

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

KERRY

KERRY is a 19 year old woman who has a mild intellectual disability. She has recently been diagnosed as having a bipolar disorder. Kerry has a history of childhood sexual assault and was assaulted in her mid teens by a friend of the family.

Kerry had challenging behaviours throughout her school years and was suspended on a number of occasions for episodes of aggressive behaviour. She self-harms and has very low self-esteem. Kerry is well known in the area as she is often seen in the local mall begging for cigarettes, frequently presents at the hospital with minor injuries or ailments and chromes occasionally. Kerry frequently engages in sexual intercourse in return for money or cigarettes.

Kerry's parents feel that they can no longer support her as it is 'destroying' their lives. They have changed the locks on the door so that Kerry cannot return to the family home.

Three days ago the police brought her to the hospital to be admitted to the mental health unit. Yesterday morning she disclosed that she was raped by another patient of the hospital.

Personal reflection

What myths and stereotypes about people with intellectual disability can you identify in this case study? How do you think these might impact on Kerry?

LUKE

LUKE is 21 years old and has been attending your service for three years. Luke has Down's Syndrome and is an only child. Luke's parents are very protective of him and have devoted their life to caring for him.

All the workers at your service have a 'soft spot' for Luke as he has great difficulty learning and has had significant problems with his heart. In the three years Luke has been accessing your service he has never had a really close friend.

Over the last 4 months however, you have observed that Luke and Alicia have struck up a friendship and now spend much of their time sitting together and talking quietly. It is obvious that they both like each other's company and workers are delighted that Luke has been able to establish a friendship.

Luke's parents become aware of his friendship with Alicia after he is invited to her house for a barbecue with her parents. The contact you and ask you to discourage the friendship as they are worried that something might happen between Luke and Alicia. They have told Luke that they do not think it is appropriate that he has a 'girlfriend'.

Personal reflection

What myths and stereotypes about people with intellectual disability can you identify in this case study? How do you think these might impact on Luke and Alicia?