

Whole Family Approach Case Study – Multigenerational

Sandra (72), Erica (43), Olivia (16)
Multigenerational White British family living in an urban city



Sandra

Sandra moved in with her daughter, Erica, six months ago following the sudden death of her husband.

While she values the companionship and support this provides, she has found it difficult to adjust to city living, particularly as she can no longer easily visit friends on foot.

Due to her Parkinson's disease and Erica having stopped driving, Sandra also struggles to manage day-to-day tasks independently.

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Erica

Erica's ability to support her mother is limited by her Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Balancing morning work, managing the household, and supporting her mother on the third floor of the property significantly impacts her energy levels and causes joint pain, often requiring her to rest during the afternoons.

Although the family are currently coping on a day-to-day basis, Erica has ongoing concerns about her mother's future care and financial situation, as well as the longer-term impact on Olivia as she grows older.

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Olivia

Olivia has taken on a growing caring role within the household, helping both her mother and grandmother with daily tasks and evening routines.

This often affects her ability to keep up with homework and has limited her social life, as she feels uneasy leaving her grandmother alone.

Olivia also feels a sense of loss about the reduced time she spends with her mother and reports increasing anxiety, with concerns about her emotional wellbeing as her grandmother's needs continue to increase.

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Sandra,

- I feel that my Parkinson's is getting worse. I had my first fall in several weeks today and had to call my granddaughter, Olivia, so she could help her mum get me up, as my daughter, Erica, now struggles to lift me on her own. Over the last few years, I have relied on Olivia more and more. Erica's Chronic Fatigue Syndrome means that even minimal physical exertion can leave her completely exhausted, so I try not to call on her for help, especially as my room is at the very top of the house.
- I try to remain as independent as possible, but tasks such as dressing, cooking, and using the stairs are becoming increasingly difficult and take me much longer than they used to. I used to enjoy baking, but I can no longer do it as often as I would like because my shaking has worsened, and my balance is unreliable.
- When Olivia is at school, I avoid asking Erica for support, as she usually needs to rest after work due to the mental exhaustion it causes her. She used to be able to drive me into town so I could catch the train to visit my other daughter or attend my clubs, but she is no longer confident driving, and I cannot walk far anymore. As a result, I do not feel comfortable going out on my own.

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Sandra,

- Since losing my husband and moving in with Erica in a new city, I feel very isolated. I miss seeing my friends and visiting the library to pick up new books. Olivia keeps me company when she is home and not studying, but I am aware that this will change as she gets older.

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Erica, Sandra's daughter

- I am often exhausted after work and need time to rest, especially on days when I have had several meetings or when I am working in the office. I work until 2 p.m. each day and commute into the office twice a week. Most afternoons I need to nap before starting household chores, which take me a long time and leave me very tired, particularly because I am up and down the stairs. I also struggle with frequent headaches and joint pain, which make everyday tasks much more difficult.
- I can see that Mum's condition is worsening. She relies heavily on Olivia because she doesn't want to make me more tired, but I know she will soon need constant support, support that Olivia cannot provide on her own. Since I am no longer driving, I see my friends much less, and I have had to give up going to the gym and swimming.

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Erica, Sandra's daughter

- Mum also can't get out and about, which I know affects her emotionally. As a result, I feel that both of us are becoming more isolated. Olivia continues to be a great support and helps around the house a lot, but I worry about her anxiety because she bottles up her emotions. I also know she misses spending time with me on weekends, when we used to go out together.
- I often wake several times during the night because I can hear Mum getting up to use the toilet or make a cup of tea. She does not need assistance, but I remain on alert in case she falls, which affects the quality of my sleep.

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Olivia, Erica's daughter/ Sandra's granddaughter, 16

- Mum tries hard to stay positive and keep going, but I can always tell when she is struggling. Her energy is drained so quickly. I help both her and Nan as much as I can when I'm at home, but I know Nan will gradually need even more support, and she is becoming increasingly isolated because she won't go out on her own.
- As Mum finds it harder to manage household tasks, I usually take over clearing up after dinner, taking the bins out, and other daily jobs. After that, I help Nan get ready for bed, and by the time I'm finished I find it difficult to keep up with my homework and revision. I feel like I don't really have a social life anymore because I don't like leaving Nan on her own for too long.
- I feel sad that Mum and I don't spend as much time together as we used to. We would go to the cinema or get the train into London, but that's too much for her now. I tend to push my feelings down, but I know they will surface eventually. I stopped taking my anti-anxiety medication, but I'm beginning to feel that I may need to start again.



Questions for reflection:

- Do we understand the impact of presenting behaviour on the person and those in the household? What is day to day life like and how much risk and harm may the presenting behaviour cause for others and does this need intervention?
- What are the family beliefs, rules, values and fears that stop them seeking and accessing support? How can we support people to consider their options?
- Have you sufficiently considered the history of the household members and impact of this, adverse childhood experiences, trauma and repeat behaviours and patterns?
- When people are only just doing enough, but change isn't being seen, how is this recognised and how do you respond to it?
- Do we understand the impact of the caring responsibility on the care giver; is this a reasonable impact or do they need support? (what is reasonable?)

Whole Family Approach

Reflections



When you consider making referrals or signposting

- How do you decide if it is necessary and proportionate?
- Do you consider if the family member needs an introduction to a new service; will they self-refer without support?
- Have you considered their level of confidence and does this mean they need practical support?
- Have you considered family rules, culture, beliefs and values and how this can impact on making the referral or affect future intervention?
- How does your own values and biases influence the interpretation of need?

**Pause here and form your own
conclusions.**

**Please only proceed once you
have done so.**

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Potential interventions / considerations

Sandra

- Social Care Assessment and conversations with social care around future planning
- Occupational Therapy referral
- Signposting to Parkinson's nurses/ support groups
- Consideration of tech for assistance at home
- Home adaptations: Additional stair rails, Chair raisers, Raised toilet seat, Bed stick and Dressing aids
- Health care review
- Medication review with GP

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Potential interventions / considerations

Erica

- Occupational Health referral
- Occupational Therapy assessment
- Care Act Assessment
- Signposting to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME) support groups
- Conversations with social care around future planning
- Pain management clinic referral
- Discussion around Carer's assessment
- Access to work referral

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Potential interventions / considerations

Olivia

- School and Pastoral support
- School based counselling
- Signposting to counselling and anxiety support groups and youth based mental health services such as Young Minds, Kooth (online counselling) and The Mix
- GP/prescriber medication review
- Peer support and social opportunities
- Referral to the Young Carer's Service and young carers information and support
- Young Carers assessment

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Sandra Outcomes achieved

- Following a care act assessment, Sandra was found to be care act eligible. She met with her GP to have a medication review and regular health checks were booked in, with the nurse visiting the house.
- Through working with the Occupational Therapist and a falls and moving-and-handling assessment, Sandra's risk of falling was reduced through relocating her bedroom downstairs, removing the need to regularly use stairs. Bed sticks, grab rails and other equipment were provided to support safe transfers and reduce the likelihood of Sandra, Erica or Olivia sustaining injuries when assistance was required. A clear plan was agreed for responding to falls, ensuring Olivia was no longer involved in lifting or moving her grandmother.
- Sandra was signposted towards aids which can help with dressing and also kitchen aids to help with baking such as a mini food processor, a stool to sit on and a lightweight kettle.
- An appointment was made with the community physiotherapist to do a walking assessment and she was signposted towards community transport and local social groups.
- As she doesn't live close to a library, Sandra was able to be signed up for the Library home delivery service.

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Erica Outcomes achieved

- With her mum now settled downstairs, Erica feels her sleeping has improved as she feels reassured that her mum is more comfortable and she has her pendant alarm. A smoke detector has also been installed.
- Following her occupational health assessment, Erica now attends the office one morning every fortnight, and her workload is reviewed during her regular weekly check-ins.
- After meeting with her GP, she has been referred to the pain management clinic, and the GP has discussed lifestyle changes that may help her manage day-to-day life more comfortably.
- Erica is working with her physiotherapist on an energy management treatment plan to help her make the best use of her energy levels through the day.
- A Personal Assistant spends a few hours a week helping around the house and assisting Sandra which allows Erica to save her energy for going out, meeting with friends and spending time with her mum and Olivia. This has positively impacted her physical and mental wellbeing.

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Olivia Outcomes achieved

- Olivia has regular check-ins with the school pastoral team, which provide practical support around balancing home responsibilities with her studies. This has helped her feel understood and reduced her stress during busy periods.
- She meets with the school counsellor when needed, giving her a safe space to express her worries and develop coping strategies. These sessions, alongside external counselling, have helped her feel more emotionally in control.
- With her mum and nan managing better at home, Olivia can now focus more on her schoolwork and enjoy time with friends. Volunteering at a local charity shop has also boosted her confidence. In time she will be able to get a weekend job and begin saving for driving lessons.
- Olivia continues to support her mum and spend quality time with her nan, including regular short walks together. This has strengthened their relationship and provided meaningful shared time.
- Olivia and Erica have reintroduced their monthly cinema trips and enjoy watching box sets together at home. Planning what to watch has helped them reconnect and maintain their bond.
- The local young carers group has given Olivia a supportive space to connect with others in similar situations. This has reduced her feelings of isolation and improved her overall wellbeing.