

Team 15 Communication Chart

Doris's Story

Doris is 88 years old and recently moved into a care home. She is a gentle lady and a fabulous violinist. Doris has a diagnosis of dementia and would sometimes throw her arm into the air and hold it rigidly above her head as she walked around the home - but never when she was sitting. Staff and others living in the home would find this intimidating and back away from her. One of the staff team had conversations with her family as Doris doesn't use words to speak, it turned out that as an 18 year old Doris was conscripted to the army, a shy girl she would return home to her parents each weekend but had to be back at the army base for 10pm on a Sunday night - this entailed a two mile walk when she got off the bus along a very dark country lane up to the base, she had taken up smoking at this point and so would light a cigarette holding it high above her head as she walked - so as anybody she imagined may be hiding in the bushes would think she was a 6 foot tall soldier. Seven decades later her fear and anxiety in the home had evoked an emotional memory and she would walk with her arm in the air perhaps to feel a little safer? Rather than staff backing away from her, great support was to approach her and offer a hug.