



**Karen McWeeney**

My name is Karen I'm 52 and part of the sandwich generation - I have a husband and teenage son, I assist with the care of my Dad who lives with his wife of 59 years, both are 85 and he was diagnosed in August 2017 with moderate dementia.

I joined the course Insights into Dementia Informing and Empowering Family Careers as I felt I knew very little about Dementia and yet I needed answers how best to cope with this illness and support my family.

After a stay in hospital and a diagnosis I rapidly learnt we needed assistance for my Dad to make life more comfortable in his day to day living, this was achieved through a Home Care Package which is invaluable to my mother.

Dementia is a very slow creeping disease which crept into our lives in 2012 but was not diagnosed until 2017 we just referred to it as "Dad being Dad".

Today dementia has a much bigger presence in all our lives - I assist with checking on their daily well-being, attend hospital, dental, optical appointments assist with form filling, banking, ensure carers are in place, organise holidays and day trips, all home improvements and whatever else needs attention.

The course provided me with so much information and gave me a wonderful insight into the disease and what it does to the person, and that it is the disease that is changing the person. Remember to treasure them every day and really appreciate the importance of communication in whatever form. It is very important to remember that there is a lot of help out there and never be afraid to ask.

Never take NO for an answer and always ask questions as you will become more informed and information is empowering to ensure the right care and support is in place.

I learnt about the Alzheimer's Society through their advertising campaign on television and contacted them for some information which was very informative and saw the course advertised and duly applied.

The course is invaluable and presented each week in a concise well planned informative session. Through the interaction among other course participants you realise although we are all on an individual journey we share a lot of the same problems and could share some practical solutions to these problems which was helpful.

This course is a must do for you when you are faced with a prognosis of dementia in your family.

Thank you.

**Note:** Sadly Karen's Dad passed away peacefully in July 2018, five weeks after suffering a brain haemorrhage. May Frank Rest in Peace.