

Case Examples

A selection of case examples that can be used to devise learning activities, simulations or encourage reflection.

About Andy

Home life

Andy stays at home with his mum, dad and younger brother, age 16. His dad has Multiple Sclerosis and Andy receives carer's allowance to look after him.

Caring Situation

He is the main carer as his mum works part time and isn't strong enough to lift his dad. Andy left school at 16, after not doing very well in his exams because of the conflicting demands of home and school. He would like to go back to college and get some qualifications to have some hope of a career, but it seems this will have a major impact on the family finances as his carer's allowance will be cut. He feels trapped at home and has started going out binge drinking at the weekends to try and block out the stress of seeing his dad deteriorate, and his mixed feelings of hopelessness, guilt and anger. He would actually like to move out and get a place of his own but doesn't think either he or his family could manage financially. He doesn't want to subject his younger brother to taking over the responsibility for caring for his dad, but is a bit jealous that he is going to be able to go on to college. He is involved with his local Young Adult Carers group and feels he gets some support there.

Key Issues

1. Young Adult carers struggle to continue in education, and maintain their caring role at the same time.
2. Young Adult Carers find it hard to have a life outside caring.
3. There are barriers to independence for young adult carers who often feel trapped due to their caring responsibilities.

Information Needs

1. Information and support about continuing education, finding a job and balancing his caring role.
2. Staying updated on policy changes that might affect him.

Support Needs

1. Getting support from friendly, informed sources that empower and encourage him.
2. Interacting with other young adult carers going through similar situations.

Likes to communicate by

Instant messaging, Facebook, YouTube



About Callum

Home life

Callum lives at home with his mum and his two younger sisters, age 9 and 11. His dad completed suicide five years ago without leaving any notes.

Caring Situation

His mum has an alcohol problem which has not been detected by health or social services. However she was recently charged with drink driving, and knows when she appears in court it will be reported in the local paper. She is very worried that social services might get involved and the children might be taken from her.

Callum has been trying to keep the family together for the last three years. He tries to make sure he gets some money to buy shopping from his mum when she gets her benefits, before she spends it all on alcohol. He and his sisters search the house for alcohol and pour it down the sink, but his mum seems to find new hiding places all the time.

Callum's best friend knows about his home situation but he has made him promise not to tell anyone. His teachers at school are slightly concerned about his disruptive behaviour but he is very good at forging his mum's signature on any letters and report slips sent home from school.

Key Issues

1. Some young people are used to covering up how difficult things are at home.
2. Some young people need someone they can trust to share their problems with.
3. Those who are identified as young carers say that they need more support from their specialist support representatives in school.

Information Needs

1. Getting information about support for his mother and getting the best help for her.
2. Finding out about the CIS service and how they can support him.

Support Needs

1. Having someone whom he can trust to talk to regularly about things.
2. Interacting with other young carers going through a similar situation.

Likes to communicate by

Instant messaging, Facebook, YouTube



About Carole

Home life

Carole lives with her husband, John and her daughter, Hannah. The family live in a three bedroom town house which is rented from a local housing association. Carole is currently sleeping on the bed settee in the living room as she has very disturbed sleeping patterns and can't make the stairs on her own. She has been given details of the Macmillan nurse in the area, but has not seen her yet.

Caring Situation

Carole has recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer, after undergoing unsuccessful surgery and radio and chemotherapy. She is very weak and tired, but back at home just now. Because of her illness she has not worked for the last 18 months. Only Hannah still lives at home – one of their other daughters lives with her boyfriend close by and the other is away at university studying. John works part time in the parks department on a very low wage.

Carole used to be a college lecturer and the family are not sure whether they might be able to access her pension, or possibly even her life insurance to make the final few months more enjoyable for her. They want to buy a new bed and a supportive chair.

Key Issues

1. Some families who are dealing with complex care situations might find it challenging to also support the person who is the main carer. 2. Sometimes the emotional demands and stress of a caring situation mean that families can only think of one day at a time.

Information Needs

1. Become familiar with the legal and financial implications of their caring situation.

Support Needs

1. Coping with their caring responsibilities.
2. Support with housing arrangements to ensure Carole's comfort.
3. Consistency in interactions with health professionals

Likes to communicate by

Face to face



About Elaine

Home life

Elaine lives with her partner. They have no children of their own but she has a close relationship with her nieces and nephews.

Caring Situation

She had to take responsibility for an elderly aunt and uncle (who also had no children) and, as their health declined, had to try to deal with all of the different care agencies. Her uncle died shortly after her aunt and left no will, which meant she had to sort out his funeral and then try to liaise with solicitors about his estate. Elaine also now has power of attorney for her mum, who has dementia.

Although Elaine has two siblings, one works long hours and the other doesn't live locally so she takes the burden of responsibility for supporting her mum. Their mum moved into a very sheltered housing complex a year ago, where she receives some extra support and her meals each day. Elaine's brother was living with their mum, so he still lives in her house as a tenant but they are not entirely sure what the legal situation is with regard to the house.

Elaine tries to visit every other day to make sure her mum is changing her clothes, however she has taken on another part-time job which means she is working away from home two days a week. She is wondering whether her mum perhaps needs a carer to go in each day now.

Key Issues

1. People are put off by the waiting times (and being transferred from one person to another) when calling help lines or statutory services.
2. CIS currently does not retain details of callers' enquiries, so if Elaine called back she would have to explain the situation all over again.
3. Users need more information about legal and financial implications of their care situation.

Information Needs

1. Being given clear step by step advice on what she needs with regards to her situation.
2. Become familiar with the legal and financial implications of her caring situation.

Support Needs

1. Coping with her care responsibilities whilst managing her job.



Likes to communicate by

Face to face, Email, Phone

About George and Margaret

Home life

George and Margaret live together in their own home in Edinburgh.

Caring Situation

George and Margaret have been in good health all of their lives and George had never been in hospital until he fell in the church hall a few months ago and was kept in for observation and physio for two weeks – he's not sure why.

Margaret does have osteoarthritis and has suffered from recurrent chest infections over the past year or so. When George was in hospital she managed on her own and their daughter organised shopping to be delivered. George says he didn't feel his age until he had the fall, but now feels much more frail and vulnerable. He was discharged home from hospital with only the occasional physio visit.

The couple don't have much contact with their GP as the practice has moved a few times and is now the other side of town and two bus rides away. George knows that his brother used to get help with caring for his wife before she died, and is wondering whether they might be able to get something.

Key Issues

1. Social isolation.
2. Lack of mobility, or ability to travel.
3. Lack of communication between hospital discharge teams and relevant support agencies.

Information Needs

1. Setting up an emergency care plan.
2. Advice with legal and financial issues.

Support Needs

1. Support with caring for each other.
2. Someone to check up on them from time to time.

Like to communicate by

Face to face



About Jim

Home life

Jim lives and works in Dubai, only coming back to Scotland once or twice a year. He is divorced with teenage children who come out to visit him in the holidays.

Caring Situation

As his children like coming to Dubai, he only comes home to see his parents occasionally. They are in their late 70s and live in their own home in Ayrshire. His dad is a retired accountant, and his mum was a teacher. He is an only child. His dad was diagnosed two years ago with Alzheimer's and his mum has osteoarthritis. Recently his mum has been complaining on the phone that she is concerned about his dad's increasing dependence on her, and that he kicks up a fuss whenever she wants to go out on her own. Although his dad is on medication from the doctor they have not had any form of care assessment or support of any kind up to now. Jim now feels that perhaps his mum might need some support in caring for his dad. He knows that they are very proud, independent people and may be resistant to anyone from social services (or what they would term as 'welfare') getting involved. He has no idea who to phone to ask for help or advice.

Key Issues

1. For some people, it is hard to accept they might need external help, especially from 'social services'. Because of the stigma surrounding terms such as 'social worker' and 'welfare', they can be resistant to accessing support they might be entitled to.
2. People living outwith UK have limited knowledge of the welfare system and how it applies to different situations.
3. When someone doesn't have power of attorney it is difficult for them to get advice on behalf of someone they are concerned about.
4. Terminology such as 'social worker' and 'welfare' can make some people sceptical and resistant to any support they might be entitled to.

Information Needs

1. Become familiar with the legal implications of taking action on behalf of his parents.

Support Needs

1. Having a trusted person to call in relation to his concerns.



2. Getting his parents to understand they need a care assessment and organising for this to happen.

Like to communicate by

Skype, Phone, Email

About Naz

Home life

Naz lives in Glasgow with her husband who works as a taxi driver, and her 26 year old son who has learning difficulties.

Caring Situation

She has two daughters who are married with young children, but live reasonably close by. Her husband's father also lives with them and he has major health problems related to diabetes. She is concerned that her husband may also be diabetic. The family are Muslim and attend mosque regularly, and keep the religious holidays, including the Ramadan fast. Naz wears the hijab and mixes traditional Muslim clothing with European clothing.

Although the diabetic nurse comes in regularly to change her father-in-laws dressings, they have no other support from health or social services. They rent their flat from a private landlord and pay the rent from her husband's earnings. Naz speaks reasonable English but is not

confident talking on the phone to people in authority. The family do not have an internet connection and none of them are very IT literate.

She watches a lot of television as she is often tied to the house because of her son and father-in-law. She would like to have more time to visit her daughters and spend time with her grandchildren.

Key Issues

1. Some people are not confident with speaking on the phone or face to face due to language barriers.
2. Naz needs supported to find some time to do the things she wants to do to stop her health deteriorating too.

Information Needs

1. Information on how to best support her father-in-law and her son.



Support Needs

1. Social services to assess her situation and provide better support.
2. Coping with her caring responsibilities and still living her own life.
3. An interpreter to help her communicate with health and social care professionals.

Like to communicate by

Face to face, TV

About Rachel

Home life

She is currently classified as 'homeless' as she is sleeping in friends' houses, waiting to be allocated a flat of her own. She misses letters from the different agencies as she moves around quite a lot. She has now been told that she will only get housing benefit for a shared room in a flat because of her age. This has seriously freaked her out as she gets very anxious about meeting new people. She really struggles to make phone calls to benefits agencies and get accurate information.

Caring Situation

Rachel has suffered with mental health problems since she was in high school. She managed to get the qualifications to go to college and study art, but dropped out after 8 months due to her deteriorating mental health. She suffers from severe anxiety and depression. She has serious panic attacks when she receives letters about benefit changes.

She has had a range of key workers over the past three years but doesn't feel that any of them have really 'got' her. When she worked up the courage to send an email to her latest key worker, explaining her anxiety about finding somewhere to live, he sent a very curt reply suggesting she call the local council herself.

Key Issues

1. Social isolation and stigma.
2. Some people don't feel comfortable talking on the phone or in person.
3. Some people might not only be in a situation where they need extra support, but also in a fragile state of mental health.

Information Needs

1. Being given clear step by step advice on what she needs to do to get the support she needs

Support Needs

1. Being given a choice in channels of communication when contacting local services



and authorities

2. Socialising and building connections.
3. Finding a stable place to live.
4. Better and friendlier support from her key workers.
5. Coping with her anxiety and depression.

Like to communicate by

Web Chat, Forum, Facebook

About Rosemary

Home life

Rosemary is a widow whose husband died 12 years ago. She has two sons and a daughter who live within a reasonable distance, and lots of grandchildren she often lends a hand with, looking after them during the holidays when their parents are at work. She lives in her own home, drives her own car, is financially independent, and has a wide circle of friends, with whom she enjoys cruise holidays twice a year.

Caring Situation

She does an enormous amount of voluntary work, helping with vulnerable people in her local community, driving them to appointments and supporting them in many other ways. Although she has had both hips and knees replaced in the last 10 years she is very active and independent. When she does go to the GP she is more concerned about his health and wellbeing than he is about hers.

She doesn't consider herself 'old' and spends most of her time helping others. Rosemary would consider 'care' as something she does for others rather than needs herself, and gets annoyed when her daughter fusses over her and tells her she is doing too much. She doesn't worry about the future and likes to take each day as it comes.

Key Issues

1. Some people don't think about care or future financial planning.
2. Lots of people are fit, active and supporting others well into their 70s.

Information Needs

1. Finding out about CIS and how they might provide information about future support needs.

Support Needs

1. Start thinking about the future in terms of financial planning and care.



Like to communicate by
Face to face, Paper, Phone

About Shona

Home life

Shona is a single parent with a son, age 13, who has autism and other associated learning difficulties.

Caring Situation

He is in mainstream education at the local high school and is supposed to have one to one support. Shona works part time in a local office. She often receives phone calls from the school while at work, asking her to come and collect her son when he becomes distressed, and is worried that she may lose her job.

She has made herself something of an expert in her son's condition, and searches the internet for information and advice. She is a member of a few different support forums for parents and gets a lot of information and support from there, although some of the information about support services is not directly relevant as it may come from people in the States or in England. She takes an active role in her local carers support group and has advised some of the other mums about how to get the support they need.

Shona feels she is constantly battling to get the support she needs for her son. She feels it is her against the system. She says it is stressful enough having to care for her son without having daily battles with the education authority and social services.

Key Issues

1. Some people become 'experts' in their particular caring role, and feel that their knowledge could be shared for the benefit of others in similar care situations.

Information Needs

1. Stay updated with policy changes that might affect herself and her son.



2. Being provided with more information relevant to Scotland rather than England or international.

Support Needs

1. Better support from the education authorities and social services.

Like to communicate by

Twitter, Forum, Facebook

About Brian

Home life

Brian is a 72 year old gay man who lives in Edinburgh. He used to be a typesetter in a publishing company but is retired now. He lives alone in a flat rented from a local housing association. Since his long term partner died a few years ago, he has been on his own and often feels quite lonely and isolated.

Brian used to have a group of very close friends who were also LGBT and whom he thought of as his “family”. However, as they have all gotten older they seem to have lost contact and he no longer sees them as much. His biological family (sister, brothers, nieces and nephews) live in Fife and he has minimal contact with them, mostly just seeing them at Christmas and big family occasions. He is often saddened by the fact that he senses he is a bit of an oddity to his family, and they sometimes seem embarrassed by his presence at family occasions. This makes him feel as if he has to hide his identity, which he finds stressful and debilitating.

Like most older people he finds the pub/club scene is very ageist and he feels quite uncomfortable in gay bars now where the focus is on much younger people.

Caring situation

Brian is healthy and active just now, but sees some of his friends’ health declining, and they all worry about getting appropriate personal care and health support. Some of his friends have told him that they are the target of homophobic bullying in care, and others say that their carers have assumed that they are straight and they have not felt able to correct them. He is concerned when he sees his friends have removed visible indicators of their LGBT identity from their homes, such as picture of partners, since they began receiving home help. He says it takes a lot of energy and wears you down when the onus is always on you to declare your sexuality and maintain your ‘outness’ in the face of blatant or implied discrimination. He says he is



frightened that after years of fighting to be 'out' that he may have to go 'back into the closet'.

Key issues

1. Social isolation.
2. Discrimination.
3. Bullying.

Information needs

1. To receive information presented in ways that recognise the diversity of sexual orientation.
2. To find out about services that specifically support older LGBT people.

Support needs

1. CIS advisors to be aware of the particular issues facing LGBT people thinking about personal care and support.
2. Having access to care providers who understand his specific support needs.
3. CIS and care providers advisors trained not to assume heterosexuality/gender identity. (These assumptions are commonly referred to as "heteronormativity" or "heterosexism")
4. CIS stock images not to be heterosexual by default.
5. Confidentiality issues with carers coming in – some people might not want to be outed.

Likes to communicate by

Face to face, phone, basic online skills

About Robert

Home life

Robert is 62 and lives in supported accommodation with other people with learning difficulties. They each have their own flat and a support organisation employs support workers who come in and support as they are needed. Some people get support workers staying over with them, but Robert just needs someone to go with him when he goes out to the shops or into town.

Caring Situation

Robert has a support package which means that he has a set number of hours that someone can support him to go out and do the things he wants to do, such as going



to the shops. He also goes to a day centre two days a week where he can do different activities of his choice. There are also two groups he goes to in a local centre in the evening where they have social activities.

Robert can get stressed when he knows he is going to have a new care assessment. He can worry about the questions and whether he will give the right answers. He relies a lot on the People First group where he gets a lot of support from his peers and expert support to guide him through changes such as these. He says that sometimes he gets anxious if he is given too many choices about what he can do as, in the past, he was only used to being told what to do, and not making choices for himself. This is why Self Directed Support worries him.

Key Issues

- 1. Robert can take a bit longer to think about things and answer questions than other people. He can need support to make sure he has understood new information.*
- 2. Robert can find it difficult to make decisions when there are too many choices. He needs support so he can decide which are the best options for him.*

Information Needs

1. CIS can train staff to recognise when someone who is calling has learning difficulties, and respond in an understanding way.
2. CIS website must have video and audio descriptions on each page, explaining all website content in a clear way. Text must also be simple and plain English used throughout.

Support Needs

- 1. If he has to have a new care assessment or think about what support he needs, someone should be available to guide Robert in understanding all the issues and answer the questions in the right way for him.*
- 2. Robert needs information provided in a clear and easy to understand way. However, he does not like when things look too childish as he finds that really insulting.*

Likes to communicate by

Face to face, Paper

About Mr & Mr Cheung

Home life

Mr and Mrs Cheung are both in their early 80s. They live with their son and daughter-in-law and their two children in a Victorian terraced house in Leith, Edinburgh. They have their own bedroom but share the rest of the rooms (such as living room and kitchen) with the rest of the family. Mrs Cheung does a lot of the



cooking as her daughter-in-law works full time. Neither of the couple speaks English, so they rely heavily on their son and grandchildren to help them with any official letters or forms they have to fill in. They don't drive but know which buses to take to the Chinese Supermarket and the local Chinese community group. They go out most days to meet with friends at a local café.

Caring situation

Mr Cheung has dementia. Friends in their community advised the family to contact MECOPP, a minority ethnic carer's service in Edinburgh. They have received a lot of support from them and Mrs Cheung has recently been told that she is her husband's carer, and she can get a carer's allowance. This seems very strange to her as culturally she feels that this is something that families do for each other naturally. They used to rely on their son or grandchildren to accompany them to any appointments, but now they have a lot more appointments, their son cannot take time off work, so he requests an interpreter for them. This means that arranging appointments can be quite difficult and take longer than usual.

Key issues

- 1. Communication is a major issue. Neither of the couple can speak nor read English.*
- 2. There is a problem sourcing information in community languages.*

Information needs

- 1. Care information in their language.*
- 2. Trained special community advisors who can help them to navigate the social care system.*

Support needs

- 1. Planning for the future, considering their options if Mr. Cheung's condition continues to deteriorate.*
- 2. Ongoing care information and support when caring for someone with a long-term condition*

Likes to communicate by

Face to face

