

### Identifying Information

**Name:** Olivia Joyner

**Age:** Unknown, but elderly

**Ethnicity:** African-American

**Marital Status:** Widowed

### Intake Information

You are the worker “on call” at the Goodheart Mental Health Center, which is located in a Southern town. You receive a call from local law enforcement that they are bringing an elderly African-American female in for evaluation. They had been contacted by personnel from the Greyhound bus station after they became concerned about her apparent confusion and continued presence for the past 36 hours.

### Initial Contact

The client appears quite elderly and frail. She is dressed neatly in a checked dress with comfortable shoes. She seems rather alarmed and confused. She is clutching a small handbag.

“Good morning, ma’am. What can I call you?” you begin.

“My name is Olivia Joyner,” she responds.

“I work here at the clinic and hope I can help you out today,” you say.

“That’s okay, honey. I just can’t find the el. These police are scaring me some,” she whispers.

“You can’t be too careful, you know. White people can be real mean.”

“I don’t think he needs to stay if he’s bothering you. Do you think I could look in your purse before he goes?” you ask.

“What purse?” she responds, but she allows you to take her bag and hand it over to the officer.

The officer finds an identification card in her purse indicating that she is 93 years old and resides in Gary, Indiana. The officer tells you he will try to get more information about her and leaves.

“Well, Mrs. Joyner, would you tell me what you’ve been doing at the Greyhound station the last few days?”

“Just call me Olivia, sweetie. Where’s the el?” she responds. “I been wanting to do some real important shopping but then there’s the weather. Can’t fight city hall, you know.”

You recognize that the “el” is a mass transit system in Chicago (not far from Gary, Indiana). “Okay, Olivia, where are you trying to get to?”

The client seems to have lost track of the conversation and is looking anxiously around the interview room. “Have you seen my bag?” she asks. “I got to keep my things together. People can take advantage of you when you get old. Do you know what time it is?”

When you return her handbag, she empties it and begins looking through its contents.

“Olivia, have you eaten recently? Can I get you something to eat or drink?” you ask.

She looks at you expectantly and then returns to her inspection of her handbag. “Strawberry shortcake is the best, don’t you think?”

17.2–1 What diagnoses are you considering at this point?

While you are getting Mrs. Joyner a sandwich and a glass of water, you pick up a message from the police officer who brought her in. He has contacted the Indiana State Patrol and confirmed that she was reported missing 6 days ago. He is attempting to contact relatives in that area.

When you return to the client, she thanks you enthusiastically for the snack. "I just love lunch meats. When I was little, you know, we didn't have things like this. You have so many stores now. You can buy anything you want. And go to the bathroom wherever you want. Things sure are different these days."

"Mrs. Joyner, I mean Olivia, can you tell me how old you are?" you ask.

"I'm not sure I know anymore. What year is this?" she responds. "I can't even keep track of the schedule anymore."

"Ma'am, do you know where you are?"

She laughs softly. "I guess not since I can't find that station. I've been coming here most of my life, but everything just looks strange to me now."

"You're in Quitman, Georgia, at a clinic. Do you know how you got here?" you ask.

The client looks somewhat alarmed and begins to cry. "I thought that bus ride was too long. I just want to get my baby a present. Did anyone feed my cat?"

"Don't worry now. We'll make sure you get back home. Can you tell me how to contact a friend or a relative in Indiana?" you ask.

The client stops crying and says, "Carter'll come get me. Can you call Carter?"

"I'd be happy to call. Can you give me his number?" you ask.

"It's 459. But I haven't got a present yet. It's his birthday tomorrow, you know."

You excuse yourself again to see if law enforcement has gotten any more information.

17.2-2 What diagnosis would you give Olivia Joyner at this point?

17.2-3 Other than contacting a family member, are there any other resources you would want to involve at this point?

### Collateral Information

About an hour later, the police officer calls with a telephone number in Gary. He has contacted a Mrs. Carter Joyner, the client's daughter-in-law. You immediately call this relative.

"Mrs. Joyner, I'm calling from Quitman about your mother-in-law, Olivia Joyner," you begin.

"Thank God. We've been so worried. She's been missing for a week now. Is she all right? Can I talk to her?" she asks.

"She seems to be all right physically. I'll be happy to let you speak with her in a few minutes, but

I need a little information first if you don't mind."

With her agreement, you continue. "Your mother-in-law seems a bit confused and disoriented. For example, she thought she was lost in Chicago, at least initially. Has she had problems with that kind of confusion before?"

"Well, no. Olivia's as sharp as a nail. She takes Greyhounds into the city and then goes all over on the el. She handles her own money and everything. Most of the time, she has it better together than me. Do you think something's happened to her?" she asks.

“I don’t think she’s been injured or anything. She may not have eaten or slept right for quite a while since we don’t know what was going on with her for most of this week. Would you have any objections to me taking her to a medical doctor to have her checked?” you ask.

“Not at all. I’ve called my husband, Carter, and he’s on his way home from work. We’ll be

flying down just as soon as we figure out the details. Olivia should have her Medicare card with her. Will that be enough for someone there to see her?”

“That should do it. I’ll make arrangements to have her examined immediately. I’ll call again in an hour or two so we can coordinate getting you all and Olivia back together.”

17.2–4 Based on this interaction, would you change your diagnosis for Olivia Joyner? If so, what would be your new diagnosis?

### Emergency Room Contact

After some calls, it seems clear that the most expedient way to get a medical examination of Olivia Joyner is to take her to the local hospital’s emergency room. After you have waited roughly 30 minutes, an ER nurse comes out to speak with you.

“We’re going to be admitting Olivia to the hospital, so I need more information about contacting her relatives.”

“Sure, I’d be happy to relay information as well. I last spoke with her daughter-in-law about an hour ago. She and Olivia’s son planned on coming as soon as they could. Can you tell me what’s going on with her?”

“Well, at this point, it looks like she’s had some sort of a brain bleed. I’m not sure whether

it could technically be considered a stroke, but right now we’re just trying to get her blood pressure back under control. Do you know whether she was taking antihypertensive medications?” she inquired.

“All I can tell you is that she didn’t have any medicines in her handbag. I’m afraid I didn’t think to ask her daughter-in-law specifically, although she indicated that Mrs. Joyner was ‘healthy,’” you reply.

“Well, we’ll call her family now and take it from there.”

“Great. Please let them know that they can contact me at the clinic if I can help them make arrangements,” you conclude.

17.2–5 What will be your “final” diagnosis for Olivia Joyner?

17.2–6 List the psychosocial and cultural factors as V or Z codes that would apply to this case.

### Identifying Information

**Name:** Mildred Perkins

**Age:** 75 years old

**Ethnicity:** Caucasian

**Marital Status:** Married

**Occupation:** Retired

### Background Information

You work as a hospital social worker. As part of your job, you visit patients when referred by their doctors in order to help them and/or their families with resources and discharge planning.

### Referral Information

Mildred Perkins is a 75-year-old woman recently hospitalized due to her newly diagnosed diabetic condition. Her daughter, Janet Fletcher, is a 44-year-old single mother of two children ages 15 and 17. Janet is a human resources administrator for the Parks and Recreation Department of a small

city in the Midwest. She enjoys her job and gets along well with her children.

Janet's parents, Mildred and Ray, lived in Pennsylvania most of their lives. They moved to the Midwest to be close to Janet when they were in their late 60s and after Janet had divorced her former husband. Mildred and Ray have remained very active in their retirement years. They own a recreational vehicle and have traveled extensively throughout the United States. Janet, an only child, has spent many hours at the hospital with her mother and 80-year-old father.

While spending time with her mother at the hospital, Janet noticed that her mother was becoming increasingly forgetful. On one occasion when Janet arrived at her mother's room, Mildred asked Janet if she was a new nurse on the unit. This comment was very disturbing to Janet. She told her mother, "I'm not a nurse, Mother, I'm your daughter."

"Oh, of course you are," her mother replied. "I just didn't have my glasses on and couldn't see you clearly." Janet then asked her mother's doctor about the problem. He referred the family to you for an initial screening.

17.3-1 What diagnoses are you considering before you visit with Mildred?

### Collateral Information

Before visiting the family, you stop in to see the nurse who is giving care to Mildred. She tells you that she has noticed that Mildred appears to be becoming increasingly disoriented. For example, it seems that Mildred sometimes forgets that she is in the hospital. On two occasions, the nurse walked into the room and found Mildred getting dressed. When the nurse asked her what she was doing, Mildred replied that she was going downstairs to have dinner.

On another occasion, the nurse found Mildred attempting to use her toothbrush to cut her meat on her dinner tray. She seemed confused when the

nurse suggested she use the knife instead of the toothbrush. The nurse also suggests that Mildred seems to get "agitated and edgy" for no apparent reason.

You find a chart note from the morning nurse indicating that Mildred is making good progress on her recovery from her diabetic episode but that she rang her bell frequently all morning and was asking the same questions over and over again. The nurse found herself having to repeat things to Mildred that she had just told her a few minutes earlier. She was very concerned about sending Mildred home because Mildred was having a great deal of difficulty

remembering the instructions the nurse had given her regarding the need to check her glucose levels at regular intervals. The morning nurse has been attempting to explain the process to Mildred for several days, but Mildred is unable to recall what the nurse has told her to do. The nurse also felt that, due to Ray's advanced age, he might not be able to help Mildred with the type of assistance that she would require at home.

When you go to visit Mildred, she is not in her room but is wandering down the hall, apparently looking for someone. When you approach her and tell her your name, she states that she is looking for her room. You guide her back to her room and suggest the two of you talk about how she's been feeling and about going home.

Mildred says that she's ready to go home. "I have been in this hospital for weeks and they won't let me out of here," she states. When you ask her if she knows exactly how long she's been in the hospital, Mildred replies, "Since about June, I guess."

"And what month is it now?" you question.

"I believe it's November, and I have to get the house ready for Christmas," Mildred replies.

"Actually, Mrs. Perkins, it is September and, from your records, it looks as if you've been in the hospital for about a week now," you explain to her in a gentle and nonthreatening manner. "Do you know what year it is?" you query.

Mildred replies, "I believe it's 1995, isn't it?"

"Well, actually, this is the year 2000, Mrs. Perkins," you respond.

"Oh yes, I couldn't quite remember. You know it's harder to remember these things when you get older like me," Mildred suggests.

"What about children, Mrs. Perkins. Do you have any children?" you ask.

"Yes, my daughter, Janet, works for the Parks and Recreation Department. She is very good at her job."

"And has Janet come by to see you in the hospital?" you inquire.

"I don't think she's had the time. You know she has children of her own that take up a lot of her time," Mildred replies.

"What about your husband? Has he come to see you while you've been in the hospital?" you ask.

"Yes, I believe he came to see me yesterday," Mildred responds.

"Do you know who the president of the United States is this year, Mrs. Perkins?" you inquire.

Mildred stares at her hands, and after a long pause she suggests that it must be President Reagan. She again states that she really needs to get home since Christmas is right around the corner. Mildred then gets up and begins taking her belongings out of the drawers and placing them on the bed. She takes the trash can and begins placing all her things in the trash.

When you ask her what she is doing, she states that she's packing to go home. Mildred looks rather perplexed about the trash can but continues to pile her clothing in the bin. She then appears to realize that her clothes don't belong in the trash can and begins taking them out. She states that all her clothes won't fit in that small suitcase and that she needs her larger suitcase so everything will fit.

You suggest that it might be a good idea to wait until the doctor has seen her before she begins to pack her suitcase. Mildred looks astonished and asks why she needs to see a doctor. You tell her that she's in the hospital and that she's there in order to get her diabetes under control. Mildred looks confused and sits down on the bed again.

"I just don't know what's happening to me these days. I think I'm losing track of things," Mildred states.

You suggest that perhaps a doctor can help her sort things out so she will feel better. You tell her that you'll come back to see her again and that maybe she'd like to rest for a while.

With your encouragement, Mildred lies back down on the bed and states that she is feeling very tired.

17.3–2 What other information would you like to have? Whom else would you like to interview? Are there any other consultations you'd like to arrange?

17.3–3 What would be your preliminary diagnosis?

17.3–4 List the psychosocial and cultural factors as V or Z codes that would apply to this case.

**Follow-Up Information**

Based on your report, Mildred's primary physician calls in a neurologist for consultation. While

waiting for Mildred's evaluation, her daughter and husband ask to meet with you to plan for the future.

17.3–5 How will you assess the strengths of the family?

17.3–6 What questions are important for the family to consider in making discharge plans for Mildred?

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