

STUDENT HANDOUT
Unfolding Case Study: Caring for Peter Schultz
Evaluating Communication Techniques

DIRECTIONS: Read the following conversation between Peter and his wife, Eve. Make a list of the communication techniques that Eve uses to connect with Peter during the conversation and then prepare to share your findings with the larger group.

I found Peter sitting alone on the love seat just around the corner from the nurses' station, so I sat down beside him. A couple of HCAs were passing us once in a while as they tended to their duties. Peter didn't speak and neither did I for quite some time.

Then he said, "Do you think you could arrange a wedding for some time in the fall?"

"Oh, who is getting married?"

"I am."

"Who are you going to marry?"

"The girl next door."

"Really? What is her name?"

"I don't remember."

"Is it Jenny?"

"Yes, that's her name."

Aha! Jenny lived across the road from Peter when he was a kid.

"You can't marry her. She is already married."

He gave me a look of incredulity, but said nothing. A few minutes of silence.

Then he said, "Well, do you think you can arrange a wedding for some time in the fall?"

"Peter, how old are you?"

"I am 15 in about half a year."

"I really think you are too young to get married. A girl might be able to handle it, but it's really much too young for a man to marry."

"I'd really like your opinion, though. Do you think she would make a good farmer's wife?"

"Yes, I do. I'm sure she would make an excellent farmer's wife. She has lived on a farm all her life, and I'm sure she knows exactly how to be a good farmer's wife, but I still feel you are both too young to be getting married."

More silence.

"Well, I'd like you to try to arrange a wedding for the fall."

"But, Peter, do you have a farm?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, how can you think of getting married if you don't have a farm? You would have to live with your parents. That wouldn't be fair to Jenny."

He thought that over for a while.

"You're right. I guess I'd better concentrate on getting a farm first."

Who did Peter think I was as he asked for my opinion? Could it have been his mother or perhaps his elder sister? Soon the snack cart came along. We each enjoyed a cup of coffee and a cookie. I kissed him goodbye and went home smiling, because Jenny was still not married when Peter married me.