



Grey Bruce Case Study – The Case of Martha Schmidt

Martha Schmidt is a 60 year old woman who completed her university degree in Library Science and has worked as a librarian part-time in the local library for the past 35 years only taking time off when she had each of her three children (now 28, 30 and 32 years of age). She is married to Thomas who is 61 years old.

Martha has suffered from anxiety bouts over the past decade which caused high blood pressure and recently she suffered a CVA (stroke) which resulted in mild cognitive deficits and some right sided arm and leg weakness. She returned home shortly after having the stroke, but this change in her abilities has had a profound effect on her. She is right-side dominant and has also experienced some visual

changes that have incapacitated her and caused her to worry about whether she will be able to return to her part-time work that she loves.

Martha has always been involved in her community's activities including being part of a book club, the quilting group, and a key member of the group that helps to set up the annual summer fair's baking contest. Martha loves cooking and baking and this love has resulted in her putting on weight over the past several years to the point now where she is carrying 175 lbs. on her 5ft. 5inch frame. She has frequently said that she wants to get more active, but has not found the motivation to change from her current low activity level. Her family physician had also cautioned her about her blood pressure and high cholesterol levels but with little impact.

Her CVA was a real wake up call for her, and unfortunately there was a delay in initiating treatment that has left her with impairments. Martha worries about how Thomas will be able to accept these changes in her abilities. He loves to golf in the spring, summer, and fall and to ski in the winter. Hence he is quite active. Thomas also has a university degree in business management and is currently the town's bank manager at the Royal Bank branch. He has seen big changes in Martha since her stroke and worries about how she can manage for herself when he is at work and out golfing or skiing. He has noted she sometimes has trouble following his conversations with her which is very stressful as he loved the deep discussions they used to have about books they were both reading. He worries as well if their home is suitable for Martha as he has noticed how hard it is for her to manage the stairs to the 2nd floor. They have always had a cleaning lady so this has helped with Martha's adjustment to her new situation. However, things she used to do independently like bathing and grooming herself, making meals, and driving to the local grocery store now require assistance. Martha can no longer drive her car and must rely on her two daughters or Thomas to take her now. These changes are real challenges for her.

Martha has always loved being a mother. She has a loving, warm relationship with her adult daughters who live within a one to 2 hour drive of her home. Her 28 year old daughter Sharon has always been dependent on her mother's advice

and direction. Sharon completed a dental assistant diploma at the nearby community college and she currently works full time in a dental office as a dental assistant and like her mother, has a weight problem. Sharon is tall (5'10") and 250 lbs. Martha and Thomas' son, Daniel is 30 years of age and is employed in Afghanistan with the Canadian Armed Forces. He occasionally calls home to connect with the family. Martha's other daughter, Karen who is 32 years of age obtained a police foundations diploma from the same community college as Sharon and currently works fulltime as an Ontario Provincial Policewoman. She, like Sharon is very close to her mother and all three women often went out together on outings. Sharon and Karen have had trouble coming to terms with the changes in their mother following her stroke.

Karen has recently become engaged to another OPP police officer and she was looking forward to planning her forthcoming wedding with her mother. The stroke changes all her plans. She has had to delay the wedding while coming to terms with her mother's change in physical and cognitive capacities.

Although the family members are all experiencing stress and deep sadness over the changes in Martha, they have been reluctant to sit down together and discuss how they are feeling.