

Case Study #1: April - A Cultural Focus: Conflicting Beliefs on MAiD

Presenting Factors:

- **Age and Family:** April is a 46-year-old immigrant woman from a cultural background where MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying) is not widely accepted. She is single and childless. She has advanced multiple sclerosis (MS) and a history of depression, with her condition rapidly worsening.
- **Medical Status:** April's MS has significantly impaired her physical abilities and quality of life. She faces increasing difficulty with daily tasks and experiences severe emotional and physical challenges.

Social/Contextual Factors:

- **Family Dynamics:** April feels isolated due to strained family relationships. Her mother, who was a central figure in her life, passed away less than a year ago. This loss has exacerbated her health issues and strained her relationship with her stepdad and siblings. She has minimal contact with her family and relies primarily on online friends and personal support workers (PSWs) for emotional and practical support.
- **Emotional and Social Impact:** April experiences feelings of being a burden, loneliness, and exhaustion. She struggles with discussing MAiD with her support network, which has been met with discomfort or disapproval.
- **Support Challenges:** April is conflicted about discussing her MAiD decision with her family, who oppose it based on cultural and spiritual beliefs. She also feels guilty about considering MAiD, influenced by cultural values that emphasize enduring suffering and the sanctity of life.

Key Points:

- **Cultural Beliefs:** April comes from a cultural background where MAiD is often viewed as contrary to traditional values that emphasize enduring hardship and the sanctity of life. Spiritual beliefs may include seeing suffering as a part of a divine plan, adding complexity to her decision.
- **Spiritual Practices:** Traditional spiritual practices in her culture may include rituals or beliefs about death and the afterlife, which may conflict with her choice for MAiD. April might need to navigate these spiritual expectations alongside her personal decision.

- **Community Expectations:** There are strong community and familial expectations regarding end-of-life issues, including reliance on traditional practices and a focus on family support rather than medical interventions like MAiD. April may feel pressured to conform to these expectations despite her personal struggles.
- **Immigrant Experience:** As an immigrant, April may lack access to familiar cultural support systems and face challenges in finding culturally competent healthcare services. The cultural dissonance between her background and the principles of MAiD adds another layer of complexity to her decision-making process.