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Proponent HB 2356

As a daughter and friend of someone who lived with Dementia related diseases, and as an RN who has worked with patients diagnosed with various types of Dementia, I know the importance of having well-educated and trained advocates in healthcare, and daily living, to improve someone's quality of life.

With my experiences, personally and professionally, when you have the necessary training, you learn the tools to elevate your own frustration and stress, and it builds confidence. You are then able to create a more empathetic, relaxing and positive environment for both you and the individual. You begin to build a stronger connection and trust. It's that connection and trust which leads to better outcomes in someone's health and overall life.

Dementia comes with a complex set of challenges individual to each person. Someone like my father, who had Lewy Body Dementia, experienced hallucinations and confusion which progressed to difficulty with communication and fine motor skills. The hallucinations could sometimes cause more assertive behavior or distress. A guardian who understands how to communicate with someone during a hallucination helps to ease any negative thoughts and feelings for the individual by knowing how to respond.

A guardian who is trained to advocate in the best interests of someone with dementia or Alzheimer's, allows healthcare staff to provide a higher level of care with positive outcomes. Proper training of a guardian assists healthcare staff in recognizing changes and can assist with important communication with an individual. The individual may also have a level of trust in the guardian that they may not initially have with a nurse. The guardian can also share observations or raise concerns in care of the individual is receiving and ask the questions needed for someone to understand their own disease process. It creates a collaborative effort. In healthcare, I can't stress enough how important it is to have strong advocates. I mention outcomes a lot but it is absolutely true that if you have a knowledgeable advocate, you are much more likely to have better outcomes.

I appreciate our court appointed guardians because they are solely there for the individual. This training in Alzheimer's and Dementia will make a huge impact with a lot of people and professions and make them an even stronger advocate.

Thank you for your time and support.
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