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Frontline Workers in Assisted Living

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This volume provides an in-depth look at the people who staff assisted living facilities, the tasks they perform, and the environments in which they work.

As the population of the United States ages, increasing numbers of frail older persons are choosing assisted living as a means of maintaining independence and delaying or avoiding admission to a nursing home. But assisted living workers?mostly women and minorities?are already in short supply and their numbers are shrinking. The work generally pays substandard wages. It is physically hard, dirty, and mentally and emotionally challenging.

This book uses qualitative methods and multilevel statistical modeling techniques to examine individual- and community-level factors that influence the experiences and work conditions of direct care workers in assisted living. It explores how and why they selected this type of employment, shows what the job entails, highlights the importance of these workers to the people they care for daily, and gives important new information about the interrelationships among issues that affect worker satisfaction and turnover in assisted living. In doing so, it reveals the reasons for the inherent tensions among frontline workers, facilities operators, and residents and their families and loved ones, and it offers practical strategies for attracting and retaining top-notch direct care workers.

Based on a three-year study of assisted living workers, this important, original analytical snapshot of the assisted living industry provides teachable, practicable lessons for researchers, scholars, and professionals in gerontology and assisted living.

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