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The Strains of Being a CNA

Although many have been asked: Where do we go after we die? Not many have been asked where do we go when we are near death? Although it's morbid to think about your last days on Earth, it is important to think about how they would be spent. For many what ends up happening is that they spend their last days in a nursing home. And what meant to be a calm and peaceful way to live out the rest of their days it's met with abuse and neglect from their caregivers. There's a staggering study that found that as many as 85% of assisted living facilities reported at least one report nursing home abuse or neglect that year. And this is the part where you wonder how this even happens to the most vulnerable people of society, the people high in the category we should look after the most. I would have to say this issue is due to a cycle of abuse and mistreatment that first starts from the poor conditions their caregivers are given to work with.

In order for nursing homes to run smoothly you need adequate doctors, nurses, and CNAs. Cna stands for certified nursing assistants. They work directly with patients and nurses to aid in the patient care and provide basic care to them and help them with daily activities they might have trouble doing. What some people would degradedly call butt wipers, we are the people that make sure your family members have the most pleasant and peaceful recovery or hospice care. I work in a rehab and nursing home facility, and I am very proud of the work that I

do to make sure that these people still have their honor and dignity that many people afraid they won't have when they reach this uncomfortable stage of life. With a smile and a gentle hand, I try to brighten my residents' days even despite the harshness I face every day that comes with this job. From long hour shift, physically demanding work, juggling different responsibilities, poor pay, poor working conditions, poor the Cna- resident ratio, understaffed floors, the job is a very high risk and low reward type of career path. According to Nursinghomeabuse.org, "Impossible staffing can mean that there aren't enough people to care for residents, which can reduce overlap quality of the facility. Impossible workloads lead to overwhelmed staff who cannot fulfill their duties and more likely to make mistakes. Sadly, understaffing in nursing homes has been a long-term problem that only worsened in recent years. According to a report from the U.S Public Internet Research Group, 20% of all nursing homes in America are understaffed as of December 2020," (Nursinghomeabuse.org). What this tells us is that when CNA are overworked and have too much on their plate and little help this falls on to the residents and can make them make mistakes and lead to neglect and harm to the residents. I have personally seen many Cnas not able to handle the stress and work that comes with the job and when they can't bear the brunt of the weight that comes with the job it either falls onto the care receiver or the caregiver.

As many would know being a Cna is not an easy job. Your met with poor pay, poor working conditions, and can possible significant injuries while working the job. According to Cnaclassesnearyou.com, "CNAs in many cases felt that their physical problems were made worse, or even the result of, the constant demands made by their daily duties. The job of CNA is very physical, requiring the transfer of patients from bed to wheelchair, the moving of heavy equipment and the lifting and twisting involved in performing other patient care tasks. Done on a

daily basis, this can make major demands on a person's body," (Cnacllassesnearyou.com). What this describes is that the amount of physically taxing elements we Cnas deal with every time we go into work add up and causes many of us to develop back pain and back strains. Another major issue that comes up in this field is the rise in burnout in facilities where poor and toxic conditions continue. In the article, "An Overview of the CNA Shortage" it states that, "If these toxic issues are not addressed, burnout can develop, and staff members may choose to leave, adding to the shortage and perpetuating the cycle for others. Conversely, they may choose to stay but may inadvertently contribute to a negative work environment due to their own frustration. If the negativity among staff is widespread enough, the quality of care within an entire facility can suffer, creating a stigma about the work of CNAs and branding the profession as rough, sloppy, or uncaring. If a poor image of CNAs is present in a region, this could deter potential students from becoming CNAs, further perpetuating the shortage and subsequent problems," (Primer Nursing Academy). This just goes to show you that it's a vicious never-ending cycle that spreads even further when actions are not taken to solve it. The actions that need to take place can look like increasing staff, better ratios of resident to nursing assistants, and proper equipment that can limit the amount of strain on CNAs.

And the question many ask is: why would work at a job that's that difficult? It's because for me I have the passion for it, the passion to be hit and scratched by a confused and distressed resident but to continue giving them the best care. The passion to be yelled at by an impatient family member because you weren't fast enough to their liking. The passion to make sure that I complete my work on time even if it means working through my break. But I'm not unique in that way, the majority of people who start their career as a Cna too have the same passion and professionalism I bring in every day at work but overtime the never-ending battle of the stressor

and difficulties that come with the job leaves many to develop burnout and to leave the field.

With the help of city officials and sensible laws we can stop this brutal cycle that causes many to leave the field and lead towards a new future where nursing homes are known to care for not only the residents but the people that they employ.

Works Cited

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