Service Dialogue for
Sydney Jamison

Description of Family:

Claire is a 6-year-old Caucasian female living in Houston, Texas. She lives with her 40-year-old mother, Rachel, and 4-year-old younger brother, Todd. Claire's father passed away of a rare form of cancer three years ago. Claire has been having severe stomach pain with both constipation and diarrhea for over six months now which has limited her ability to engage in her normal daily activities. All testing she has undergone in the previous months have returned with normal results.

Her current hospitalization resulted from a sudden increase in the intensity of the pain she has been experiencing. She is waiting to undergo more testing to determine a diagnosis. This will include an MRI which Clarie has expressed anxiety about. Claire's mother, Rachel, is overwhelmed by having a sick child and not having any answers, on top of both work responsibilities and being a single parent. However, friends from the family's Baptist church have been helping with Rachel's daily tasks since Claire became ill six months ago. Rachel feels confident that the church will help with the care of Todd during Claire's current hospitalization. In addition, Rachel's work provides great health insurance which has mitigated any anxiety related to hospital bills.

Claire, her mother, and brother are all in the room when I introduce myself.

Description of Setting: 1

Claire is currently in an inpatient pediatric room at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Service Dialogue:

CCLS: Hello! My name is Sydney, and I will be your Certified Child Life Specialist. You must be Claire (looking towards patient in the hospital bed). Who do you have here with you?
Claire: My mom and my little brother.
Mother: Hello, I'm Rachel and this is Todd (pointing towards her child sitting close by).
CCLS: It's so nice to meet all of you. I heard from Claire's doctor that it has been a rough day for you all. I'm so sorry that your family is going through this, but you are in the right place to get the help you need and find answers!
Mother: Yeah, it has been awful. Claire woke up last night having intense abdominal pain and I rushed her straight down here. We haven't gotten an ounce of sleep and she's still feeling horrible.
CCLS: Wow! Well, I won't take too much of your time, so hopefully you can get a nap in before the doctor comes. But I do want to let you know that as a child life specialist my role is to help support your family through this hospitalization. That includes working to minimize any fears or anxieties your family may be facing, helping to clear up confusion any of you may have about what is happening, and to provide resources that could be beneficial.
Mother: That would be great, I have felt overwhelmed and confused since we got here. One of the doctors mentioned something about an MRI, but we haven't heard anything about it in

hours. Claire has been worried about this because she hasn't had one before and I'm unsure if they will allow me back with her.
CCLS: I see in the doctor's notes that the MRI should take place around 3PM. Someone from patient transport will come and pick Claire up at that time. Usually, a parent is allowed to be present just prior to the MRI. I can check with radiology to see if they will allow you to be present during the test. I'll let them know that this is her first MRI, and it would be very helpful to Clarie. As soon as I hear back from them, I will let you know.
Mother: That would be absolutely wonderful!
CCLS: They likely won't allow Todd to come with you for this because of his age. However, if you feel comfortable, I can send one of our volunteers to your room to come pick up Todd just before you and Clarie head off. The volunteer will take Todd to our playroom, which I'm sure he will love!
Brother: There's a playroom here?!
CCLS: Yes, we have two actually! They will likely take you to the one on the 8th floor which is my personal favorite. It's filled with arts and crafts, board games, and tons of toys!
Brother: I want to go to the playroom (looking at mom).
Mother: Alright, well that settles that. Let me know as soon as you hear back from radiology.
CCLS: Yes! I will do that!
CCLS: Claire, I want you to feel as comfortable as possible during this MRI. What have you heard about this test?
Claire: I don't know… I'm just scared it's going to hurt, and I want mom there.
CCLS: That is understandable, it can feel scary when you don't know what to expect. An MRI is nothing to be afraid of though! It's just a fancy name for a machine that takes pictures of what you look like on the inside. It shouldn't hurt at all, and the machine won't touch you, but it will be loud, and you will have to stay very still. We hope that this will let your doctors know why your tummy is hurting so that they can help you.
Mother: See Claire, I told you it'll be okay! You can do this!
CCLS: I know you will do great, Claire! I can also put on some music for you to listen to during the MRI. Do you have a favorite song?
Claire: Can you play Kidz Bop?
CCLS: Yes, I can! I will make sure to have some playing.
Claire: Okay, thank you!
CCLS: I will stop by about an hour before your MRI to talk to you more about what to expect. (looking at Claire) I have a mini-MRI machine that the child life team built out of Legos that I'll use to show you what the actual machine will look like. I'll bring a teddy bear to demonstrate how you will lie during the test. If you like the teddy bear, you can take him with you for your MRI.
Mother: That sounds really cool! You'd love that, right Claire?
Claire: Yeah!
CCLS: Great, I look forward to bringing that down. Other than concerns about this MRI, is there anything else that I can help you with at this time?
Mother: Not that I can think of, but you have been very helpful.
CCLS: Let me write my phone number down on the whiteboard, so if you have any questions, concerns, or need support, you can call me. While I'm at it I'm also going to put down the chaplain's number. The chaplain is available 24/7 for any spiritual needs.

Mother: Thank you! We have been in contact with our church family since Claire has been ill, but I don't always feel comfortable calling at odd hours when I'm needing support. I'm glad I have a number to call now.
CCLS: Yes, that is what we are here for! Our team wants you to feel supported and have the resources to get through this difficult time!
Mother: I really appreciate that!
CCLS: Of course! So, to recap, I'm going to call radiology for you and get back to you with what they let me know. If they say yes, I'll arrange for a volunteer to take Todd to the playroom. Also, I will stop by about an hour before the MRI to educate and prepare Claire for it. In the meantime, please try to get some rest if you can!
Mother: Thank you for all of your help. Although this time has been restless and difficult, we truly appreciate the support you have given us.
CCLS: I'm glad to be of assistance. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need anything! I will see you all shortly.