

## Multi-Generational, Blended Family Case Story

The following case story describes a multi-generational, blended family unit who live in Richmond, a city located in the Vancouver mainland area in British Columbia.

Harry is a 50 year old man who was born in Terrace and currently lives in Richmond. He married his high school sweetheart Barbara when he was in his early 20s, and together they had four healthy children, two boys and two girls, who are now 12, 15, 17, & 20 in age. They were divorced five years ago, after Harry met Holly at soccer games when his teen son was 10 years old.

Barbara remains single and works full-time as a social worker at the Richmond Hospital. Harry has worked full-time as a manager at the local credit union for the past five years. He has a bachelor's degree in commerce, and has taken numerous courses related to business management. He is interested in taking the Royal Rhodes Master's degree in business administration, but the tuition for this program is costly. Harry has diabetes mellitus type 1 which was diagnosed when he was an adolescent. He manages the disease well with daily insulin shots, a diabetic diet, and evening walks with his dog at the local regional park.

Recently, he visited his doctor with complaints of heartburn both when eating spicy foods, and about 30 minutes after meals. If he chews on Tums tablets after meals, the burning feeling goes away. His doctor suspects he has a peptic ulcer. Harry also mentioned he is experiencing impaired sleep, like insomnia.

Holly was adopted in China when her parents were Anglican missionaries working near Shanghai. She was the only child and her Caucasian, Canadian parents adopted her late in life, when they were in their mid-40s. They returned to Canada in the early 1990s and retired in Queen Charlotte City, British Columbia. Her father was 70 years old and died suddenly of a heart attack two years ago. Her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease 10 years ago. Her father took care of her mother for about 5 years, and then she moved permanently into a local long term care facility. She died three years ago from pneumonia.

Holly is of Chinese heritage, is fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese, and English, and completed her post-secondary education as a registered nurse in Hong Kong. When she was 25 years old, she married a local boy, Eric who was 29 years old, born and raised in Skidegate, an aboriginal community located near Queen Charlotte City. Together, they had two sons and one daughter who are currently 8, 12, and 16 years old. Seven years

ago, when Holly was 35 years old, her husband Eric was killed in a logging accident. Devastated by this loss, she decided to move to Richmond where she had a chance to start a new life with help from a network of friends through the local, Anglican Church. She also returned to work part-time as a registered nurse on an acute surgical unit at Richmond Hospital.

Currently, Holly is 42 years old. She met Harry five years ago, and they have since had a son, James who is 4 years old. James was diagnosed with epilepsy when he was 3 years old. He has not had any seizures since being diagnosed and takes his medication every day. Three years ago, when Harry's father died from prostate cancer and her mother-in-law, Esther moved into a suite they built in the basement of their home, Holly quit working as a registered nurse.

Esther is 75 years old, has Diabetes Mellitus Type 1, hypertension, and rheumatoid arthritis. Esther uses a walker and needs assistance in everyday activities, such as bathing and food preparation. Holly, like her husband, has been experiencing sleep disturbances and weight loss of about two kilograms in the last month. She is wondering whether it is related to the burden of being the main caregiver for Esther or being a grandmother?

Her daughter, Candace is 16 years old and is a single mother of a six month old girl, Chelsea. Chelsea was recently diagnosed with acute, bilateral otitis media. Candace is completing her Grade 10 studies by correspondence. She has found a daycare that will take Chelsea next fall, when she plans to return to studying full-time at high school and get her Grade 12 diploma.

To make matters even more complicated for Holly, her other son Jonathan, who is 8 years old, has just returned from a two-day soccer tournament in Victoria, complaining of abdominal cramping and diarrhea. She suspects he has gastroenteritis given his symptoms and the fact that he feels much better after not eating and just taking sips of Gatorade. Holly was glad that at least her other son Michael, who is 12 years old and was diagnosed with asthma when he was 8 years old, seems fine. He takes his puffers daily as ordered by the doctor, and is good about not eating peanuts and corn, two confirmed food sensitivities.