

CASE STUDY: MRS. SMITH

You are visiting in Happy Times Nursing Facility when a resident, Mrs. Smith, stops you in the hall. She is dressed in clothing that is too big and the colors of her skirt and blouse clash. You remember her from previous encounters. She always seems to have a series of "problems." No one in the facility takes her seriously.

After asking you if you've been in the facility before, she emphatically tells you that she can't tolerate her roommate. She wants another one, the home will just have to find somewhere else to move the lady who is in Mrs. Smith's room now!

There's one more thing Mrs. Smith wants you to know: the nurse is trying to force her to take drugs that dope her up. She has managed to outsmart the nurse so far, but she doesn't know how much longer she can continue before the nurse starts trying to slip the pill in her food! Mrs. Smith mumbles something about the nurse claims her doctor ordered the pill for the pain in her leg.

Mrs. Smith asks if you can help her with these problems.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What ethical dilemmas or concerns do you see in this case?
2. What kind of decision-making capacity can Mrs. Smith exercise?
3. How do you balance Mrs. Smith's rights and the rights of her roommate?
4. Is the staff treating Mrs. Smith as if she were incompetent? Are they right? Why?