
Head Teachers' Leadership Academy | Scenarios

When Sally Met Billy | Episode One

There was consternation in the care home on the Sunday morning. Sally Slender was found in bed with Billy Burley.

Sally, 73, a widow has been in the home for less than six months, her family having felt that it was no longer safe for her to live at home following a series of incidents and a subsequent diagnosis of Alzheimer's. She has a daughter and son, neither of whom has power of attorney as the onset of Alzheimer's was relatively rapid and neither was willing to accept the reality of what was happening until it was too late, and their mother no longer had the capacity to assign it to them.

Billy, 64, is a former professional footballer, a superstar of the 1980s, often photographed with glamorous models but now suffering from alcohol related brain damage and dementia. He is also part of a study into possible brain damage caused by heading footballs. His third wife has terminal brain cancer and lives with her daughter who has power of attorney for both parents. Billy has been in the home for three months, the first two were difficult for staff as he searched for alcohol or did not get his own way over mealtimes, smoking areas, and freedom to leave the building.

Over the past month, however, Sally and Billy have grown closer, sitting together at mealtimes, and holding hands while watching tv. Billy has calmed down significantly. Sally thinks Billy is her dead husband.

The home has been operating for less than a year with a slogan of Home from Home and five core values: Privacy, Dignity, Choice, Respect and Community. They have provision for couples to live together if they arrive as a couple. The manager, who has been called in by staff, finds the staff divided on what should happen next and no clear policy to help. What would you do if you were the manager?

When Sally Met Billy | Episode Two

On the assumption that consult the families is one of the suggestions, here's a summary:

Sally's daughter thinks it is lovely and comforting that her mum is so happy with someone she believes to be her husband. She is happy for things to run their course. Her son is enraged

and believes his mum is the latest female to be taken advantage of by Billy Burley. "He's nothing other than a predator." He has hinted that he will go to the press unless the relationship is stopped.

Billy has two sons both of whom are relaxed about the situation and say that he has always sought female company. One of the sons asserts that his dad has the right to have a relationship if it makes him happy and suggests the home accommodates them in a shared room. Billy's daughter is appalled that such a thing could be considered given her mum's condition. The situation must be stopped immediately.

You're the manager. What's your plan?

(Tutor Note: solution lies with Billy's daughter's power of attorney but not before the wider issues of rights in such circumstances are discussed.)

