I am an independent young woman and enjoy going out with my boyfriend and also with disabled persons. I am an office support worker at CRPD. I work 20 hours a week. I also do lectures and research at university. Anne-Marie and I have just finished research on overprotection. I will talk about this later.

I can wash and get dressed on my own. I also go on my own to various places such as the hairdresser, work and university. There are other things that I feel I can do but my parents are afraid that something will happen to me. But if there is someone taking care, they don’t worry.

To become independent I had support from many people. When I was little, I was helped by my parents, educators, and therapists. When I grew up, I found help from other people. A support worker from Agenzija Sapport taught me how to use the bus. My colleagues taught me how to do my work. They worked in steps and that way I learnt new tasks. I was then given more work.
and increased the number of hours I work. They also helped me when I was with a young man at a party and he stayed with someone else. They helped me understand that he didn’t really love me.

I would like to live in a flat with other disabled people, with support workers. That way I can become more independent because there is someone to teach me how to do housework. I would also be able to go out more, with support if I need it. For example, I need help to wash my hair. When I go out I need help with buying things – to check if something is expensive and to check the change. If I want to go somewhere and I finish late, I need someone to give me a lift.

As I mentioned, Anne-Marie and I did research about overprotection and found that many persons with intellectual disability have overprotection. This is because parents are afraid that something bad happens to their children. Many parents said that when there is someone taking care of them, they are not worried.

We found that persons with intellectual disability have overprotection in different aspects of life: work, going out with friends, intimate relationships,
using money, using mobiles, and using buses. Many persons with intellectual
disability, if they go out on their own, their mum keeps phoning them on the
mobile. There are persons who only go out with family and do not have a
mobile. The mobile is used for parents to keep in touch when their sons and
daughters go out on their own.

There are also parents who don’t do overprotection. One parent said that
when she goes to a restaurant, if the waiter asks her what her son wants to
eat, she tells the waiter to ask her son. Another one said that when her son
wants to go out to meet his girlfriend and there is no one at home to tell him
the time, she sets the alarm clock so he knows it’s time to meet his girlfriend.
But this parent also said that she doesn’t allow her son to use buses on his
own, because he doesn’t know which stage to stop at.

Many parents said that they are afraid the first time that their sons or
daughters are going to do something new. If all goes well, then they allow
them to do that activity.
We reflected that persons with intellectual disability want to be like homing pigeons. We want to go out on our own but we also need a home where there is someone taking care of us.

I feel that we are only given one chance to make a mistake. If something goes wrong, we don’t get a chance to do the same thing again. But we can learn from our mistakes if there is someone to guide us. We should be independent. We shouldn’t have to do only what our parents tell us to do. Because to do something on our own we need their permission. This doesn’t help independence and community living.