

# Worksheet 14:

## Case Study – Diane and George

The following case study is based on true events. Please read the case study and answer the questions. Be prepared to discuss your responses.

### Case Study: Diane and George

Diane and George have been married for over fifty years. They have six children and eleven grandchildren scattered all around the world.

Diane qualified as a Geography teacher in 1968. She met her husband, George, at the first school she worked in, an inner-city school in South London. George was the Deputy Head, and Diane will tell anyone who listens that she fell in love with him immediately. They had a small and intimate wedding with close family and friends. They both gave up their jobs and went around the world for their honeymoon. This adventure sparked a life-long passion for travelling – George always used to joke that they needed to go to Antarctica to get number seven (meaning a seventh child).

Diane and George have always managed to work in the same three schools throughout their careers - all in deprived areas of London. Both share the belief that education is a right not a privilege, and have forged out senior roles – George as a Head Teacher since 1980, and Diane as Head of Humanities at their last school, Saint Bartholomew's. When George retired in 2000, Diane chose to take early retirement too. For the next five years, they volunteered for a small charity that helped to educate children in Zambia. This was a life long ambition for both of them, and an experience that they both treasure. When they returned to London in 2005, they continued to work for the charity, fundraising and running events to promote its work.

Ten years ago, George began to have difficulties at the charity – forgetting to collect items for a fundraiser, getting venues confused and on two occasions getting very lost when driving to the charity's shop.

Diane and George spoke with their GP, who referred them to a local memory clinic. After extensive assessments, George was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. They were given a few leaflets – one on Alzheimer's disease, one on GPS Trackers and SOS Alarms and one from a local Dementia Café. Diane immediately put them all in the bin on the way back to the car. As she drove them both home, her head was spinning and she was struck by how positive George was.

Diane and George spoke infrequently about the future. Once, while they were watching TV, George turned to Diane and said that he never wanted to go to a home and made Diane promise that she'd never do it. Diane was taken aback – she promised that she never would and made him promise the same thing!

As the next few years passed, George began to experience many difficulties in their house, so they chose to buy a flat in a newly opened extra care housing scheme close to where they used to live in South London. Diane said that it seemed like the best plan for the future.

For the last year, Diane has been helping George with activities of daily living: getting up, washing, using the toilet, getting dressed and getting ready for bed. However, after a recent health scare, Diane has been receiving support three times a day to help with George's care needs.

Two months ago, Diane was told that she needed to go into hospital for an operation. When she informed John (the manager of the Home Care Agency), he suggested that she →

needed to think about respite care for George. Although she was anxious, Diane went with John to view three care homes. John recommended the last home they saw, Victoria Falls Care Centre. Diane thought it a good omen, as the name of the home filled her head with memories of the times that she and George had shared in Zambia.

Everything was agreed and, one month ago, Diane and George arrived at Victoria Falls for George's four week respite stay. They were met at the front door by Patsy, the home's administrator, who welcomed them warmly.

Patsy suggested that the three of them take a walk to the 'River Suite', the home's specialist dementia service, as she knew that the staff were expecting them. In the doorway of the 'River Suite', Patsy introduced Diane and George to Chantal, one of the care staff. Just at that moment, Patsy was paged, so she gave her apologies and left. Chantal took them through the doors and asked them to wait, as she needed to find the senior carer.

Moments later, another carer approached Diane and asked her if the small suitcase she was holding was for George. When she said it was, the carer asked if she could take it to help prepare George's room. Diane agreed and the carer disappeared with George's suitcase.

A minute or two later, George became restless and began to ask if they could go home. Diane glanced around the lounge area and saw Chantal. She called to her and Chantal came back over to them. Smiling, Chantal explained that they were really busy this morning because they had a new drumming session starting. She added that the session was being run by members of a local charity, the Africa Centre. George smiled broadly and Chantal quickly asked him if he wanted to come and have a look. He did and the two of them disappeared down a corridor.

Diane was left standing in the corner of the lounge. She looked around, waiting for Chantal to come back. She went to the door but couldn't open it because there was a key-pad door lock. She went back to the lounge and stood alone by the wall, waiting. After another ten minutes, Diane began to cry. A short while later she crouched and then sat on the floor, by now crying uncontrollably. Although there were members of the care team in the lounge, nobody approached Diane until Chantal came out from a resident's bedroom and saw Diane's distress. She took her into the office and alerted the senior on duty.

**What positive experiences did Diane have with members of the professional care teams?**

**What negative experiences did Diane have with members of the professional care teams?**

**Why do you think this situation in the 'River Suite' happened?**

**What impact does the attitude of the care professionals towards Diane have on her?**

**What could the whole care team have done differently?**