

Worksheet 7.6: Carers managing their own emotional responses

An important part of recovery is for Edi to face their fears over a wide range of everyday events that involve food. These might include social events and parties, meals at school or work, meals out in restaurants and of course shopping for and preparing meals. Carers also find these situations very difficult and can get caught up on an emotional wave even thinking about how to get through some of these everyday events. If carers can prepare for and visualise these events in advance they are more likely to be able to keep calm and gently support Edi through difficult times.

Use one of the caring scenarios from the group or use this scenario:

Mum Jane and 17-year-old Molly are in the supermarket doing the weekly shop. Molly has her own shopping list and the plan was that she would collect her things while mum did the shopping for the rest of the family. However, as soon as they arrive at the supermarket it is clear that Molly is overcome with anxiety and cannot think clearly. Her body language gives this away as she is scratching her arms and wringing her hands. Jane is feeling equally anxious as recent trips to the supermarket have not gone well. Jane quickly becomes critical of Molly's attempts to fill her basket and loses her temper. Jane says to Molly 'if you carry on like this you won't be here much longer'. In turn Molly gets really upset and says 'maybe it would be better if I weren't here' and leaves the supermarket in floods of tears.

In small groups consider these tasks and then discuss with the whole group.

- a) What animal response is Jane displaying? What could Jane have done differently?

b) Imagine you are Jane and use ALVS to try to connect with Molly.

Attend

Label

Validate

Soothe

c) Write down phrases you could use when your loved one says things like 'maybe it would be better if I weren't here'.

It is unlikely that using MI techniques will yield immediate positive results, what it does show is that the carer is trying to make some changes and to keep calm whatever Edi throws at them. In this scenario it is quite likely that Molly will not be able to do her shopping as she is so anxious. However, by using MI techniques Jane can show her unconditional love and support, and importantly, keep calm. Once away from the supermarket Jane could help Molly to reflect on the experience and review goals for future supermarket shopping expeditions.

At the very least Molly feels listened to, supported and that her Mum understands the challenges she is facing.