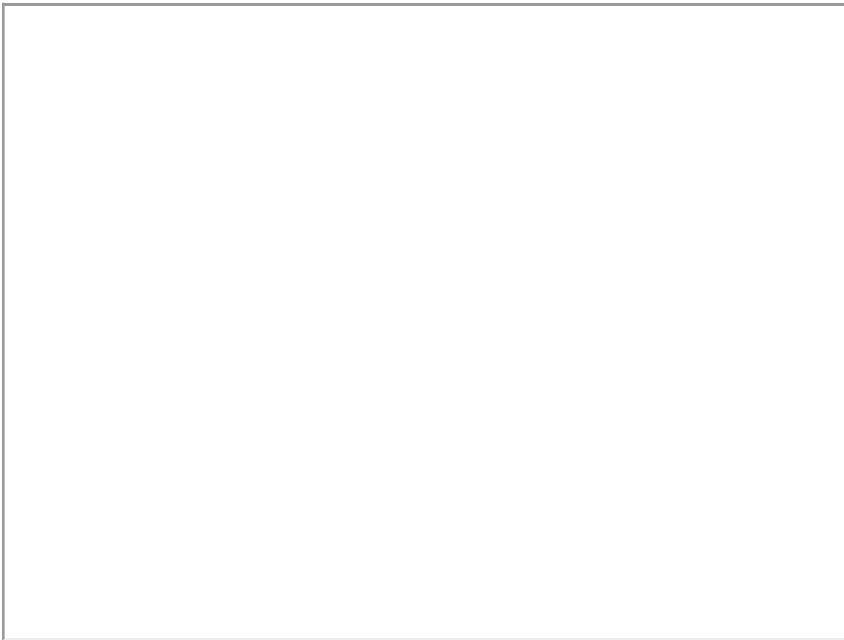
The complaint affidavit said Adelbrook decided to keep “at least two of the three employees.” Camp further alleged that her daughter lives in a “perpetual state of fear” because of the employees who remain, and this has caused “egregious emotional distress.”

Lieb, who also does defense work for companies being sued for discrimination, said if he were Adelbrook’s general counsel, he would advise it to take several steps, including reaching out to Camp and “offering new procedures to protect children” and “offering to mitigate.”

Lieb claimed the police report is particularly damning.

“I would be mortified if I was associated with a place like this,” he said.

Read the complaint affidavit:



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