

# Worksheet 16:

## Mandy's story

Mandy is 64 years old. She works part-time in a bank as PA to a bank manager. She lives with her husband Bob and is his main carer as he has been physically disabled by a stroke. Mandy and Bob have four children and six grandchildren who all live locally.

They are a very close family and in the last year they have all become increasingly concerned about Mandy. Mandy herself is aware that 'something is not right'. Her memory is becoming very poor indeed. She has had several frightening experiences including when she has forgotten to pick up her grandchildren from school – something she has been doing with no problem for years. Mandy constantly calls her grandchildren by her children's names without recognising her error. She has been accused of 'cutting friends and neighbours dead in the street' because she has ignored them. When Mandy has been told afterwards, she has been very upset about what she's done and disclosed to Bob that she didn't mean to 'cut them dead'... she didn't know who they were.

Mandy is worried about her job as she is making significant errors in her work. Her manager has asked that an office junior checks Mandy's work daily. Mandy has forgotten key tasks or sent information to the wrong person, left piles of post in her desk drawer and seems vague and lacking in concentration. All of these things are highly unusual for Mandy who has always been meticulous and well organised.

Mandy has gone to her GP to talk to him about her symptoms. Her GP has done blood and urine tests, performed a general health check, assessed her using an abbreviated 'Mini Mental State Examination', assessed her mental health, and taken a full history of her symptoms. He has informed Mandy that he thinks she may have signs of dementia and has referred her to the local memory clinic.

Following further assessments and tests the consultant at the memory clinic confirms the GP's diagnosis: Mandy has young onset Alzheimer's disease. Mandy is offered information about Alzheimer's disease and local services that she might be interested in. The consultant informs her that she will be kept under their care as part of their 'Integrated Care Pathway', and that he will ask a member of the social work team to visit her.

The months that have followed for Mandy and her family have been a rollercoaster!

They have been able to discuss the possible implications of Mandy's diagnosis and, although it has been emotional for all of them, they have set in place actions which have been of great reassurance to Mandy, Bob and the children.

They have done lots of research on the Internet about Alzheimer's disease so feel that they have an understanding of the symptoms and how to support Mandy. Mandy is happy to share her diagnosis with friends and colleagues – some of whom have 'disappeared' from her life, but many of whom remain close, understanding and helpful.

Mandy has informed her manager and, through the bank's HR and occupational health departments, has undertaken a work assessment which has identified what she is able to do and what she needs assistance with. Mandy has reduced her hours and applied for a range of benefits and allowances.

Mandy, Bob and their children have all completed lasting power of attorneys (LPAs) and Mandy and Bob have each completed an Advanced Directive. Mandy and Bob attend a local support group once a month which is run by the Alzheimer's Society Branch and volunteers. They both enjoy the quarterly Alzheimer's café.

Mandy would say that 'things are ok' at the moment, but her CPN has suggested that she might benefit from some counselling or 'talking therapy' to help her deal with the impact of the diagnosis and her fears for the future.