My life with my two sons, even when I was married, was difficult. Dr. Andy Narine worked many hours and I was left with most of the responsibility of the children, so he could concentrate on his career. This has not changed since the separation. The boys have sporadic contact with their father. The last time Nathaniel had a visit with his father was June 17th, 2018. There has been three whatsap contact between Nathaniel and his father he left the country. It has been stayed by Dr. Narine that I should be able to work fulltime in my field of social work while have 100 precent of the responsibility of the boys. I hope to explain why this would be detrimental to all three of us, Jonathan, Nathaniel and myself but also impractical due to all the appoints and involvement with community agencies we have.

The last time I worked in my field of social work was December 2012. We moved many times in our 18-year marriage and this was the beginning of a new hospital. For your information Jonathan is our biological son and Nathaniel is adopted. In 2012, I worked for almost a year but only part time, two days a week. This turned out to be more I than I could handle. At the time Nathaniel’s behaviors at 4 years old were surfacing and it was extremely difficult. Although these behaviors have evolved from age 4 to age 10 his present behaviors are just as difficult to handle at times.

In 2012, Nathaniel was diagnosed with partial FAS and autism. In the spring and summer 2017, he was admitted to a locked psychiatric unit five times and subsequently also diagnosed with ODD (Opposition Defiance Disorder) and ADHD. The police have also been called approximately 11 times since April 2017 to deal with Nathaniel’s behavior. The last time being June 2018. I have realized that the police are not very helpful when he is extremely aggressive because they can do very little except transport him to hospital. MAC hospital has refused to admit Nathaniel since his final admission in August 2017 as they have diagnosed him and have nothing left to offer. In August to December 2017, Nathaniel was voluntary admitted to foster care to ensure that everyone remained safe as his behavior was out of control and extremely violent. His time in foster care gave me time to get assistance from behaviorists which I met with weekly, counselling for myself and Jonathan as well as more respite workers for Nathaniel. I also attended a 7-week parenting course.

Since Nathaniel came home in December 2017, I have committed to keeping him at home and this requires time and effort. I have availed of as many services in the area as possible. As a family we are involved with many agencies on a regular basis: Bethesda (Nathaniel and Jonathan) , Pathstone ( Nathaniel and Jonathan) , Children and Family services ( all of us) , Design for New Tomorrow ( Charlene) , Autism Ontario ( Jonathan and Nathaniel) , Pediatric Physician( Nathaniel), General Physician ( all of us) and Community Living ( Nathaniel on wait list)

There is a massive amount of appointments with my two boys and myself as seen on the last three months calendar. Add car issues, sickness, pet issues and school meetings it would be difficult to maintain a job. I have no family in the area. My parents tried to come from Newfoundland in August 2018 to help me and decided that the disruption to the boy’s lives was not being tolerated and went home early. Both boys exhibited problem behaviors with a change in routine. If I get a respite worker to be with Nathaniel it cost $18.00. I have Special Services at home funding for approximately 9 hours a week. I have had to fire respite workers this summer because they did not handle his violent out burst appropriately. Getting respite workers that can build a relationship with Nathaniel has sometimes proven difficult. Prior to our separation I really wanted to go back to work, both myself and Dr. Andy Narine agreed that in order for me to go back to work, even part time, we needed a live in Nanny. We tried unsuccessfully to employ a Nanny. It did not work out well as Nathaniel did not like her approach and the disruption in his life. Jonathan also did not handle a stranger in our home either. We thought that a Nanny would be especially important as Nathaniel also will not go to a regular camp during the summer because he is too active. (It was fortunate that this past summer Pathstone mental health services obtained a last-minute grant to run a camp that would be unable to tolerate regular camp. Nathaniel went for the month of August.)

In order for the court to understand why working would be impossible at this time I will give you an idea what the last two weeks have been like for my family. This is not the exception but pretty typical.

I drive Jonathan to school at 8:00 and pick him up 2:20. He does not have access to the school bus because he is out of the school district. I drive him at 8:00 and pick him at 2:20. We have encouraged him to be more independent by taking the public bus but due to his anxiety this has not been effective. He also has limb deficiency (missing three fingers) and scoliosis so lifting a heavy backpack hurts his back. We tried a bag with wheels but would not fit in his locker at school. When I pick him up sometimes, he has a great deal of anxiety and needs to debrief about his day. Nathaniel must be picked up a 3:30 so there is often an hour to spend with Jonathan before Nathaniel arrives. This last two weeks was not any different. Jonathan has therapy once a week approximately since August 2017. He is now coming up to the end of it because of his age but will be transferred to CMHA support services. I often receive a call to debrief about his therapy session from his therapist due to his suicidal ideation and safety plan. I also have contact with his therapist via telephone sometimes to report things that she must be aware of. One such incident happened a month when Jonathan and Trace got in a physical fight recently and I had to separate them. This is rare for Jonathan but nevertheless had to be talked about in therapy. I can no longer leave them in the house together without supervision due to this incident no matter how limited the time is. This includes even walking the dog. Jonathan also has events after school that he is involved with so his times to be picked up varies from week to week. Last week I had to bring him to the doctor to talk about anxiety medication.

We also had an appointment with Grace from Child and Family Services who meets with the children and myself once a month. We all need to be present. Usually I also have to meet with her in person or on the telephone to report things that could not be mentioned with the boys present. She is hoping to have a community meeting to discuss the family situation soon which I will be required to attend. There were two similar meetings in the summer.

ON Tuesday Trace has tutor lessons from Tutor Doctors. Nathaniel is presently very behind academically and has had a tutor for three years.

On Wednesday Nathaniel has drum lessons. This has proved to be very beneficial. I pick him up and go afterschool. In the evening he goes to church Wednesday night group.

On Thursday I have respite in the evening which is often used to help Jonathan with homework or run errands that I never got to during the week. Since Jonathan has therapy usually on this my respite for Nathaniel starts right after school as I have to drive Jonathan and pick him up and goes until 7:30.

Unfortunately, in the last two weeks I had three incidents with Nathaniel where I could not get him to school. One day he refused to go to school because his hair would not comb right, and it was “ugly”. It took me over an hour of patience and finding solutions to get him to go finally at 9:30. This past Thursday the challenge did not go as well. I dove him to school but he refused to get out of the car because he did not want to wear his winter coat. Even when I compromised, and he just had to bring the coat in with him he refused. This is the ODD part of his behavior. Everything is a play for control and getting him to go to school is a big issue. When he refused to get out of the car I waited for three hours in the parking lot trying to get him in school. If I had gone home like he wanted it would become a precedent and the next day would be even worse. The school sent out his teacher twice to help me and he ran away. After he broke my rear-view mirror, it was decided in conjunction with the school principle, that the situation was getting too dangerous and we would try the next day. During the three hours in the car I was kicked and cursed at by him. It is exhausting dealing with his behavior at time. A friend who was fortunately free came to help me the next day to get him to school and he went for her. There are also days where he does not go to school because the children are having an unstructured day or because he is sick. Both things happened in the last two weeks. He did not go to a play the children were going to because he did not like Beauty and the Beast, and it was not worth fighting him for. It was decided that rather than fight him to go he would stay home. He missed at total of 3 days. Unfortunately, I never know when these incidents are going to happen and must deal with it in the moment. It often appears when I have a meeting or an appointment because he feels my stress. I had to cancel a dentist appointment but could still do an assessment that was done over the phone.

Other appointments that we often have are behavioral appointments with Pathstone or Bethseda. Jayson from Pathstone is going to meet with Nathaniel on this Thursday.

When Nathaniel and Jonathan are home both require attention and therefore, I try to get most of my cooking, cleaning and laundry during the day while they are in school. Nathaniel does not handle going on errands very well. If I do not get my errands while he is in school, I use my respite time to go. I have had to stay in Walmart and Shoppers Drug Mart for an hour in the past because Nathaniel is having a tantrum and will not leave. The behaviorist and I have discussed this at length and decided that taking Nathaniel to run errands is not feasible. It is a power struggle when he sees things that he wants and I will not buy them.

In relation to myself I also have standing appointments. This week I have an appointment with my Family Doctor. I have a history of depression and anxiety and the situation with the children often exasperates my depression as I often feel exhausted and hopeless. The divorce process and financial difficulties has also been very difficult for me. There are times when I see my Doctor weekly as he feels I need to be monitored closely. Mostly it is every 2 to 3 weeks.

My Family doctor, Dr. Woodland has wrote notes in the last year for the court to state that working is not feasible due to the family circumstance. I also attend counselling with a therapist at Design for New Tomorrow every two weeks as I have experienced emotional abuse and am trying to heal so I can deal with the past more effectively. I began this counselling a year ago and will go indefinitely.

In addition to appointments I often have to research resources for my children or write letters to advocate for them. |rec I had to write an advocacy letter for an adoption subsidy for Nathaniel and was able to get a subsidy to cover all the things that Nathaniel breaks and the extra cost of caring for a high needs child. They assessed him at the highest level of need. He was up until 3:00am last Saturday after we went to an event in the evening and he could not wind down.