

## APPENDIX

### Background from Ruth:

When I started drafting a submission to the Council of Canadian Academies, the body which will be studying the three postponed MAID topics (of which mental illness is one), I invited participation from half a dozen people I knew to be concerned and informed. James was one of the first to respond. I felt immediately that his story should be part of our submission, and he gave me permission to include it.

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Dec. 20, 2016

Over the past few days I have been receiving emails from Ruth concerning her submission to the Council of Canadian Academies, dealing with MAID decisions and mental illness. I met Ruth this past summer at a Dying with Dignity open house in their Toronto office.

I had gone initially to another open house during the federal election because I was incensed that the right to die with dignity was nowhere on the election radar. I left the meeting totally frustrated with the Liberal candidate in my riding, whose stand on the matter was no stand at all.

I met Ruth again at a subsequent DWD meeting, I think it was the night that Bill C-14 came into law. That night I gave a short talk about my first wife Carol's three-year battle with anxiety/depression which ultimately led her to take her own life. She had just turned forty. Our daughters were 10 and 12.

As I read Ruth's draft submission I found several facts and statements that I can relate directly to Carol's illness.

Concerning the 'capacity' of a mentally ill person to make rational decisions about their own state of affairs, there were many occasions where Carol was completely lucid and competent enough to discuss her own feelings. There were also periods when her illness overwhelmed her and she would not have the capacity to make her own decisions, but those bad periods reinforced her hopelessness and strengthened her will to end her life.

I did not know about the different domains or spheres of capacity, but I agree totally with the statement that only the mentally-ill person can answer the question "Can I bear any more of life like the one I am having, which seems to be the only kind I can have?" Carol's multiple suicide attempts made it crystal clear that she could not. All she could see was the 'foreverness' that Ruth writes about.

I have no formal education in psychology or mental health. All I am is a primary caregiver whose world was torn apart by this insidious disease. Carol wanted to die, there is no question about that.

To this day I don't know which was worse, the illness or the medication she was given to 'cure' her. I have my wife's full medical records complete with the doctors' private notes which detail every step, pill by pill. She also had six sessions of electric shock therapy that gave her an embolism in her lung. She was institutionalized five different times in Ontario and once in Florida. In her submission Ruth writes that 'with mental illness, life will be inflicted upon you.' It was certainly inflicted on my Carol and it weighed her down.

My daughters and I have rebuilt our lives and we are now part of a blended family with four adults and three grandchildren. But my girls will never get over the fact that they were unable to say goodbye to their Mum.