

Working with the Elderly

Lucia A. Hernandez

BEFORE YOU READ: Do you have any loved ones being cared for in a nursing home or other facility? If so, what is it like?

Honor and Respect Our Seniors

I believe we should honor our seniors. They are the people who once cared for us. Now, as older people, they might not be able to care for themselves. They might have dementia or some physical problems. Or they might just be too fragile to be alone. Some of them go into nursing homes. When this happens, we should make sure that they are treated with empathy and respect.

Working in a nursing home was my first job in the U.S. I was a CNA (certified nursing assistant). My friend helped me find the job. In less than a week, I was already working. I had worked as a nurse in Mexico, so I had experience.

Short on Staff and Resources

I remember my first day at work. I wanted to do things the same way I did when I worked at a hospital in Mexico. But the environment here was different. There was not enough staff, time, or resources to do the job well. I tried to provide proper care, but it was impossible.

I was so distressed by how the other workers acted. Their behavior was unprofessional. The caregivers yelled at them and sometimes roughly grabbed their hands. It was heartbreaking to see such a lack of compassion and respect. I soon stopped working there.

Leaving our loved ones in the care of incompetent people is almost like leaving them alone. It may even be worse. We must value our seniors and give them a better quality of life.

Staff Need Better Pay and Training

To improve the care of the elderly, especially in nursing homes, the government should make

sure that all workers have better training and higher pay. In addition, there should be a minimum ratio of caregivers to patients. This would help ensure each of the residents receives proper attention. Nursing homes should also be regularly monitored for quality standards.

Financial Support for Families

Furthermore, families should receive financial support and resources—such as home care assistance or tax credits—to help them care for their elderly relatives at home if they prefer not to place them in a facility. With these improvements, we can ensure our seniors are treated with the dignity they deserve. With compassion, investment, and commitment, we can create environments where our seniors are treated with dignity and love.

AFTER YOU READ: What does Lucia think we should do to improve care for the elderly? What do you think?



Lucia A. Hernandez is enrolled at Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. She is a healthcare professional with 12 years of experience and holds a postgraduate degree in intensive care. She enjoys staying home and taking care of her five dogs and three cats. Her goals include learning English and becoming a registered nurse in the United States.