

Fear of Retaliation Video Script - Richard

Background Only

Richard is a 58 year old man who spent three weeks in a rehabilitation facility after hip replacement surgery one year ago. He is otherwise in good health. Richard owns a small business and is used to being quite independent, making his own decisions and providing a comfortable lifestyle for himself and his family.

R=Richard

IM=Interviewer Mike

IM: Good afternoon Richard. Thank you for agreeing to this interview. I'd like to talk about the time you spent in care after your hip replacement surgery.

R: Sure, I'm happy to talk about that. It was a real experience. I was in a nursing home that offered rehabilitation therapy. And I was pretty immobile at the beginning.

IM: Could you talk a little about what it was like to have someone else caring for you?

R: Well, it was quite a change. I'm a very independent person normally. I've worked since I was 16 and I've owned my own business for almost 30 years. It was hard for me to depend on another person for everything from going to the bathroom to getting dressed.

IM: Do you have any examples that you could share?

Sure....Just imagine how you would feel if a young woman arrived in your room to help you to the bathroom. I felt humiliated, and I was probably pretty cranky with her because of that.

She was nice to me when she first came in the room. But after I behaved badly...I was really just embarrassed...she wasn't as nice. She left me sitting on the toilet for almost 45 minutes before she came to help me back to bed. I think she was paying me back for being grouchy.

She must have talked to the other CNAs about me too. All of a sudden I got my dinner tray last, and the food was mostly cold. My roommate told me I should complain to the head nurse, but I figured that my treatment would only get worse if the staff thought I was a trouble maker.

IM: How did you handle the situation?

R: You know...I've always been a good salesman. I decided to use my people skills to win over the staff. I asked them how their day was going or thanked them for doing their job. They did respond better to me after that.

IM: It sounds like you made the best of a tough situation.

Yes, but people shouldn't have to make friends to get good care. I knew I would be leaving, so it was easier for me to put up with. I can't imagine how hopeless I might have felt if that was my permanent home.

My roommate was an elderly man who had lived there for two years. He told me about a time when he had to use his cell phone to call the front desk when no one answered his call light. After that, the CNAs would plug his phone in to re-charge it and not return it to him for hours. He could see it sitting there across the room but couldn't reach it. Can you imagine how frustrating that would be...and how angry and helpless you would feel?

IM: It sounds like you and your roommate had some pretty negative experiences.

R: Well, I want to make it clear that my experience wasn't entirely negative. Most of the staff were professional and helpful. The physical therapy was tough, but the therapist was very positive and encouraging. And after all, I got a new hip that works perfectly!

IM: Richard, do you have anything else you would like to share?

R: Well, in thinking back, I wish I would have reported the incidents to a supervisor or administrator. I found out later that there are resident councils and other resources like the Ombudsman program that could have helped me.

IM: I want to thank you very much for sharing your experiences.

R: You're welcome. I hope this can help someone else in a similar situation.