
Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facility

Posted by Inez - 26/10/2009 09:25

I am a recently trained assistant nurse working in an aged care facility. During training students were rightly informed that residents have rights and that we should be mindful and respectful of their rights and that we are working in their home, it is only our place of work but it is their home. During work experience one female resident after having gone to a doctors appointment (being fully dressed including wearing a bra) said to me she felt comfortable and confident again wearing a bra and said she would like to start wearing one each day again. As I in the lead up to her Dr's appointment had gone through her drawers at her request to locate what bras she had that were suitable knew that she had a number that she could wear. The staff said it was difficult to put the bra on (I was told the resident does not help) I did however put one on her and it was not difficult to do. Subsequently I was pulled aside by the team leader and told off for simply putting on a bra while dressing the resident. I was not allowed to shower and dress the resident again. The resident was told in no uncertain terms that putting a bra on her really hurt/broke their arms and that they were not going to do it. The resident was very upset and crying.

I am now a casual at that facility and there may be occasions when I shower and dress this resident, what do I do regarding matters like this when carers have a set routine in "dealing" with residents. I was also told this particular resident is "manipulative". In my view from my observations basically no resident wears a bra unless they dress themselves. I believed we should assist I had even mentioned that perhaps the bras could be altered to enable easier placement. I was told the daughter who helped her mum in this regard had died the previous year and the other daughter did not help. Can casual carers provide assistance in matters like this or would they be viewed by staff and family as "intruding""becoming too close""showing favouritism""crossing boundaries" etc. Is it common in facilities that females do not wear bra's even though it is obvious from their personal items in the drawers/cupboards that they did upon entry and they expected to be able to continue to do so. Also how can "casuals" instill correct behaviour towards residents when they have to work with and along side permanent staff who have a fixed and set approach which may not be in the best interests of the resident. Remembering that permanent staff can make life unpleasant for casuals and in fact prevent casuals from getting work.

Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facility

Posted by HellenFisher DCA Team - 28/10/2009 13:49

Congratulations Inez, you have a FANTASTIC outlook on what resident's rights should entail and you certainly have a positive and respectful approach.

Any female resident in care should be facilitated where possible to wear supportive garments if that is what they wish. Refusing to assist in this simple ritual would be very damaging to the resident's self-esteem and reprimanding the resident for expressing this wish is very disrespectful. It seems that the culture of care of the facility where you work seems to focus on labelling residents as 'manipulative' instead of addressing their 5 universal emotional needs. Unless there was a documented health reason for bra's not to be worn, we cannot see why this should be disallowed.

I can understand that it must be difficult for you working as a casual in this facility as you are probably limited to how much you can influence the culture or make any real change to the daily experiences of residents. Showing concern for a residents wellbeing is not "intruding, becoming too close or showing favouritism" it is having a Spark of Life Approach that respects, empowers and lifts the person with dementia!

If it would not cause any further trouble for your darling resident, I would suggest continuing to assist her in whatever way you can. Try not to be too influenced by negative staff members and keep a positive, flexible approach where possible. As a casual, perhaps you can investigate other facilities where they have a more respectful and proactive approach.

Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facility

Posted by rajalmaja - 20/11/2009 04:18

hi inez.. have you try talking to the RN incharge so they could revised the care plan and add wearing a bra as a special need to uplift your resident's self esteem? in my experience in working in a nursing home staff always resist changes but once it is put into writing (updating care plans) staff became more receptive with change...

Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facility

Posted by Merle - 26/11/2009 21:33

I think it is disgusting that you were reprimanded for helping the patient put on a bra I worked in a home once and staff did not put underwear on at all as it made it easier for them to put the patient on the toilet etc I personally think it is very degrading and should not be allowed as it takes away the patients self esteem
Homes like that need reporting That is my opinion any how This is one of the main reasons I will take care of my husband as long as I can Then I will be very choosy as to which home he would go to I am sure there are some good ones
Merle

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Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facil

Posted by nada - 29/11/2009 22:24

Hi Inez,

I wish there were more people like you. Maybe the staff there are set in their ways, burnt out and hardened towards the type of work they do. Whatever it is, I know for a fact that what you are doing is the right thing to do and any act of acknowledgement or kindness goes a long way with the residents.You saw that yourself. Be strong about what you think is right and keep doing it. Unfortunately, complaining to the govt. authorities, whilst they do investigate, no tangible outcomes eventuate - I know because I did it twice.
I just removed my dad to another respite centre.

Whilst I have kept my dad with me for almost 3 years, at the cost of my health, I have done it willingly because I know what the alternative provides. Dad is now in respite and may eventually have to go permanently but let me tell you that I still go there sometimes at lunch but always every afternoon, to feed him, wash his teeth, toilet him and get him ready for bed and make sure he is settled and asleep. If I didnt I know that he would be treated in the way you described your team leader. In my experience, and I have had dad in respite in 5 different facilities, there are always at least two to three staff members who are wonderful and the rest should seek other career paths. Those two or three people are people like you and they are the ones that help me not cry every night and feel guilty that he is there. Carers should be exactly that "caring" because if they are not they not only hurting the residents, they are also hurting people like me who care about their loved ones.

Keep your own counsel, do not argue with the team leader but keep doing what you are doing. If it becomes intolerable then find another facility which will make you happy and the residents happy. Nothing of what you have said would be considered intrusive or inappropriate , quite the opposite.

Good luck and God bless you.

Nada

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Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facility

Posted by Inez - 14/12/2009 08:19

Thankyou for your responses. I have received limited work since my last entry, fortunately I have recently secured a permanent part time position in another facility nearby.My new place of work stipulates respect and dignity in it's mission statement and the staff do treat the residents accordingly. It is a happy friendly and family like environment and I look forward to being part of this friendly team for many years.

I still however feel I should do something regarding the attitude of some staff at the other facility.It is common for staff to call residents by names other than their own (and not names they were known by prior to entry into the home), talk to residents about others residents, for staff to be rude, physically rough, say things like "you have used up your toileting dollars for the day so this is the last time I am taking you", to tell a resident she will just have to wait to go to the toilet or to this same resident that she is not to open her bowels in a bed pan as the nurse is not going to clean that mess out, or refuse to give the bed pan entirely.

There are many wonderful nurses at the facility however I am sure they do not speak up for fear of being "targeted" by those that are not treating the residents respectfully.What would be the best course to take in this regard. Would a letter to the Director result in "change"or should I contact a regulatory body.

Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facil

Posted by nada - 14/12/2009 09:13

Hi Inez, If the staff behaviour of your previous facility is still on your mind then obviously it is of sufficient concern for you to do something about it. Residents are vulnerable human beings and require our protection. In my opinion you should at least call the Aged Care complaint authorities and tell them of your experience. They will advise you of what is the best thing to do, i.e., whether to advise the director or let them handle it in the first instance. They will act upon it if you lodge a formal complaint which I think you should do. Too many people put their heads in the sand, which solves nothing. Don't be one of those people as there are enough of them already!

I have been impressed with their approach but as I explained in my previous reply, they have difficulty in bringing about change if there is a culture of silence within the facility. Give them the facts and the names of the perpetrators so they will have something tangible to work with. There will be an investigation.

Of the directors I have come across, they are mainly concerned with running a financial concern but they forget that the residents are their business as well. They should do regular rounds and see for themselves, with spot checks, to see how their residents are but they don't and are generally very precious about complaints. As a result, it is the families and concerned staff like you who are the unofficial regulators.

Please report the situation and know that you have done all you can and with a clear conscience sleep well at night. If there is only one change then it is one less difficulty for the residents to bear. This is a positive outcome. Inez, you have to help those who cannot help themselves. The Govt. put that department there for a reason - use it. I have and will continue to do whatever I can to bring about change for the better, be it in small little gestures for the residents or by approaching the appropriate authorities to report blatant abuse. Good Luck. N

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Re:Recently trained Casual worker in nursing facility

Posted by HellenFisher DCA Team - 18/12/2009 10:40

Inez, all of us at DCA are so impressed with your approach and dedication to improving the care of the residents. We agree that this treatment is not acceptable and congratulations for taking a stand.

We would recommend that you make a complaint both to management at the home and the relevant government bodies. There may be some concern that at some level, management are turning a blind eye to this behaviour so involving authorities is probably also a good idea.

If you could make a submission detailing some of the examples you have given us this should give you a good case.

If you would prefer not to discuss your issues with the residential aged care home, or if this avenue has been unsuccessful, you can also contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme. This service is free and confidential.

The Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme investigates complaints and concerns about Government-funded residential aged care homes and community care.

Anyone can contact the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme – a resident, family member, care provider, staff member or other person.

Complaints can be made openly, anonymously or your name can be kept confidential.

The scheme can be contacted on 1800 550 552 or in writing to:

Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme

c/: Department of Health and Ageing

GPO Box 9848

In your capital city

What about advocacy services?

The Australian government funds advocacy services in each state and territory. Contact details can be found on the internet.

You could also try contacting the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd. While they do not investigate specific complaints, they do carefully consider any information about residential aged care homes in planning their monitoring of their standard of care and services.

I hope this information is of some use to you and we would love for you to stay in touch and let us know of your experiences in the new home. Good luck!

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