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Healthcare assistant honoured for going beyond the call of duty

Rosalind Ang

Mr Ng, 80, is a dementia patient who suffered a stroke last year.

He was depressed and refused to talk to anyone, including his wife and daughter, who visited him at Jurong Community Hospital daily.

Healthcare assistant Ilandari Deva Nishantha made the effort to talk to Mr Ng tenderly whenever he sponged him, changed his diapers and fed him, and to greet him in Mandarin – Mr Ng’s mother tongue.

Mr Nishantha, a Sri Lankan, ended up being the first person Mr

Ng spoke to after three months of not communicating with anyone.

It moved Mr Ng’s daughter to tears when she witnessed it.

Mr Nishantha, 35, won the Exemplary Service Excellence Award at the Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021 last Friday. The ceremony was held virtually.

Mr Nishantha has been working at Jurong Community Hospital for five years and has 15 years of healthcare experience. He moved from Sri Lanka to Singapore in 2006.

He said he was inspired to pursue a career in healthcare when, as a 15-year-old, he saw how his grandmother, then a nurse, tended to his mother and helped her recover from fever: “The way that

my grandmother took care of and communicated with my mother really touched my heart.”

At the request of Mr Ng’s daughter, Mr Nishantha visited his former patient at home after he was discharged, as Mr Ng was in low spirits. He did this in his own time, outside work hours.

Going beyond the call of duty, he shaved Mr Ng and changed his diapers during visits, and taught the family’s helper how to do so too.

Migrant workers hospitalised for Covid-19 also benefited from Mr Nishantha’s care and consideration when he was deployed to Ng Teng Fong General Hospital from around May to July last year.

“I could sense that they were feel-



Healthcare assistant Ilandari Deva Nishantha says that when he takes care of his patients, “it’s like looking after my family”. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID

ing down physically and mentally,” he said.

He also went to Little India to buy soap for them, as well as other necessities such as nail clippers, slippers and Tiger Balm products. He paid for these out of his own pocket.

“As a foreigner in Singapore, I really miss my family. When I take care of my patients, it’s like looking after my family,” Mr Nishantha said.

“I’m really happy to work in Singapore as a healthcare worker, and I’m really thankful to my managers and fellow colleagues for supporting me.”

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