

Case of Mlle. Sylvie LeBlanc

Mlle. Sylvie LeBlanc is a 76 year old female. She resides in her own 2-storey house where she enjoys listening to the radio and the occasional record and tending to her African violets. She was never married, nor did she have any children. She attended one year of college, after which she obtained employment as a secretary in a lawyer's office, a job which she held for 40 years and retired from when she was 67. She uses her own car for occasional trips but has expressed concern lately about getting lost when she drives outside of her neighbourhood.

Mlle. LeBlanc has always been a highly anxious person; she has a history of benzodiazepine use, and she has a history of psychiatric admissions for depression and anxiety. She has been experiencing increased anxiety following a diagnosis of skin cancer 7 months ago. She has asthma and uses Ventolin, and she frequently calls her family physician regarding her asthma attacks.

Mlle. LeBlanc has been attending an Adult Day Program attached to a Seniors' Centre twice a week. She has had several falls over the last 6 months and fractured a rib during her last fall incident. Currently, she receives nursing service from Home Care once a week to monitor her medications. She has been visiting her sister once a week in a nearby nursing home, but the frequency of her visits has fallen off over the past few months. Mlle. LeBlanc has a mild bilateral cataract problem and has bilateral hearing aids for sensorineural hearing loss in the left ear and a mixed hearing loss in the right ear as a result of a stapedectomy when she was a child, which caused a conductive hearing loss.

Over the past month or so, day program staff have noted that Mlle. LeBlanc's personal appearance is deteriorating – she sometimes wears soiled clothes, and her hair is not always clean or evenly combed. She has attended on the wrong day on three occasions in the past two months, and seems to be forgetting the names of staff and other participants, even those whose names she knew. She appears more withdrawn and seems to have trouble following the threads of conversation at the program. A social worker at the adults' day program has referred her for a geriatric assessment.

She has questions concerning her mental health and ability to live alone.

Adapted from Case Studies in Gerontology for the Applied Health Sciences: An Education Resource developed by J.B. Orange, S. Hobson, M.F. Cheeseman, A.A. Vandervoot, and M.E. Black, July, 1997.