

Testimony of Anne Ariosa, advocate
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My name is Anne. I have a loved one who lives in an assisted living facility. She has been diagnosed with the onset of dementia.

In my experience, I have felt that once my loved one was diagnosed with dementia, her rights were no longer a consideration in her care. I understand that with this disease of dementia, there are many stages, and each person can experience different levels. I feel that once my loved one was labeled, she no longer had a voice. Her choices were taken away by the Geriatric Nursing Assistant (GNA), nurse, and the facility's policies and practices and not geared toward Person-Centered Care.

Right to Person-Centered Care. I have always fought to have my loved one viewed as an individual. If she gets dehydrated or has the start of a urinary tract infection (UTI), she develops certain behaviors that I recognize will lead to a medical crisis. I tell every new or temporary nurse that unfamiliar with my loved one: "My loved one does not get a temperature when she has a UTI. My loved one cannot tell you that it burns when she urinates." At the onset of her UTI it is imperative that my loved one receives medication.

Medication distribution is a challenging topic. The Resident has the right to refuse medications. At any time, my loved one might refuse her medication. The medical technician will walk away without giving her the needed medications. Without these medications, her temperament and behavior will change, spiraling down a long path away from her base-line status, resulting in a long, painful way back to regain her base-line status and a struggle to get her medications regulated until that happens. On the path to "recovery," I am told that her condition is the progression of dementia, which so far has never been the case.

In researching a career as a certified nursing assistant (CNA), I was amazed to find out that, Residents Rights were first and foremost. Why are Residents Rights not put into practice, especially the Rights of Residents who have a memory care diagnosis?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have not monitored my loved ones medications as I used to. With the restrictions of not allowing family members to visit their loved ones long term care facilities, residents suffer physically and mentally.