

Lona Hovde



Why did you choose older adult services as a career?

To be perfectly honest I chose older adult care because I don't like working with kids. Kids need to learn, make messes, and absorb everything around them. But older adults can teach, help in cleaning up messes, and we can only hope to absorb their knowledge, wisdom, and zest for life. I chose older adults because I will be an older adult some day and want to learn how to age well and teach a thing or two to the "young ones" that will take care of me.

How do you hope to impact the profession?

I hope to work with hospice. Working with hospice can be very difficult physically, mentally, and emotionally, but dealing with the family can often be the most difficult. In many hospice situations, the family has had time to deal the "why," but then the "when" question is the most scary because it is the unknown. Families want to know when their loved one is going to die. I want to impact the nursing profession by assisting families to better understand the dying process and given them the knowledge needed to care for their loved one. In the hospice setting, knowledge is comforting. Families need to know their loved one can hear them when they talk to them, understand the physical changes that will happen and know the individual is comfortable and free of pain. With a greater understanding of the dying process, the question of "when" becomes overlooked by the comfort the family has been helped their loved one through this final chapter of life.

What do you want to do with your life within the older adult services profession?

I volunteer with a organization in my home town that works with high school girls volunteering within the community. One of our recent activities was to assist with an open house at the nursing center. When explaining the details of the event to the girls, one of them had a look of disgust on her face. When I asked her why the face, she stated, "I don't want to go there, those people are old." I was surprised and taken back by her answer. I soon realized that she had not spent a lot of time with this age group and was not comfortable with them. Growing up volunteering in the nursing center I didn't give much thought that others could be uncomfortable with this age group. I want to be able to blend my career and volunteer work so both ages can work together. I want to make sure that the younger generation does not look at them as old, but instead learn from a generation that has been there and done that.

Provide a specific example of when you positively impacted someone through the care or services you provided.

For over seven years I have the privilege to provide services for a client who I will refer to as Name. Name had lived with MS for about 30 years at the time of her death. Due to the progression of her MS, Name required a hooyer lift, electric wheelchair, supra-pubic catheter, a colostomy bag, and much more. Her husband was her primary care giver until his untimely death in February of this year. Name and her husband dealt with her MS in their own way which included limiting the information that they shared with their three sons. After his death, her sons became the primary care givers. Because Name limited the amount of medical information she shared with her sons, becoming her primary care givers was very

difficult for them. Due to my relationship with Name, supervisors looked to me to teach the family some of her basic cares. It was soon decided that Kay would be moved to a assisted living facility and I was chosen by my supervisors to train the staff at the facility. Not only train them to meet her physical needs by properly providing the needed cares, but also to teach them how to deal with some of her fears and concerns in adjusting to this change of life style.