

## Lisa Kern



**Why did you choose older adult services as a career?** I had the opportunity to complete an intern during my senior year of college in a hospital setting, where the majority of my clients were seniors. It was then that I had the experience of making a difference in the lives of seniors and their families. I began my career in this setting and a few months later began working in long term care. Over time, in the long term care setting, I was able to make a difference in the lives of our residents and families we served. Most importantly, I experienced first hand how the resident's made a difference in my life and how much I was learning by being an advocate for them. I knew after a few years in this setting, that I could be an integral part of providing quality service to seniors.

**What do you want to do with your life and how do you hope to impact the older adult services profession?** I believe that I have talents and gifts that can help to shape quality care for seniors. We will always need dedicated, hard working people in long term care if we want to provide quality care to our seniors. I strive to be a leader in problem-solving and promoting a "team" atmosphere, where staff can share their ideas, individual talents and gifts which in turn enhances their job enrichment. Employee satisfaction thus has a positive impact on the quality of care provided to seniors and their families. During my career in long term care, I want to be an advocate for seniors. I want to be their voice when they can not be heard. I want to be their arm when they can not act. I believe that with my talents, I can be a leader in long term care by leading others to strive towards excellent care for our seniors. Working to change systems that promote efficiency, continuity, positive working environments, and ultimately, satisfied and happy customers, is how I can impact the older adult services profession.

**Provide a specific example of when you positively impacted someone through the care or services you provided.** Appropriate discharge planning has always been a passion of mine. I have strived to educate other staff in this area. This involves thoroughly assessing a resident and their support system, indentifying barriers and needed support services and equipment and making arrangements for these needed components so a resident can safely return to their home. When I started in long term care, not much time was spent on discharge planning and today I am a strong supporter and advocate for safely and effectively discharging residents to a more independent living situation. Recently, I made a positive impact in someone's life by assisting in the arrangements for this resident to have a semi-electric bed in their home. This resident is a 63 year old gentleman who is very self-motivated to continue to stay as healthy and active as he can be despite having Multiple Sclerosis. Just a short time ago he mentioned that it would be so helpful for him to have an electric bed at his home. This would enable him to transfer himself in and out of bed, would help him complete daily stretching on his legs and arms that he needs to continue to do to stay strong and to sleep in different positions allowing him to relieve stiffness and pain. I was able to research this and make the arrangements for delivery of a bed to his home. When I told him about the arrangements and the coverage for this with his insurance, he was ecstatic! He smiled and said, "Can I give you a kiss". He had tears in his eyes along with his excitement. These moments do not come along every day, but when they do, I know that I am here to stay in supporting and advocating for those who need my help.

**How have you positively impacted your organization and increased effectiveness (through teaching, mentoring, working on committees, etc.)?** I feel that I have had the opportunity in the last few years to bring the idea of "quality customer service" to life in our facility. I have taught the annual

mandatory education on Resident Rights, Vulnerable Adult issues, Confidentiality and Concern Management for many years. I slowly have engaged our staff to embrace what it really means to have positive customer satisfaction. In the last year, I have observed housekeeping staff assisting our visitors at the front door, business office staff asking visitors if they can help them with anything and dietary staff going above and beyond "their" job duties in the dining room. Many of our staff have learned that by working together, we can best meet our customer's expectations. All of us can make a difference in the lives of our residents by not just following the "job duties" as listed in their job descriptions. When we step outside the box and keep customer service our number one priority, then the care provided to our residents and their families will be the best that it can be!