

Applying a diversity lens to consumer-centred care

Magda moved to Australia with her husband and three young sons when she was in her 30's and they created a good life for the family just outside Geelong. They had a nice house with just enough room for their dogs, chickens and the occasional pig. She has lived at Perfect Homes aged care facility since her husband passed away a year ago. Lucy, one of the registered nurses at Perfect Homes, calls Irene, Magda's daughter-in-law who is Magda's point of contact. Lucy tells Irene that she's calling to provide an update and do Magda's care plan review. She says:

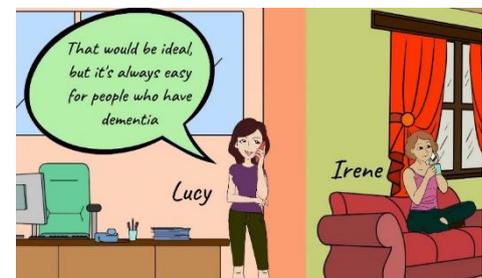


“Magda is doing well, she has always been one of the most physically fit here, and I think the lockdowns have been a bit harder on her as she does love to walk outside, but unfortunately we can't leave site. Some more good news is that her diabetes is under control, she hasn't gained or lost any weight, there haven't been any falls or near misses. There's obviously the memory loss issue and with that she's speaking a few Polish words here and there which keeps us on our toes.”

Lucy tells Irene that for the care plan review they need to come up with some goals for Magda, and asks if she would you like to keep the same goals or look at something different? Irene says:

“I can tell you what I think she does and doesn't like, but that can change and given the environment is quite different now because of lockdowns, I think it would be good if you asked Magda what she liked, what she wants to change or do more of.”

Lucy says that while that would be ideal it's not always easy to set goals with people who have dementia, so they prefer to do it directly with family. Irene continues to advocate that a conversation is had with Magda and suggests waiting and picking the right time to talk to her and having a number of small conversations, so it doesn't confuse her. After some discussion, Lucy agrees.



To help her frame the conversations Lucy reviews Magda's one-page profile which says she loves animals, especially dogs and chickens, she was playing tennis most weeks until her husband died and it's important that she observes her catholic faith. Lucy brings two small racquets and a sponge ball into the home and ask Magda if she would like to hit the ball in the hall. She smiles and they enjoy hitting the sponge ball like she was playing tennis. Over the next week Lucy has several small conversations with Magda and asks her what she like about living here, what she misses doing and what she would like to do more of. Magda told Lucy she wants to go to church and misses her chickens.

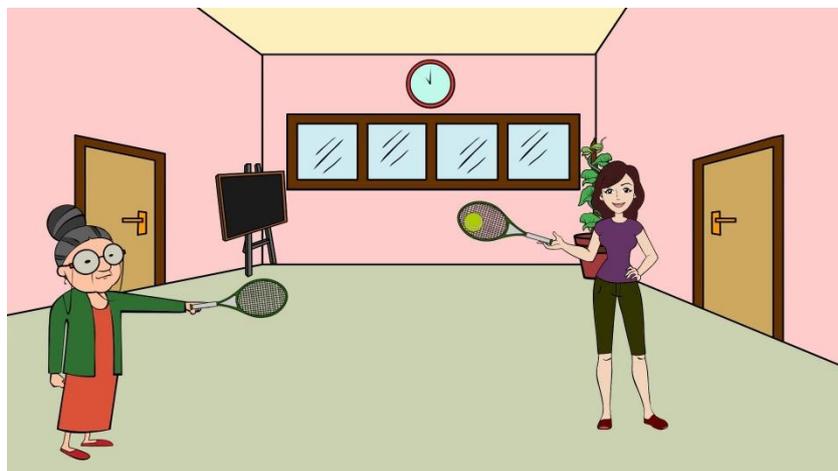
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Two weeks after their last call Lucy speaks with Irene and discusses the conversations she's had with Magda and their game of sponge tennis. Lucy recommends that one of Magda's goals be "To feel connected to my catholic faith" and says to support this Perfect Homes will host online Mass services for her and other interested residents while in lockdown. The other recommended goals are "To keep my body active and moving" and "To feel relaxed and peaceful". These goals will be supported by sponge tennis which Magda has really enjoyed and brining chickens to live on site at Perfect Homes as Magda told Lucy she misses her chickens and finds stroking them very relaxing.



Reflective questions

- What risk factors are present in this scenario?
- What did you think about Lucy's original approach to the care plan review?
- What do you think would have happened if Irene hadn't advocated for Magda to be involved in the care plan review?
- How did learning about Magda and her diversity support the situation and outcome?



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Case Study Reflections

- Assumptions were being made that Magda was not able to be part of the decision-making process, because she is living with dementia. There is a risk that her autonomy, choices and preferences are not understood or supported. Magda's dementia is not a risk factor, the aged care facility needs to find ways to include her in her care and the care plan processes.
- Taking a consumer-centred approach would ensure that a variety of different approaches are tried, recognising that no two people are the same and that the same person may need different approaches at different times.
- Lucy was not taking a consumer-centred approach by excluding Magda from the review processes. If Irene was not a strong advocate it is unlikely that the things that were important to Magda would have been understood or enacted. This would significantly impact Magda's wellbeing and quality of life.
- When challenged to do a meaningful care plan review. Lucy did implement good consumer-centred practice. She reviewed information about Magda that explained her diversity, who she is, what she likes and what is important to her. She adapted how she had conversations, tried out activities she thought Magda might like and put actions in place to support Magda's goals.
- Learning about Magda and her diversity provided Lucy with a variety of options and activities to try out. By adopting a consumer-centred approach Lucy looked beyond Magda's dementia diagnosis and saw her capabilities and interests, not her limitations or impairments.
- The goals developed for Magda's care plan describe feelings, outcomes or achievements that Magda talked about with Lucy during their conversations. Lucy took the important information from those conversations and created goals and actions that are meaningful to Magda and will contribute to her having a better quality of life, by doing things that she likes and are important to her.

