

# research in practice

## *About Susan*

### *Susan's story*

Susan Reinfeld is 70 years old. She is primary carer for her partner, Grace Wilson, who is 82. In their younger days Susan and Grace travelled widely, they had a large network of friends and although they don't have any children of their own, they have nieces and nephews. Susan is particularly close to her nephew Graham. Grace has generally taken the lead in decisions and in the relationship. Sometimes now she gets angry with Susan if she doesn't do things the way Grace expects or if Susan makes a suggestion which Grace sees as 'stupid.' Grace's family have at times struggled with her sexuality and while her relationship with her nieces and nephews is good, her relationship with her brother Clive has been more difficult.

Over recent years Grace has become increasingly frail and has relied on Susan to get washed and dressed, and use the toilet, as well as maintain the home and cook meals. Two months ago, Grace had a fall and was admitted to hospital. She was discharged to a rehabilitation bed in a care home. Before the hospital admission Susan and Grace were not in contact with services. Whilst in hospital and the care home, Susan has visited every day and helped Grace with personal care. Grace frequently phones and texts Susan. After six weeks of rehabilitation, Grace continues to need support to walk and with all her personal care, including support at night. You have been involved in a multi-disciplinary assessment which has recommended that Grace needs 24-hour care. As part of this assessment, Susan talked about how exhausted she is, and said that she no longer feels able to support Grace at home because of the impact on her health. Grace has agreed to a trial three months in a care home.

Susan and Grace are not legal partners, as they have not entered into a civil partnership nor are they married. Susan has no power of attorney for Grace. Susan is worried about the costs of a home and how this will be paid for. She feels guilty about 'letting Grace down' and sad about the future she will no longer have with Grace. Susan is also worried about Clive's reaction.

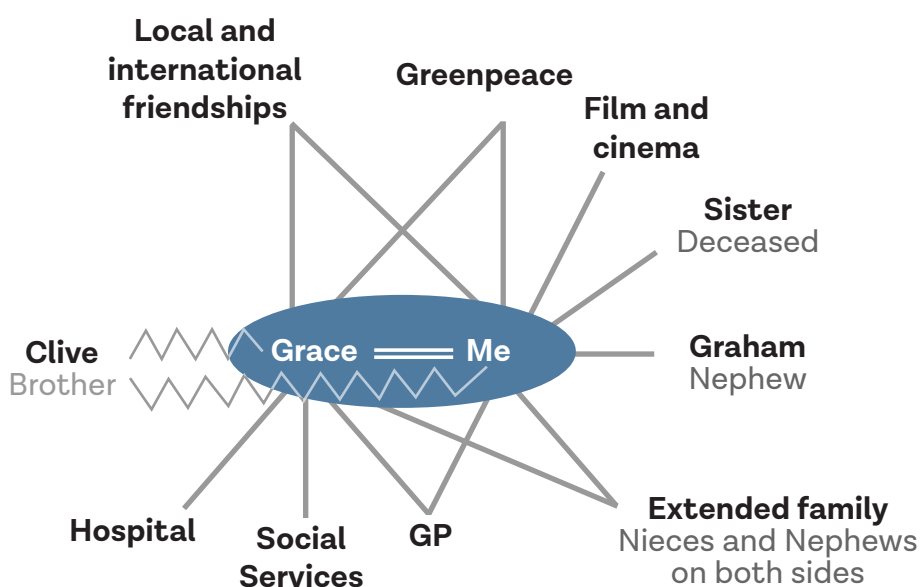
Susan has asked to speak to someone about her concerns.

You are the social worker and go to meet Susan.

## One-page profile

What others like and admire about me	What is important to me
It depends on their politics! I am a human rights activist, a peace campaigner and environmentalist. My friends admire the strength of my life-long commitment to socialist principles.	Socialist feminism Cinematography Being outdoors Walks and good food
How best to support me	
<p>Don't make assumptions about me.</p> <p>Read the notes before meetings or discussions so that I don't have to repeat information.</p> <p>Give me information and advice on how to find and finance the best possible care for my partner.</p> <p>We need open-minded communities. Be aware and sensitive to us as a lesbian couple.</p> <p>Recognise that I am still a carer even though Grace is in a care home.</p> <p>Help me to carry on caring for Grace and to manage the impact for Grace and her family of her being in a care home.</p> <p>Support me to understand the implications for our home, finances and future decisions as we are not civil partners or married.</p>	

## Ecogram





### *Questions*

How can a human rights perspective help you to empower Susan and Grace?

How can you act as a navigator to make the systems around Susan and Grace transparent and understandable?

How does an intersectional view of Susan's and Grace's identities (seeing the overlapping aspects of identity) help you to understand how they respond to social care?