

Customer service across the miles Case manager provides support (and a shoulder)



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A CASE MANAGEMENT STORY

In April 2008, Janet Tagliola's world was turned upside down. Her husband of 38 years was diagnosed with stage IV cancer and after a painful four-month battle, he passed away.

Janet is an employee of a major fashion retailer and Nationwide Better HealthSM customer, in Wood Dale, Illinois. During her 18 years of service, she has developed close relationships with her managers, colleagues and even customers. Although she loves her job and her co-workers, she needed to take a leave of absence after her husband's sudden death.

When calling her employer's leave and disability unit, Janet reached Nationwide Better Health case manager Jennie Jackson. Her employer outsources its leave and disability service to Nationwide Better Health, so we work with employees to generate the appropriate claims and obtain the necessary medical information to approve – or deny – an employee's leave of absence request.

Jennie heard how devastated Janet was and asked to be assigned to her case. Despite the physical distance between the two women, they immediately became close and formed a strong bond.

"I was a basket case on the phone but could not believe that this was really happening. Jennie always calmed me down and made me feel so comforted," said Janet. And when Janet asked about Jennie's level of compassion, Jennie attributed some of it to her father. "Janet wondered why I was so understanding, and I told her that my daddy always told me to be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle."

In mid-November, Janet went back to work part-time because she missed being around people and, more importantly, her doctor thought it might be good for her. She soon discovered it was hard to function. "Jennie encouraged me to take the time I needed and care for myself," said Janet.

Since the beginning of the year, Janet has days when she feels a little better and continues to take Jennie's advice about taking the time she needs to care for herself. "With all of my heart, I believe I was meant to have Jennie help me with this time of my life," said Janet. "I truly believe she is one of my angels along the way, and I will never forget her kindness."

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