
Head Teachers' Leadership Academy | Scenarios

Clash of cultures

You are three months into a new post as a community and family support worker. Your caseload includes an 18-year-old male with a rare degenerative illness. He is an only child and lives with parents aged 71 and 60. From an earlier role in healthcare, you are aware that the condition is life limiting and is likely to be preceded by a period of significant disability. You sense that the parents are unaware that life expectancy is around 21 years.

You raise the matter with the local medical centre practice manager at a routine fortnightly meeting and are told that the parents believe the condition is stable and have invested all their faith in a medical breakthrough. The nominated General Practitioner has, for cultural reasons, decided not to disclose the reality of the condition and to go along with the parents' hope. You express discomfort that, by saying nothing, you are in effect colluding with an approach that withholds information from a young adult. The next day, the practice manager contacts you to say that the GP wishes to speak to you. "He's displeased" she adds.

Let the meeting proceed.

An opportunity for role play (if two tutors or volunteers are willing) followed by discussion.

Wider issues can then be explored.

