

Vignette #8: 34.34–40.34

I Signed the Papers (6 min.)



Objective

By the end of this vignette, viewers will be able to discuss various ways that patients sometimes cope with difficult decisions.

Summary

This vignette highlights Mr. Bilotti, who is being discharged from the hospital to his home where he lives alone. He describes the love between him and his wife of 60 years, who has predeceased him.

Patients Highlighted

Rudy Bilotti, WWII veteran with kidney failure who has signed the necessary paperwork to refuse dialysis, and to implement “Do Not Resuscitate” status.

Discussion Points

Mr. Bilotti seems to be somewhere in the middle of acceptance and fear regarding his situation, at times joking while at other times becoming teary-eyed throughout the interview.

Discussion Question 1

Reflect upon Mr. Bilotti’s talking points, and describe some of the conflicting points of view that he portrays.

Further Discussion/Points as Needed to Prompt Audience Interaction

When asked if he is afraid to die, what is his response? He states, “Who’s not afraid to die?” implying that he has fear. Yet he jokes about being the “happiest corpse in the cemetery.” What do you think he means by these comments?

Discussion Question 2

What role do you believe Mr. Bilotti’s deceased wife plays in his acceptance of his prognosis?

Further Discussion/Points as Needed to Prompt Audience Interaction

Mr. Bilotti talks about how he would have rather lost an arm than to have lost his wife. How do you think the loss of such a prominent figure in his life may be affecting his desires to refuse extraordinary measures to keep him alive?

Suggested Applicability to Nursing Courses and/or to Care Settings

Courses: Palliative/Hospice Care; Introduction to Nursing; Home Health/Community Nursing; Mental Health Nursing; Medical/Surgical Nursing; and any course focused on communication, discharge planning, Do Not Resuscitate orders, access to care, 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; Cultural/Spiritual Considerations in End-of-Life Care; Communication; Loss, Grief, Bereavement.