

Case Study #1 - Sadie's story

Sadie is a 78 year old woman with diagnosis of dementia. She lives at home with her husband Jim who is her main carer. Sadie and Jim have two daughters who both live close by. They are a close supportive family and would like to offer help to their parents however they both work full time and are raising families of their own so are unable to support Sadie as much as they would like. Sadie's condition is deteriorating, she is becoming increasingly distressed and agitated resulting in recent episodes of self-harm and physical assault on her husband. Sadie has a tendency to wander, lacks insight into risks around the house and can be unsettled during the night.

Two weeks ago the situation at home became critical with Sadie became highly distressed and lashed out at Jim. Sadie was admitted to hospital, she is currently in the local geriatric psychiatric unit for assessment but is ready for discharge.

Jim wants Sadie to return home but recognises that he needs more support. Sadie finds it hard to articulate her wishes but has always said she doesn't want to go into care and has not settled on the ward she frequently wanders and appears agitated.

Sadie's daughters are concerned for both their parents and feel that Jim is no longer able to care for Sadie at home, they feel a residential setting would be best. Sadie and Jim have always been fiercely independent and reluctant to engage with traditional services such as day care which has been offered in the past. Jim admits he is very tired as Sadie is up through the night and this impacts on his ability to function and care for Sadie during the day. He used to be a keen golfer and bowler but has not been able to participate for a number of months as Sadie is unable to be left unsupported. Sadie has a couple of good neighbours who have become good friends through their joint passion for gardening and love of opera.

A case discussion has been arranged at the hospital to explore future support for Sadie and Jim.



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