



I Won't Go:
A Study Guide for Social Work Educators and Students

Michael A. Wright and Stacey Borasky

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Council on Social Work Education
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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Overview: <i>I Won't Go</i>	5
Topics	
Priorities	6
Care Worker Duties.....	7
Past Trauma.....	8
Resilience, Depression, Engagement	9
Living by Myself	10

Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist social work educators and students in using films from the CSWE film festivals in their classrooms. It is one in a series of CSWE curriculum resources designed to enhance the teaching and learning of social work concepts.

We welcome your comments as the library of these resources is refined and expanded.

Michael A. Wright
Tennessee State University

Stacey Borasky
St. Edwards University

Overview: *I Won't Go*

Film Information

Title: <i>I Won't Go</i> Date: 2010	Producer: LoveLove Films
Running Time: 28 minutes	Distributor: Terra Nova Films, terranova.org

Context: Ninety-something Oli Truss lives in a cottage that could rightfully be condemned. Her former student visits and inquires about Oli's current life, her past, and her insistence that she continue to live on her own.

Themes:

1. Aging Independence
2. Caregiving and Caregiving Services
3. Self-Determination/Unsafe Living Environments
4. End of Life in Home

Time Code	Topic	Central Quote	Salient Themes
3:56–8:55	Priorities	"I'm happy on my own."	Independence, Cognitive Decline, Living Conditions
9:00–14:53	Care Worker Duties	"Make the place a little bit tidy, sort of clean up in general."	Caregiver Training, Agency Policy, Resource Identification
15:24–18:46	Past Trauma	"I wouldn't go to anything I was invited to."	Isolation, Trauma, and Decision Making
18:51–24:17	Resilience, Depression, Engagement	"That was all that mattered... That's all I got."	Resilience, Depression, Retirement, Engagement
24:20–24:39	Living by Myself	"My idea of living a happy life."	Self-Determination, Quality of Life

Topics

Priorities

Time Code: 3:56–8:55

Central Quote: “I’m happy on my own.”

Themes: Independence, Cognitive Decline, Living Conditions

Abstract: Ninety-something Oli Truss welcomes a former student into her home. The former student begins to catalog observations about Oli’s living conditions. The observations seem to be an attempt to distinguish between evidence of cognitive decline and Oli’s unchanging will to be independent.

Learning Objectives

1. Define cognitive decline as separate from normal aging.
2. Identify strategies for environmental scan and home health evaluation.
3. Articulate the challenges that come along with identifying cognitive decline.

Discussion Questions

1. Perform a biopsychosocial assessment of Oli Truss. If you were her caseworker, would you recommend that she stay in her home or be moved to an assisted care facility? Explain your reasoning.
2. What would be your approach to evaluating Oli’s home environment?
3. Compose an argument to convince Oli to stay in her home. Compose the counter-argument to convince Oli to leave her home.

Suggested Readings

Muramatsu, N., Yin, H., & Hedeker, D. (2010). Functional declines, social support, and mental health in the elderly: Does living in a state supportive of home and community-based services make a difference? *Social Science & Medicine*, *70*, 1050–1058. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.12.005

Seidel, D., Richardson, K., Crilly, N., Matthews, F. E., Clarkson, P. J., & Brayne, C. (2010). Design for independent living: Activity demands and capabilities of older people. *Ageing and Society*, *30*, 1239–1255. doi: 10.1017/S0144686X10000310

Wen, A. B., & Blanchette, P. L. (2011). Comorbidities and their impact on transitions of care. *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, *31*, 93–109. doi: 10.1891/0198-8794.31.93

Care Worker Duties

Time Code: 9:00–14:53

Central Quote: “Make the place a little bit tidy, sort of clean up in general.”

Themes: Caregiver Training, Agency Policy, Resource Identification

Abstract: A care worker is observed as she executes her duties in the extremely unkempt home. The segment offers a unique opportunity to contrast the policy of the agency with the sense of responsibility felt by the care worker. The film offers a grand opportunity for ethics, practice, and advocacy discussion in that it makes no judgment on the appropriateness of the care worker’s actions.

Learning Objectives

1. Articulate the difficulty of adhering to policy, respecting self-determination, and meeting social work ethical requirements at the same time.
2. Create strategies for evaluating care workers with the goal of improved client care.
3. Identify elder support services that exist within your community.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you identify other tasks that the care worker could undertake that would be consonant with the policy directives of her agency?
2. What additional resources in your community would benefit Oli?
3. Do you think that Oli would be open to the services you identified in answering question no. 1? Why or why not?
4. What advocacy activities could you suggest that the care worker could initiate?

Suggested Readings

Brookman, C., Holyoke, D. P., Toscan, J., & Bender, D. (2011). *Promising practices and indicators for caregiver education and support programs*. Markham, Canada: Saint Elizabeth Health Care.

Lindquist, L. A., Cameron, K. A., Messerges-Bernstein, J., Friesema, E., Zickuhr, L., Baker, D. W., & Wolf, M. (2012). Hiring and screening practices of agencies supplying paid caregivers to older adults. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, *60*, 1253–1259. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.2012.04047.x

Sherwood, P. R., Given, B. A., & Given, C. W. (2012). Caregiver knowledge and skills. In K. M. Bellizzi & M. Gosney (Eds.), *Cancer and aging handbook: Research and practice* (pp. 445–458). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Past Trauma

Time Code: 15:24–18:46

Central Quote: “I wouldn’t go to anything I was invited to.”

Themes: Isolation, Trauma, and Decision Making

Abstract: Oli reluctantly shares her history. The segment offers an opportunity for viewers to assess the origins of Oli’s self-isolation. Oli and her husband win the lottery, but the result is not happily ever after. A grand opportunity exists to discuss trauma and decision making.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the typical questions included in an oral history.
2. Compare and contrast oral history with a biopsychosocial assessment.
3. Trace the impact of trauma on decision making.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Oli was reluctant to share her story?
2. Think of an experience from your life that affected your decisions. Are you eager to share that experience? Compare and contrast your feelings with those of Oli.
3. Which do you think is more effective, an oral history or a biopsychosocial assessment? Provide a rationale for your choice.

Suggested Readings

Biordi, D. L., & Nicholson, N. R. (2012). Social isolation. In I. M. Lubkin and P. D. Larsen (Eds.), *Chronic Illness* (pp. 97–132). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett.

Maschi, T., Baer, J., Morrissey, M. B., & Moreno, C. (2012). The aftermath of childhood trauma on late life mental and physical health: A review of the literature. *Traumatology, 19*, 49–64. doi: 10.1177/1534765612437377

Roozenbeek, B., Maas, A. I., & Menon, D. K. (2013). Changing patterns in the epidemiology of traumatic brain injury. *Nature Reviews Neurology, 9*, 231–36. doi: 10.1038/nrneurol.2013.22

Resilience, Depression, Engagement

Time Code: 18:51–24:17

Central Quote: “That was all that mattered...That’s all I got.”

Themes: Resilience, Depression, Retirement, Engagement

Abstract: Oli finds an ability to overcome her isolation and disappointment through her work with children. After a successful career administering a school, she continues to tutor children in her home. She obviously found fulfillment in the activity and the interaction. Watch as she also demonstrates the interactions that continue to give her purpose in her home.

Learning Objectives

1. Define resilience and its characteristics.
2. Identify characteristics of successful aging.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think moved Oli to begin her work with children?
2. Imagine Oli as a headmistress. What do you imagine was her leadership style?
3. What other goals do you think Oli still has for her life?

Suggested Readings

Depp, C., Vahia, I. V., & Jeste, D. (2010). Successful aging: Focus on cognitive and emotional health. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 6, 527–550.
doi: 10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.121208.131449

Hertzog, C., & Jopp, D. S. (2010). Resilience in the face of cognitive aging: Experience, adaptation, and compensation. In P. S. Fry and C. L. M. Keyes (Eds.), *New frontiers in resilient aging: Life-strengths and well-being in late life* (pp. 130–161). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, P. A. (2011). Trajectories of social engagement and limitations in late life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 52, 430–443. doi: 10.1177/0022146511411922

Living by Myself

Time Code: 24:20–24:39

Central Quote: “My idea of living a happy life.”

Themes: Self-Determination, Quality of Life

Abstract: Oli confirms the fact that she is living the life she desires to live. This short clip provides an opportunity to revisit the film’s themes. The reflection on the life decisions and resilience plays in the context of the unkempt home, but Oli is happy.

Learning Objectives

1. Define client primacy in the context of self-determination and the social worker’s duty to the client.
2. Articulate the fiscal pressures that support the idea that elders stay within their homes.
3. Compare and contrast the experience of living in an assisted living facility vs. living in your home.

Discussion Questions

1. Should the client’s happiness be the only goal for intervention? Why or why not?
2. Should the client’s happiness be the highest priority in intervention? Why or why not?
3. What would you expect to happen if Oli were forced to move from her home and live in an assisted living facility? What evidence do you have to back up your expectation?
4. What is the value of enabling elder individuals to live in their homes?

Suggested Readings

Ash, C. (2011). Do our economic choices make us happy? In L. Zsolnai (Ed.), *Ethical principles and economic transformation: A Buddhist approach* (Issues in Business Ethics 33, pp. 111–131). New York: Springer Science+Business Media.

Baumbusch, S. D. (2010). *Life in the later years: An exploration of the meaning of retirement to ageing self-advocates* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia). Retrieved from <https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/30443>

Hopkins, E., Lin, A. E., Krepkovich, K. E., Axelrad, M. E., Sol-Church, K., Stabley, D. L., ... Gripp, K. W. (2010). Living with Costello syndrome: Quality of life issues in older individuals. *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part A*, 152, 84–90.
doi: 10.1002/ajmg.a.33147