

# ***THE INVISIBLE PATIENTS***

## **DISCUSSION THEMES / QUESTIONS**

### **GENERAL QUESTIONS**

*What was your overall reaction to the film? Did you like the film? Why? If not, why not?*

*What did you learn from the film?*

*Has watching the film changed your perception of our healthcare system? If so, how?*

### **FAMILY & COMMUNITY**

The bond between Roger and his mother, Shirley, is incredibly strong and is clearly a positive factor in Roger's care.

*How do you think Roger's story would be different if his mother was not an integral part of his care team?*

*How does Jessica fit into the family dynamic?*

Ron and his older brother Louis live in the same house, and though Louis views himself as a caregiver (his "mother-brother"), it does not appear to Jessica that Louis provides much assistance to his brother.

*In what ways, either positive or negative, does Louis impact Ron's care?*

*What do you think of the way Jessica handles the situation where Louis accuses her of inadvertently making him a "third-rate citizen" in Ron's care?*

*Do you think Ron will be better off without Louis living in the house?*

At the end of the film, Jess says that we need more people helping these families.

*How might a community do more to help homebound and home-limited individuals?*

*What can you do?*

## **DEALING WITH THE “HEALTHCARE SYSTEM”**

At various times in the film, both Roger and the Sherrill’s (Wink and Patty) struggle to navigate the “healthcare system.” Medicaid will not pay for the non-invasive vent that would make Roger’s breathing easier. Patty is unable to find new doctor after failing a drug test and then she’s dropped by her insurance provider.

***What challenges have you faced dealing with the healthcare system?***

***What solutions would you suggest?***

## **FAITH & SPIRITUALITY**

Early in the film, Jessica asks Roger if he has any spiritual beliefs, and he says that he “*respects some of it, but not all of it.*” As his disease progresses, his beliefs seem to change.

***How would you describe Roger’s evolving thoughts about God and religion?***

***In what way did religion impact Roger’s life?***

Wink thanks “the good Lord up above” for feeling better, and later tells a story about someone from his church “putting his hand on” his stomach to make the pain go away.

***What do you think about the notion that spiritual belief can aid in healing?***

***How do your own beliefs about religion or spirituality affect your health?***

## **END-OF-LIFE CARE**

Roger’s story gives us an intimate view of a person working through how he wants to be cared for at the end of his life.

***Describe the stages that Roger seems to go through as he nears the end of his life.***

***Describe how Jessica handles the conversations with Roger about the DNR “Do Not Resuscitate” order. Do you think she was too blunt or was her directness and honesty the right approach?***

***Have you given any thought to how you would like to be cared for in your final days?***

## **POVERTY**

Many of the 5 million homebound and home-limited in this country live in poverty.

***Discuss the effects of poverty in healthcare. What challenges must the poor face that others do not?***

***What might be done to insure that the poor are given better access to quality healthcare?***

## **NON - JUDGMENT**

During the scene where Roger's mother tells Jessica that his doctor "didn't listen to him," Jess tells us that she feels patient care is often influenced by the caregiver's perception of the patient's financial status or education.

***Do you think the Jessica's assessment is accurate?***

***How might the healthcare system work to reduce this bias?***

***Discuss whether or not you feel Jessica was able to avoid being judgmental in her care of these patients.***

## **STRESS**

The film offers small glimpses into Jessica's family life and exposes conflicts between her ability to care for her patients and to be there for her family.

***Where in the film can you see the tension between Jessica's job and her family life?***

***What might be done to help caregivers balance their work and home life?***

## **THE ROLE OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS**

There's currently a robust debate about the appropriate role of nurse practitioners in our healthcare system, with many advocating for more independence and others suggesting that their care should be supervised by a physician.

***What's your opinion about the quality of care the patients in the film received?***

*Do you agree or disagree that nurse practitioners should have more independence providing patient care?*

*Has watching the film changed your view of nurse practitioners in general?*



*Jessica Macleod with Shirley Brown, Roger's mother, as she struggles to decide whether or not to call an ambulance to take her son to the hospital.*

---