

MODULE: PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

CASE SCENARIO

The Williams Family

The Use of This Case Scenario

This case scenario can be used in several ways to illustrate psychological issues:

1. The case scenario can be used like the problem based learning cases used in other modules.
2. The Williams Family Case Scenario can also be used as a role-play to demonstrate effectively assessment skills, supportive counseling skills and communication skills. The following section outlines an approach to using role-plays in teaching. In our experience physicians very easily adapt to role-plays in a small or large group environment.

Using Role-Play Effectively

1. The facilitator or one of the participants should read the case description aloud.
2. The facilitator may ask for volunteers and/or assign each role.
3. Those assigned to roles are asked to read the role and not share the role with any other participant.
4. Chairs should be moved to the front of the teaching area.
5. Ground rules for the role-play should be read out for all participants and these include:
 - Role-players must stay in role and are to try and divulge information in their roles in a realistic fashion.
 - Bolded information in each role-play must be divulged in some manner during the session.
 - Any player may ask for time out at any time or the facilitator may call time out. The role-play may resume after the timeout with the same or different players.
 - Those observing the role-play are to remain silent but they are asked to write down observation of process and content and suggestions for change.
6. After the role-play is completed, each player is asked to read out his/her role and asked to discuss how they felt in the role.
7. After the above process is complete, the facilitator will facilitate a discussion of the case issues as they relate to the objectives and content of the modules.

WILLIAMS FAMILY CASE SCENARIO AND ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastases to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

Janet is originally from Trinidad. She has been living common law with her husband for 30 years. Her husband, James, is not well. He is a diabetic and has mild dementia. He has suffered two strokes in the past, which have left him with some right-sided weakness, and he needs help with his ADL's. She has two children. A daughter, Vanessa, lives in the same apartment building. Her daughter has two young children and is working full-time. Her son, Edward, lives nearby. He has quit his job and is trying to start up his own business. She has a sister, Marie, whom she is very close to. Her sister is organizing Janet's medical care. She is also caring for their elderly demented mother who is living in a local nursing home. Janet has also been very active in her church and has a good group of supportive friends.

What are the important issues that need to be addressed in caring for Janet and her family?

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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Dr. Albert

You have been involved with Janet's family physician for 4 years. You found her cancer and have been following her since her discharge from the cancer centre. Her condition has deteriorated rapidly over the last two weeks and she requires more care at home. Initially, home care was providing enough care. But now she is so weak that she is confined to her bed, requiring more assistance. Marie, her sister, has attempted to make a care plan but is having difficulty finding and organizing people to help. This upsets Marie because she had promised to keep Janet out of hospital.

Marie calls you for help almost daily. You are aware that there are family tensions.

You are also James' doctor and know he cannot cope on his own. Your own father is dying of lung cancer.

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

Janet is originally from Trinidad. She has been living common law with her husband for 30 years. Her husband, James, is not well. He is a diabetic and has mild dementia. He has suffered two strokes in the past, which have left him with some right-sided weakness, and he needs help with his ADL's. She has two children. A daughter, Vanessa, age 28, lives in the same apartment building. Her daughter has two young children and is working full-time. Her son, Edward, age 32, lives nearby. He has quit his job and is trying to start up his own business. She has a sister, Marie, to whom she is very close. Her sister is organizing Janet's medical care. She is also caring for their elderly demented mother who is living in a local nursing home. Janet has also been very active in her church and has a good group of supportive friends.

Janet

You are a 61-year-old woman with advanced cancer.

You are quite distressed about your rapidly deteriorating physical condition.

You are concerned about your inability to organize future plans for your husband. You have been his primary care giver and you feel your children are too wrapped up in their own lives to be able to care for him. You see his future days in a nursing home and **this makes you feel guilty, very anxious and depressed.**

You are also feeling like a burden to your family. You can see the stress that your illness is putting on your sister and your children. You are afraid to talk to your children about your illness and the fact that you are dying because you may upset them. But at the same time you want to say your personal good-byes. You are not afraid of dying as you have strong faith in God. You would like to stay at home.

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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Marie

You are a 55-year-old single woman with no children. You are a very active lady involved in a number of community organizations and with your church.

You also help care for your mother who is currently living in a local nursing home.

You have currently taken some time off work to help care for Janet but will soon have to go back. Janet turned to you for help when she was diagnosed with her cancer. You promised her that you would do everything to keep her at home.

You are frustrated because you have developed various care plans and asked Janet's children for help but found her children to be unreliable.

You feel that you are doing all the work and are getting exhausted. You realize Janet's time is limited and find that you are so involved in organizing her care and future plans after her death that you have no opportunity to spend quality time with Janet.

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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Vanessa

You are Janet's 28-year-old daughter. You are married with two children: a 1-year-old and a 4-year-old. You are currently working as a parking attendant. This involves shift work and your hours can vary.

You are angry with your aunt. You feel she has taken over your mother's care and has not given you a chance to help and is shutting you out. You feel that your aunt is acting as a dictator telling you what to do instead of involving you in decisions regarding your mother's care.

You want to help but you feel that you are being spread too thin between your job, family, and mother. Marie is making you feel guilty.

You are also afraid of being alone with your mother. You feel helpless when you are with her and don't know how to help. You are also afraid something may happen to her while you are there and you don't know how you will react. You want to tell your mother how much you love her but have difficulty discussing this with her

because you are afraid that you might upset her. You are close to your stepfather and are concerned about what will happen to him after your mother dies.

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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James

You are James, a 72-year-old man. **You are a bit bewildered by your wife's sudden deterioration.** You have been together for 30 years and have expected that you would die before your wife, especially since your health has been failing over the last five years.

You feel that people are not telling you everything about your wife's illness.

You suspect that she doesn't have long to live but haven't been given that information directly.

Everyone seems to want to protect you from the truth but you really want to know because you have always wanted to be legally married to Janet. This is something that is very important for you to do before she dies. You are also concerned about your future. You realize your children will not be able to care for you if Janet dies. You do not want to go to a nursing home but realize that you will receive the best care there. You are afraid because you do not know what arrangements have been made for you.

You get confused easily and always ask for information to be repeated more slowly.

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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Edward

You are a 32-year-old former postal worker. Recently you quit your job to open a Mac's Milk store in a busy plaza. **You are under a lot of stress.** Your mother is dying and you are having difficulty accepting that. **You are working long hours but your irregular hours mean that your visits to your mother have diminished.**

You are married to Jeanette and have 1 child aged 2.

You are worried that the burden of your father's care will fall on your shoulders since you have a house with extra room, unlike your sister.

You too are angry with your aunt, Marie, because she has totally taken over your mother's care, often making questionable decisions in your opinion. **You feel your mother should be admitted to hospital so that she can get stronger. You don't feel the doctor is right in keeping her at home.**

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough that keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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Elaine Jones

You are a 46-year-old home care nurse. **You are very concerned about Janet and feel quite close to her. You think that Marie is a "saint" for taking care of her sister and you feel Janet's children are not pulling their weight in caring for their mother.** You have advised them to start nursing home papers for James and palliative care papers for Janet but no one seems to be acting on this. You do not feel that the family doctor, Dr. Albert, really has enough experience and want a referral to a home palliative care team.

WILLIAMS FAMILY ROLE-PLAY

OPTIONAL TELEPHONE ROLE-PLAY

Case Description

Janet is a 61-year-old woman diagnosed with colon cancer with metastases to her lung and liver. She was diagnosed approximately 3 months ago when she presented to her family doctor with a productive cough. She was initially treated for pneumonia but when she did not respond to treatment a chest x-ray was done. The chest x-ray revealed a suspicious nodule. She underwent a series of investigations that resulted in the diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of her colon with metastasis to her lung and liver. Janet was not a surgical candidate. She was initially treated with chemotherapy. She developed significant side effects from her chemotherapy and for this reason it was discontinued after 5 courses of treatment. No further treatment is being offered at this time. Her current problems include a chronic cough, which keeps her up at night, poor appetite, and generalized weakness. Pain is not a problem. She has had increasing difficulty coping at home. She has been quite anxious and has been to the emergency department with panic attacks and hyperventilation several times.

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Telephone Call Role-Play

Marie:

- ❑ Angry, wants immediate house call, wants you to do something about Janet's continuing deterioration
- ❑ Says she cannot cope any longer especially since the children are not helping out
- ❑ Initially resistant to suggestion of family meeting
- ❑ "Just get Janet in hospital to make her stronger"