

**PATIENT Dilemma**  
**Chemotherapy/End of Life**  
STUDENT Worksheet

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**Ken Johnson, 52 years old**

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**Overview**

Holistic nursing care entails caring for not just the physical needs of every patient, but also the soul (emotional) and the spirit. In this dilemma, a patient with a stage IV lung cancer has a strong faith and belief system, but his illness is beginning to cause him to question his faith. How the nurse can practically support and care for his emotional and spiritual needs in this context is the essence of this patient dilemma.

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## Chemotherapy/End of Life

### I. Scenario

**History of Present Problem:**

Ken Johnson is a 52-year-old who was diagnosed with stage IV small cell lung cancer two years ago. He has been managed with a daily oral chemotherapeutic drug that had kept his tumors in both lung fields and lymph nodes in remission. He had a repeat CT scan last month that revealed that every tumor had grown dramatically in size and that he would need to undergo aggressive intravenous chemotherapy to have any hope of long-term survival.

**Personal/Social History:**

Ken has a strong Christian faith and acknowledges that he feels that God has used the numerous people who are praying for him as well as the medical care he has received have kept him alive. He has a supportive wife and two teenage sons.

*What data from the histories is important & RELEVANT; therefore it has clinical significance to the nurse?*

RELEVANT Data from Present Problem:	Clinical Significance:
RELEVANT Data from Social History:	Clinical Significance:

### II. The Dilemma Begins...

**Current Concern:**

Ken comes to receive his second dose of intravenous chemotherapy. Instead of the optimistic attitude and bright affect he had last week, Ken is withdrawn and has a flat affect. When asked how he is doing, he replies, "The past three weeks have been so hard. I had no idea how painful chemo would be and how persistent the nausea and vomiting have been. I have no strength. I have been praying, other people have been praying for me and I thought I was going to be healed. I know God can heal and do the impossible. I have two sons who still need a father. Why has God chosen not to heal me? I don't know how long I can do this..."

*What data from the current concern is important & RELEVANT; therefore it has clinical significance to the nurse?*

RELEVANT Data from Current Concern:	Clinical Significance:

### **III. Resolving the Dilemma**

*1. Identifying data that is RELEVANT, what is the essence of this current dilemma?*

*2. What additional information is needed by the nurse that would help clarify the current dilemma?*

*3. What additional members of the healthcare team could be used in this situation? Why?*

*4. What is the nursing priority?*

*5. What nursing interventions and/or principles can the nurse use to successfully resolve this clinical dilemma?*

*6. What is the expected response of the patient that indicate the nursing interventions were effective?*

*7. What response by the patient would indicate that a change in the plan of care and nursing interventions are needed?*

*8. What is the patient or family likely experiencing/feeling right now in this situation?*

*9. What can I do to engage myself with this patient's experience, and show that he matters to me as a person?*

*10. What was learned from this case study that you will incorporate into your practice?*