

Step 2: Please read the following case studies and complete the personal reflection

HELEN

HELEN is a 45 year old woman with an intellectual disability. Helen was sent to a Home for Crippled Children by an abusive step-father. She spent time on the streets when she ran away from school, home and various institutions. She has been in and out of hostels during her adult life but has recently found stability and relative independence in a unit in a complex for the homeless in inner- Brisbane. Helen says she has "come a long way" and is now learning to cook, shop and budget.

Helen says she has a learning disability, which she was born with. Helen says this means she is not good at remembering ("I forget things quickly") and is not good at doing some things (for example, Knowing left from right"). Helen says she hardly ever went to school ("I was picked on and had my books ripped up and the teachers wouldn't do anything about it").

Helen has wanted a child of her own for a very long time. She has expressed anger at having to have Depo-Provera and in not being able to make the same choices as other women. Recently Helen spent time with a GP who regularly visits her current residence. The GP explained that Helen's epilepsy was the problem. She explained that if she went off medication she might die – and that she would need to be off medication if she became pregnant. This information was upsetting for Helen and she has had to have the news repeated several times.

Helen likes and trusts her GP who delivered the facts in a manner that Helen found to be caring and compassionate. The GP was prepared to deliver the information many times and share this message with other supports in Helen's life who could help reinforce the message. Helen felt that nobody had really explained this to her before. Helen never feels judged by her GP and she never feels stupid for asking questions.

Personal reflection

What experiences of social disadvantage can you identify in Helen's story? How might these experiences impact on Helen?

REBECCA

REBECCA is a 22 year old woman with a mild intellectual disability. She lives with her mother Lynette and younger sister Natalie (age 20).

Rebecca left school half way through Year 12. She attended a mainstream state high school, studying a mix of Mainstream and Special Education Unit classes. Rebecca was expelled from school after she physically assaulted another student. She has received a Disability Support Pension since that time.

Rebecca currently spends her days at home. She enjoys watching TV (often with Lynette), using social media to connect with friends from school (although she doesn't see them in 'real life'), and playing with her dog. Rebecca would like to work in Child Care but is not sure if she could ever achieve this goal.

For the past four years Lynette has been in a de facto relationship with a man named Jeremy (age 55). The relationship has been one of domestic violence with the police being called to the home on numerous occasions. Jeremy was recently released from prison after serving a 3 month sentence for assaulting a stranger outside a pub. While Jeremy was in prison, Rebecca entered into a relationship with Jeremy's son Dave (age 35). Dave is verbally abusive to Rebecca and Natalie thinks Rebecca is being sexually exploited by Dave (he only visits Rebecca on her pension day, or after he has been out drinking).

Lynette abuses over the counter drugs and often spends days at a time in bed. Rebecca has also commenced using over the counter drugs. Rebecca pays Lynette \$300 a fortnight board and often seeks to borrow money from Natalie who has a job at a local petrol station. The neighbours have called police on numerous occasions because of aggressive arguments between Rebecca and Lynette.

Natalie is planning to move into share accommodation with friends. She wants to escape the violence and stress in the family home but is concerned about Rebecca's welfare if she leaves. She says Rebecca has no insight into the dynamics of her relationship with her mother or her 'boyfriend' Dave.

Personal reflection

What experiences of social disadvantage can you identify in Rebecca's story? How might these experiences impact on Rebecca?