

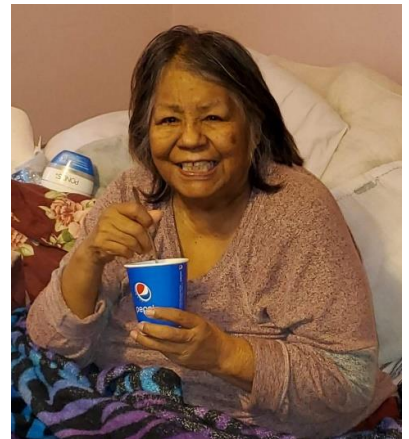
National Family Caregiver Month
Second Generation Caregiver Perspective

Abraham Andaverde, Caregiver, Milwaukee

As we honor National Family Caregiver Month, we look at a family with a second generation caregiver. Abraham, age 36, takes care of his grandmother, who has been living with dementia for five years. Their home is multi-generational with his mother, grandparents, siblings and nephew living together. He also cares for his 8-year old nephew, who is Autistic.

Looking at the Big Picture

For Abraham's grandmother, multiple chronic conditions make her care more complicated. In addition to her dementia, she has several chronic conditions, including diabetes, complications from a stroke and is currently going to dialysis 3x a week. "I respect my grandmother more than anything, but she's not forthcoming with her condition," said Abraham. "I want to give her dignity, but it's hard for me to help her if I don't know all the problems. It's a lot for me to keep an eye on her 24/7."



Abraham tries to reinforce basic care regarding diet and medication management. His grandmother's behavior has been erratic at times and Abraham has reached out for help. "I want what's best for her," said Abraham. "A lot of caregivers struggle with depression, but I know there is support out there. There are people out there who are willing to help, but you have to share your story and ask for the help. I've talked to people at the Sixteenth Street Clinic and Virginia Zerpa (bi-lingual Community Outreach Coordinator) at the Alzheimer's Association to try to get ideas."



Strong Family Ties

Abraham's family is extremely family-oriented and they all bind together in order to help a family member in need. Abraham doesn't really consider himself a caregiver and that this is just *what you do* for family. "We have to do what's best for her," said Abraham. "That may mean doing things differently. My grandmother's life hasn't been easy though, and I owe it to her to support her. She doesn't have a formal education and she gave up a lot so the next generations could better themselves."

Overcoming Cultural Barriers

Abraham is a younger generation in his family and balances his need to help his grandma, with respecting her traditions. "My grandma believes more in black magic than doctors and I'm trying to get her to see that doctors are better," shared Abraham. "My grandparents believe in herbal remedies and that everything can be fixed with magic."

"There is a need for education in the Hispanic community," Abraham shared. "Dementia doesn't have to be a bad topic. The Hispanic community is tight, but we don't like to share our issues. I just want to show my grandmother the respect she deserves and give her the best care possible."

