

Professor Mcarthy

ENGL 1120

September 2022

Taking care of your Grandparents

Being a CNA is gross, you are doing work that nobody else wants to do, the type of work that when you tell someone what you do you get surprised expressions and many questions on how you do it. When people think of a CNA, they think of cleaning up bodily fluids, getting hit by residents, and that CNAs are “too lazy to be real nurses”. As a CNA I do deal with not only physical but mental strain. There may be a resident who is suffering from dementia and is confused on where they are and who you are while I am are trying to assure them that they are safe. A resident might be having a bad day and start taking it out on me physically and by calling me names and as a CNA I am expected to continue doing my job. I do more than this though, I am the backbone to the resident's safety and wellbeing. I am their voice or advocate. I am their new family.

Many CNAs like me are going to college while working, taking care of the vulnerable, and trying to just stay on their game while they have 15 things to balance at once. I work very hard every day all day. A normal day of work includes collaborating with other CNAs, getting residents up by physically lifting them, getting them cleaned up, down to whatever meal or activity that is happening, get them back and to whatever they want to do, then at the end of the day back into bed and cleaned up again. When I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my future, becoming a CNA always stuck out to me. I have always loved being helpful, caring, and a nurturing figure in people's lives. I knew that I wanted to work in healthcare, even when I was a little kid, I told my parents I wanted to be a doctor when I grew up. When I heard about the job I fell in love with it, I didn't care about the things people said about the job, I just decided to take a shot and go for it. Ever since I have loved my job and fell in love with

healthcare all together. Although there are many good times in this field, there is also many frustrating and challenging times.

When I started working as a CNA, I worked on this specific group with a resident who I will give the name John. John had a fast-progressing form of dementia. The entire day he would cry, have anger spurts, neglect his body and ignore things that would benefit his well-being. That's where my job comes in, I am there to provide the things he cannot, or will not do for himself. He was having a hard time coming to terms with it. One time in particular John was upset about being in the nursing home he was throwing his items and the walls and at staff. Most of the staff involved backed off and gave up trying to calm him down while I sat with him and talked it out and gave him support and the love he needed because he was afraid. I often spent many hours of my shift to try to learn how to work with him and help him feel safe and comfortable. During these times of fear, anger, and confusion he would many times would become physical. During these fits he would not want anyone near him and wouldn't want to even come out of his room. This was hard on both him, me, fellow staff, and his family.

When I began to work with him one on one, he slowly started to trust me more, I could tell the trust started to form when he wouldn't refuse my cares or when he would ask specifically for my help during cares. His family started to recognize me and eventually we became close too, I adored them and they appreciated the work I did for their relative. I would always make sure to stop and see him every time I worked even if I was not working with him that day. Him and I both put a lot of effort, tears, and emotion into building a bond and trusting each other. Getting to know someone in a nurturing manner is different than any other bond I've ever had. It's almost like they are your sibling you are trying to protect from the pain in the world. Throughout the course of his illness, I was there through everything. Being there for not only him but his

relatives too. He quickly progressed in his diagnoses and eventually came to a state where he could not walk, talk, eat by himself, and could not complete his daily skills.

Helping him was always a highlight in my day, He was always so grateful and happy to simply have someone there; someone simply in the room. Even when he could not talk anymore, he would look up at me and you could tell in his eyes that he was happy to see someone. There was always a thankful energy. Helping others with their daily tasks may seem easy because you do it every day for yourself, but you really have no idea how hard it is until you are doing it for someone who wants to do it for themselves but can't and you can see how much it is hurting them.

When John passed away it was devastating for me, it was my first death as a CNA. I never considered how difficult it would be for me to come to terms with it and how difficult it is to carry on my normal day and continue to be professional because I still had 10 other residents to care for. I felt the emotions of grief as if he was family. I felt sad and disappointed. Yet you are expected to still carry on like nothing is wrong. His family came to collect his things and during this they asked me to come help, and tried to get me to keep things of him to remember him by. I tried to refuse the gesture, and they actually sent me a bouquet of flowers with a note that read. "Thank you for everything you did for our father you allowed him to confide in you and get support when we could not be there. We appreciate you more than you could ever know". they had also talked to me personally and told me they didn't know the impact a CNA has on a resident's life and that they consider me family. You never know the impact you have on someone; I always knew he was thankful for me helping him. I never expected that much gratitude from his family. This a moment in my career that I will never forget. This moment is what keeps me wanting to be a CNA, what keeps me wanting to help and serve my community, and what is motivating me to further my education and become a nurse.

Being a CNA is hard, the everyday challenges your face. the comments and questions you constantly get. when you think of a CNA, start thinking of all of the things we do for the people in need, the sacrifices you make, and the emotions we go through. We are people too, taking care of people. It is hard, it is draining, and strenuous. Being a CNA is one of the best choices I've ever made. Being a support system for residents, Being there every day for them for the rest of their lives. Next time you think being a CNA is gross, that a CNA is lazy, or that being a CNA is easy. think about who is taking care of your grandparents, think about how hard it is to be faced with hard emotions every day and continue to have a smile on your face and be ready for the next resident. So yes dealing with bodily fluids is gross, the love for the residents outweighs it.