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Counseling and Communication MGT 5  
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Assignment #3

Disease touches every part of our lives.

Disease can reshape our entire existence. A young man at the age of 23 was making plans to be married to his girlfriend of five years. He had a promising job that he enjoyed and that paid well. With only five months left until the wedding, he became ill and had to see a doctor. The diagnosis was multiple sclerosis. The result changed his world forever. Before the first three months were over after being diagnosed, he would lose nearly everything.

The impact altered his outlook on life. These changes had an effect on his relationships with both his family and his fiancé. There was a personality shift. He began to contemplate more about his own mortality. Whether from the stress or the steroid therapy he underwent, his behavior became rasher. His fiancé left him after they got into an argument. To his irritation his older sisters treated him as if he were incapable of caring for himself. Other family members tried to convince him that he should leave his home in Arizona for some place that has a more temperate summer climate. For a time he was outraged that he had been branded as disabled.

The loss of coordination due to the neurodegenerative disease affected his speech causing words to be slurred and he experienced difficulty with movement. The performance of simple everyday tasks, functions that he had always taken for granted before, needed to be modified and re-learned. Problems arose with sudden fatigue and the inability to concentrate on things. It was no longer safe for him to drive a vehicle. Friends would get aggravated with his need to rest. Due to diminished hand-eye coordination, the escape and relaxation found in playing games was not as readily available.

He had recently started work at a job which he enjoyed doing and which paid well. His job was in computer tech support working on the phones with customers. He was able to recover his ability to type and communicate on the phone, but he lost a job that he loved in the mean time. Without work, he lost his income, his health insurance, a facet of his social life, and the sense of satisfaction one gets from working. After much frustration with unemployment and social security, he was at last pointed toward applying for disability. It takes an average of five to seven months for a disability case to be processed and Medicaid averages about three months to process once it is finally applied for. There were arguments and stress brought on by struggling with the insurance company. With no income or health insurance, the bills stacked up and the medications that he should have been taking were never purchased.

Though those first three months were a challenge, he came through it all. There are still numerous trials for him presented on a regular basis as a direct result of the MS. The disappointment of not being able to work, the hindrance of living on a fixed income for the rest of his life, being plagued by fatigue, the inability to concentrate and remember things are among his daily trials. He would not give up his experiences, but neither will he put up with