



Case study five

Michelle and Joel

Joel: I'm Joel and this is my wife Michelle. We've been married for 45 years.

Michelle: And we've got two sons, Clinton who lives in Scotland and Daniel who lives with us, he's 34. Daniel is different. He's got a learning disability. They never really said what it is. He needs a lot from us and I gave up work when he stopped school at 16, didn't I, dear?

Joel: Yes.

Michelle: So that I could take care of him.

Joel: We tried and tried with the council over the years to get what Daniel needs, nothing has ever really worked out. I retired three years ago and all this it's like a fulltime job.

Michelle: What can we tell you about Daniel? We love him. We really do, don't we, dear?

Joel: Yes, we do.

Michelle: It can be hard work but he's funny. He can make us laugh and so caring. He's very caring and sweet.

Joel: Yes, he is, he volunteers at the day centre, the charity there, helps out with the teas and coffee. He's independent too. He really wants to live on his own. We're not really sure how it would work out. He's well known locally, everyone says hello and keeps an eye on him but living away from us we don't really know if he'd be alright, do we?

Michelle: Really not sure about him living away from us. He's had a few run ins with the police because he's got agitated in the neighbourhood. One of the problems is that strangers just don't get him. He can seem really like normal, I don't like to say that because he is normal to us, but people don't realise he's got a learning disability so if he does act out, people don't know how to take it and it can lead to trouble.

Joel: Yes, that's true. He's got friends though it's not like he's lonely, he's made some friends at the place he volunteers and he's got friends round that he has grown up with locally.

Michelle: Not always sure about those friends though. He's always short of cash. We wonder sometimes if they take advantage of him. We do let him look after his own money but it is a worry. I hate to think of that happening to him.

- Joel:** There's a lot to worry about with that boy, we have to make sure he's got up and he's showered in the morning and he's put on the right clothes like a coat when it's raining. His tablets and things, his medication, that's the one to watch and he can be tricky with it, really tricky. He refuses point blank to take it and that always ends up in a bit of an argument.
- Michelle:** Yes. I hate the medication rows. We have to make sure he's at the places he needs to be, sometimes we'll walk him along to the bus and sometimes I'll drive him. If I drive him some place or I'm picking him up he'll call me from his mobile, he's good with that, knows how to make calls and things.
- Joel:** Yes, so that's our Daniel, we love him, we really do like I say, but it's a struggle. We're pretty tired and we're not getting any younger. I had a heart attack last year, didn't I? It does leave you wondering what happens when...
- Michelle:** Shhhh! Now we don't want to think about that, do we? Don't be tempting fate by talking about it. I wish though that the council knew what we do. They don't seem to want to help. We've phoned them and they've been out to see us, we've got an assessment and some panel what have you, Daniel is getting one too.
- Joel:** Sometimes though you wonder where the time has gone. I'm an old man. I was a boy just moments ago. Remember when we used to go dancing.
- Michelle:** Oh yes.
- Joel:** You loved the music you did, really loved it. When was the last time you put on a tune?
- Michelle:** You're making me sad now. We loved a dance, didn't we? We were the best of all our friends too. Not so many friends about now, but that's what happens.
- Joel:** Yes.
- Michelle:** We have two sons we love and we have each other Joel. We mustn't complain.