

Vignette #13 51.55-1:01.44

Is It Worth It? I Don't Know ... (6 min.)



Objective

By the end of this vignette, viewers will be able to reflect upon how the wishes and beliefs of adult family members may influence their children's care wishes.

Summary

This vignette highlights a young woman discussing her experiences with a recurrent brain tumor. She speaks about how she felt when she was first diagnosed, how she uses journaling to help her cope, and how she goes on to face treatment for the recurrence. She and her family struggle with her memory loss as a possible long term disability.

Patient Highlighted

Alena Sydnor, young woman first diagnosed with a brain tumor in 8th grade. She has had several surgeries and, as a result, suffers from memory loss.

Discussion Point

Prior to having her second brain surgery, Alena is worried about the possibility of memory loss. She and her family have to balance the risk versus benefits of doing the surgery that could save her life, yet alter her memory for the rest of her life.

Discussion Question 1

What are some of the considerations that Alena and her family might be struggling with as they weigh benefits versus risks of brain surgery?

Further Discussion/Points as Needed to Prompt Audience Interaction

Both Alena and her family must have had a difficult decision to make when one alternative is likely death (without surgery), while the other is to possibly awaken from surgery not recognizing her family or remember her past.

Discussion Question 2

Do you feel that Alena is satisfied with her decision? Is her mother? Her sister? Why or why not?

Further Discussion/Points as Needed to Prompt Audience Interaction

Alena's mother is seen at the end of the vignette asking herself "Is it worth it? I don't know." How does Alena seem to feel regarding her outcomes?

Suggested Applicability to Nursing Courses and/or to Care Settings

Courses: Palliative/Hospice Care; Pediatric Nursing; Introduction to Nursing; Home Health/Community Nursing; Mental Health Nursing; Medical/Surgical Nursing; and any course focused on communication, quality of life, and/or family systems. Care Settings: Orientation and/or in-service programs for health care providers in primary, acute, long term, hospice/palliative care, and/or home care settings.

Suggested Congruence with ELNEC Modules

Palliative Nursing Care; Symptom Management; Ethical Issues in Palliative Care Nursing; Cultural/Spiritual Considerations in End-of-Life Care; Communication; Loss, Grief, Bereavement.

Related Vignettes

#12: It's Not Always About Death, It's About Living Life to the Fullest; #15: Quality Versus Quantity.