



Uncle Bob's Hospital Visit

Teacher's Guide

Summary

Uncle Bob was comfortable living alone following the death of his wife. He was a bit lonely but was able to cook and take care of his small home in the country. He had a routine and rhythm to his days and friends and activities to keep him busy and happy. But one day Uncle Bob suffers a heart attack and has to spend time in hospital. During his hospital stay he undergoes medical tests and has visits from his friends and family, while recovering from his heart attack. However, his growing loss of independence and autonomy has a negative effect on his spirit and ability to recover. The hospital professionals know that he can't return to his previous life, so discussions and meetings are held—too often without involving Uncle Bob! The visits from his granddaughter help turn the situation around, as does the final decision about where he will live. And so, Uncle Bob goes home to new routines and rhythms with his family nearby.

Recommended Audience: Ages 10 and up

Curriculum Areas

Family Studies

Health and Well-being

Aging

Career choice or exploration

Death

Vocabulary

heart attack

myocardial infarction

autonomy

seniors residential complex

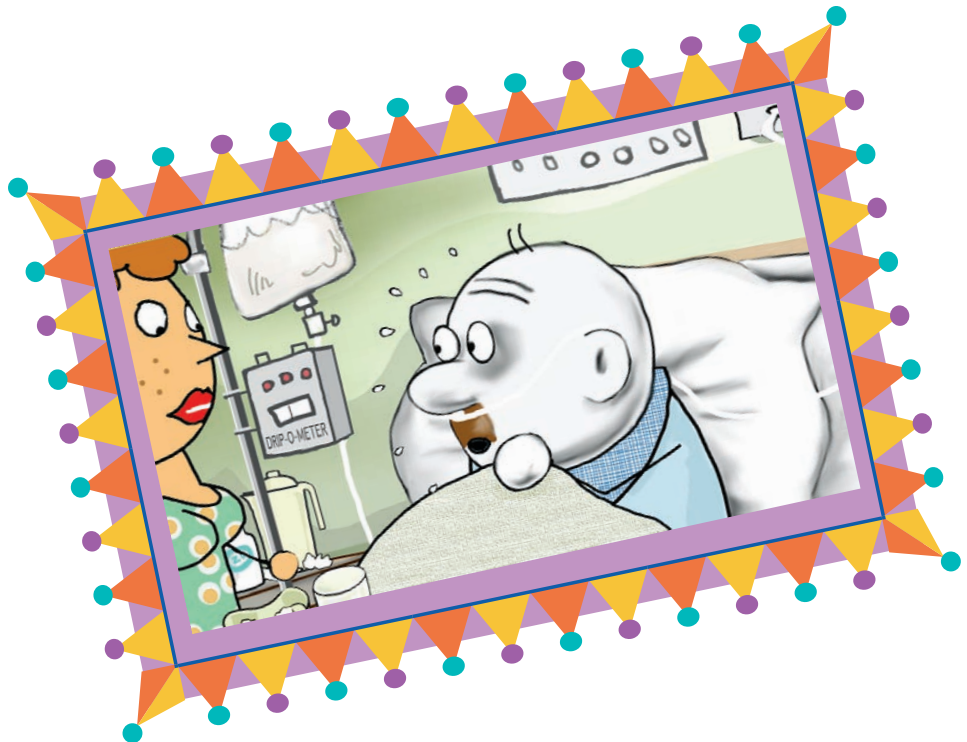
senior citizen

golden age

isolation

generations

loneliness





Uncle Bob's Hospital Visit

Pre-viewing Activities

Survey the class for their ideas of an “old person” in terms of these criteria:

- age
- physical appearance
- physical abilities
- living arrangements
- health issues or problems
- preferred recreational or social activities
- family

How did the students develop these ideas about what makes a person “old”?

What words do the students know and use to describe “old people,” e.g.:

- senior citizen
- old fellow
- golden ager

Ethnic or cultural names for grandparents

Review the role of the heart in human physiology.

- anatomy
- functions/purpose
- location
- major diseases and or health issues of the heart in childhood, middle age, old age; male and female differences

Watching the Film

Since the film is only 15 minutes, it can be viewed in one sitting. You may provide these cues:

- How did Uncle Bob react to the changes in his health?
 - How did the hospital staff help him recover from the heart attack?
 - What medical tests were done on Uncle Bob and why?
 - How many different health care workers helped Uncle Bob recover?
- Notice the changes in Uncle Bob's personality.





Uncle Bob's Hospital Visit

Post-viewing Activities

Right after viewing the film, discuss the following:

Uncle Bob experiences many emotions while in hospital. At times he is confused by the medical procedures and bewildered by some of the rules. He becomes impatient with his visitors and worries about his future. What other emotions does he experience and what are the triggers for these emotional changes?

Uncle Bob begins to feel more in control of his life when he chooses to get dressed in regular clothes instead of pyjamas. How else does he show his renewed ability and desire to look after himself?

Uncle Bob gets to know his grand-daughter while in hospital. How does she win his affection and how does this process help his recovery?

Senior Citizens in Your Community

Uncle Bob lived alone, by his own choice. Many senior citizens, either by choice or need, do not live alone in the home they shared with their family. Either for medical or financial reasons, or a desire for a more dynamic environment, many seniors move into some type of publicly supported or privately run seniors complex. These facilities offer different levels of medical care, recreation, supervision and services. They can be classified as follows:

- supervised living
- progressive assistance care
- autonomous living
- assisted living
- independent living

A. What do these, or any similar terms used in your community, mean? What is the difference between these types of living arrangements?

B. Using either a print-based or Web-based "Yellow Pages," have the class survey their community to discover the following:

- What types of senior citizen accommodations exist
- Where they are located
- What they offer in terms of medical / nursing care; recreational activities; religious practices; seniors' mother tongue resources, services and facilities
- In doing this research, the students may realize that a particular seniors' complex has a need for a piece of equipment, or a recreational activity or something to improve the quality of life for the residents. The students may decide to fund-raise, collect or create items to fill this need.



Uncle Bob's Hospital Visit

Myocardial Infarction / Heart attack

Once in hospital, Uncle Bob underwent tests to determine what happened to him. These tests included X-rays and blood tests for diagnostics, treatment planning and monitoring. His final stress test provided the information needed to determine that Uncle Bob was well enough to leave the hospital. If possible, invite a cardiac nurse or doctor, or a high school science teacher or university professor, to speak to the class about myocardial infarctions (heart attacks) – symptoms, diagnosis procedures and tests, short-term and long-term treatment options; survival prognosis, and prevention in terms of life style choices (nutrition, physical fitness, smoking).

After learning about prevention, invite the phys. ed. teacher to class to talk about the relationship between physical activity and fitness and a healthy heart. The teacher should take this opportunity to have the students find their heart rate and learn more about their own level of fitness. Together, the physical education teacher and students should map out a program to increase their fitness and improve their heart rate.

Hospital Stays

Uncle Bob had to get used to some new ways of doing things when he was in hospital. For example, he was not used to eat sitting up in bed, nor was he used to peeing in a bottle. How did Uncle Bob feel about this? His roommate had many visitors, but at the beginning, the noise from the visitors bothered Uncle Bob. Discuss this.

Uncle Bob's visitors brought gifts they thought would cheer him up or give him something to do – their conversation, music, books, fruit and candy. Why did these things not cheer him up? What did make Uncle Bob happy in hospital? Together, brainstorm how they could make a child's hospital stay more pleasant. The students could put into practice some of these ideas as part of their community service school requirements.

Senior isolation and loneliness

Many senior citizens feel lonely or isolated because:

- They live alone
- Their family members have moved far away
- Their friends and / or spouses have died
- They are housebound because of physical mobility or health problems
- Bad weather keeps them indoors
- There is a lack of transportation to help them get out of the house
- They are not comfortable in either English or French and are far from resources and people who speak their mother tongue.



Uncle Bob's Hospital Visit

Many communities have services or programs to alleviate this loneliness and isolation, such as:

- senior daycare programs
- meals on wheels
- volunteer visitors and telephone callers
- school or family based adopt-a-grandparent program
- public library outreach programs
- postal service workers check-ins
- handicapped transportation services
- visiting nurses

Do any of these exist in your community? Is there a program that your students could support either through fund-raising or other involvement?

Screen two other NFB short animated films called **George and Rosemary** and *Oma's Quilt*. (The latter is part of the *Talespinners Collection*.) How did these senior citizens and their family deal with loneliness and isolation?

Health care professionals

While in hospital Uncle Bob was treated by many health care workers:

- doctors
- nurses
- X-ray technicians
- social workers
- housekeepers
- orderlies
- hospital volunteers

What did each of these people do for, or to, Uncle Bob and why? What education and skills do people have to have for these jobs?

Decision making for Uncle Bob's future

A. Uncle Bob's son, Robert, his wife and grand-daughter Angela arrived after the social worker failed to convince Uncle Bob to move to a seniors complex. The doctors, nurses and social worker met with Robert and his wife to discuss what would happen. While they were having this discussion and making decisions about Uncle Bob's future, Uncle Bob was getting to know Angela. He was NOT part of the discussion or decision making regarding his future.

- Was this process fair?
- Why was Uncle Bob left out of this decision making?
- Why was Uncle Bob happy with the final decision about where he would live once he left hospital?

B. Have the students role-play a meeting where the following people discuss and make a decision regarding Uncle Bob's living arrangements after he leaves the hospital.

- doctor
- social worker
- Uncle Bob's son, Robert
- Uncle Bob's daughter-in-law, Robert's wife
- Uncle Bob's grand-daughter, Angela
- Uncle Bob
- Uncle Bob's hospital primary care nurse
- patient advocate from the hospital who will chair the meeting