

Worksheet 2.5: Building empathy for the sufferer – coping strategies and the crap day exercise

Remember the things that your loved one used to like doing before Edi came to visit, or things that Edi wants to do but is unable to at the moment because of their illness?

Describe a crap day for you the carer, and think of what it is that you do when you have had a crap day to relax and take your mind off things?

Write or draw as many healthy coping strategies as you can think of.

Now imagine that at the end of a crap day someone in your family tells you 'you cannot do any of these things'. How would that make you feel?

Do you think your loved one might be feeling any of these when everyone is trying to persuade them to give up their main or only coping strategy, with nothing to replace it?

This exercise helps you to think about the array of things that your loved one used to like doing before Edi came to visit, and to revisit things that you yourselves might do to relax and rejuvenate. Could you reinstate any of these through family activities?

In addition, it helps you to understand how Edi might be feeling, the emotional distress that can be triggered when you are told to stop doing something that helps you to get through a tough day.