RIVERBEND CITY: WORKING WITH CONFLICT MISSION

INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO RIVERBEND CITY

**Expository Text**

As Sheldon's condition worsens, he becomes concerned with saying goodbye to his somewhat estranged sister Judith, who lives in California. Unfortunately, Judith appears unwilling or unable to come see her brother. Additionally, the hospice nurse, Charlotte, is frustrated by Shirley's insistence on trying to provide Sheldon with nutrition and hydration.

**Instructional Text**

As you move through this mission, consider the sources of conflict and the opportunities they provide for a multidisciplinary approach to solving the underlying problems.

**Characters in this Mission**

* Susan Florman – Hospice Social Worker, Compassionate Choice Hospice
* Bruce Greenberg – Sheldon Greenberg's Son
* Judith Greenberg-Wolf – Sheldon Greenberg's Sister
* Sheldon Greenberg – Riverbend City Resident
* Shirley Greenberg – Riverbend City Resident
* Charlotte Lambert – RN, Compassionate Choice Hospice
* Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann – Senior Rabbi, Beth Shalom Synagogue

SCENE 1: RONDO NEIGHBORHOOD, GREENBERG HOME

**Expository Text**

Susan stops by the Greenberg home for a routine visit. Sheldon, while in reasonably good spirits, is growing more frail every day and it is clear that he does not have a lot of time left. Shirley brings Susan to Sheldon's room, where he is chatting with Rabbi Zimmermann. Susan soon learns that there is a new issue weighing on Sheldon's mind.

**Instructional Prompt**

Click on all highlighted characters to hear their concerns about the current family conflict.

**Dialogue 1: Shirley announces to Sheldon that Susan has come to see him.**

**Shirley Greenberg**
Sheldon, honey... Look who's here. Susan. She stopped by to see how you're doing. (Aside to Susan) He isn't very strong today. Try not to tire him out too much, alright?

**Susan Florman**
(Aside to Shirley) Sure thing. Thanks for the heads-up. (Louder, to Sheldon) Hi Mr. Greenberg. Your wife tells me you're a little tired today, so I won't stay long, but I wanted to stop by and see how everything is going for you.

Do you feel like you're getting all the help you need from hospice?

**Sheldon Greenberg**
(weak) Oh, yes. You all have been so kind.I can't begin to say how much of a help you all have been.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Hello, Miss Florman. It's good to see you again.

**Susan Florman**
Hello, Rabbi. The same to you! I'm not interrupting, I hope?

**Sheldon Greenberg**
No, not at all. I was just telling the Rabbi about my wild-thing of a sister.

**Shirley Greenberg**
Oh, she's a wild thing alright. She's a no-goodnik is what she is.

**Sheldon Greenberg**
Oh, now sweetheart, don't talk like that. Judith is the only sister I have. She just grew up at a different time, so she has her own way of seeing things.

**Shirley Greenberg**
A very self-centered way.

**Susan Florman**
I feel like I walked into the movie halfway through. Can someone help me out?

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Sheldon asked his sister to come visit before he passes away, but it's looking like she may not be able to come.

**Susan Florman**
Oh... I would imagine that's very disappointing.

**Shirley Greenberg**
It's more than disappointing. She should be here for her brother. She's his sister — she should be here before he passes, G-d forbid, and she should be here afterward to do her duty.

**Sheldon Greenberg**
Judith isn't very religious. She doesn't really understand why it's important to Shirley and me that she be here before I pass.

**Susan Florman**
I don't want to intrude on a sensitive family matter, but if there's any way I can help with this, let me know. How 's everything else going?

**Dialogue 2: Sheldon articulates his dissapointment that Judith probably won't make it to Riverbend City before he passes away.**

**Sheldon Greenberg**
Oh, very well. Very well. Everyone is so good to us — the women from the synagogue, they've been cooking every sort of comfort food ever invented. I don't have much appetite these days, but a bite or two of these things tastes like heaven.

Shirley, would you get Susan some of that kugel that Mrs. Katz brought over? I'll be she's never had kugel before.

**Susan Florman**
(catching a look from Sheldon) That sounds lovely.

**Shirley Greenberg**
Sure... Have you ever had kugel?

**Susan Florman**
I don't think so.

**Shirley Greenberg**
Oh, you'll love it. I'll be right back. (she leaves)

**Sheldon Greenberg**
Thanks. I didn't want to say anything in front of Shirley. She already is mad at Judith, but I was wondering if you could maybe try talking to Judith and see if you can make her understand that we don't have much time.

She isn't a bad person, but I don't think she understands how sick I am and... Well, it's hard to come right out and say something like that to your sister, especially when you don't talk very often to start with.

**Susan Florman**
Isn't this something you would do, Rabbi?

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Ordinarily, yes, but Sheldon's sister is not very religious. I have tried calling, but I haven't been able to reach her and she does not return my messages.

**Susan Florman**
Well, I'll be happy to try, but I don't have high hopes that she'll listen to me if she hasn't listened to either of you.

**Sheldon Greenberg**
I appreciate you making the effort. I really do want a chance to say goodbye to her face to face and I'd like her to speak at my funeral.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Which could be a problem if she isn't able to get here quickly. It would be best if she came now, I agree.

SCENE 2: COMPASSIONATE CHOICE HOSPICE, SUSAN FLORMAN'S OFFICE

**Expository Text**

Back at her office, Susan attempts to sort through the issues in the Greenberg case. As she speaks with various individuals, she considers how a multidisciplinary approach will enhance the eventual solution and outcome.

**Instructional Prompt**

Click on all highlighted people to hear their concerns about the situation with Sheldon.

**Dialogue 3: Susan calls Judith, Sheldon's sister, to discuss her participation in Sheldon's funeral.**

**Susan Florman**
Hi, this is Susan Florman of Compassionate Choice Hospice in Riverbend City. Is this Judith Greenberg-Wolfe?

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
It is. Hospice. Is this about Sheldon?

**Susan Florman**
Yes, it is.

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
Oh no... (bursts into tears) he's gone. I can't believe I didn't get to say goodbye to my own brother!

**Susan Florman**
No... no! Sheldon hasn't passed away, but the family did express some concern to me that you might not have an opportunity to talk to him before he dies.

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
Obviously, I want to be there with my brother and nephew, but it isn't that easy. I work as a stage manager for a local theatre company and we just opened this week. I can't just up and leave. I told Sheldon that I can try to plan to be there at the end of the month.

I know that's three weeks away, but it's just the best I can do. I've started a eulogy for him, too, that I really want to read at his funeral. It's sad, but he he was such a great brother and I want to tell everyone that.

**Susan Florman**
I get the impression that he hopes to see you now, while he still can.

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
I understand that, but it isn't that simple. It may be that a eulogy is the best I can offer.

**Susan Florman**
My understanding is that there may be a problem with that, though. Because of the speed with which the burial needs to occur.

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
That's just the rabbi imposing his law upon us. The airlines can have me there in less than a week, but I have to have proof before I can get a bereavement fair.

**Susan Florman**
Is cost the issue keeping you from attending the funeral in a more timely manner?

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
I wouldn't say it's the only issue, but it's a pretty significant one.

**Susan Florman**
If I could help you get a flight for the same price as the bereavement fair, would that allow you to come out now?

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
Not really. I am stage managing a production that just opened this week. I can't just walk out in the middle of this.

**Susan Florman**
What would a good outcome to this situation look like to you?

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
That he not be in this situation to start with. I don't know... That the rabbi and Shirley not make such a case out of everything. That I get to do my job here in California and then my sisterly duties in Riverbend City.

**Susan Florman**
Well, it's my understanding that Shirley and your brother are taking a lot of comfort from religion right now. Am I hearing you correctly that it isn't as much a factor in your value system?

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
Not at all. I hate all the Torah this and Synagogue that. I am sure I would be happier if I bought into all that stuff, but I just don't and I really don't understand why everything has to be rush, rush, rush once it actually happens.

It feels like they're deliberately trying to exclude me.

**Susan Florman**
Well, let me make some calls and see if there is any leeway at all. Can I call you back at this number?

**Judith Greenberg-Wolf**
Yeah, sure. There's a machine on this phone. I'll call you back if I'm not home when you call. I have to go, though... I've got a call coming in from the theatre that I have to take. Thanks for your help with all this. I know I sound like a jerk, but I do love my brother.

I just hate organized religion.

**Dialogue 4: Susan calls Rabbi Zimmermann to pursue the issue of Judith's participation in Sheldon's funeral.**

**Susan Florman**
Rabbi Zimmermann, please.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Moshe Zimmermann.

**Susan Florman**
Rabbi... This is Susan Florman.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Ah... Miss Florman. How are you?

**Susan Florman**
I'm fine, thank you. I just got off the phone with Sheldon's sister and I wanted to check a couple things with you.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Yes?

**Susan Florman**
Well... I got the distinct impression that a lot of her ambivalence is around religion, not whether or not she wants to see her brother.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
I've gotten the same impression. It's unfortunate that she can't respect her brother's decisions about such an important issue.

**Susan Florman**
I'm not sure what she's going to do in terms of getting here before he passes away, but I wanted to know how absolute it is that Sheldon be buried within 24 hours.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
That is the goal and the ideal, but exceptions can be made. There just needs to be a good reason and thus far, Judith hasn't provided one.

**Susan Florman**
Is this something that Sheldon decides or is it purely a religious decision?

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
Ultimately, it is up to Shirley and to an extent, me. Obviously, we would take his wishes into consideration, but it's the responsibility of the mourners to decide the extent to which they will follow the laws relating to burial.

**Susan Florman**
While showing respect to the deceased and obeying jewish law, what is the latest you can delay burying him?

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
No more than three days, I'll say that.

**Susan Florman**
Alright. Clearly I need to hear more from Judith and see what's really going on, but I thank you for your time. This has helped me understand the issue better.

**Rabbi Moshe Zimmermann**
You're welcome. Thank you for your efforts in mediating this.

**Susan Florman**
You're welcome. I'll talk to you soon.

**Dialogue 5: Charlotte stops by Susan's office to discuss an issue that has come up with the Greenbergs.**

**Charlotte Lambert**
Hi, Susan. Do you have a minute?

**Susan Florman**
Sure... What's up?

**Charlotte Lambert**
Well, it's Mr. Greenberg. I'm pretty sure his pain has been increasing steadily, but he's still only taking Tylenol for pain. I just don't think he's getting the care he's entitled to and I think it's because Rabbi Zimmermann and Shirley are so adamant against the use of morphine.

**Susan Florman**
Have you spoken to Sheldon himself?

**Charlotte Lambert**
Yes, and he says this is what he wants, but I am just not convinced. I think he'd like better pain management but he's concerned about how Shirley will take it if he tries stronger medications.

**Susan Florman**
Do you have some thoughts on how to address the issue?

**Charlotte Lambert**
Well, the family really respects you. If you suggest that he could take more morphine, they would go along with it.

**Susan Florman**
I am not sure how comfortable I am just inserting myself into this issue. I was planning on swinging out there sometime tomorrow. I'll try to talk to Sheldon one on one and see if I can find out what he would like.

**Charlotte Lambert**
Great. I don't think I am trying to push my own agenda, but it really makes me sad to see someone who is suffering more than necessary.

**Susan Florman**
I understand. I need to get to another meeting. Is there anything else I can do for you?

**Charlotte Lambert**
No, I don't think so. Thanks for following up on this.

**Susan Florman**
You're welcome. Talk to you later.

SCENE 3: RONDO NEIGHBORHOOD, GREENBERG HOME

**Expository Text**

Susan returns to the Greenberg home the next day to share the information she's obtained from Judith and to broach the issue of pain management.

**Instructional Prompt**

Click on all highlighted characters to hear their contribution to the discussion.

**Dialogue 6: Bruce discusses the situation of his aunt's participation in Sheldon's funeral.**

**Bruce Greenberg**
Hi, Susan. Good to see you again. You sure weren't kidding when you said you'd be leading my Dad's care team.

**Susan Florman**
Thank you, Bruce. I know things are getting difficult, so I really appreciate you giving me such a warm welcome.

**Shirley Greenberg**
It's true. I don't think we could have done this without you.

**Susan Florman**
Well, again... Thanks. What brought me over here today is that I've spoken to Judith a couple times and I think we might be in a better place in terms of understanding everyone's individual concerns and needs.

My impression from talking to Judith is that she is concerned that the service will be — and these are her words — too religious.

**Shirley Greenberg**
Oh, that's just like Judith. She didn't come to our wedding, or to Bruce's Bar Mitzvah... Or his wedding. Now she wants to make Sheldon's funeral about her and not about him or G-d. It's so disrespectful.

**Bruce Greenberg**
I have to admit, Susan, it seems bizarre to me that she wants to participate in the funeral. She's never done anything religious in all the time I've known her.

**Shirley Greenberg**
She may not be religious but Sheldon is, and he's actually getting more interested in religion. She can't just take this away.

**Susan Florman**
Alright. One last question. How strongly do you both feel about him being buried within 24 hours? Is that engraved in stone for you both, or would you be able to delay the burial?

**Bruce Greenberg**
It's not that unusual to make a little exception in order to ensure everyone can attend.Three days would be the most, though.

**Susan Florman**
Alright. I 'll be talking to her again this weekend, so let me see if I can get us all to a point we can agree upon.

**Dialogue 7: Susan broaches the subject of morphine.**

**Susan Florman**
There is another issue I need to bring up — pain medication. Charlotte mentioned to me that she was getting a lot of pushback from you two even though it seems like Sheldon's actual pain is getting stronger and more frequent.

**Bruce Greenberg**
I've noticed the same thing, but even though I disagree, I think he's making this decision on his own. He really wants to be able to talk to people who come to see him. I keep trying to explain to him that it would be possible to have better pain management and still be lucid.

**Shirley Greenberg**
It really scared him the way he got when he was getting that medicine in the hospital. He was so out of it, he couldn't connect to anyone or anything for more than a second or two.

**Susan Florman**
Okay. Do either of you mind if I recommend some other options?

**Shirley Greenberg**
No, not at all. I think he's still going to tell you the same thing we are.

**Susan Florman**
Fair enough. I just want to know I tried my best.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE ACTIVITY

**Introduction**

Even when employing a multidisciplinary approach, sometimes conflict is unavoidable. The situation with Judith is continuing to create tension and stress for Sheldon and his family. Judith has called Bruce and Shirley several times, telling them both how Sheldon's care should be handled. Additionally, Judith has indicated that she wants to speak at Sheldon's funeral, but she continues to find reasons not to come see him while he is still alive. Bruce tells Susan that his father is deeply saddened by the thought of not saying goodbye to his sister and asks Susan to help find a solution to the problem.

**Instructional Text**

In this activity, you need to help Susan resolve the issues Sheldon and his family are facing.

**Advisors for Susan**

In addition to your help, Susan often receives insight from two friends in the human services field – Kiki Berger and Maggie Harden.

**Kiki Berger**

**Caseworker, Hennessy County Department of Corrections**
A rough childhood that included several stints in foster care left Kiki with the awareness that there was a real need for pragmatic, tough, and compassionate people to work with troubled youth. As a caseworker for the Hennessy County Department of Corrections, Kiki works with juvenile offenders and their families to turn young lives around before it's too late.

**Maggie Hardin**

**Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC)**
Maggie Hardin has a master's degree in counseling and has been a Certified Addictions Counselor since 2001. Maggie specializes in working with families and individuals affected by addictions, trauma, depression and ADHD.

**Prompt A**

As Susan updates the case file for Mr. Greenberg, she considers the issues that seem to be most troubling Sheldon and his family. While the problem of pain management and medication is one she knows needs to be addressed, she decides that communications between Sheldon and his sister, Judith, are causing the most immediate distress. The problem, though, is that she can't really think what to do next.

Before making your decision, click on each person for advice.

**Kiki** — Death and dying isn't my area of expertise, but I know that denial is a big issue. I wonder if that may be behind Judith's behavior. Perhaps if you spoke to her, you might be able to unravel the real issues and make sure she understands that she doesn't have time to mess around. What should Susan do next?

**Maggie** — This has to be so hard for Sheldon. What does he want you to do?

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Talk with Sheldon to solicit his thoughts, concerns and wishes. Whether or not Judith comes, Sheldon will need support around this issue."

**Option 2:** "Call Judith and see if she can get to the heart of the matter. Susan shouldn't involve Sheldon until she has a concrete plan.

**Option 3:** "Call the Rabbi and see if he would be willing to talk with Judith. The religious element of this problem should be dealt with by a clergyman.

**Prompt B**

The next day, Susan stops by the Greenberg home and asks Sheldon about the situation with Judith. Sheldon explains that he really wants to see his sister one last time and admits he is hurt because she hasn't come to see him. Susan asks if he has told Judith how he feels and his wife Shirley reveals that he has not — nor has he made it clear to Judith how quickly his health is declining.

**Kiki** — That sounds good, but it could be risky. I'm getting the impression that Shirley and Judith don't get along well. A telephone call could deteriorate and that might be even more upsetting to Sheldon. You should try to address the airfare question — that's less of a landmine.

**Maggie** — You need more input to this situation — including Judith's. Perhaps a conference call could be arranged to talk through everyone's issues.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Set up a meeting with Sheldon, his family and his Rabbi to talk about next steps."

**Option 2:** "Continue to serve as an intermediary between Judith and the Greenbergs."

**Option 3:** "Look for ways to pay for airfare for Judith."

**Prompt C**

Susan arranges a meeting between Sheldon, Shirley, Bruce, Rabbi Zimmerman and herself. During the meeting, Susan points out that the cost of short-notice travel seems to be the sticking point for Judith.

Shirley reacts with exasperation and anger, but Bruce offers to give Judith his frequent flier miles. Rabbi Zimmermann suggests that if that does not work, the synagogue might be able to assist with the plane fare.

Before making your decision, click on each person for advice.

**Kiki** — It is possible that Judith was making excuses, so Sheldon should be prepared for that possibility.

**Maggie**— It sounds like you made a lot of progress here. You might want to remind the family that the cost of the plane ticket might not be the only barrier.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Susan should encourage Sheldon and Bruce to contact Judith to see whether or not the options that they've identified will allow her to come see her brother."

**Option 2:** "Susan should call Judith herself and tell her that there are options to pay for the plane fare."

**Prompt D**

Bruce calls Judith and makes the offer to let her use his frequent flyer miles. They have an emotionally intense conversation during which Judith admits that she is terrified to see her brother in his current condition. The conversation ends with Judith promising to call Sheldon within the next few days to tell him whether or not she's going to be able to come see him.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Susan should give Bruce a call to see how things went and find out whether there's anything the family needs from her at this point."

**Option 2:** "Susan should stop by within a few days to find out whether or not Judith is coming to visit."

**Prompt E**

Susan calls Judith and talks to her about the situation. While Judith is clearly concerned about her brother, she claims that she can't afford to fly to Riverbend City on such short notice.

Before making your decision, click on each person for advice.

**Kiki** — Wow! If it were me I think I'd want to talk to some of my colleagues and find out if they've ever been in this situation before.

**Maggie** — I think you need to include Sheldon and his family at this point.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Susan should talk to her coworkers and solicit ideas for next steps."

**Option 2:** "Susan should explain to Bruce and Shirley that she has contacted Judith but was unable to convince her to come out."

**Prompt F**

Susan looks for agencies and organizations that might be able to assist Judith with the cost of plane fare.

Before making your decision, click on each person for advice.

**Kiki** — I don't know. The Greenbergs might be embarrassed by that kind of thing. You shouldn't ask the Rabbi to do something like that without their knowledge and approval.

**Maggie** — Would the congregation at the synagogue be a resource to help the Greenbergs? I would ask the Rabbi if he could coordinate some outreach for them from that direction.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Susan should set up a meeting with Sheldon, his family and his Rabbi to talk about next steps and possible sources for financial help with the cost of plane tickets."

**Option 2:** "Susan should contact Rabbi Zimmermann and ask if the congregation at the synagogue could help with the cost of plane tickets."

**Prompt G**

Susan stops by the Greenberg home and tells Sheldon and Shirley there is nothing more she can do about the situation with Judith. Sheldon says that he understands, but says little more during the conversation. Sheldon dozes off and as Susan prepares to leave, Shirley criticizes her soundly for upsetting Sheldon and making things worse.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Remind Shirley that depression is a common part of the end-of-life experience and suggest they talk to his doctor about medication that could help with that."

**Option 2:** "Apologize to Shirley for upsetting Sheldon and then coordinate with his medical team to have him evaluated for depression."

**Prompt H**

Susan contacts Judith and explains that she has found funds to cover the airfare if Judith will come to visit her brother. Judith admits that she is terrified to see her brother in his current condition. The conversation ends with Judith promising to call Susan within the next few days to tell her whether or not she's going to be able to come to Riverbend City.

Before making your decision, click on each person for advice.

**Kiki** — Yes ... This might be a good time to talk about final decisions, since Judith has talked about wanting to speak at Sheldon's funeral.

**Maggie** — You've done well, but you need to continue working with your client and his family.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "She should meet with the family and open a discussion about what they will do if Judith does not come."

**Option 2:** "Susan should focus on getting a firm answer from Judith before she discusses the issue with the Greenbergs again."

**Prompt I**

Susan and Rabbi Zimmermann work together and are able to find funds to cover Judith's airfare. Susan contacts Judith and explains that she has found funds to cover the airfare if Judith will come to visit her brother. Judith admits that she is terrified to see her brother in his current condition. The conversation ends with Judith promising to call Susan within the next few days to tell her whether or not she's going to be able to come to Riverbend City.

Before making your decision, click on each person for advice.

**Kiki** — It seems to me there are some deeply entrenched family dynamics surrounding Sheldon's sister. The fact that you're a neutral party is a good thing.

**Maggie** — It's good that you've found a solution to the immediate problem, but I'm a little surprised that you aren't working closer with the family, and Sheldon himself.

**What should Susan do next?**

**Option 1:** "Susan should go to the Greenberg's home and explain the current status of the situation."

**Option 2:** "Susan should continue to work with Judith and Rabbi Zimmermann so that she can spare Sheldon and Shirley the stress of coordinating the visit."

**Outcomes**

**Outcome: Excellent**

When Susan calls Bruce she learns that Judith has booked a flight and will be arriving in Riverbend City in three days. This is an excellent outcome not only because brother and sister will be able to see each other, but also because the family, the client, and the human services professional worked collaboratively to find a solution.

**Outcome: Good**

When she stops by the Greenbergs' home, Susan learns that Judith has decided that she could not handle seeing her brother in his current condition. Sheldon is deeply disappointed by his sister's decision, but Susan, his family, and his Rabbi are able to support Sheldon as he works through his disappointment and grief.

**Outcome: Fair**

After several phone calls, Judith finally books a flight. When Susan goes to the Greenbergs to tell them the good news, Shirley reacts negatively and Sheldon appears stressed by his wife's reaction. This is a fair outcome because while the immediate issue was solved without Sheldon and his family involved in the decision-making process may lead to other problems.

**Outcome: Poor**

This is a poor outcome to this situation not because Susan was unable to convince Judith to come to Riverbend City, but because she did not include the Greenbergs in the problem-solving process. Trying to go it alone was not effective.